Guidelines and Suggestions for Chapter 2

Learning Objectives, Key Terms, Lecture Outlines, Focus Questions, and Multiple-Choice Quizzes

CHAPTER 2: GROUP LEADERSHIP

Lecture Notes and Outline for the Chapter

I. *Learning Objectives.* After reading and studying this chapter, the students are expected to have a basic understanding of problems and issues facing them as group leaders, the skills and techniques of leadership at various stages of a group, and an awareness of the skills and functions needed for effective group leading. Specific learning objectives include:

A)	Developing an awareness of students' own personal characteristics and how these are related to group leadership;
B)	Becoming familiar with the basic problems and issues that face beginning group leaders as well as clarifying their position on how to deal with matters such as anxiety, self-disclosure, and co-leading groups;
C)	Having opportunities to practice basic intervention and group leadership skills;
D)	Recognizing the importance of developing one's own unique style of group leadership;
E)	Learning about the skills and techniques involved in opening and closing group sessions;
F)	Gaining an understanding of the special challenges of doing group work in an institutional setting;
G)	Identifying specific beliefs and attitudes, knowledge, and skills that are essential in becoming a diversity-competent group counselor;
H)	Gaining an understanding of the importance of the group leader's willingness to adapt his or her techniques to the multicultural context of group work;
I)	Acquiring an understanding of the role research can play in enhancing group work and recognizing the importance of developing a research orientation; and
J)	Recognizing the trend toward using approaches such as Evidence-Based Practice and Practice-Based Evidence.

II. *Key Terms* to Define, Describe, and Explain

- Evidence-Based Practice
- Group leadership skills
- Practice-Based Evidence
- Self-disclosure

III. *Lecture Outline:* Notes and Comments

      A. Introduction

1. Although we focus on the topic of the group leader at this point in the course, we will come back to this topic during the entire course. Issues come up as the students are leading groups and thus cannot be covered in one week allocated to the subject.

B. The Group Leader as a Person

1. My bias is to emphasize that a group leader will be no more effective as a leader than he or she is as a person. Thus, my emphasis is on personal characteristics that may be facilitative or inhibitory in a group.

2. The text identifies the following personal characteristics as being most important as variables related to effective group leadership: presence, personal power, courage, willingness to confront oneself, sincerity and authenticity, sense of identity, belief in group process and enthusiasm, and inventiveness and creativity. A good discussion catalyst is to ask students to identify what they consider to be the few most important personal characteristics of the effective group counselor. How can they either acquire or enhance these characteristics? How can they begin this process in this group course?

3. In their own self-directed groups, these students are expected to look honestly at their own level of courage, their degree of genuineness, their own sense of enthusiasm, and so on. I believe that their willingness to continually look at themselves and to work on their own struggles should be given priority. During the course, they can continually take opportunities to deal with their own feelings, values, and conflicts as these surface in the work they do as beginning group leaders.

C. Problems and Issues Facing Group Leaders

1. An excellent way to provide the focus on the leader as a person is to begin with questions such as: What are your motivations for wanting to be a group leader? What personal needs are met through leading groups? How do you grow personally from the interactions you have with the members of your group and with your co-leader? How do you deal with the anxieties that you face as a group leader?

2. The *Student Manual* has a number of suggestions for activities in class, including role-playing possibilities.

3. We spend much time on matters dealing with working effectively with co-leaders. This includes discussing what members can learn through the modeling done by co-leaders.

D. Overview of Techniques and Therapeutic Interventions: Skills and Functions of Group Leaders

1. It is reasonable to expect that students will be able to identify, define, describe, and give clear examples of the basic skills and functions of group leaders. These terms and skills are:

   ■ active listening
   ■ initiating

- restating
- goal setting
- clarifying
- evaluating
- summarizing
- giving feedback
- questioning
- suggesting
- interpreting
- protecting
- confronting
- disclosing oneself
- reflecting feelings
- modeling
- supporting
- linking
- empathizing
- blocking
- facilitating
- terminating

2. In my lectures on group leadership skills I give a brief description of some of the skills and often demonstrate these skills in the classroom in small groups.

3. I find trouble in attempting to teach each skill in a systematic and isolated manner. Although I do spend time in going through the skills, I prefer to teach these skills in a more integrative manner, especially during the demonstrations and the experiential groups in class.

4. The list of specific skills and functions provides a framework for ongoing evaluation of the group leaders. In the *Student Manual* you'll see a 22-item evaluation form, which contains the 22 skills listed here plus other specific leadership skills. I have evaluated the leaders on this scale when I have observed their group leading directly. I use this form as one basis for a private discussion with the student to talk about progress in learning and mastering the skills. Even more important is the leader's *self-evaluation.* Students are asked to complete this evaluation at three points during the semester; their co-leader also completes the evaluation. In this way the students have feedback from several sources.

