SYLLABUS

EDSR 7315 Group Counseling
SEMESTER: Fall 2024

Thursdays 7:00 p.m.

PROFESSOR: Dr. Samuel Garcia, LPC-S

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OFFICE HOURS: Wednesday 4:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m. & Saturday 08:00-1:00 p.m.

PLEASE CALL or EMAIL TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT FOR IN-PERSON APPOINTMENTS:

Master of Education Counseling Program: Clinical Mental Health Counseling
School Counseling

Program Coordinator: Mrs. Ronda Hayes, CSC, LPCS

Chair of the Education Department: Dr. Bradley Carpenter

Dean of College of Education and Professional Studies: Dr. Barbara Tucker

Provost: Dr. Bernardo Canteñes

President: Dr. Carlos Hernandez

Required Text:

Corey, G (2023). Theory & Practice of Group Counseling, 10th ed. Cengage Learning, Inc.
ISBN: 978-0-357-62295-7

Recommended Texts:
None

Course Prerequisites:

None

Course Purpose:

This course will provide students with an experiential and interactive opportunity to develop awareness and competence in counseling diverse groups of individuals through the exploration of group dynamics, processes, and therapeutic interventions.

Course Description:

This course is designed to provide counseling graduate students with an understanding of the theories and an appreciation for the practices of group counseling and psychotherapy. Group counseling is considered an effective, efficient modality of treatment and is preferred to individual counseling in some clinical settings. While there is some overlap in the skills, strategies, and techniques employed in both individual and group counseling, there are also profound differences. This course allows students to explore and experience the therapeutic group as a participant while simultaneously observing the demonstrations of effective group counseling. Group counseling is essentially about exploring, discovering, and implementing new and previously unimaginable possibilities.

Course Goal:

The primary goal of this course is to provide counseling students with an authentic group experience in which they will learn the theoretical and conceptual foundations of group counseling while simultaneously developing the skills, strategies, and techniques necessary for conducting effective therapeutic groups. Students will incorporate their observations, assumptions, and experiences into their emerging and evolving integrated personal approach to counseling and psychotherapy. As one of the first "hands-on" classes of the Counseling Program, the students will demonstrate professional competencies in the knowledge and skills that are essential for the facilitation of effective and culturally relevant group counseling experiences.

Counseling Program Objectives:

Upon successful completion of the Counseling Program, the candidates for the degree of Master of Education in Counseling will clearly and unambiguously demonstrate to the Counseling faculty that they:

- Understand traditional and contemporary personality and counseling theories and apply appropriate counseling interventions and strategies in individual and small-group counseling.
- Identify and utilize basic assessment principles related to standardized assessments and design an appropriate treatment plan.
- Comprehend the role and function of the counselor in a variety of work settings.
- Know and apply the professional standards of practice and the relevant code of ethics.
- Attend to their personal growth, as well as that of their students and clients, through utilizing supervision, valuing interpersonal feedback, and engaging in mindful self-examination.
- Possess the knowledge and skills necessary to practice as a highly competent counseling professional.

- Employ personal self-awareness and professional sensitivity to the divergent values, behaviors, traditions, and counseling needs of all students and clients regardless of gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, ability, language, religion, ethnicity, or race.
- Engage in compassionate cultural sensitivity by applying core counseling concepts, mindfulness-based skills, and professional practices with diverse populations the bilingual and bicultural students and clients living in the South Texas border region.
- Model intellectual curiosity and a strong personal commitment to continually expanding their counseling knowledge and proficiency through lifelong learning and professional development.

Student Learning Objectives:

Upon completing this course students will:

1. Identify and explain small group dynamics and stages of group development.
   Evaluation Method: Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Group Observation Blog, Instructor Observation of Classroom Group Participation, the Group Experience Curriculum, the Objective Final Examination, and the Take-Home Final Examination.

2. Identify and describe the counselor's characteristics and behaviors that influence the group counseling process.
   Evaluation Method: Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Group Observation Blog, Instructor Observation of Classroom Group Participation, the Group Experience Curriculum, the Objective Final Examination, and the Take-Home Final Examination.

3. Specify and describe the major ethical issues in group counseling and psychotherapy.
   Evaluation Method: Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Group Observation Blog, Instructor Observation of Classroom Group Participation, the Group Experience Curriculum, the Objective Final Examination, and the Take-Home Final Examination.

4. Demonstrate and discuss the essential group leadership skills and facilitation styles.
   Evaluation Method: Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Group Observation Blog, Instructor Observation of Classroom Group Participation, the Group Experience Curriculum, the Objective Final Examination, and the Take-Home Final Examination.

5. Recognize and apply theoretically specific techniques for group counseling and psychotherapy.
   Evaluation Method: Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Group Observation Blog, Instructor Observation of Classroom Group Participation, the Group Experience Curriculum, the Objective Final Examination, and the Take-Home Final Examination.

6. Incorporate and integrate a developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant perspective to the inclusion, protection, and termination of individual group members.

Evaluation Method: Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Group Observation Blog, Instructor Observation of Classroom Group Participation, the Group Experience Curriculum, the Objective Final Examination, and the Take-Home Final Examination.

7. Recognize and define the concept of mindfulness as it relates to the group counseling processes and implement and maintain a personal mindfulness practice.
Evaluation Method: Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Group Observation Blog, Instructor Observation of Classroom Group Participation, the Group Experience Curriculum, the Objective Final Examination, and the Take-Home Final Examination.

8. Demonstrate personal growth, increased self-awareness, and heightened insight as the result of authentic and genuine group participation.
Evaluation Method: Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Group Observation Blog, Instructor Observation of Classroom Group Participation, the Content Quizzes or Encounter Group Marathon Participation, and the Take-Home Final Examination.

Proficiencies for Counselors:

Proficiencies that students must master in this course are derived from two sources: The State of Texas Standards Required for the School Counselor Certificate (§239.15) and the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP).

