

# Report on drug alcoholic offenders group therapy

[Health & Medicine](#), [Alcoholism](#)



Group Design and application of therapy to a particular homogeneous group is an important aspect of therapeutics in psychology. This exercise is a stepwise process, which is created in order to design groups and provide them with assistance and counseling in line with the guidelines laid by state-run treatment facility. The goal of facilitator will be to define the group, which in this case would be Drug & Alcoholic Offenders and provide T. A. S. C. Treatment Alternatives for a safe community sessions. The group members are chosen on the basis of set criteria and efforts were in place in order to maximize the homogeneity of the group. The counseling sessions are scheduled for days a week and continue for seven months and the group type over here is an open group. The group would only include members that fall into the criteria that has been set to define the right people who are indulged into offences related to drug and alcohol abuse and each member should be above the age of 18.

The therapy strives to ensure total abstinence from all mood altering substances takes place by the end, elimination of criminal activities, the participants gain knowledge of drugs and alcohol and their affects and help member achieve treatment goals, per treatment plan. Tuckman's 4 stage models of group development - forming, storming, norming, and performing will be applicable in this group development exercise the entire transition is smooth and time bound. It would be the responsibility of the facilitator to ensure the adequate environment to conduct the sessions and all the activities must be conducted and handled appropriately. Trust, humor, and empathy are expected to be majorly represented by the group in order to achieve successful outcome.

## **Drug & Alcoholic Offenders**

In the beginning stage of putting the group together several things must take place. In a state ran treatment facility where several groups were created in the past, It would be very interesting to form a group called Drug & Alcoholic Offenders treatment group. The state mandated facility where group leaders, interested in leading a group, will come up with a proposal that is submitted to the supervisor of the agency. The proposal will entail the group type, population; serve the number of sessions, number of participants, and the goals of the therapy in order to develop and apply the plan o provide the adequate counseling to all the patients. In order to be chosen as the group leader, a bid has to be placed. The agency will then prescreen the members for the group who are an adult probationer or a parolee. They are then placed in the group from T. A. S. C. Treatment Alternatives for a safe community. I seems to be very important to orientate the members by setting up one night for the selected members to meet. During the meeting, an informed consent form will be provided and that will state what the members can expect from the leader of the group and what is expected of them and the expectations of the group in a whole. In this informed consent form, it will also state things like who can be banned from group policy explaining confidentiality, physical contact, and substance use contact outside of the group. Each group member's acceptance of the informed consent form is what will make a group strong and successful.

There will be two types of group members who have met either the criteria of Dependence or Abuse. Members who met the criteria of Dependence will meet four nights a week, Monday through Thursday from 6: 00pm - 9: 00pm

for seven months. Members who met the criteria for Abuse will meet one night a week on Tuesdays from 6: 00pm - 9: 00pm for eight weeks. The type of group which is selected over here is an open group. There are positive aspects of having an open group where there will be continuous change in members. New members can learn from the old members and it is easier to maintain the group size. Having an open group also helps the members learn how to say hello and goodbye at the end of the contracts. Some disadvantages could be when a member is having a hard time dealing with change and by having a continuous change of members can take up group time. To make a group successful, there must be excellent lines of communication. The reason why this type of group is chosen is because, the nature of my clients on probation and parole dictates when they arrive or introduced into the group. The population these groups will serve is probationers and parolees. These groups will consist of a combination of 15 male and female members within the age range of 18 and older. All the clients will go through regular interviews, will have both long term and short term goals and these steps will be taken in order to avoid relapse.

### **The goals of the therapy will be:**

- A) Total abstinence from all mood altering substances.
- B) Elimination of criminal activities.
- C) Gain knowledge of drugs and alcohol and their affects.
- D) Help member achieve treatment goals, per treatment plan.

## **E) Program completion.**

Tuckman's 4 stage models of group development - forming, storming, norming, and performing. In the forming stage, it is so important that the leader provide guidance and direction. Anytime you have a group or teach a class, there will always be a leader. Students or group members look up to them for help. In the initial stage, it is important to break the ice so to speak. The leaders can start off with a question, this helps group members open up and respond. In the initial stage, members will also be comparing themselves to others and will attempt to be liked by all members by displaying different behaviors. The storming stage, is when a member tries to establish themselves with the leader and its members. There seems to always be one whom will want to be the leader of the group and try to take this position to accomplish total attention or to nerve others within the group. The group must work together and not be at odds with another but learn how to work through destructive criticism. The leaders goal is to help with denial of addiction whether abuse or dependence. The third stage is norming, this is when the members except their role in the group and learn how to make group decisions. It is also a good idea to have activities included. In a successful group, there is respect for the leader and its members. The fourth stage is performing, this is when the members now begin to understand the dynamics of the group and understand their own individual part of the whole group.