E. Becoming a Diversity-Competent Group Worker

1. After reading ASGW's *Principles for Diversity-Competent Group Workers* and the sections in the textbook in Chapter 2 that deal with becoming a diversity-competent group counselor, students can be asked to reflect on the areas of competence they now possess as well as areas in which they need to acquire knowledge and skills.

2. In the *Student Manual* there is a Checklist for Becoming a Diversity-Competent Group Counselor that will help them identify their strengths and limitations in working with groups from a multicultural perspective.

F. Skills in Opening and Closing Group Sessions

1. The *Student Manual* contains some guidelines that students have found helpful in opening and closing a particular group session. I find that students need practice and coaching in these skills; too often there is very little effort made to tie one session to another.

2. Consult the *Student Manual* for specific exercises that you might find useful in group work related to opening and closing in addition to a detailed list of questions as a review/checklist for examining one's level of skill development on the 22 skills described.

G. Developing Your Style of Group Leadership

1. Students generally find this a topic of interest. You might consider giving a lecture on the various styles of group leadership, and then asking students to form smaller groups to clarify which style comes closest to their own.

2. A problem that may occur is that the beginning student in group counseling most likely has little feel for "a style of leadership." My attempt is to get them thinking about what style they might develop.

H. The Role of Research in the Practice of Group Work

1. Research and clinical practice are not always well integrated. I think it is important that you emphasize the advantages of integrating them and show your students how they might accomplish this. Consider bringing a few scholarly journal articles into class that focus on some element of group work. You can then lead a discussion on how the research findings might influence practice in very concrete ways. Be sure to also discuss ways that clinical practice can inform research.

2. Given the increasing use of Evidence-Based Practices, it is imperative for trainees to understand their advantages and disadvantages. You might have students form small groups to discuss the advantages and disadvantages, or split the class in half and have a debate about the topic, with each half taking the opposing stance.

3. Some students who are training to become clinicians may view research and statistics to be daunting and "hoops to jump through" in order to earn their degrees. With that in mind, I try to make this part of my lecture as engaging and interactive as possible to persuade students to give research a chance and make it more accessible to them.

I. **Gerald Corey's Lectures for Theory and Practice of Group Counseling**

If you are using the DVD program or the online program "Gerald Corey's Perspectives on Theory and Practice of Group Counseling" those lectures can be useful in focusing students on the key points of each chapter. You may want to show these brief lectures (about 15 minutes) in class as a way to introduce some highlights of each chapter; you can flesh out my brief lectures with the points you think are most important.

Below are a few key points that I make in the DVD for this chapter:

The group leader as a professional cannot be considered as separate from the group leader as a person.

There are a number of personal characteristics that are related to being an effective group leader. Some of these qualities are: presence, stamina, self-care, honesty and genuineness.

Self-care is not a luxury for group workers; it is an ethical mandate.

Group leadership skills that are described in the chapter are mastered with supervised practice. Do not overwhelm yourself with the pressure of having to master all of these skills at once or immediately. Be patient!

You can learn skills of group facilitation by being in a group as a member. Your experience in a group as a member can be invaluable both personally and as a group practitioner.

Becoming a diversity-competent group leader involves self-awareness, knowledge, and skills. You need to be aware of how your own culture is affecting you, and you must have an awareness of your beliefs and attitudes. While knowledge of cultural groups is important, you do not need to be a cultural anthropologist to be an effective group worker. Work ongoingly at acquiring and polishing skills that will enable you to work competently with diverse individuals in a group.

Focus Questions

1. What are the personal characteristics that you deem most essential for effective group leadership? What are some personal assets you possess that you think will be of assistance to you as a group leader?

2. Anxiety is frequently experienced by beginning group leaders. Discuss how you might experience anxiety when you think about being involved in the work of group leading.

3. What are the major concerns you have when you think about becoming a group leader? Discuss what you consider to be one of your most pressing concerns.

4. Self-disclosure is both a skill and a process that group leaders need to learn. What guidelines can you develop to assist you in determining whether or not your disclosures are facilitative? What kinds of problems do you anticipate, if any, in the area of self-disclosure as a group leader?

5. After reviewing the specific group-leadership skills in the textbook and the *Student Manual,* identify the skills you think are your areas of strength. Which skills do you see as needing the most improvement? How might you go about developing these skills?