The following school counselor certification standards (TAC §239.15) are addressed in this course:

***Standard I. Learner-Centered Knowledge*:** The certified school counselor has a broad knowledge base. The certified school counselor must know and understand:

(2) counseling and consultation theories and practices
(7) environmental, social, and cultural factors that affect learners' development and the relevance of those factors to educational, career, personal, and social development, along with comprehensive school counseling programs;
(9) legal and ethical standards, practices, and issues and the importance of commitment to and implementation of ethical principles
(13) the roles and responsibilities of a comprehensive school counseling program that is responsive to all students (14) counseling-related research techniques and practices;
(15) developing and teaching best practices on leadership skills;
(16) how cultural factors and group membership impact individual students;

Standard II. Learner-Centered Skills: The certified school counselor applies the knowledge base to promote the educational, personal, social, and career development of the learner as outlined in *The Texas Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs*. The certified school counselor must:

(3) counsel individuals and small groups using appropriate counseling theories and techniques in response to students' needs

(6) demonstrate proficiency in teaching small and large groups by actively engaging students in the learning process.

(9) use counseling-related research techniques and evidence-based practices to address student needs;
(10) advocate for a comprehensive school counseling program that is responsive to all students;
(11) facilitate learners' ability to achieve their potential by helping them set and attain challenging educational, career, personal, and social goals based on various types of information.

Standard III. Learner-Centered Process: The certified school counselor participates in the development, monitoring, revision, and evaluation of a campus based on *The Texas Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs* that promotes learners' knowledge, skills, motivation, and personal growth. The certified school counselor must:

(3) use both preventive and intervening strategies to address the concerns of learners and to help them clarify problems and situations, set goals, explore options, and implement change

Standard IV. Learner-Centered Equity and Excellence for All Learners: The certified school counselor promotes academic success for all learners by acknowledging, respecting, and responding to diversity while building on similarities that bond all people. The certified school counselor must:

(1) understand learner differences, including those related to cultural background, gender, race, ethnicity, socio- economic levels, academic ability, and learning styles, and know ways to create and maintain a positive school environment that is responsive to all learners;

(2) advocate for a school environment in which diversity is acknowledged and respected, resulting in positive interactions across all cultures, genders, ethnicities, and learning styles;

(3) facilitate learning and achievement for all students to ensure services that cover an array of exceptionalities, including special populations, by promoting a cooperative, inclusive, purposeful learning environment;
(4) take a positive, strength-based approach that builds on commonalities versus differences in all learners;

(5) understand how environment and behavior may impact or influence individual learners;
(8) acknowledge learners' gifts, strengths, and extracurricular talents when considering programs and services

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Standard V. Learner-Centered Communications: The certified school counselor, an advocate for all students and the school, demonstrates effective professional and interpersonal communication skills. The certified school counselor must:

(1) demonstrate effective communication through oral, written, and nonverbal expression;
(2) use knowledge of group dynamics and productive group interaction;
(8) work effectively as a team member to promote positive change for individuals, groups, and the

school community;
(9) take a positive, strength-based approach that verbalizes commonalities versus differences in all learners;

Standard VI. Learner-Centered Professional Development: The certified school counselor continues professional development, demonstrating a commitment to learn, to improve the profession, and to model professional ethics and personal integrity. The certified school counselor must:

(3) strive toward the highest level of professionalism by adhering to and modeling professional, ethical, and legal standards

The following CACREP Common Core standards are addressed in this course:

Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice

i. ethical standards of professional counseling organizations and credentialing bodies, and applications of ethical and legal considerations in professional counseling

k. strategies for personal and professional self-evaluation and implications for practice l. self-care strategies appropriate to the counselor role

Social and Cultural Diversity

a. multicultural and pluralistic characteristics within and among diverse groups nationally and internationally
b. theories and models of multicultural counseling, cultural identity development, and social justice and advocacy c. multicultural counseling competencies
d. the impact of heritage, attitudes, beliefs, understandings, and acculturative experiences on an individual's views of others
e. the effects of power and privilege for counselors and clients
g. the impact of spiritual beliefs on clients' and counselors' worldviews

Human Growth and Development

i. ethical and culturally relevant strategies for promoting resilience and optimum development and wellness across the lifespan

Counseling and Helping Relationships

a. theories and models of counseling
d. ethical and culturally relevant strategies for establishing and maintaining in-person and technology-assisted relationships
f. counselor characteristics and behaviors that influence the counseling process

j. evidence-based counseling strategies and techniques for prevention and intervention n. processes for aiding students in developing a personal model of counseling

Group Counseling and Group Work

a. theoretical foundations of group counseling and group work
b. dynamics associated with group process and development
c. therapeutic factors and how they contribute to group effectiveness
d. characteristics and functions of effective group leaders
e. approaches to group formation, including recruiting, screening, and selecting members
f. types of groups and other considerations that affect conducting groups in varied settings
g. ethical and culturally relevant strategies for designing and facilitating groups
h. direct experiences in which students participate as group members in a small group activity, approved by the program, for a minimum of 10 clock hours over the course of one academic term

Research and Program Evaluation

b. identification of evidence-based counseling practices
c. needs assessments
d. development of outcome measures for counseling programs e. evaluation of counseling interventions and programs

Counseling Program Marketable Skills:

Upon successful completion of the Counseling Program, the candidates for the degree of Master of Education in Counseling will possess the following marketable skills:

1. The Master of Education Counseling student will demonstrate analytical and critical thinking skills.
2. The Master of Education Counseling student will demonstrate empathy and listening skills.
3. The Master of Education Counseling student will demonstrate deductive and inductive cognitive skills.

Marketable Skills Dissemination Strategy: The marketable skills are included in the course syllabi for the Master of Education in Counseling. The faculty present and discuss these skills online or in class with students. Each marketable skill includes consideration of the cultural influences on an individual's worldview perspective. This cultural focus is reflected and emphasized in all courses. The analytical and critical thinking skills and the deductive and inductive cognitive skills are considered foundational in all graduate counseling courses. Group Counseling (EDUC 7315) emphasizes the essential communication skills and therapeutic interventions of active listening, reflecting feelings, and demonstrating authentic empathy.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):

Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility

services. Students seeking accessibility services must contact the Student Services Specialist for the specific Campus. PLEASE SEE BELOW FOR TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE.

