

THE GROUP WORKER

FALL 2006
Vol 35 No 2

ASSOCIATION FOR SPECIALISTS IN GROUP WORK



President's Message

Maria Riva, President

This is a call to action! I am looking for energetic, vocal, people who are committed to the practice and training of group work. We have been a collaborative and caring group in ASGW. In fact, I think that ASGW members competently go about their jobs of helping others heal, training new group workers, researching how groups work,

and connecting with others in a nonhierarchical way. Generally ASGW Members do not seek out the spotlight and are a humble group of people. These are extremely positive characteristics and certainly congruent with the philosophy of group work that emphasizes connection, cohesion, universality, etc. Yet, it is time to increase our efforts toward group work advocacy, training, and practice. This may cause us to rethink how quietly we have gone about our group work.

Over the weekend, I had an inspiring conversation with Bob Conyne, a long-time member and Past President of ASGW. He pointed out that group work is an often overlooked treatment format that rarely gets the respect it deserves AND that we need to be more active to change the way that group work is seen and portrayed. I can attest to many examples that illustrate a bias toward individual therapy over group treatment. Here are just a few.

1. There are rarely grant sources that focus specifically on groups. A researcher said to me years ago, if you want to do funded research on group work, you will need to include a small part about groups in a much larger grant that focuses on some other topic besides group work.
2. "Competencies", training components in counseling and psychology, talk about interventions that students need to know to be competent. Yet group work typically plays a very

minor role, with most of the focus on individual counseling skills. This is particularly true for psychology training programs. Counseling programs do a much better job of highlighting group work but still there is much work to do.

3. Even though more and more groups are being conducted in the field, a large percentage of those who lead groups have not been trained to do so. Related to this is that many training programs, especially in clinical psychology, do not require even a basic group counseling class.
4. Although group counseling has been found to be equally as effective as individual treatment for many types of problems, AND many people who need counseling do not receive it, group work continues to be seen by many as a second-class treatment.
5. Many counseling agencies across the country offer individual treatment as the primary service but when people complete their allotted number of individual sessions, they can receive group treatment. What message do you think this sends to the client about the value of group work???

I can go on but I think I have made my point. In order for us to provide the care to underserved persons, to advocate for grants for group work research, and to highlight group work in training programs, we will need to be much more visible and vocal about the effectiveness of group work. Who better to emphasize the value of group work than ASGW! I am assembling a group of ASGW Members who would like to be change-agents. This strategic planning group will function like a think tank that develops ideas for change. It is vital that the therapeutic community begin to see group work as a primary, potent, and essential mode of treatment. If you are interested in advocating for group work, please consider volunteering by emailing me at mriva@du.edu. Thank you for considering this important request. I look forward to hearing from you.

Advanced Group Training Institute (AGTI) Survey

ASGW's Advanced Group Training Institute (AGTI) leadership team (Jim Trotzer, Burt Bertram, Ed Jacobs, and Loan Phan) is conducting a needs assessment survey to assist in developing a strategic-action plan for this coming fiscal year (2006-07). Please connect with the link below to complete the survey. It will take only a few minutes but will supply vital information for planning, development, promotion and marketing. Please distribute the link to your group work colleagues as well. Thank you for your participation in this vital step in the development of ASGW's Advanced Group Training Institute program.

Survey link: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=10202317367>

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ASGW Officers 2006-2007

President

Maria Riva
2450 S. Vine St.
College of Education
Program in Counseling Psychology
University of Denver
Denver, CO 80210
303-871-2484
mriva@du.edu

President-Elect

Janice DeLucia-Waack
Counseling, School and Educational Psychology
403 Baldy Hall
University at Buffalo, SUNY
Buffalo, NY 14620-1000
716-645-2484 ext. 1054
716-645-6616 (fax)
jdelucia@buffalo.edu

Past President

M. Carolyn Thomas
9360 Vaughn Road
Pike Road, AL 36064
334-244-3437 (office) 334-244-3102 (fax)
mthomas@mail.aum.edu

Secretary

Susan Warm
479 Wrencroft Ct.
Lebanon, Ohio 45036
513-932-2294 (h) 513-378-6520 (c)
513-686-1770 x 3220(w)
warms@sycamoreschools.org
suewarm@yahoo.com

Treasurer

Rebecca (Becky) Schumacher
University of Massachusetts Boston
Graduate College of Education
Dept. Counseling and School Psychology
100 Morrissey Blvd.
Boston, MA 02125-3393
Rebecca.Schumacher@umb.edu

ACA Governing Council Representative

George R. Leddick
1863 County Road 4109
Campbell, TX 75422
903-454-7199
drgeo@earthlink.net

Process Observer

Niloufer Merchant
Professor and Department Chair
Educational Leadership & Community
Psychology
St. Cloud State University
720 4th Ave. S.
St. Cloud, MN 56301
320-308-5194
e-mail: nmmerchant@stcloudstate.edu

Newsletter Editor

Sheri Bauman
Department of Educational Psychology
College of Education
University of Arizona
Tucson, AZ 85721-0069
Office: 520-626-7308
Fax: 520-621-2909
Email: sherib@u.arizona.edu

A Message from the President-Elect

Janice DeLucia-Waack



Greetings from New York!!! It is pretty amazing to be writing this column as President-Elect. It seems like just yesterday I was presenting my first poster session at ACA, which had been accepted by

ASGW, and there was Don Ward coming up to afterwards to ask how it went. But it was not yesterday. It has been a long time since then and I am truly honored to have been elected President of ASGW. This organization is central to my career and personal growth and development, and I am hoping that it is to yours as well.