6. Special skills are needed to effectively open and close each group session. Mention a few procedures you might employ on a routine basis as a way to open and to close.

7. What do you see as being the main advantages of working with a co-leader? What about some disadvantages?

8. *What are some specific characteristics that you'd most look for in selecting a co-leader? Explain why you selected these factors. Mention some things you would want to discuss with your co-leader before you approached a new group.

9. Assume that you are working in an institutional setting (a state mental hospital) and you have developed a plan for organizing and leading a weekly group for some of the patients. What obstacles might you encounter as you seek to get your program approved and implemented within the system? Discuss ways you could deal with these frustrations.

10. Mention and discuss what you see as being the most significant forces that have affected your style of group leading.

11. What can be gained by integrating research findings into your clinical practice? What are some advantages of using evidence-based approaches as a group leader? Are there any potential disadvantages? If so, what might they be?

Note   *In the *Student Manual* there is a checklist of guidelines for meeting with a co-leader. I suggest looking over these 15 guidelines as a concrete way of identifying the areas where students see themselves functioning especially well and those areas needing improvement. These guidelines can be productively used by having co-leaders ask each other relevant questions as they process their relationship throughout the course of a group's history.

Evaluation Form for Group Leaders

In the *Student Manual* I've provided a 22-item assessment form of the specific skills that are discussed in the textbook, along with a checklist of questions that can help leaders focus on their level of skill development on these various dimensions. The form that follows is somewhat similar for the first 22 items (without the self-examination questions), yet it has additional items.

If this evaluation form appears to be something that would be of use to you and your students, you can have it reproduced and use it in addition to the shorter form that is in the *Student Manual.* If you directly supervise your students, then you might use this form as an evaluation device.

Evaluation Form of Group Leader Skills

The following evaluation form can be used in several ways. It can be used by group leaders as a self-evaluation form, which is its basic purpose. This self-inventory will give you, as group leaders, a set of criteria to assess many of your strengths and specific areas that need improvement. This form can also be used by co-leaders to rate each other, by supervisors to evaluate leadership performance, and by group members as a basis of evaluating their leaders.

The following specific variables are to be rated on a five-point scale, using the following code.

- 5 = This is done *almost always* with an exceptional degree of competence.

- 4 = This is done *much of the time* with a high degree of competence.

- 3 = This is done *sometimes* with an adequate degree of competence.

- 2 = This is done *occasionally* with a relatively low level of competence.

- 1 = This is *rarely* demonstrated, or done with an extremely low level of competence.

Note   *Above, all, strive for the maximum degree of honesty with yourself as you complete this rating scale.

To what degree does the group leader demonstrate:

____ 1. *Active Listening* (the ability to hear, understand, and communicate this understanding)?

____ 2. *Restating* (the ability to capture the essence of what is said in different words with the effect of adding meaning or clarifying meaning)?

____ 3. *Clarifying* (focusing on underlying issues and assisting others in getting a clearer picture of what they are thinking and feeling)?

____ 4. *Summarizing* (being able to tie together loose ends, identify common themes, and provide a picture of the directional trends of a group session)?

____ 5. *Questioning* (the ability to use questions to stimulate thought and action, and to avoid a question/answer pattern of interaction between the leader and members)?

____ 6. *Interpretation* (explaining the meaning of behavior patterns within the framework of a theoretical system)?

_____ 7. *Confrontation* (the ability to challenge members in a direct way on discrepancies in such a manner that they will tend to react non-defensively to the confrontation)?

_____ 8. *Reflecting Feelings* (mirroring what others appear to be feeling without being mechanical)?

_____ 9. *Supporting* (being able to offer some form of positive reinforcement at appropriate times in such a way that it has a facilitating effect)?

_____10. *Empathy* (intuitively sensing the subjective world of others in a group, being able to adopt the frame of reference of others, and communicating this understanding to clients so that they feel understood)?

_____11. *Facilitating* (the ability to help members to clarify their own goals and take the steps to reach them)?

_____12. *Initiating* (demonstrating an active stance in intervening in a group at appropriate times)?

_____13. *Goal Setting* (being able to cooperatively work with members so that there is an alignment between member goals and leader goals, and being able to assist members in establishing concrete goals)?

_____14. *Feedback* (giving information to members in such a way that they can use it to make constructive behavior changes)?

_____15. *Suggestion* (offering information or possibilities for action that can be used by members in making independent decisions)?

_____16. *Protecting* (the willingness to actively intervene to ensure that members will be safeguarded from unnecessary psychological risks)?