Student Support Services:

Student Support Services provides students with the tools and resources they need to achieve academic success and remove all learning obstacles, including advising tutoring, and workshops. Tutors are available at the three sites, Uvalde, Del Rio, and Eagle Pass during the fall, spring, and summer semesters. These tutors help in mathematics, English, History, and PowerPoint presentations. Tutors' schedules are posted on bulletin boards around campus as well as **ONLINE**. Tutors are available by appointment or on a walk-in basis.

Student center computers are equipped with Grammarly (https://www.grammarly.com/), a software program that helps students achieve academic goals and improve their writing in essays, reports, theses, dissertations, and college entrance applications. Grammarly automatically detects grammar, spelling, punctuation, word choice, and style mistakes in your writing.

Please go to: http://www.sulross.edu/page/1568/student-services to speak to a support service representative or visit the student center.

Student Services Specialists are:
  Del Rio – (830) 703-4816
  Eagle Pass – (830) 758-5037
  Uvalde- (830) 279-3027

Technology Requirements:

Hardware Requirements: The following minimum hardware and software requirements are necessary to access an online class through SRSU-RGC's current version of Blackboard. Be sure to check your course syllabus and discuss technology needs with your professor as early in the class as possible.

System Requirements: The following minimum hardware and software requirements are necessary to access an online class through SRSG-RGC's current version of Blackboard. Individual instructors may have additional requirements for specific classes. Be sure to check your course syllabus and discuss technology needs with your instructor as early in the class as possible.

	Minimum	Recommend
Operating System	Windows 7 or higher Mac OSX 10.8 or higher	Windows 10 Mac OS 10.12
Processor	1 GHz processor	2 GHz or faster processor
Memory	512 MB of RAM	2 GB of RAM or higher
Monitor Resolution	1024 x 768	1024 x 768 or higher
Free Hard Disk Space	5 GB of free disk space	20 GB or higher of free space
Internet Connection	Broadband (high-speed) Internet connection with a consistent minimum speed of 1.5 Mbps	Broadband (high-speed) Internet connection with a speed of 4 Mbps or higher
Internet Browser	FireFox	FireFox

Java	Java is required to use Blackboard. Visit our Java support page for information about troubleshooting Java.	
Macromedia Flash Player	Flash may be required to play videos within the Blackboard system. You can download Flash from the Adobe website.	

Students are required to have regular, reliable access to a computer with a stable broadband Internet connection. Any system older than 4 years may not have the processing power to work with our current version of Blackboard and its components.

All SRSU-RGC networked computers are configured to use Blackboard and will have the software needed to complete online coursework. If additional software is needed on an SRSU-RGC lab computer, please contact the administrator of the lab for assistance.
If your computer is publicly accessed off campus or is loaned to you, you may be prohibited from downloading files or software.

The first step to see if your computer is set up for Blackboard is to check your browser compatibility. We strongly recommend Blackboard students use the latest version of Mozilla Firefox for Windows or Mac because it is the most compatible with our current Blackboard system.

Browser Downloads	**PC**	**Mac**
Mozilla Firefox	Download	Download
Safari	Download	Download
Google Chrome	Download	Download

Generally, it is a good idea to have multiple browsers installed on your system for a couple of reasons. First, you always want a plan B. If you are trying to perform time-sensitive tasks in Blackboard, you don't want to waste time troubleshooting your browser or downloading a new browser. Having multiple browsers already installed allows you to quickly switch to a different browser when you have a browser-related issue.

Second, it helps to rule out browser-related issues. If you are having problems in one browser and not another, then you know there is something going on with your browser or its settings. If you are having the same problem in multiple browsers, then you'll know that it is either a system issue or something related to Blackboard.

Additional Software and Plug-ins: Most of the materials you will be accessing in Blackboard will consist of web pages, Microsoft documents or Adobe Acrobat files. However, instructors may choose to upload content in a variety of formats. Below you will find a list of common file types that may be used in Blackboard. The software required to view these files is given and links to downloadable versions of the software have been provided if available.

Application Downloads File Extension		PC	Mac
Adobe Acrobat Reader	.pdf	Download	Download
Microsoft Office	.doc • .docx .ppt • .pptx .xls • .xlsx .rtf • .txt	Download	Download

Microsoft Office Viewer			
Word Viewer	.doc • .docx	Download	n/a
PowerPoint Viewer	.ppt • .pptx	Download	n/a
Excel Viewer	.xls • .xlsx	Download	n/a

Video Players	Common File Extensions	PC	Mac
Macromedia Shockwave Player	.fla • .swa • .swf	Download	Download
QuickTime	.mov • .qt	Download	Download
Media Player Classic	.avi • .vlc • .wmv	Download	n/a
VLC Media Player	.avi • .vlc • .wmv	Download	Download

Additional Software	PC	Mac
Microsoft Security Essentials	Download	n/a
Ad-Aware Spyware Removal	Download	n/a
Spybot Search and Destroy	Download	n/a

Technical Skills

Technical Skills Required: Students will be required to interact through a virtual media real-time technological program Enhance-video Streaming through Zoom. Moreover, students will be required to know how to send and receive emails; how to cut and paste information; how to post and download assignments onto and from Blackboard; how to access videos and post comments on discussion boards; how to take exams through Blackboard and how to access Collaborate Ultra Real-time or Zoom feature. Students will also be required to access their generated grade points to measure their progress in the course. PLEASE REVIEW Introductory Videos to refresh your understanding of how to access and navigate through these blackboard features. Other Technological Devices/Equipment: Student computers MUST be equipped with fully functional speakers, microphones, and video cameras.

D.   Select the "Blackboard Orientation" feature under the "Orientation" Submenu.

Students can access the Blackboard orientation video clips designed to help students navigate and use Blackboard while taking graduate coursework. Students can access the videos by:

E. Going to the Blackboard main page.
F. Access the "Student Resources" located at the red top left block of the Blackboard Log-in Page.
G. Orientation and "How to" videos are available to help the student navigate and through Blackboard.