As I write this column, it is late summer and I feel very invigorated and energized. I am well rested and have had a good break from academics. I have made jewelry and worked very hard on my first mosaic project – a table. From these efforts comes the theme of this column. Invigoration and Energizing are the keys to successful careers. As a group leader, it is important to continually learn new skills and try out new ideas. I had the wonderful opportunity to co-lead a group of high school peer mediators at the end of June which served multiple

purposes: to allow ASGW to create a training tape on how to lead groups for children and adolescents (see more about this in future issues as it becomes available) as well as to teach group leadership skills to the peer mediators and also to our audience. It was a chance for all to learn. I came away with a new sense of how important it is to be respectful of reluctance in group members, as it occurs in all group members as a natural part of the group process. Even these willing and eager teenage volunteers were reluctant to talk about some issues and go deeper about certain things. Respecting that and not pushing allowed them to learn how to be respectful with their future group members. Our audience got a chance to see new activities, watch group process happen, and listen as the group members reflected on what was most and least helpful for them. I came away revitalized and excited about trying out some different things.

And that leads to my message. One of my goals for my presidency will be to continue to support ASGW as a way for group leaders to continue to grow and develop their leadership skills through local workshops and conferences as well as the national ASGW and ACA conferences. If you have ideas about specific training topics, please let me know. I would love to hear from you at jdelucia@buffalo.edu.

Call for Nominees: Eminent Career Award and Professional Advancement Award

The ASGW Awards Committee is seeking nominations for the Eminent Career Award and for the Professional Advancement Awards. Nominations in either category should address the nominee's outstanding activities and contributions to the field of group work. Additional letters speaking to the nomination would be welcome. Letters should identify which award is being sought.

Eminent Career Award: This highest award is intended to recognize major contributions made to the field of group work by an ASGW/ACA member. Credentials and letters of recommendation for the nominee should convey the national or international influence the individual has had on group work over a period of time.

Professional Advancement Awards: These awards are made to recognize the outstanding activities of individuals who help advance the field of group work through any one of the following: research, development of a new technique or theory, public relations, legislative activities, or group work practice.

Nominations and supporting letters must be received by January 31, 2007 and should be sent to Lorraine J. Guth, Ph.D., Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Department of Counseling, 206 Stouffer Hall, Indiana, PA 15705. Nominations may also be sent by e-mail to lguth@iup.edu. The award recipients will be announced at the ASGW Luncheon at the ACA Conference in Detroit, Michigan.

Training Group Counselors in Botswana: *A Response to the HIV/ AIDS Epidemic*

Submitted by Amy Nitza

With an HIV infection rate of over 37% of the adult population, Botswana has been hit particularly hard by the AIDS epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa. It is estimated that by the year 2010, 21.6% of all children in Botswana will be orphans (UNAIDS/WHO, 2003). Clearly, there is a strong and urgent need for interventions to address the social problems that have and will continue to impact the people there as a result of this epidemic. As a response to this need, the International Counseling, Advocacy, Research, and Education (I CARE) program was developed with the primary goal of training human services personnel to deal with the psychosocial and mental health needs of those living with or affected by HIV/AIDS in Africa. I CARE was developed by Rex Stockton, Chancellor's Professor in the School of Education at Indiana University Bloomington, in collaboration with Keith Morran, professor in the School of Education at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis, and Michael Reece, assistant professor in the Department of Applied Health Science at Indiana University Bloomington.

As a recent member of the I CARE team, I had the pleasure of accompanying Rex Stockton and Nancy Stockton to Botswana in July to assist them in conducting a week-long group counseling workshop at the University of Botswana in Gaborone. The specific goal of this workshop was to provide an introductory group counseling training experience to human service professionals. Group counseling may be of particular benefit as a response to the AIDS epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa for several reasons. In collectivist cultures, problems are often addressed and solved in groups. Additionally, the social and mental health problems associated with HIV/AIDS are impacting particular groups of people in very large numbers. Together these factors make group counseling a potentially very effective means of addressing social and mental health problems associated with HIV/AIDS in Botswana (Stockton, Morran, & Terry, 2005).

Topics addressed in the workshop included stages of group development, leadership skills, and application



of theory and skills to address needs in their specific work settings. Skills practice, experiential learning, and application of the material to the cultural context(s) of Botswana were emphasized throughout the workshop. A group of counseling professionals from Botswana including Dan-Bush Bhusumane and Chris Tidamane of the University of Botswana, and Lesego Mokgwathise of the Molepolole College of Education assisted in conducting the workshop. They were instrumental in helping to tailor the experience to the needs of the local culture(s).

The seventeen participants largely consisted of primary, secondary, and distance education teachers from across the country as well as counselors and human resource professionals from the University itself. The teachers were primarily serving in the role of guidance and counseling teachers in their schools. In these positions teachers provide guidance lessons in addition to their regular teaching duties and serve as the counseling resource people in their schools, often without a great deal of formal counseling training. Many of the teachers came from remote areas of the country and had to travel long distances to attend; one participant shared that she had to walk for ½ a day to catch a bus for another day-long ride to Gaborone. Most came because they were invited by the Ministry of Education, which paid them for their time and expenses while they attended. Many shared that they were not initially clear as to the goals of the workshop or how

group counseling would apply to their work, but welcomed the opportunity to come to the university and learn some new counseling skills. However, over the week of the workshop it became apparent that participants not only learned group counseling skills and information, but experienced the group process in a way that left them feeling excited about groups and with ideas and energy to implement group work into their schools or other work settings.