The last stage clearly is a showing of what has been learned. The members show new changes in decision making and how to talk things out. As a leader, it is very important to teach my groups to think for a change to

happen. A positive result would mean the group shows changed and improved behavior and this will reinforce the change behavior. To be able to meet criteria's of culture diversity, there must be structure, boundaries, and tolerance for this to happen.

Trust, humor, and empathy are vital to any group therapy. All members need to feel they are accepted, that when they say something they are being heard, and humor can always change one's atmosphere and empathy. It is much appreciated because the client needs to know or feel you really understand what they are going through, as if you can feel their pain. This builds trust and helps the client be more open and in the end it brings change. The goal of a counselor is to help them find their new found journeys, and to walk it with pride and a more understanding of self.

## **Abstract**

This part of the exercise includes creation of a brochure, that would talk about the group activity and would be an interactive advertisement to invite group members who would like to benefit from the sessions and would like to improve themselves through a positive therapy. In order to ensure excellent homogeneity within the group, a specific questionnaire is developed and proposed. The responses to the questionnaire would allow the assessment of whether a potential group member falls into the criteria to join a group or not. It is ensured that all the group members are positive about their recovery and treatment and they have zeal to improve their life.

One of the major goals of this therapy is to ensure that knowledge retention is adequately arranged and at the end of this exercise the group must have

adequate amount of education related to substance abuse and its harmful effects. Hence, while selecting the group the knowledge level of the participants should also be a criteria and the more knowledge they have about substance abuse, easier it would be to reach the goals that were set at the beginning of the group development and treatment exercise. Based on the above, eight, gender, type of addiction, knowledge related to substance abuse and few other factors would be included in the selection criteria along with the responses which would be received, to the questionnaire that was set in the beginning.

## **Location**

Academic level

Do you sometimes feel inferior as compared to the others?

Do you feel isolated from family/peer group?

Feel of lack of direction in life?

Do you suffer from depression?

What is something without which you think you cannot survive?

Do you have lack of confidence?

Do you take alcohol? If yes, how much do you think you take in a day?

Do you abuse any drugs?

Do you feel you will be able to manage a day without drug/alcohol?

Do you think that if you are able to restrict drug/alcohol addiction, it will make your life better?

Drug and alcohol offences have become common these days, considering the fact that the required substances are easily available to all age groups.

Drug and Alcohol offenders can have multiple reasons behind choosing to

consume these in large quantities and develop addiction which may further lead to illicit activities in order to arrange finances to curb their addiction. This study will consider various factors to be kept into consideration when choosing group members. It's important to consider factors such as gender, age, environment, personal and academic challenges and level of education. This study will critically analyze factors to consider while selecting group members.

While selecting group members, it is important to consider the background and understand whether there was any specific reason behind such behavior and the level of addiction, which can be decided on the basis of the response to the questionnaire that is mentioned earlier. This will enable members to be comfortable with each other since they will all belong to the same academic level. Furthermore, this will enable the group leader to develop a program that will suit all the group members since they have same addiction type and level. Having a group with members with different issues creates it hard to cater for the individual differences. In addition, most members who come from same type of substance abuse practice go through the same challenges in life. Most substance offenders undergo same challenges such as low self esteem, lack of confidence, financial pressure (Smock, McCollum, Pierce, & Rose, 2008). This will enable the group to share the experience that they undergo and have a wide view of their problems.

Secondly, it is important to consider gender while selecting group member of any kind. (Argyris, C., 2000) explains that having a group with different genders enables the group to appreciate and learn from each other. Both boys and girls undergo different challenges because of their body changes,



friends and family members. Groups that have different genders enable the members to learn from one another and appreciate each other physical, emotional and moral being. In addition, it is important to select members from mixed cultural background. This enables members to have wide view of how offenders from different cultural background are pulled into this and it becomes easy to share and learn from each other.

Furthermore, it is important to consider the number of group members for the study. The number of participant plays an important role in ensuring success of the group activities. Having a large group will significantly interfere with the program of group activities. It also becomes hard for the leader to control large number of people. It becomes hard to make decision that will satisfy all the group members, when their number is large. In addition, the group should not have less number of people in such a way that if one member is not available the group activity cannot take place (Argyris, 2000).

It is also important to select members who are committed and dedicated to the activities of the group. The success of a group depends on serious members who are ready to participate and become open for all the group activities (Argyris, 2000). Having a group that is passive and lack committee will without saying lead to failure. It is important to look for members who will contribute significantly to the success of the group and leave slackers or uncommitted members.