Blackboard Representatives: (888)837-6055 24 hrs. Monday-Sunday
Tim Parsons (432-837-8525): tim.parsons@sulross.edu
Estella Vega (432-837-8247): estellav@sulross.edu

Enhanced Video Streaming: As your instructor, I place heavy emphasis on Individual class participation. There will be sixteen graded collaborative meetings, and they have a total value of 100 points. The interactive component of this course is critical. It will enhance your reasoning skills, which is very important to the counseling process. Your participation will facilitate others enhancing his or her reasoning skills by drawing from your rich experience(s). The intercultural experiences of students add tremendously to everyone's learning in class. Our live online streaming interaction will provide us the opportunity to review the week's theme of instruction and will also help to alleviate any issues or answer any questions that often arise when taking online coursework. I will ask many open-ended questions to elicit responses. Students will be required to participate in every classroom session.

Collaborate Ultra is a web-based system used for real-time connection. You can access the Collaborate Ultra feature by:

1. Log into Blackboard.
2. Select the Course number and name.
3. View your Menu on the left-hand side of the main course page.
4. Select "Zoom" under the "Assignment" Sub Menu.
5. Turn on the video by depressing the Camera icon and do the same for the microphone when speaking ONLY.

Frequent "Lost connection" is NOT acceptable, and the student will be required to go to the computer lab located at the closest SRSU-RGC university site for the remainder of the semester after two class periods of lost connectivity difficulties. Such disconnection issues interrupt the class dynamics and will not be accepted. Each student is encouraged to take his or her computer hardware to the IT department to assess compatibility before classes begin to ensure standards for connectivity are acceptable. Students are also encouraged to provide the IT representative with the type of home internet service provider and specifications to determine if acceptable for Collaborate ultra-connectivity. It is also recommended that your home network usage be limited to your use to prevent slowing the home network connectivity. For example, make sure others including yourself, disconnect Wi-Fi from cell phones and other programs that slow home network connection.

IT Technologist for each campus are (PLEASE CALL BLACKBOARD REPRESENTATIVES ABOVE for Blackboard issues):

       Del Rio - (830)703-4818
       Eagle Pass - (830) 758-5010
       Uvalde – (830) 279-3045

In consideration of the current advanced mobile technology, it is imperative that students make necessary arrangements to access collaborate at the designated time. Students are not allowed to drive a vehicle or engage in an activity where safety is compromised and exposes the student into a dangerous situation.

Students with Disabilities: It is the policy of the University of Sul Ross State University-Rio Grande College to create inclusive learning environments. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of any course that result in barriers to your inclusion or to an accurate assessment of achievement-such as time-limited exams, inaccessible web content, or the use of non-captioned videos, etc. - Please notify the instructor as soon as possible. For information about SRSU-RGC disability support services, please contact

Student Service Specialist: (830) 279-3003

Diversity:

Discussion and activities will include issues of diversity as they relate to specific learning objectives. All students will be encouraged to introduce topics they deem applicable to the content and process of the course, particularly those that enhance students' awareness of diversity and multicultural understanding.

Scholastic Misconduct:

As with all University courses, instructors expect students to be engaged in learning the course content. Scholastic dishonesty seriously compromises this learning and is not tolerated. The penalty for scholastic dishonesty in this class depends on the circumstances. Penalties could range from consultation with the instructor and receiving a zero (0) on the assignment in question, to failing the course and facing the University charges of academic misconduct.

Etiquette Expectations:

Graduate students are expected to take responsibility for their academic work. Everyone will make sure to understand the content and process of syllabi. The professor may help, and your advisor may offer you direction; however, the student must demonstrate initiative and maturity to pursue understanding actively.

Students are to communicate questions or statements as directed by the professor. Etiquette considerations will include speech tone, language, and expression that is respectful and clear to minimize ambiguity; moreover, the presentation of questions or statements will not consist of any

defamatory, sarcastic, degrading, or disrespectful tones, whether in person, telephonically, teleconferenced, enhanced video streaming, email or any other modes of communication.

Culture often influences an individual's mode of gaining understanding and disseminating meaning. Therefore, individuals must consider primary language, speaking style, inappropriate terms, the distance between parties, eye contact, inappropriate body language (Example: finger-pointing, etc.), and disabilities that may hinder effective communication.

Attendance, Introduction, and Participation:

Regular participation is a required aspect of this course. Your first module will be to submit a five-minute recorded introduction of yourself. In the discussion board labeled **DB 1**. This will be a great time to get to know each other since we will be spending significant time sharing each other's lens through which course content is viewed. Points of Introduction must include the following and not to exceed five minutes:

- o Full name.
- o Place of Birth.
- o Place raised
- o Describe the family or culture that best describes you.
- o Your interest in your undergraduate degree.
- o Rationale for entering the counseling program.
- o What do you hope to accomplish with Counseling training?
- o How do you conclude this to be important?

Your Discussion Board Entry (DB 1) has a value of 100 points.

Virtual Participation:

As your instructor, **I place heavy emphasis on Individual class participation.** The interactive component of this course is critical. Your active, reflective, and timely participation in your discussion boards and assignment completion will determine the degree of participation. Please feel free to contact me anytime if you run into any difficulties.

Late Work:

Assignments must be turned in weekly. Students will work on completing and submitting a minimum of two modules per week.

Grading/Feedback:

Most grading is technologically driven, and grades are posted immediately. However, some quizzes require professor review and grading. In cases where grading is not instantaneous, I will complete all grading weekly. This will provide ample time for students to review their outcomes. Students are welcome to contact me anytime to schedule a time to meet virtually to address any questions. In the

event I do not answer the phone, please leave a message so that I may return your call, I respond to all my calls within 24 hours.