Early in the week, participants were provided with didactic information and modeling of skills and intervention with opportunities for practice. Initially, the participants relied primarily on role plays during the experiential components of the training. However, as the week progressed they began to use the practice groups to share real life situations and difficulties they experience in their roles as guidance teachers. The group process provided a means for sharing experiences, concerns and ideas, and for gaining support and feedback. As the participants shared, the isolation associated with working in remote settings and serving as the only guidance and counseling teachers in their schools became apparent. This time for sharing and discussing seemed particularly valuable; universality and instillation of hope were evident as participants discussed their struggles with their roles as teachers of guidance and counseling, and their concerns about specific students and situations in their schools.

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One important area of discussion was how to best incorporate local and traditional cultural values and practices into the teachers' work with students whose lives are impacted by HIV/AIDS. Cultural practices for dealing with death and grieving, and the secrecy and stigma that still surround HIV/AIDS were discussed. Additionally, participants shared that differences in native language between themselves and their students often present challenges in getting to know the students and their families well. In some cases these issues make it difficult for the teachers to even know which children are orphans or are grieving the loss of a loved one, have sick parents, or are sick themselves with the disease. They also shared their concerns about how to appropriately deal with related serious situations facing some of their students including arranged marriages of young girls, sexual abuse, and prostitution. During the workshop, discussion of how to implement traditional practices and rituals into groups, practice leading groups in the participants' native languages, and role play of specific difficult situations were incorporated to address these important issues.

Another topic of discussion was opportunities for, and potential barriers to, implementing groups into their work settings. Several of the teachers identified specific types of groups they would like to run at their schools; support groups for orphans, general grief and loss groups, and groups for students struggling academically were some of the ideas they began working on. One common concern identified was the lack of support for counseling activities by teachers and administrators; participants mentioned that there is often a reluctance to support activities not covered on student exams. Similarly, teachers shared that while they are contractually given release time to implement counseling activities, this does not often occur in practice. Nevertheless, many expressed excitement that groups could provide a more efficient and effective method of addressing student concerns that they had struggled to meet on an individual basis.

The termination process of the workshop itself was largely led

by participants and included traditional songs and customs from Botswana. It was clear as members shared that some important relationships and connections had been made that hopefully will be maintained even as they return to their individual towns, villages, and schools. Workshop evaluations indicated that participants found the opportunity to experience the group process and practice skills in dealing with specific situations to be very valuable. Additionally, the opportunity to share with and learn from each other's experiences was of particular importance. Most indicated plans or desire to begin implementing groups but also expressed a need for further training. Participant comments on the evaluations included statements such as "The workshop helped me very much because I did not know how to go about tackling certain issues", "The practice sessions were very fruitful and were a perfect opportunity to put the skills to practice", and "This workshop increased my group counseling skills but I still feel that I need more training". To address this expressed need for more training, the I CARE program will host a follow-up videoconference among the workshop facilitators and participants. This will be an opportunity for participants to gain additional supervision and feedback and for facilitators to assist them in their emerging roles as group counselors and support them in dealing with some very challenging social problems.

References

- Stockton, R., Morran, D. K., & Terry, L. J. (2005). Mental health counseling groups in developing countries: The preparation of group leadership trainers. *Training in Developing Nations: A Handbook for Expatriates*. Armonk, N. Y.: M. E. Sharpe.
- UNAIDS/WHO, 2003. *AIDS Epidemic Update: December 2003*. Geneva, Switzerland: Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and World Health Organization.

Nominations Sought for Group Work Practice Award

The ASGW Awards Committee is seeking nominations for the Group Work Practice Award. The purpose of this award is to recognize an outstanding practitioner in group work. Recognition may be for any area of group work covered by the ASGW Professional Standards and nominees must be members of ASGW.

A nomination letter and two supporting letters should address the following points:

1. **Scope of practice of nominee to include:**
 - a. Type of group work
 - b. Client population served
 - c. Practice setting
2. **Innovations in group work practice by the nominee.**
3. **How nominee has disseminated group work skills through workshops, conference presentations, supervision, or training.**
4. **Evidence of nominee's significant contribution to group work practice.**

Nominations and supporting letters must be received by January 31, 2007 and should be sent to Lorraine J. Guth, Ph.D., Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Department of Counseling, 206 Stouffer Hall, Indiana, PA 15705. Materials may also be sent by e-mail to lguth@iup.edu. The award recipient will be announced at the ASGW Luncheon at the ACA Conference in Detroit, Michigan.

GROUP WORK PRACTICE IDEAS



ASSOCIATION FOR SPECIALISTS IN GROUP WORK

Rebuilding Shattered Lives in Support Groups for Mothers of Sexually Abused Children

by M. Carolyn Thomas



M. Carolyn Thomas is a Professor and Coordinator of Counselor Education at Auburn University Montgomery. Her groups for battered women, adult survivors of sexual abuse, males molested as children and mothers of sexually abused children were the first such groups in Montgomery, AL. Carolyn was the first president of the Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence and was recognized with the President Bush Point of Light Award for her efforts to improve services for victims of family abuse. She is an ASGW and NCDFA Fellow and recently served as ASGW President.

Background

Although the battered women's movement in Alabama had resulted in the establishment of several domestic abuse shelters and programs by the 1980s, few therapeutic services were available for victims of sexual abuse. The available counseling generally focused on child victims. Nothing was available for adult survivors or other family members. M. Carolyn Thomas started two support groups for female survivors of sexual abuse in the mid 1980s as essential services of the Montgomery Area Family Violence Program (MAFVP). A group for males molested as children was later added to the program. Mothers of sexually abused children were completely ignored, except as subjects of blame for the abuse of their children.