_____17. *Self-Disclosure* (demonstrating the ability and willingness to share persistent reactions with the members that relate to the here-and-now occurrences in the group)?

_____18. *Modeling* (demonstrating to members desired behaviors that can be practiced both during and after group sessions)?

_____19. *Silence* (the ability to effectively deal with the meaning underlying silence in a group session)?

_____20. *Blocking* (being able to intervene effectively without attacking members who engage in counterproductive behaviors in group)?

_____21. *Terminating* (creating a climate that encourages members to continue working after sessions)?

_____22. *Assignment* (suggesting to clients specific activities that they can practice both in and out of group to develop new behaviors)?

_____23. *Role Direction* (being able to direct members to enact specific roles in role-playing situations)?

_____24. *Diagnosing* (the ability to assess specific problems or conflicts of members in such a way that avoids labeling them)?

_____25. *Evaluating* (the ongoing appraisal of the process and outcomes of a group)?

_____26. *Following Through* (the ability to implement and follow through to reasonable completion work that is begun with a client)?

_____27. *Knowledge of Theory* (demonstrating a theoretical understanding of group dynamics, interpersonal dynamics, and drawing on a model or models in group leading)?

_____28. *Application of Theory to Practice* (the skill in applying theoretical constructs to actual group practice)?

____29. *Perceptivity and Insight* (sensitively and accurately seeing underlying issues and getting at the core of both verbal and nonverbal communications)?

____30. *Referral* (presenting to members resources for continued personal growth in such a way that they are likely to seriously consider using these resources)?

____31. *Risk-Taking* (the willingness to risk making mistakes and an openness in learning from them)?

____32. *Inventiveness and Creativity* (being able to approach a group with fresh ideas, and being able to synthesize a personal therapeutic style from a variety of therapeutic approaches)?

____33. *Enthusiasm* (a sense of aliveness, a belief in group process, and the ability to influence members' level of excitement)?

____34. *Expression* (being able to verbally express thought and feelings in an effective manner)?

____35. *Awareness of Self* (being aware of personal needs, motivations, problems, values, and the impact they have on group process)?

____36. *Group Dynamics* (being aware of the many levels of interaction in a group and assisting members in working effectively together)?

____37. *Content Orientation* (helping members to focus on certain themes in a structured type of group)?

____38. *Cooperation as a Co-Leader* (the ability to effectively work with a co-leader, to plan together, and the ability to carry out these plans in a group)?

____39. *Values Awareness* (awareness of how leader's values can either facilitate or inhibit the functioning of a group, and the ability to expose leader values without imposing them on members)?

____40. *Ethical Awareness* (demonstrating a knowledge and sensitivity to the demands of the professional responsibility of leading a group)?

____41. *Techniques* (knowing a range of techniques or therapeutic procedures and being able to use them appropriately in helping members work through personal issues)?

____42. *Flexibility* (the willingness to change an agenda, modify a structure, change strategies, and in other ways adapt to the unique needs of a particular member or a certain group)?

____43. *Psychological Presence* (the ability to be emotionally in contact with members, and being psychologically ready to lead a particular session)?

____44. *Genuineness* (being what one is, the absence of false fronts, a congruence between inner experiencing and external expression, avoiding hiding in roles)?

____45. *Structuring* (the ability to use appropriate structuring in a group so that members do not become leader dependent but at the same time do not flounder needlessly)?

____46. *Belief in Group Process* (demonstrating a belief in the values of a group for influencing constructive changes)?

____47. *Personal Power* (using personal power in such a way that members are not encouraged to adopt a dependent or inferior position)?

____48. *Respect* (communicating an attitude of acceptance and seeing value in others and valuing the dignity and autonomy of the members)?

____49. *Care* (experiencing and demonstrating an attitude of genuine caring, warmth, and concern for the members)?

____50. *Courage* (demonstrating the willingness to do for oneself what is expected of members and being willing to face oneself honestly)?

Some Suggestions for Using This Inventory

1. Go back over the preceding skills and functions and review your list.

2. What did you learn about yourself from thinking about these questions and applying them to yourself?

3. List some of the specific areas (such as "active listening," "interpreting," "questions," and so on) that you think will give you the *most* difficulty as a group leader.

Unit Test on the Basic Elements of Group Process: Chapter 2

Overview of Group Leadership Skills

The following questions refer to the definition/description of specific group leadership skills. Match the definition with the most appropriate skill listed.