Sub Sections	Point Scale	Grade
Collaborate Attendance & Discussion Board Assignments	A-100-Completion of all Discussion Board Entries B- 90-mnissing one Discussion Board Entry C- 80-missing two Discussion Board Entry D- 70-missing three Discussion Board Entry F- 60-missing more than three Board Entries	**A= 90-100** **B= 80 - 89** **C= 70 - 79**
Group Study Guide	120 Potential Points Each	**D= 60 – 69** **F= <60**
Group Observation Blog (Every Class Experience)	100 Potential Points Each	
Group (6-hours) Marathon Encounter	100 Potential Points	
Quizzes (13)	100 Potential Points Each	
Final Exam	100 Potential Points Each	

Group Study Guide :

One of the most important qualities of an effective group counselor is spontaneous creativity (referred to as "therapeutic spontaneity"). Group counselors are continuously required to "invent" therapeutic experiences instinctively. All students are expected to create a study guide that includes:

AUTHOR

Provide a biography of the author and a brief narrative on the theoretical framework that he or she builds on to promote healthy group therapy.

CONCEPTS

Expand on the theoretical framework and provide specific elements or concepts he or she focuses to promote healthy outcomes.

ROLES AND FUNCTION

Provide the role each person assumes from the author's point of view and analyze the relevance of outcomes according to the author. Make sure to include the counselor's role as well.

TECHNIQUES

Please provide the stages, and techniques to the group approach to therapy. Provide examples of what type of case would be an ideal application.

EVALUATION

Describe the procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of the specific lesson or experience with the group members. Each session must be evaluated, and the complete group experience must also be evaluated.

<u>Group Observation</u>:

All students are required to maintain a Group Observation Blog. You will be required to watch a video on the type of group therapy session and write your observation, including documentation and demonstrations of one's reactions to the group sessions, information, dynamics, evolution, discussions, readings, and interactions. Students will observe and record the interpersonal communication systems, leadership roles, member roles, stages of group growth, decision-making processes, the purpose of conflict, and power as they have witnessed and experienced in the processes of the group experience. Students should also record their cognitive and affective responses to group events and interpersonal interactions with other group members. Blog entries should not exceed 500 words and must be of substantial quantity and graduate level.

Posts and entries in your Group Observation can include:

Personal (1st Entry):

- Personal thoughts, feelings, insights, and reflections.

  • Questions or concerns arise from various group experiences or course readings.

  • Primary lessons learned.

  • Applications of concepts and strategies to future group experiences.

  • Thoughts that are not yet fully formed but that you want to refine later; this could include your feelings about the course, your progress, and theories developing in your mind.

  • Remember that the ideas mentioned above must be relevant to your growth throughout this class. At various points throughout the semester, the instructors will provide feedback to you regarding the content and depth of your Group Observation Blog entries. Your blog must

be created after each class meeting. There will be a minimum of two blog postings per week, one reflecting your own experience and your perception of the group's experience. The Group Observation Blog is worth a total of 100 points toward your final grade in this course.

Group Process (2ⁿᵈ Entry):

When observing the group processes and recording your observations in your blog, use the following prompts to guide your reflections, contemplations, and notations:

•   How would you describe the patterns of participation in the group? Did all have opportunities to participate? Were some excluded? Did a few dominate? Was an effort made to draw people out? If some members did not participate, how might your account for this? What needs to happen in the group for everyone to participate?

•   How would you describe the patterns and styles of leadership behavior that emerged during the group? Did a leader, as such, emerge? Was a leader designated? Was leadership shared? Was there any structuring of the group? Were facilitation skills demonstrated? If so, by whom? If not, why not?

•   How would you describe the structures that emerged to govern the behavior of the group members? What were the rules on which the group functioned? Did you notice any new or emerging rules or norms? Which rules seem to be present but unspoken? How was power manifested? Where and how did power flow during the group experience? Did the group seem to be avoiding something? If so, what? How did the group deal with member anxiety? Where is your group developmentally? What needs to happen for your group to develop further?

•   How would you describe the individual roles and responsibilities that developed and emerged in the group? Who initiated ideas? Who supported them? Did anyone block it? Who helped push for decisions? Was there any attempt to summarize and pull together ideas? Do some members tend to assume "caretaking" roles and responsibilities? Does someone seem to be the protagonist? Does someone seem to be the antagonist?

•   How would you describe the decision-making processes employed by the group? Did the group get many suggested ideas before deciding, or did it begin deciding on only a single idea? Did everyone agree to the decisions made? Who helped influence the decisions of others? What issues did the group seem to (not) resolve? Did the group experience conflict? If so, why? If not, why not?

•   How would you describe the patterns of communication utilized in the group? Did people feel free to talk? Were there any interrupting or cutting people off? Did people listen to others? Was there clarification of points made? Who did people look at when they talked?

•   How would you describe the affective qualities of trust and safety in the group? Were members sensitive to each other's needs and concerns? What feelings did you see expressed either verbally or nonverbally? What level of trust do you currently feel for the group? In which situations would you still not feel safe with your group? What needs to happen for group members to feel more trust and safety?

Quizzes:

Weekly quizzes are designed to evaluate knowledge level comprehension for each class content reviewed. Each student will complete a quiz on a weekly basis. The quizzes are intended to ensure you can grasp the content of the assigned reading. There is a total of thirteen (13) quizzes, and each quiz has a 100-point potential. Each quiz will contain different number of questions that correspond with the chapter or Video Reflection content and will consist of true and false, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank-the-blank, and short answer questions. If you do well in your quizzes, it is very probable you will do well in the final exam. You will be given the opportunity to use your quizzes to study for the final exam.

Students will be required to complete the quiz immediately after completing the video reflection, which is completed immediately after the class session. This will provide me the opportunity to provide grading and feedback for potential class discussion.

Final Exam:
The final exam is a 100-question True/False, multiple-choice and fill-in the blank questions that are designed to assess comprehensive, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluative consideration of knowledge gained over the semester. The final exam primarily derives from the weekly quizzes, forum activities, and Collaborate content and has a 100-point potential. The exam will be posted on Blackboard on the designated date and each student will have four (4) hours to complete the exam.