Mothers of sexually abused children were often caricatured in early research as coconspirators of the abuse rather than characterized as covictims. Many professionals seemed to believe that most mothers were aware of the abuse and either colluded in the actual abuse, or allowed the abuse to occur. After one encounter with an experienced counselor educator who described mothers in particularly negative terms, the author made a silent but determined commitment to combat the negative stereotype and improve services for mothers. A support group for mothers of sexually abused children was immediately added in the late 1980s to the MAFVP, and it continues as an integral service.

Thomas (1993) described the group for mothers as a protective helping environment for mothers on heroines' journeys in which mothers face a series of trials. The heroine's journey taken by the mothers parallels the model described by Joseph Campbell (1949). The challenges include reporting the abuse, changing the family structure, enduring the legal procedures to protect the child, facing the biases of friends and family, learning about the effects of the abuse on their child and other family members, and mending the torn relationship with the victim. When the mother finds courage in the group to acquire new knowledge of herself and abuse and increase her powers by learning new skills, she becomes a primary agent in breaking the cycle of abuse in her family and in the larger world.

The cumulative experiences of organizing, adapting and leading the groups for mothers of sexually abused children provided a rich source of learning for the author. Sharing these lessons will hopefully help practitioners in starting their own groups. The mothers' courage, wisdom and capacity for love are renewable resources for group counselors who wish to learn from the true teachers.

Critical Considerations in Organizing a Group for Mothers

Screening. Screening is more than a selection process. Screening is best viewed as an opportunity for the group leader and prospective group member

to cooperatively decide the best treatment mode for the mother. The group counselor learns about the circumstances of the abuse, the effects on the mother, and the ability of the mother to benefit from group interaction. The mother learns about the purpose and goals of the group, the professional qualifications of the counselor, and the theoretical framework of the group. The mother has the opportunity to share fears of being in the group, and ask specific questions about techniques. The counselor and mother may decide that individual counseling is more appropriate when the mother is in crisis, actively suicidal, or has other serious difficulties that may warrant individual help. On occasion, the counselor and mother may decide that a combination of individual and group counseling is the best treatment mode. The main purpose of screening is to make a shared decision about treatment.

Choosing a co-facilitator. Having a co-facilitator is important. A major issue is diversity among group members. Two group leaders who have differing styles, skills and insights can better accommodate greater diversity among group members. For example, an important issue in the Alabama general population is religiosity. After several years of leading the group for mothers of sexually abused children, it became apparent to the author that the members appreciated the author's professional skills and expertise

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in the field of abuse, but also greatly appreciated the spiritual insight of the cofacilitator. The co-facilitators can be diverse with respect to marriage, having children, age, education, geographic origin, race, and nationality. Over the years, mothers in the group have been teachers, maids, homemakers, engineers, social workers, childcare workers, clerks, and workers in a myriad of fields. The mothers have consistently related well with both counselors, but they also often express appreciation for different insights and skills.

A practical reason for having co-facilitators is scheduling and the infrequent need of one of the counselors to be absent. Having two group leaders removes the necessity of canceling a group session. Another practical reason for having a co-facilitator is training a second counselor who will hopefully be better able to start another group and provide more opportunities for other mothers.

Ongoing versus time limited groups.

The author is strongly committed to ongoing groups for mothers of sexually abused children. Six or eight week groups with a different topic for discussion planned for each week resemble educational sessions that give little time for healing or personally processing the issues. For example, mothers feel guilt for the abuse. Getting rid of that guilt may take one mother several weeks, another several months and another more than a year. Mending the torn bond between the mother and abused child, getting support during complicated and prolonged court proceedings, and rebuilding a shattered family cannot be scheduled like educational units in lesson plans. Healing is a process that is different for each mother. Mothers describe the issues related to sexual abuse as layers of an onion. One thinks an answer or insight has been found, only to discover another layer or aspect emerges. Mothers also often comment about having ups and downs in their journey. They talk about making progress and then feeling like they are regressing. The healing path of the mothers is a long, hard road that winds, loops back upon itself, and often seems to reach a dead end. The group process and ongoing healing environment blazes new paths for the mothers. A time limited group that schedules topics seems very superficial and ineffective when considering the journey of rebuilding shattered lives.

Mothers are asked to make a six month commitment to the group. However, many mothers attend a few weeks, others a few months, and still others a few years. Over the years, a pattern seems to have emerged that predicts when a mother might quit coming to the group. After court proceedings are over, the child victims are stabilized, the mothers have acquired needed skills and knowledge, and sufficient healing has occurred, mothers often begin to concentrate on other aspects of their lives. They may enroll in school and begin the pursuit of a different career or they may choose to enter into another relationship. Invariably, when the mothers have successfully met the majority of the challenges presented to them because of the abuse of their child, and they focus on issues other than the abuse, the mothers decide they no longer need the group. They always ask if they can return to the group, so they need the security of knowing the supportive environment is available to them, but they make the decision about their readiness to leave the group.

Open versus closed groups.

Closed groups for the mothers were the practice for several years, because adding new members often threw the group back into the beginning stages of group growth. The older members sometimes became bored and impatient, and missed sessions. However, a closed group restricted the availability of the group for other mothers in the community. The group got smaller, and no other counselors started groups, so the group was available to only a few mothers. The belief that time limited groups were less effective than ongoing groups exacerbated the problem. Semi-open groups solve the problem fairly well, provided certain cautions are observed. New members join the group at specific times cooperatively chosen by the members and group leaders. By carefully choosing a time for several new members to join the group, specific tasks are not interrupted or blocked. For example, if a group session is planned around a concern of most of the members such as exploring reasons why the children are angry with the mothers, new members are not added at that session.

