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.

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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, 3909 Stevenson Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22304

Subscriptions to The Group Worker are included with ASGW membership. To join ASGW or to process a change of address write to: ACA, 3909 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: 520-621-7308, FAX: 520-621-2909, sherib@u.arizona.edu.

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 collectively go about their jobs of helping others heal, training new group workers, researching how groups work, and connecting with others in a non-hierarchical 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 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 e-mailing 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 Biertram, 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
A Message from the President-Elect
Janice Delucchio-Waack

Greetings from New York! It's 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 after my session to ask how it went. But it was not yesterday. It has been a long time since then, and I am truly happy 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 the column: Inagination and Ener-gization are the key to successful careers. As a group leader, it is important to continually learn new skills and try 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 you to learn about the experience working with others.

I came away with a new sense of purpose and potential. It is important to be respectful of these students, as group members who are part of the group process. Even these willing and eager teen-agers were reluctant to talk about some old issues and go deeper about certain things. Respecting that and not putting them down allowed them to learn how to be respectful with their future group members. Our audience got a chance to see new activities. I came away from the experience happy 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 jdelucchio@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/WACA 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 advance the field of group work through any one of the following: research, development of a new theoretical or empirical group model that advances practice, theoretical, 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.

Invitation for Applicants: ASGW Peg Carroll Scholarship

The ASGW Awards Committee invites ap-plicants 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: processual, 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, work-shop sponsors, etc. In addition, describe your intended degree program, if applicable.

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 recom-mendation 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. Recom-mendation letters should address topics such as group counseling skills of the ca-pibbean, 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. Submis-sions 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 Counsel-ing Psychology, 3102 Sanger Hall, Kalamazoo, MI 49085. All applications must be received by January 31, 2007. The scholarship winner will be announced at the ASGW Luncheon at the ACA Confer-ence in Detroit, Michigan. Recipients must be (or become) members of ASGW.
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

**Implications**

These findings provide compelling evidence that group interventions are effective for children and adolescents. School-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 base and extract key generalizations. While many of the studies included in this meta-analysis included school counselors as group leaders and hence variable evaluation of the effectiveness of school counseling interventions, most of these studies were published in journals that are 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 counseling literature contributed to our understanding of the effectiveness of school-based group interventions. The school counseling profession would profit from additional interventions that are highly 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 of meta-analysis use meta-analytic methods and utilize the interdisciplinary literature related to our field. While Hoag and Burlingame categorized outcome measures according to a logical analysis of their outcomes, that would be particularly significant to the school counseling profession. For example, a school counseling researcher would have immediately recognized the necessity of breaking out studies using outcome measures related to academic achievement to enable the estimation of effect sizes in this area. Meta-analyses conducted in this area of additional interests 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 the meta-analytic review procedures.

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 provide research that is especially relevant to improving practice. The complete collection of briefs is available on the Center’s website, http://www.cscor.org.

**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 (Barlow, 2004). However, in Botswana, it was estimated that by the year 2010, 21.6% of all children in Botswana will be orphans (UNICEF, 2004). There was 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. The U.S. Department of State and the International Counseling, Advocacy, Research, and Education (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. CARE was developed and implemented by former Chancellor’s Professor in the School of Education at Indiana University Bloomington, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, profes- sor in the School of Education at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis, and the former Associate professor in the Department of Applied Health Science at Indiana University Bloomington.

As a recent member of the 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 introduction for the group counseling classroom training experience to human service professionals. Group counseling may be of particular benefit as a response to the AIDS epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa, where people are in need of help. In collective cultures, problems are often addressed and solved in groups. Additionally, any additional health problems associated with HIV/AIDS are impacting particular groups of people in any country and had to travel long distances to attend; one participant shared that she had to work for a ½ day to catch a bus for another day-long ride to Gaborone. Most came because they wanted to learn about “The Ministry of Health,” the Ministry of Health, which paid them for their time and expenses while they attended. Many shared that they were not initially excited 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 in 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, participants found these difficult situations to share real life situations and difficu-

Counselors in Botswana:

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

AIDS Epidemic


Group counseling interventions are an important component of the delivery system of comprehensive developmental school counseling programs as 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 important for school counselors to 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 re- search has been the norm. 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 po-tentially interesting variables (e.g., client variables, types of outcomes, settings, etc.). Reviewers can ask important questions such as “Are the clients most able to benefit from counseling services?” The questions that can be answered by the meta-analytic review depend on the number, strength, and variability of the studies.