PROPOSED COURSE OUTLINE

DATE	TOPIC. ASSIGNMENT DUE AND READINGS
Module 1 **Fall Semester Starts** **Aug 26**	**Introductions** • **Assignments are assigned on the date specified in the left column and are due before the next class session.** **Course Overview and Expectations** **Review the following** **Part 1:** Basic Elements **Part 2:** Theoretical Approaches to Group Counseling **Part 3:** Integration and Application **Group Observation Blog #1**

Module 2	**PART 1**
	Reading Assignment: Ch. 1 Introduction to Group Work
	   • Increased Interest to Group Work
	   • Overview of the Counseling Group
	   • Other Types of Groups
	   • Group Counseling in a Multicultural Context
	
	Quiz 1: Ch. 1 Introduction to Group Work

Module 3	**Reading Assignment:** Ch. 2 Group Leadership **Quiz 2:** Ch. 2 Group Leadership • The Group Leader as a Person • Special Problems and Issues for Beginning Group Leaders • Group Leadership Skills • Special Skills for Opening and Closing Group Sessions • Becoming a Diversity-Competent Group Counselor • Developing Your Group Leadership Style • The Role of Research in the Practice of Group Work
Sep 19	**Reading Assignment:** Ch. 3 Ethical and Professional Issues in Group Practice • Rights of Group participants • Psychological Risks in Groups • Ethics of Group Leaders' Actions • Uses and Misuse of Group Techniques • Group Leader Competence • Teaching Group Counseling Virtually • My Journey toward Becoming a Group Work Specialist • Liability and Malpractice Insurance **Articles:** 1) Group Circle; 2) How to do Group Therapy Telehealth **Quiz 3:** Ch. 3 Ethical and Professional Issues in Group Practice
Sep 26	**Reading Assignment:** Ch. 4 Early Stages in the Development of a Group • Stage 1: Pre-group Issues-Formation of the Group • Stage 2: Initial Stage-Orientation and Exploration • Stage 3: Transition Stage-Dealing with Reluctance **Quiz 4:** Ch. 4 Early Stages in the Development of a Group
Oct 03	**Reading Assignment:** Ch. 5 Later Stages in the Development of a Group • Stage 4: Working Stage-Cohesion and Productivity • Stage 5: Final Stage-Consolidation and Termination • Stage 6: Post group Issues-Evaluation and Follow-up **Quiz 5:** Ch. 5 Later Stages in the Development of a Group
Oct 10	**Encounter Group Marathon at the Dominion (9 Kings Tower, San Antonio, Texas)**
Oct 17	**PART 2** **Reading Assignment:** Ch 6 The Psychoanalytic Approach to Groups Ch 7 Adlerian Group Counseling Ch 8 Psychodrama in Groups **Quiz 6:** Ch 6, 7, 8

Oct 24	**Reading Assignment:** Ch 9 The Existential Approach to Groups **Quiz 7:** Ch 9 The Existential Approach to Groups
Oct 31	**Reading Assignment:** Ch 10 The Existential Approach to Groups **Quiz 8:** Ch 10 The Person-Centered Approach to Groups
Nov 07	**Reading Assignment:** Ch 11 Gestalt Therapy in Groups **Quiz 9:** Ch 11 Gestalt Therapy in Groups
Nov 14	**Reading Assignment:** Ch 12 Cognitive Behavioral Approaches to Groups **Quiz 10:** Ch 12 Cognitive Behavioral Approaches to Groups
Nov 21	**Reading Assignments:** Ch 13 Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy in Groups **Quiz 11:** Ch 13 Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy in Groups
Nov 28	**Thanksgiving Holiday**
Dec 05	**Reading Assignment:** Ch 15 Solution-Focused Brief Therapy and Motivational Interviewing in Groups **Quiz 13:** Ch 15 Solution-Focused Brief Therapy and Motivational Interviewing in Groups
Dec 11	**Final Exam Due** **Quiz 13 Due** **Group Curriculum Due**

GROUP PROCESS: Observation Guidelines

Did all have opportunities to participate? Were some excluded? Did a few dominate? Was an effort made to draw people out? If some members did not participate, how might your account for this? What needs to happen in the group for everyone to participate?

Leadership

Did a leader, as such, emerge? Was a leader designated? Was leadership shared? Was there any structuring of the group? Were facilitation skills demonstrated? If so, by whom? If not, why not?

Structures

What were the rules on which the group functioned? Did you notice any new or emerging rules or norms? Which rules seem to be present but unspoken? How was power manifested? Where and how did power flow during the group experience? Did the group seem to be avoiding something? If so, what? How did the group deal with member anxiety? Where is your group developmentally? What needs to happen for your group to develop further?

Roles

Who initiated ideas? Who supported them? Did anyone block it? Who helped push for decisions? Was there any attempt to summarize and pull together ideas? Do some members tend to assume "caretaking" roles and responsibilities? Does someone seem to be the protagonist? Does someone seem to be the antagonist?

Decision-Making

Did group get a lot of ideas suggested before beginning to decide, or did it begin deciding on only a single idea? Did everyone agree to the decisions made? Who helped influence the decisions of others? What issues did the group seem to (not) resolve? Did the group experience conflict? If so, why? If not, why not?

Communication

Did people feel free to talk? Were there any interrupting or cutting people off? Did people listen to others? Was there clarification of points made? Who did people look at when they talked?

Trust and Safety

Were members sensitive to each other's needs and concerns? What feelings did you see expressed either verbally or nonverbally? What level of trust do you currently feel for the group? In which situations would you still not feel safe with your group? What needs to happen for group members to feel more trust and safety?

Group Counseling FAQs

What is Group Counseling?

In group therapy, six to twelve people meet face-to-face with one or more trained group counselors and talk about what is troubling them. Members also give feedback to each other by expressing their feelings about what someone says or does. This interaction allows group members to try out new ways of behaving and learn more about how they interact with others. The situation is unique because it is a closed and safe system. The content of the group sessions is confidential; what members talk about or disclose is not discussed outside the group.

The first few sessions of a group usually focus on establishing trust. During this time, members work to establish trust that allows them to talk personally and honestly. Group trust is achieved when all members commit to the group.