Having a semiopen group and adding new members at strategic points has an added advantage. New members gain hope when observing the progress of the older members. They have evidence that one can survive the ordeal. Older members are reinforced by seeing how much progress they have made in their journey. They also enjoy an altruistic benefit of helping new members. A caution about adding new members is to make every effort to foster quick identification with the older members. A skilled group leader can help the older members make the new members feel they belong to the group and they are with mothers who understand their feelings.

Frequency and length.

The recommended length of groups for mothers is two hours, and the recommended frequency is every other week. Mothers' children often have their own counseling sessions and other activities, so having two week intervals provides scheduling flexibility for the families.

Childcare, location and times.

Providing childcare is essential for successful groups for mothers of sexually abused children. Consequently, the location for the group is a consideration. Because the children may be of different ages, the facility should be able to provide activities for older children and play activities for younger children. The time of group should be compatible with schedules for young and older children. The mothers group described herein is held at the Family Sunshine Center from 5:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. every other Tuesday evening. A library, play room, and television room are available. In the past, the mothers group met on Saturday mornings, and childcare was often not necessary, because other family members were able to care for the children on the week end day.

An unexpected benefit of providing childcare for the children was two new groups for sexually abused children. Mothers reported that the children became quite aware why their mothers were in group, and the children identified with each other and talked among themselves. The mothers even reported that one of the main reasons they came to their group was so their children could meet other abused children. Consequently the MAFVP initiated a group for younger abused children and teenage abused children.

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Hints for Successful Groups for Mothers

- Make screening a careful joint decision about the best treatment mode for prospective members.
- Choose a skilled and caring cofacilitator who has skills and characteristics that will complement yours.
- Plan an ongoing group for mothers who make their own decisions about readiness to leave the group.
- Choose a semiopen group format and add new members only at strategic times.
- Meet for two hours every other week.
- Provide childcare in a facility suited for young and older children.

Major Issues for Mothers

Because each mother is different, the issues are not the same for all mothers. However, a few concerns are shared by virtually every mother of sexually abused children, and some are widely shared. These concerns should not be discussed as mere topics. Although much psychoeducation must be included about the nature of abuse, how it occurs, grooming by the abuser, the effects on the victim and the entire family, court procedures, and available services, mothers must be able to personally identify with each situation. They must repeatedly revisit each issue, identify and share feelings associated with the issues, and learn from the other members. Education is an important component in healing from sexual abuse, but the group process is the key factor in healing.

Guilt, denial, anger and depression.

Every mother feels guilt about the abuse. In the many years of leading the group, only one group member actually knew the abuse was occurring. In that instance, the abuse occurred several decades ago, and the mother knew of no resources or steps to take to stop the abuse. She simply quit work, tried to vigilantly monitor the situation, and kept her children near her. The efforts were ineffective in preventing the abuse, which led to additional guilt. In every other case, the mothers did not know about the abuse, but they felt responsible for not knowing. That pattern has not varied over the years. Mothers currently in the group feel extreme guilt, regardless of

factually knowing they played no part in the abuse. Mothers often believe they should know everything that is going on with their children, and they should always be able to protect them from harm. No matter how small or significant a role they may have played in not detecting the abuse, they believe they failed as mothers by not protecting their child.

Denial about the abuse is always a factor. Instantly believing that a husband, son, father, mother, close friend or other loved one is capable of such a crime is difficult. Acceptance of the truth is often gradual. One mother spent weeks reading every book about sexual abuse she could find in the university library until she fully accepted the fact and immediately took action to stop the abuse. In some cases, the abused child has begun to act out, tell untruths, rebel and behave in destructive ways. Mothers may have learned they cannot believe much of what the child says, so the mother has a difficult time believing the abuse occurred. The manner in which the denial is exhibited is also a concern. Some mothers accuse their child of lying, while others are more supportive of their child, even though they are hesitant to accept the truth of the abuse.

Anger and depression accompany the guilt and emerge as the denial is overcome. The depression may be exhibited differently in mothers who discover their child is currently being abused and mothers who discover years after the fact that their child was abused in the past. Mothers in the group whose children were currently or recently abused are generally involved in some action to stop the abuse and initiate help for their child. They may be too busy to give in to depression during the crisis. Their depression may come later when they are rebuilding their lives. Mothers who learn about past abuse are not as distracted by having to take immediate action, and their depression may immediately appear. These mothers are faced with the fact that their lives and their views of their families are not and were never what they believed them to be, and they mourn for that lost dream. Mothers who discover that their children are being abused may cling to a hope that they can salvage their families and lives. Mothers who learn that their grown children were abused and their family was not what they imagined often experience little hope of rebuilding. This

depression becomes hopelessness and can often lead to suicide attempts.

Anger seems to be more severe with mothers who discover their child is currently being abused than in mothers who learn of past abuse. The anger can escalate into threatened or actual violence toward the abuser. A few mothers made serious attempts to harm the abuser. Some mothers symbolically acted out violence. Others simply screamed or threw dishes against the wall.

The guilt, denial, anger and depression are serious issues with potentially tragic consequences if not handled properly. Group provides a medium for venting feelings in constructive ways, obtaining support from other mothers with similar feelings, and relieving the isolation so often felt by mothers.

Choosing between loved ones.

Although each mother's case is different, almost every mother is faced with choosing one loved one over another. Some mothers must immediately move away from a spouse or partner to protect the child. She loses an integral part of her life to protect another integral part of her life. A mother whose son or daughter has molested a sibling must make choices to protect the victim. Choosing one child over the other seems quite impossible to most mothers. In several cases where a son has molested a sibling, that son must be removed from the home. The mother wants to help both children. Whatever choice she makes runs the risk of appearing to one of the children as a rejection.