**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). Pre-treatment, post-treatment and follow-up were the common issues addressed by the groups were behavior problems, social skills, and academic achievement.

**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 (.61) would be considered moderate, and indicates that the average child or adolescent served by a group intervention was better off than 37% of those in control groups. Several interesting and potentially important methodological variables. The only client variable found to be reliably significant was socioeconomic status, with middle-class clients (ES = .29) profiting more than working class clients (ES = .29) from group interventions. In general, group interventions found to have a greater impact than interventions delivered in schools (ES = .55).

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


Continued on Pg 4
One important area of discussion was how to best incorporate participants' thoughts and ideas into the group process. 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, particularly in cases where students are not fluent in the language of the country they are studying in. The 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 and learn from each other's experiences was of particular importance. Most indicated plans or desire to begin implementing groups at their own site.

References


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.

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 state to which one can look for quality group work and support one another and make a difference in how group work is conducted in Georgia.

GA-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 Homrich, Bree Hayes, Richard Hayes, Andy Horne, and Lenoir Gillam are a few of the names that 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 Good-man Crowell, Wesleyan College in Macon, is spearheading the revitalization of GA-ASGW. GA-ASGW will focus on connecting professionals in leading effective groups and learning the art of processing group work. In one of the first events of GA-ASGW, a video tape series will be shown 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.”

A dedicated group of professional educators has initiated the process of creating a charter and bylaws, etc. Jeri Crowell is President, Dr. Jonathan C. From Georgia State University is President-Elect, Dr. Larry Molloy from Fort Valley State University is the Treasurer, and Dr. George McMahan 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.edu.

ASGW Video Tape Series

Learn useful strategies and techniques from the leading experts in the field.

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  - Presented by Ray Stockton
  - List & Member: $125.00 (each)

- Encouraging Risk Taking in Groups
  - Presented by Jeffrey Kottler
  - List: $89.95 Member: $79.95

- Group Work for Eating Disorders and Food Issues
  - Presented by Cynthia R. Kalesow
  - List: $89.95 Member: $79.95

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1-800-422-2648 ext. 222 www.counseling.org
5999 Stevenson Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22304
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 or when 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 of 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 steps required by their procedures but the system is blocked. Judges may avoid sentencing or referring sexual abusers to treatment centers, or 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 on a marriage, 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 responses, the mothers 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 disenchanted when a church, minister or organization 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 they were advised 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 given 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. If a mother no longer believes the values of the good parts of her family and helps 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 service systems
- Accessing resources
- Mending relationships
- Recovering a spiritual base
- Maintaining the steps needed to build new dreams

Final Thoughts

Mothers of sexually abused victims are the primary protectors of their abused children and 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 create 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.

References


Thomas (1993) described the group for mothers as a protective helping environment for mothers on heroines’ journeys in which mothers face a series of challenges in repairing the damage caused by the abuse on their child and other family members, and mending the torn relationship with the victim. When the mother easily repaired when mothers learn about current or recent abuse and they intervene to protect the child. Mending is very difficult in recognizing any accomplishments in her negatively skewed picture. Helping the mothers 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.

Although the battered women’s movement has 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 elements of the Montgomery Area Family Violence Program (MAVP). A support group for males maltreated as children was later added to the program. Mothers of sexually abused children were often castrated 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 MAVP, and it continues as an integral service.

Background

Mothers of sexually abused children are the primary protectors of their abused children and 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 create 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.

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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. If a mother no longer believes the values of the good parts of her family and helps her believe that she can build new dreams are crucial issues for the group and the mothers.