Why does Group Counseling work?

When people come into a group and interact freely with other group members, they usually recreate those difficulties that brought them to group counseling in the first place. Under the skilled direction of a group counselor, the group can give support, offer alternatives, or gently confront the person. In this way the difficulty becomes resolved, alternative behaviors are learned, and the person develops new social techniques or ways of relating to people. During group counseling, people begin to see that they are not alone. Many people feel they are unique because of their problems, and it is encouraging to hear that other people have similar difficulties. In the climate of trust provided by the group, people feel free to care about and help each other.

What are the goals of Group Counseling?

- Exploring issues in an interpersonal context more accurately reflects real life.
- Group counseling provides an opportunity to observe and reflect on your own and others' interpersonal skills.
- Group counseling provides an opportunity to benefit both through active participation and through observation.
- Group counseling offers an opportunity to give and get immediate feedback about concerns, issues and problems affecting one's life.
- Group counseling members benefit by working through personal issues in a supportive, confidential atmosphere and by helping others to work through theirs.

What are the benefits of Group Counseling?
- An increased sense of support and connectedness
- A decrease in self-criticism and negativity
- Renewed hope in one's own abilities
- Increased resourcefulness in finding solutions
- Greater ease in identifying feelings and self-disclosure
- A deepened trust for oneself and one's instincts
- More confidence in trying out possible solutions What can I talk about in Group Counseling?

Talk about what brought you to the session in the first place. Tell the group members what is bothering you. If you need support, let the group know. If you think you need confrontation, let them know this also. It is important to tell people what you expect of them. Unexpressed feelings are a major reason why people experience difficulties. Revealing your feelings (self- disclosure) is an important part of group counseling and affects how much you will be helped. The appropriate disclosures will be those that relate directly to your present difficulty. How much you talk about yourself depends upon what you are comfortable with. If you have any questions about what might or might not be helpful, you can always ask the group.

What are the common misperceptions about Group Counseling?

- "I will be forced to tell all of my deepest thoughts, feelings and secrets to the group."

You control what, how much, and when you share with the group. Most people find that when they feel safe enough to share what is troubling them, a group can be very helpful and affirming. You are encouraged to not share what you are not ready to disclose. You can also be helped by listening to others and thinking about how what they are saying might apply to you.

- "Group counseling will take longer than individual counseling because I will have to share the time with others."

Group therapy is often more efficient than individual counseling for two reasons. First, you can benefit from the group even during sessions when you say very little but listen carefully to others. You will find that you have much in common with other group members, and as they work on a concern, you can learn more about yourself. Secondly, group members will often bring up issues that strike a chord with you, but that you might not have been aware of or brought up yourself.

- "I will be verbally attacked by the leaders and by other group members."

It is very important that group members feel safe. Group leaders are there to help develop a safe environment. Feedback is often difficult to hear. As group members come to trust and accept one another, they generally experience feedback and even confrontation as positive, as if it were coming from their best friend. One of the benefits of group counseling is the opportunity to receive feedback from others in a supportive environment. It is rare to find friends who will gently point out how you might be behaving in ways that hurt yourself or others, but this is precisely what the group can offer. This will be done in a respectful, gentle way, so that you can hear it and make use of it.

- "Group counseling is second-best to individual counseling and psychotherapy."

If group counseling is being recommended for a client it is because a counseling professional believes that it is the best way to address your concerns. Group counseling is recommended when it is the most effective method to help clients.

- "I have so much trouble talking with people; I'll never be able to share in a group."

Most people are anxious about being able to talk in group. Almost without exception, within a few sessions people find that they do begin to talk in the group. Group members remember what it is like to be new to the group, so you will most likely get a lot of support for beginning to talk in the group.

How to Recognize and Effective Group

1. Members do not ignore seriously intended contributions.

Each member needs to know the effect of his/her remarks if s/he is to improve the way s/he participates in the group. When other members do not respond, the speaker cannot know whether:

- They did not understand his/her remark
- They understood it and agreed with it
- They understood it but disagreed with it
- They understood it but thought it was irrelevant

When this principle is followed, the discussion is cumulative, and the group moves together. When it is not followed, the discussion becomes scattered, the same points are made over and over, and members feel no progress occurring.

2. **Members check to make sure they know what a speaker means before they agree or disagree with his or her contribution.**

   The question, "What is it?" should precede the question, "How do we feel about it?" For example, understanding is prior to evaluation. Thus, group members frequently use paraphrase, perception checks, and provisional summaries to clarify their assumptions of what others are saying and feeling.

3. **Each member speaks only for "self" and lets others speak for themselves.**

   Each member states his/her reactions as his/her own. He or she does not attribute them to others or give the impression s/he is speaking for others. Each member reports his or her own reactions honestly. She or he recognizes that unless s/he is true to self, the group cannot take his/her feelings into account.

1. **All contributions are viewed as belonging to the group, to be used or not as the group decides.**

   A member who suggests does not have to defend it as "his" or "hers" against the others. Instead, all accept responsibility for evaluating it as the joint property of the group.

4. **All members participate but in different and complementary ways.**

   When some members fulfill task functions, others carry out interpersonal functions. While some members are providing information, others are making sure it is understood and organized, or identifying points of agreement and disagreement. Each member does not participate always in the same way. Instead, s/he fulfills whatever function is appropriate to his/her interest in the task, his/her information, and the behavior of other group members.

6. **Whenever the group senses it is having trouble getting work done, it tries to find the reason.**

   Some symptoms of difficulty are excessive hair-splitting, points repeated over and over, suggestions that "plop" and are not considered, private conversations in subgroups, two or three people dominating the discussion, members taking sides and refusing to compromise, ideas being

attacked before they are completely expressed and apathetic participation. When such symptoms occur, the group shifts easily from working on the task to discussing its own interpersonal process. Discussing interpersonal process prevents pluralistic ignorance. For example, each member of the group is confused but thinks she or he is the only one.