Torn relationships with the victim.

The relationship between the mother and victim is often quite antagonistic. The superficial reason is that the victim believes the mother knew about the abuse and failed to protect the victim. While this may be part of the reason for the antagonistic relationship, the issue is far more complex. For instance, in order to keep the abuse a secret, the abuser must create a distance between the mother and child so the child will not disclose the abuse. In numerous small and large ways, the abuser portrays the mother as the enemy so the child will not feel close and share the abuse. In rarer cases a daughter abused into the teenage years may actually take on the role of a father's mistress, and the child becomes the mother's rival. The torn relationship seems much more

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easily repaired when mothers learn about current or recent abuse and they intervene to protect the child. Mending is very difficult when mothers learn about past abuse and intervening years have created seemingly permanent chasms difficult to cross. These torn relationships create the extremely hopeless feelings when mothers are unable to bridge the divide between themselves and their child. One adult survivor of sexual abuse explained that she was most angry at her father, not because he raped her, but because he stole from her a healthy relationship with her mother.

A Powerful Group Strategy for Mending Torn Relationships

About once a year the mothers of sexually abused children's group meets for one session with the adult survivors of sexual abuse group. Both groups are invited to ask any questions they want to ask their own mothers or children.

On every occasion, the mothers first ask, "Why didn't you tell me?", and the adult survivors first ask, "How could you not know?" Although the mothers are not the survivors' actual mothers and the survivors are not the mothers' actual children, the insight derived from the responses, discussions and sharing of deep personal feelings lays a foundation for mending their own torn relationships.

Enduring the criminal justice system.

Some mothers are fortunate to live in areas where the criminal justice system actually protects the victim. However, this is often not the case. A mother may take all the required steps and meet proscribed obligations, but she is blocked by the system. Judges may award unsupervised visitation to the abuser, or threaten to award custody of the victim to the abuser. One mother was jailed because she protected her child. Another mother was ordered by social service professionals to take one action, and a judge threatened to incarcerate her if she took that action. Dealing with the anger and frustration caused by inappropriate judicial and social service actions is crucial in helping the mother remain a stable and viable protector of her abused child.

Recovering a spiritual base.

Religion seems to often play an auxiliary role in the abuse or response to the abuse. Religious identification is usually important to the mothers, and they become disillusioned when a church, minister or congregation is associated with the abuse. The children of several mothers in the group were abused by ministers or elders in a church. A few turned to the church for help and support when their child was abused by someone outside the church, but the mothers were encouraged to keep the abuse a secret or not respond appropriately. One mother was a member of a church where the elders had to give permission to get a divorce, and she was denied the permission. Some mothers directly attribute their strict adherence to certain religious tenets as contributing to their unhealthy beliefs that led to abuse. Regardless, the mothers feel abandoned and struggle to find a new and healthier spiritual base for themselves and their family.

Mourning lost dreams.

Mothers invest themselves in creating an ideal family. When a mother discovers her family was not the family she imagined,

she feels a huge loss and believes her dreams are destroyed and may never be realized. Her ego integrity and generativity are compromised. When a mother discovers what she believed to be her ideal family was tarnished by sexual abuse, she has difficulty in recognizing any accomplishments in her negatively skewed picture. Helping the mother salvage the good parts of her family and helping her believe that she can build new dreams are crucial issues for the group and the mothers.

Important Ongoing Issues for Mothers

- Working through denial
- Reducing guilt and coping with unjustified blame
- Finding constructive outlets for anger
- Overcoming depression
- Understanding the abused child
- Learning to choose or not choose between loved ones
- Changing the family structure and building a protective and healing environment
- Maneuvering through the criminal justice and social services systems
- Accessing resources
- Mending relationships
- Recovering a spiritual base
- Mourning shattered lives and building new dreams

Final Thoughts

Mothers of sexually abused victims are the primary protectors of their abused children and the key persons to stop the cycle of abuse, but they are often blamed for the abuse and offered little support. Groups provide the safe environment in which mothers can express themselves fully and believe they are understood by other women who are meeting similar challenges. The mothers also benefit from professionals who are knowledgeable in the field of abuse and who help the mothers understand that they are too often the overlooked victims of family abuse.

The author often shares a poem she wrote with mothers in her group who are struggling with the incongruence of the life they thought they had lived and the painful reality of their lives. The last line of the poem is, "If it really was, it still would be". Once the mothers break through denial, mourn the lost vision, work through the anger and depression and begin to accept what really was, the mothers are encouraged to rebuild their seemingly shattered lives. When mothers in the group say, "My dreams will never come true", I say to those mothers, "Then build new dreams" (Thomas, 1991). That is the goal of groups for mothers of sexually abused children, building new dreams for themselves and their families.

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Welcome Home, Georgia ASGW!

Submitted by Jean Underfer-Babalis, M.Ed., PCC



Magnolias are a beautiful and delicate flower with a sweet fragrance that is often associated with the

state of Georgia. In addition to magnolias, there is something else blooming in the state of Georgia. That is the Georgia Association for Specialists in Group Work (GA-ASGW). This is a magnificent opportunity for group workers in this fine state to support one another and make a difference in how group work is conducted in Georgia.

Georgia ASGW was originally chartered in 1977 and maintained an active branch for many years. Numerous old Georgia members are currently active national ASGW members. George Gazda, Alicia Hornrich, Bree Hayes, Richard Hayes, Andy Horne, and

Lenoir Gillam are a few of the names most of us recognize but may not recall their Georgia roots.