Furthermore, it is important to consider members who are well knowledgeable in various topics that will be covered during group discussion (Bennis, 1999). This will enable the group leader to have smooth

management of the group since members can easily refer from each other. This will also reduce boredom from single speaker since delegation duty can be easily spread to other members during active section. The ability of all members should also be considered while selecting the participants. Having members who have different abilities enables the group to be lively and interesting in study.

In addition, it is important to consider group member's familiarity with each other and their personality. Members who worked together in different groups in the past have are more likely to work successfully again. There are tendencies of some members to act as introvert or extrovert. It is important to consider the personality of each member since most groups tend to focus on extrovert members sidelining the introvert members. It is important to consider the different personality and mold each member accordingly without biasness.

## **Abstract**

The first two sessions that were conducted with the group selected in the previous steps is discussed. The first session comprises of basic introduction with the group and the activities related to the initial discussion which forms a part of the 'forming' stage of development. This session is highly interactive and all the efforts are directed towards normalizing the group and resolution of conflicts during the early phase. There were certain ups and downs related to emotional setback, heated arguments, and privacy/security concerns and people issues however they were effectively tackled through group counseling and one-on-one interactions. After, the initial conversation with the group members and tranquillizing session, the team members were

dispersed for the weekend, and were invited for the next session on Monday.

The session two, completely concentrated on creation of an environment for discussions in future, and the main motive of the discussions were to enhance the level of trust between the group members so that they can share their experiences easily with other members and be participative in future sessions that will be held. There were hesitations within the group initially however after effective counseling; all the group members comfortably started sharing their experiences around the theme of fears and expectations, which were purposefully induced for discussion. Although, substance abuse is in itself a reason for this counseling however there might be other reasons like abortion which can be the primary reason behind it, and therefore this section also answers a few questions like this. In the end, there is an explanation of the referral process that should be employed, in order to refer the group or an individual member for further counseling another counselor. The overall activity by the end of the session has been the approval to create the group, recruitment and selection of group members and conducting firsts two sessions dealing with the forming stage of group design activity.

## **Session 1**

This discussion is based on the activities of the group which was chosen during the week 2, and was based on drug and alcohol offenders. The name of this group is Skylarks, and there is a tagline that says " sky, is the limit". The group discussion that we go through is influenced by conversation of Dr. Corey and Marionne, where there is a conversation that goes between

James, Darren, Andrew and Jill related to the peer groups.

This session is primarily targeted to achieve a normalized environment and to achieve success in making the participants comfortable to the group and to help them so that they can share their emotions with the other group members. Once the discussion starts, the first activities to put the name of the group for discussion and everyone agrees to the fact that 'Skylark', is a nice name considering the fact that it represents height and the group really like the tagline suggested by James, "Sky is the limit", and as a group everyone says that loudly before we start the discussion.

The discussion starts with a close debate on how different people within the room feel within the group and how important are it to trust each other.

Jason mentioned that at times he feels no one is trust worthy and good; hence at times he just wants to be sedated and forget about this world. Jason was asked to discuss any issue that he has faced in his life and take opinions from the members within the room.

This session noticed common heated conversations in the beginning however the as a facilitator the participants were successfully in calmed down, by keeping them engaged with the discussions related to their fears and expectations. In order to make the group feel comfortable, the group was asked to have a 10 minute discussion, however they should discuss on one of the topics that involve fears, hopes, expectations, any concerns they have. On being asked about, who are the people that the group would like to be liked by, the answer was authoritative figures which mean the group leader (Myself). A discussion based on fears and expectations among the group was initiated and the group was requested to be participative and to

interrupt in case if they want to give an opinion of their own. One of the group members shared the fact that, it was difficult for them to share thoughts about their family and this is one issue that makes them vulnerable within a group. The group member seemed extremely emotional when it comes to family issues and then he was questioned whether there was any reason related to his family due to which he got indulged into a drug offence. The member gave a positive answer and the group member was asked to look into the eyes of other members of the group and to share his problem with the group, surprisingly there is a feeling of compassion for that member within the group and this gave a lot of confidence to him. This is a great example of tranquilizing an issue with a member, which is related to severe emotional impact and dilemma.

One of the members raised the point that she feels very low because of the fact that being an African-American women she is not taken as seriously as she should and she feels that alcohol is a way to take this thought away from her. She also mentioned that there are lots of times that her ethnicity makes her feel inferior to the others and she wants to forget this anyhow. The emotions of the lady are tranquilized by making her discuss her issues with one of the members of the group that she felt inferior against, the discussion was much helpful and resulted in relaxation to the member was feeling very low due to inferiority complex. Similarly, other members also shared their experiences with fears and expectations and in the end the group was dispersed on a positive note by telling them to just be themselves and spend their coming week in a different way.