7. **The group recognizes what it does is what it has chosen to do. No group can avoid making decisions; it cannot choose whether to decide, only how to decide. Thus, an effective group makes decisions openly rather than by default.**

   When a group faces an issue, it must decide. It may agree openly to act. It may agree openly to take no action. It may decide by default to take no action. Deciding by default not to act has the same impact on the problem as openly agreeing not to act. However, decisions by default are felt as failures by group members and create tensions among them. A group grows more by openly agreeing not to act then by not acting because they could not agree.

   The group views each decision as a provisional trial that can be carried out, evaluated, and revised considering experience. The group is aware each decision need not be everything or nothing and need not last forever. When the group decides that it does not carry out, it recognizes the real decision was one not to act, although the apparent decision was to act. The group openly discussed why the apparent and real decisions were not the same. They try to learn why some members agreed with the decision although they felt no personal commitment to carry it out. The group makes decisions in different ways depending upon the kind of issue and the importance of the outcome. The group may vote, delegate the decision to a special subgroup, flip a coin or require complete consensus. The crucial factor is the group has agreement on the way it makes decisions.

8. **The group brings conflict into the open and deals with it.**

   The members recognize conflict as inevitable. They know the choice is theirs as to whether the conflict will be open (subject to group control) or disguised (out of control).

9. **The group looks upon behavior that hinders its work as happening because the group allows or even wants it; not just as the result of a "problem member."**

   A person who continually introduces irrelevancies can change the topic only if other members follow his or her lead. Instead of labeling "him" or "her" as the problem, the group considers this tactic a group problem. They determine why they all let it happen. Perhaps the other members welcome his digressions as a way of avoiding the open conflict that would occur if they stayed on the topic. Likewise, the person who talks too much...jokes too much...continually attacks others...or never participates, is a sign of a problem shared by the total group. The group needs to discuss it openly as "our problem" to eliminate the disruption. The group gives helpful information to individuals about the impact of their actions on the group. It does not, however analyze, dissect and "work them over."

Mindfulness and Counseling:

Mindful counselors can interact more effectively with their personal and professional environments; they are able to respond rather than react to life's unexpected happenings; they are more effective communicators professionally and personally; and they are more creative and effective agents of client-desired change. A routine personal mindfulness practices provides the counseling graduate student with the knowledge and skills to:

- Slow down or stop the cascade of automatic and habitual reactions.
- See oneself and others more clearly.
- Listen deeply and understand situations just as they are.
- Be open to creativity beyond conditioning.
- Respond effectively to complex and/or emotionally charged situations.
- Act competently and ethically.
- Achieve balance and resilience in personal and professional lives.

Professional Counseling Identity and Behavior:

In registering for classes in the Counseling Program at Rio Grande College, graduate students accept responsibility for attending scheduled class meetings, completing assignments on time, contributing to class discussions, and fully participating in all experiential learning activities. Counseling faculty members maintain specific attendance and participation requirements for each class. Faculty members may impose academic penalties upon absences from some classes and/or experiences; however, such penalties for absences will be a part of each course syllabus and will be distributed to each class at the beginning of each class and a copy filed in the departmental office.

The Counseling Program has specific policies and procedures which provide students with a sequential, growth-oriented progression of courses to take; students are fully responsible for knowing and following these policies and procedures. By the time a student is admitted to the Experiential Block, it is expected that she or he has thoroughly read and comprehended the complete policies, procedures and recommendations of the most recent issue of the Counseling Program Handbook. This document details and describes all aspects of the Counseling Program, from taking the first courses to passing the Comprehensive Oral Examination and graduating with the Master's in Counseling. This is not a singular academic program to prepare students for advanced levels of teaching or beginning levels of administration, but rather a distinctly different profession entirely. Counseling is not an appropriate career field for all students. In the process of pursuing professional training in counseling, some students discover (or faculty may advise) that they are not appropriate for the counseling field and/or the field of counseling is not appropriate for them. Faculty of the Counseling Program will provide continuous, honest and pragmatic feedback to each student regarding progress and suitability in this program.

Unethical behavior (as defined by the Code of Ethics of the American Counseling Association) by a student enrolled in any counseling course will result in the exclusion of that student from the Counseling Program of Rio Grande College and may subject the student to civil penalties as well. Professional behavior is expected of each student at all times across all counseling courses. Failure to maintain professionalism is considered unethical behavior. The Counseling Program emphasizes professional, personal, and academic development as essential in counselor education and training. Students must not only excel academically but must adhere to the professional and ethical standards

of the profession, demonstrate effective counseling skills and competencies, and focus on their own personal development as it impacts their ability to work effectively and ethically as counseling professionals.

Counseling students are expected to attend to their own social and emotional development through extensive self-reflection and mindfulness. They must be open to new and divergent ideas, prepared to examine their own values and assumptions, ready to recognize their own prejudices and biases, willing to be present in the moment with highly uncomfortable (painful) emotions that initial evoke the "fight- flight-freeze" hijacking of the primitive limbic system, able to receive critical feedback in the company of peers with an open mind and a tender heart, and capable of engaging in personal growth and transformation. At times this will involve examining one's own life experiences while creating space and understanding for one's inner demons and emotional obstacles to personal growth. Willingness to do this important personal work is an integral part of any counselor's professional training.

Therefore, graduation from the Counseling Program requires that students successfully complete the academic and experiential requirements with mindful regard to both professional and personal development. Students must, in the professional judgment of the faculty and supervisors, understand and behave in accordance with the professional standards of behavior, meet the requisite counseling competencies and skills to work as an effective professional counselor, and be free from any psychological or emotional impairment that may act as a barrier to effective interpersonal and therapeutic interventions. Throughout the counseling course work and the practical experiences, the faculty members regularly review student progress on the following basic qualities:

- Openness to new ideas
- Flexibility
- Cooperativeness with others
- Willingness to accept and use feedback
- Awareness of own impact on others
- Ability to deal with conflict
- Ability to accept personal responsibility
- Ability to express feelings effectively and appropriately
- Attention to ethical and legal considerations
- Initiative and motivation
- Development of professional skills and competencies
- Psychological functioning and mindful self-management