We remember the several national conferences at the Georgia Center and the work of the Georgia members. As members moved to other states, Georgia ASGW became dormant.

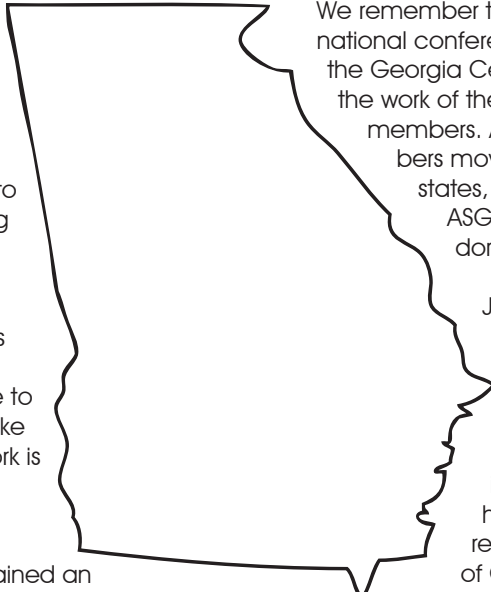
Jeri Goodman Crowell, Wesleyan College in Macon, is spearheading the revitalization of GA-ASGW.

GA-ASGW will focus on assisting professionals in leading effective groups and learning the art of processing group work. One of the first events of GA-ASGW will be a workshop on October 12, 2006

at Fort Valley State University's campus in Warner Robins, GA. GA-ASGW will be a touchstone for all sorts of opportunities when someone wants to tap into group specialization, according to Crowell. "We also want to provide an opportunity to engage graduate students at a state level". GA-ASGW will be part of mentoring new professionals in the area of group work.

A dedicated group of professional educators has initiated the process of creating a charter and bylaws, etc. Jeri Crowell is President, Dr. Jonathan Orr from Georgia State University is President-Elect, Dr. Jerry Mobley from Ft. Valley State University is the Treasurer, and Dr. George McMahon from Georgia State University is the Secretary. GA-ASGW is excited about this new venture and they want YOU! If you, or you know someone else who is interested, please share this information, and ask them to contact Crowell.

Membership dues are \$10 for members annually, and \$5 for student members. Contact Jeri Goodman Crowell: JGCrowell@WesleyanCollege.



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The Lessons of Meta-Analysis: Does Group Counseling with Children and Adolescents Make a Difference?

By John Carey, Director, Center for School Counseling Outcome Research and Carey Dimmitt, Associate Director, Center for School Counseling Outcome Research

Hoag, M.J., & Burlingame, G.M.(1997). Evaluating the effectiveness of child and adolescent group treatment: A meta-analytic review. Journal of Clinical Child Psychology, 26, 234-246.

Group counseling interventions are an important component of the delivery system of comprehensive developmental school counseling programs, so documenting the impact of group counseling is imperative. Knowing what types of group interventions are most effective for specific issues/problems and for specific student sub-populations is also critical. Since researchers often seek to simplify the intervention context in order to increase the internal validity and power of the research, it is helpful to synthesize the findings of a number of studies in order to address many questions that are of interest to school counselors. Historically, narrative literature reviews have served this purpose. Increasingly, meta-analytic review procedures are being used because these procedures can result in a more detailed and precise understanding of factors related to effectiveness.

Meta-analytic reviews start with a number of studies that permit the computation of effect sizes for the intervention. The effect size (ES) reflects the distance between the experimental group's mean and the control group's mean, thus demonstrating the impact of an intervention. Once effect sizes are computed for all outcomes, studies can be compared and contrasted on a number of potentially interesting variables (counselor variables, client variables, types of outcomes, settings, etc.). Reviewers can ask important questions like, "Are older students more likely to benefit than younger students from a particular intervention?" The questions that can be answered by the meta-analytic review depend on the number, strength, and range of studies being reviewed.

Methods

Hoag and Burlingame (1997) conducted a meta-analytic review of the effects of group counseling for children and adolescents. In order to be included in the review, studies needed to meet several criteria including: the population studied must be children or adolescents; the study must involve a group treatment (broadly defined); and, the study must be experimental or quasi-experimental. A total of 56 studies published between 1974 and 1997 were included. Most (almost 74%) of the studies took place in schools. One fifth of the studies employed school counselors as the group leaders and 25% of the studies employed a mixture of school counselors and other school-based professionals (e.g. school psychologists, school social workers). The most common issues addressed by the groups were behavior problems, social skills, and divorce adjustment.

Results

The overall ES of the studies was .61 with a range of -.04 to 2.99. In general, group interventions were found to be effective but a large range of effectiveness was noted. The overall ES of .61 would be considered moderate, and indicates that the average child or adolescent served by a group intervention was better off than 73% of those in control groups. Several interesting and potentially important findings were also apparent. The only client variable found to be reliably significant was socioeconomic status, with middle class students (ES = .79) profiting more than working class students (ES = .29) from group interventions. In general, group interventions that were delivered in clinics (ES = 1.13) had a greater impact than interventions delivered in schools (ES = .53).

Group interventions were shown to reliably improve a wide range of outcomes including disruptive behavior, anxiety, adjustment to divorce, cognitive performance, social skills, and self-esteem. There were no differences in treatment effectiveness among these outcomes.

Implications

These findings provide compelling evidence that group interventions are effective for children and adolescents. While clinic-based group interventions seem more successful, school-based interventions are also valuable. Group interventions can produce a wide range of positive outcomes related to effective school behavior and performance.