Mothers of sexually abused victims are the primary protectors of their abused children and 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 create 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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Guilt, denial, anger and depression.

Every mother feels guilt about the abuse. In the many years of leading the group, the author of this book never 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 ignore the situation, and kept her children near her. The efforts were ineffective in preventing the abuse, which led to the harm that occurred. In this case, the mothers did not know about the abuse, but they felt responsible for not protecting their children. The children were often abused and the abuse continued over the years. Mothers currently in the group feel extreme guilt, regardless of factually knowing they played no part in the abuse. They also should know everything that is going on with their children, and they should always be able to protect their children from harm. No matter how much or small a factor they may have played in not detecting the abuse, they feel failed as mothers by not protecting their children.

One 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, felt 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 mother who denial is exhibited is also a concern. Some mothers accuse their child of lying, while other mothers are disposed of such accusations. Even though they are hesitant to accept the truth of the abuse, however, they are unable to accept the abuse.

The major resolution accompanying the guilt and emerge as the denial is overcome. The depression may be experienced differently in mothers who discover their child is currently being abused and mothers who discover years ago the fact that their child was abused in the past. In the group, the mothers whose children were currently being abused or recently abused were generally involved in some action to stop the abuse and initiate help for their child. They may be too busy to give time to depression during the week. Their depression may come later when they are rebuilding their lives. Mothers who learned about past abuse are often 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 currently being abused are often distracted by having to take immediate action, and they cannot salvage their families and lives. Mothers who learn that their grown children were abused and continue to live in the past...
in the field of abuse, but also greatly appreciated the spiritual aspects that the group introduced. The mothers have consistently related well with both counselors, but they also often express appreciation for different insights and skills. A...
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 or intervene years have created seemingly permanent chasms difficult to cross. These torn relationships create the extremely hopeless feelings when mothers are unable to bridge the divides between themselves and their child. One adult survivor of sexual abuse explained that she was most angry of her father, not because he raped her, but because he stole from her a healthy relationship with him.

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 the survivors’ actual mothers and the adult 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.

Mothers of Sexually Abused Victims are the Primary Protectors of Their Abused Children

Mothers of sexually abused victims are the primary protectors of their abused children and they 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 learn to recognize, understand and help themselves. 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 often the overlooked victims of family abuse.

Recovering a Spiritual Base

Religion seems to often play an auxiliary role in the abuse or response to 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 abused children and adults were being observed outside the church, but the mothers were encouraged to keep the abuse secret or not respond appropriately. One mother was a member of a church where the elders had given 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.

Final Thoughts

Mothers of sexually abused children are often categorized in early research as co-controllers of the abuse rather than characterized as victims. Many professionals seemed to believe that 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 incredibly negative terms, the author made a silent but determined commitment to combat the negative stereotype and improve the mothers’ experience. 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.

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 prescribed obligations, but she is blocked by the system. Judges may avoid unusual cases or cases that are too difficult to assign to a judge to handle. The system may award a small amount of money of or money of the Government to the victim of the abuse. 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 judgments and feelings of helplessness can be overwhelming for the group.

Mothers and Healing

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. She feels isolated and is driven to isolation and abuse and increases her powers by learning new skills to help 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 service systems
• Accessing resources
• Manning relationships
• Recovering a spiritual base
• Maneuvering through the criminal justice and social service systems

References


Thomas (1993) described the group for mothers as a protective helping environment for mothers on heroine’s journeys in which mothers face a series of tasks. The heroine’s journey taken by the mothers parallels the model described by Joseph Campbell (1949). The challenges include working through changing the family structure, enduring and learning the legal procedures to protect the child, facing the biases of friends and family, and learning about the effects of the abuse on their child and other family members, and redefining the mother’s role and relationship with the victim. When the mother finds courage in the group to acquire new knowledge and experience 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 group 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 first viewed as an opportunity for the group leader and prospective group members to cooperatively decide the best treatment mode for the group. The group counselor learns about the complexities of the abuse, the effects on the mother, and the ability of the mother to benefit from group interaction. The mother learns about the purposes and goals of the group, the background and 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 a major issue. A major issue is diversity among group members. Two group leaders who have differing styles, skills and insights can better accommodate the diverse 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 mothers appreciated the author’s professional skills and expertise.
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 national opportunity for 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 is President, Dr. Jonathan Orr from Georgia State University is President-Elect, Dr. Jerry Mobley from Fort 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.