The post-session discussion and analysis was done in order to evaluate their attempt in order to normalize the group and create a spontaneous interaction.

## **Session 2**

In the second session the group concentrates on transition and creation of relationships. The discussion starts with the group where we talk about building trust and demolishing the wall which restricts them to trust the others. The group was suggested that it is good to be expressive and being a little weak emotionally is natural hence it is not wrong to express love and emotions at times. The discussion in this section has thoroughly about creating the environment and the safety within which the conversations in the room can take place. The group was advised that they should feel relaxed and the cameras should not impact them, they should feel free to discuss anything they like however must remember the ground rule, which is that, no discussion from here goes outside this room.

In the first two sessions, the participants test the atmosphere and they learn the functioning of the group. There is a connection between the group which is initiated by the facilitator, initially we see that the members are not sure whether they can be a part of the group however with the progress of the above two sessions there is a comfort zone for every member and they have decided that how much can be disclosed with the group and quite sure about their safety. The members can now express fears, concerns, hopes, reservations and expectations within the group. All the clients within the group will go through this exercise and a feedback will also be taken to

understand if these group sessions are helping, in case if there is any other issue which does not get resolved during the session, private counseling will be done to counter those issues.

a) In order to deal with an issue where one of the members feels uncomfortable in the presence of the group or a specific member, it would be important to ask the member to name in case if there is any group member specifically who is making them feel uncomfortable. A good team introduction and 1-on-1 discussion will be used, if anxiousness is felt with any special group member, also major effort would be to normalize the group. If yes, then the member should be asked to interact with the person that he or she is feeling uncomfortable with and should talk about the reasons behind the feeling of discomfort. In case, if this uncomfortable feeling is related to the entire group, the member should be asked to try once to talk about his feeling and take opinion from the group members about his presence in the group. This will help to strengthen the transition and would help to initiate trust within the group after few interactions with the group members. It will also help to make the member, leader of a group for certain time to help him or her enjoyed the attention of the group and also get time to build some relationships.

b) Drinking and driving, use of illegal drugs and issues that can be relevant to my group. In case of drinking and driving, it is important to make the member of the team realize the value of his life and its impact on his or her loved ones. The initial discussion would be related to help the member to understand that how adversely it could have impacted his life and that at this time to connect it with its implications on life. It would be a helpful idea

to ask the member to share any reason why this happened and it would be best to counsel him by asking him to imagine if any of his loved one would do that. The group should be engaged into discussions where they share knowledge and experience about their life and emphasis must be laid on the importance of education and knowledge. In case of illegal drugs, the approach would be the same as above however it would be important to Counsel the member and it would be important to find out that what had led to the member getting involved into such an act. If the reason is related to an emotional breakdown, it would be important to discuss that reason further and penetrate into the actual cause, which would also help to identify a possible solution. The group must be made aware of the harm that substance abuse and alcohol abuse can bring to them and their loved once, it is important to break these impacts into short term and long term to convince the group that the overall impact of the substance abuse in their lives is very high. Abortion can just be the root of a lot of other issues, which may be making the client's life difficult, hence it is important to find out and counsel the client about the other issues along with the emotional setback related to abortion.

On the other hand, abortion is an issue which is only dealing with female members but involves men as well and mostly involves emotional transitions where discussion of future opportunities is very important and helpful. It would be beneficial to address the member with her spouse and to explain them how there are many future opportunities that can help them to regain the same happiness and a positive approach needs to be reflected through the discussion.



c) While there is a transition to end the group, it is important to ensure that the group has a very good bonding and all their issues are resolved, which may be discussed at the beginning. In order to do this it is important to discuss the journey that the group had during their previous sections and in case if they feel that there is any existing issue that still stays since the time that they had joined the group. Once the issue is identified, they can individually be counseled or else the group should be advised on a positive note that they have come a long way and it is time for them now to individually face their issues and to assure them that they will be successful in handling it alone. Finally, there must be a small assessment that the clients should go through in the end, which may be in the form of questionnaire to assess if the same issues initiated in the beginning still persist or have they been handled effectively.

d) As a counselor, while referring to further services it is important to make the member realize that this step is taken to continue the improvement and sustain it in future as well. The member should not be directly referred to any other counselor or group as that may send the message that the client is not improving; however it is important to maintain a gradual transition to a different counselor group in case if it is required and at least three different counselors must be suggested for the customer to choose from. If the entire group has to be referred then, it becomes important to explain the group about the goal that was set at the time of starting the sessions, the current progress and the reason for referral to achieve the next step.

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