In general middle class students seemed to profit more from group interventions than working class students. Additional research is needed to understand the reasons for this finding and ways group intervention can be made more effective for working class students.

Critical Perspectives

The Hoag and Burlingame (1997) meta-analysis demonstrates the potential power of this technique to synthesize a broad literature base and extract key generalizations. While many of the studies included in this meta-analysis included school counselors as group leaders, and hence yielded important information on the effectiveness of school counseling interventions, most of these studies were published in journals that are not frequently read by school counselors. Even the studies that did not employ school counselors (and which also were published in diverse sources outside the professional school counseling literature) made important contributions to our understanding of the effectiveness of school-based group interventions. The school counseling profession would profit from additional interdisciplinary meta-analyses that address important questions of effectiveness (e.g. the impact of prevention programs).

Careful scrutiny of the Hoag and Burlingame (1997) study also points out why it is crucial that school counseling researchers who are familiar with the issues facing the profession use meta-analysis and utilize the interdisciplinary literature related to our field. While Hoag and Burlingame categorized outcome measures according to a logical schema, they failed to look at clusters of outcomes that would be particularly significant to the school counseling profession. For example, a school counseling researcher would have immediately recognized the importance of breaking out studies using outcome measures related to academic achievement to enable the estimation of effect sizes in this area. Meta-analyses conducted by people who are familiar with the current professional issues and perspectives should yield the most cogent results.

Given the power of meta-analytic review procedures to answer questions about effectiveness, more school counseling researchers need to be using these techniques to analyze outcome studies, and school counselor education programs ought to teach students to read meta-analytic reviews.

This School Counseling Research Brief 3.3, October 4, 2005, Center for School Counseling Outcome Research is re-printed with permission from the authors. The Center for School Counseling Outcome Research is dedicated to enhancing school counseling by grounding practice in research. The Center publishes periodic Research Briefs that review research that is especially relevant to improving practice. The complete collection of briefs is available on the Center's website, <http://www.cscor.org>.

Invitation for Applicants: ASGW Peg Carroll Scholarship

The ASGW Awards Committee invites applicants for the \$2,000 scholarship given annually to honor Marguerite "Peg" Carroll, former ASGW President and pioneer in group work. The purpose of the award is to support the study of group work and further the understanding of group dynamics. Any student interested in the field of group work is eligible for consideration by the ASGW Awards Committee.

Applicants are requested to respond to the following questions:

1. There are many types of group experiences such as: therapeutic and/or counseling, decision making, task oriented, psychoanalysis, quality circles, classroom meetings, etc. What area interests you the most and why?
2. Where would you obtain training in your area of interest? Be specific in respect to trainers, institutions, workshop sponsors, etc. In addition, describe your intended degree program, if it applies.

3. In what setting(s) and with what population do you hope to use your expertise?
4. How do you plan to assess if you and your groups are making progress? Have you had any experience with these evaluation tools? Explain fully.
6. List the types of groups in which you have participated. Describe their duration and the positive and negative aspects of each experience and your role (participant, leader, intern, etc.).
7. Describe your participation in professional organizations related to group work.

The application should have a cover sheet with name, address, home and work phone numbers, e-mail address, social security number, and the names and contact information of those writing letters of recommendation. Letters of recommendation should be solicited from THREE professionals in the field who are familiar with the applicant's work. These letters may be from supervisors, mentors, major profes-

sors, or other individuals who are knowledgeable about the applicant's work with groups. These letters should be forwarded directly from the recommendation source to the address listed below and must be received by January 31, 2007. Recommendation letters should address topics such as group counseling skills of the applicant, evidence of ethical behavior, and evidence of professional commitment and potential.

Electronic submissions are preferred and may be submitted via email (attachment) to: kelly.mcdonnell@wmich.edu. Submissions via regular mail should include three (3) typed and double spaced copies of the application to: Kelly McDonnell, Ph.D., Western Michigan University, Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology, 3102 Sangren Hall, Kalamazoo, MI 49008. Applications must be received by January 31, 2007. The scholarship winner will be announced at the ASGW Luncheon at the ACA Conference in Detroit, Michigan. Recipients must be (or become) members of ASGW.

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Research Grants Available

The Association for Specialists In Group Work allocates funds on an annual basis to stimulate research and scholarly publications related to the application of and practice of group dynamics and group work. This year, ASGW is pleased to announce that they will award up to two grants for \$500.00 each.

Research grants are available to all ASGW members, and recipients are strongly encouraged to submit their findings to the Journal for Specialists in Group Work when the project is completed.

Proposals will be peer-reviewed by the ASGW Research Committee. Applications should not exceed 10 pages (double-spaced, 12-pt. font), and must include:

1. The name(s) of the investigator(s).
2. A brief statement summarizing the current literature that supports the need for the study and how this study will add to that current literature on groups
3. A clearly outlined method section
4. A clearly specified budget and timeline for the proposed activities.
5. A statement of other financial support received for the project.
6. A statement of whether you have received institutional IRB approval for the project.
7. Please send the application electronically no later than February 1, 2007 to Dr. Janice DeLucia-Waack at jdelucia@buffalo.edu.

The Group Worker

Published three times between the months of September and May by the Association for Specialists in Group Work, a division of the American Counseling Association, 5999 Stevenson Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22304.

Subscription to The Group Worker is included with ASGW membership. To join ASGW or to process a change of address write to ACA, 5999 Stevenson Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22304. All other correspondence should be directed to the Editor, Sheri Bauman, Educational Psychology Dept., The University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ 85721-0069, Office: 520-626-7308, FAX: 520-621-2909, sherib@u.arizona.edu.

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