Nominations and supporting letters must be received by January 31, 2007 and should be sent to Jeri Goodman Crowell: JGCrowell@Wesleyancollege.edu. The award recipient will be announced at the ASGW Luncheon at the ACA Conference in Detroit, Michigan.

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 Lorelaine 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.

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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


Group counseling interventions are an important component of the delivery system of comprehensive developmental school counseling programs. Counseling professionals doing the important work of group counseling are imperative. Knowing what types of group interventions are most effective for specific issues/problems and for specific student sub-populations is critical for professionals who seek to simplify the intervention context in order to increase the internal validity and power of the research. It is helpful to synthesize findings of a number of studies in order to address many questions that are of interest to school counselors. Historically, narratively oriented reviews have been the primary mode by which meta-analytic reviews are being used because these procedures can produce a more detailed and precise understanding of factors related to effectiveness.

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: 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 group leaders and 25% of the studies employed a mixture of school counselors and other school-based professionals (e.g. school psychologists). Results: The common issues addressed by the groups were behavior problems, social skills, and adjustment difficulties.

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 somewhat unexpected findings were noted. The only client variable found to be reliably significant was socioeconomic status, with middle class students (ES = .29) profiting more than working class students (ES = .29) from group interventions. In general, group interventions for working class students appeared to have a greater impact than interventions delivered in schools (ES = .55).

Group interventions were shown to reliably improve a wide range of outcomes, including adjustment, mood, attitude, 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. A meta-analytic review of school-based group interventions seems to support this claim. School-based group interventions are also valuable. Group interventions can produce a wide range of outcomes and are 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 these findings 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-based 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 infrequently read by school counselors. Even the studies that did not employ school counselors (and which also were not published in diverse sources outside the profession) provided important contributions to our understanding of the effectiveness of school-based group interventions. The school counseling profession would profit from additional investigations of the most 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 involved use meta analysis and utilize the interdisciplinary literature related to our field. While Hoag and Burlingame categorized outcome measures according to a logical hierarchy 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 being able to distinguish using outcome measures related to academic achievement to the estimation of effect sizes in this area. Meta-analyses conducted to address specific theoretical or practical 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 use these techniques to analyze outcome studies, and school counselor education programs ought to teach students meta-analytic review.

This School Counseling Research Brief 3.3, October 4, 2005. Center for School Counseling Outcome Research is re-published with permission from the Author. The Center for School Counseling Outcome Research is dedicated to enhancing school counseling by grounding practice in research. The Center publishes peer-reviewed research that is based on research that is critically relevant to improving practice. The complete collection of briefs is available on the Center’s website, http://www.cscor.org.

Continued on Pg 4
A Message from the President-Elect
JANICE DELUCIO-WAACK

Greetings from New York! It’s 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 afterwarders 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 professional development. As a group leader, it is important to continually learn new skills and try 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 of us.

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 willingness and eager volunteers were reluctant to talk about some same 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. I came away with a new appreciation for 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 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 Scefoulhall, 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.

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: Psychoeducational and/or counseling, decision making, task oriented, psychodrama, 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 interests do you hope to use your experience?
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.
5. 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.).
6. Describe your involvement 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 professors, 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. Recommend 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 e-mail (attachment) to: kelly.mcdonnell@wmich.edu. Submissions via regular mail should include a typed and double spaced copies of the application to: Kelly McDonnell, Ph.D., Western Michigan University, Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology, 3102 Sanger Hall, Kalamazoo, MI 49085. 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.

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