1. Opening up clear and direct communication among members; helping members to assume increasing responsibility for the group's direction

   a. suggesting
   b. facilitating
   c. goal setting
   d. giving feedback
   e. none of these answers

   ANS: B   REF: 26

2. Appraising the ongoing group process and the individual and group dynamics

   a. blocking
   b. facilitating
   c. evaluating
   d. interpreting
   e. clarifying

   ANS: C   REF: 26-27

3. Offering possible explanations for certain thoughts, feelings, and patterns of behavior

   a. interpreting
   b. evaluating
   c. giving feedback
   d. active listening
   e. all of these answers

   ANS: A   REF: 24

4. Saying in slightly different words what a member has said to clarify its meaning

    a.   reflecting feelings
    b.   supporting
    c.   facilitating
    d.   restating
    e.   none of these answers

    ANS: D   REF: 23

5. Expressing concrete and honest reactions based on observation of members' behaviors

    a.   disclosing oneself
    b.   giving feedback
    c.   confronting
    d.   clarifying
    e.   summarizing

    ANS: B   REF: 27

6. Grasping the essence of a message at both the feeling and the thinking levels; simplifying client statements by focusing on the core of the message

    a.   active listening
    b.   clarifying
    c.   restating
    d.   summarizing
    e.   interpreting

    ANS: B   REF: 23

    The next ten questions refer to the aims and desired outcomes of specific group leadership skills. Match the initial statement (desired outcomes) with the term that is the appropriate leadership skill.

7. To prepare members to assimilate, integrate, and apply in-group learning to everyday life

    a.   modeling
    b.   suggesting
    c.   interpreting
    d.   initiating
    e.   terminating

    ANS: E   REF: 28

8. To help members sort out conflicting and confused feelings and thoughts; to arrive at a meaningful understanding of what is being communicated

    a.   clarifying
    b.   interpreting

c. evaluating
d. suggesting
e. none of these answers

ANS: A   REF: 23

9. To foster trust in the therapeutic relationship; to communicate understanding and to encourage deeper levels of self-exploration

a. questioning
b. empathizing
c. reflecting feelings
d. giving feedback
e. summarizing

ANS: B   REF: 26

10. To let members know that they are heard and understood beyond the level of words

a. active listening
b. restating
c. clarifying
d. reflecting feelings
e. empathizing

ANS: D   REF: 25

11. To help members develop alternative courses of thinking and action

a. giving feedback
b. suggesting
c. interpreting
d. supporting
e. terminating

ANS: B   REF: 27

12. To offer an external view of how the person appears to others; to increase the client's self-awareness

a. giving feedback
b. suggesting
c. facilitating
d. goal setting
e. empathizing

ANS: A   REF: 27

13. To warn members of possible risks in group participation; to reduce these risks

a. blocking
b. evaluating
c. protecting
d. facilitating
e. none of these answers

ANS: C   REF: 27

14. To avoid fragmentation and give direction to a session; to provide for continuity and meaning

    a. reflecting feelings
    b. summarizing
    c. initiating
    d. blocking
    e. suggesting

ANS: B   REF: 24

15. To prevent needless group floundering; to increase the pace of group process

    a. modeling
    b. protecting
    c. blocking
    d. initiating
    e. interpreting

ANS: D   REF: 26

16. To encourage deeper self-exploration; to provide a new perspective for considering and understanding one's behavior

    a. clarifying
    b. interpreting
    c. confronting
    d. supporting
    e. suggesting

ANS: B   REF: 24-25

17. Group leaders become an influential force in a group when they are:
    a. able to model effective behavior rather than merely describe it.
    b. able to use an authoritarian leadership style.
    c. licensed and certified.
    d. approved by the ASGW.

ANS: A   REF: 15

18. Authentic group leaders:
    a. share every fleeting thought, perception, feeling, fantasy, and reaction they have.
    b. are willing to appropriately disclose oneself and share feelings and reactions to what is going on in the group.

c. never hold back their true feelings toward members.
d. both answers "share every fleeting thought, perception, feeling, fantasy, and reaction they have." and "never hold back their true feelings toward members."

ANS: B   REF: 17

19. The main rationale for the group leader's personal disclosures is the assumption that:
    a. he or she is the expert who has the answers to members' problems.
    b. such sharing will facilitate the work of the group.
    c. his or her stories will be more interesting than members' stories.
    d. self-disclosure is a good strategy to use when he or she cannot think of other strategies.

ANS: B   REF: 17

20. Highly effective therapists can be described as having:

    a. the ability to provide an emotionally safe environment for clients while challenging them.
    b. an ability to deeply enter the world of another without losing a sense of self.
    c. the ability to accept feedback about themselves without becoming destabilized by this feedback.
    d. all of these answers.

ANS: D   REF: 18