

Scenarios in Group Therapy

Calling for Intervention -- EPSY 6365

Dr. Scott Sparrow, UTPA Dept. of Educational Psychology

Below you will find a list of scenarios that can occur in group therapy. It is important for you to know what you can do as a leader in each of these scenarios.

1. A person talks a lot about his or her problems, but does not seem to accept the suggestions of the group, leading to increasing frustration on the group members' parts.
2. Members have met outside the group (subgrouping) and discussed other group members or meetings.
3. Members have met outside the group, during which romantic feelings have arisen, and a sexual relationship is clearly possible.
4. During a group meeting, one member admits to being attracted to another member in the group.
5. A member admits to having strong negative feelings about another member.
6. A member has become silent, and upon questioning does not feel like talking, leaving the group wondering what is going on.
7. A member has become silent, and upon questioning admits feeling unsafe in the group.
8. A member challenges the leader to share more, or to become more like the other members.
9. A member expresses feelings that you prefer other members to him/her.
10. A member misunderstands what you have said, and feels insulted.
11. A member announces that he or she plans to quit because he/she does not think he/she is getting anything out of the group.
12. A member reacts strongly and negatively to what another member has said, and tension arises between them.
13. A person is monopolizing, and the group is failing to confront the situation.
14. A member is engaging in there-and-then storytelling.
15. A member is asking a lot of questions.
16. A member is giving a lot of advice.
17. A member is using "you" and "we" as if it's true for everyone.
18. A member is afraid of going deeper, for fear of having strong emotions.
19. A member has broken down, and is sobbing. Everyone is quiet, and one member seems to be looking to you to do something.
20. A member begins to cry, and another member makes a light comment, clearly aimed at relieving the intensity of the moment.
21. A member begins to cry, and another member spontaneously crosses the room and kneels beside the crying member, as if preparing to hold her/him.

22. A member shares an extremely painful experience, such as having been molested, raped or assaulted, and begins to relive the trauma. It is clear that he/she is experiencing anxiety and fear.

23. A member admits that there's something important that he/she does not feel comfortable sharing with the group.

24. A member admits that another member, or the leader, reminds him/her of a parent who harshly mistreated him/her, and is experiencing some apprehension.

25. Your work-level group has become "chatty," and the deep work that they once were doing seems to have come to a halt.