

# Ethics in group counseling

Business, Human Resources



As a starting point, the paper illustrated that family issues are an important topic for group counseling insofar as many children learn aggressive behavior in their home. Moreover, the paper postulated that parental abuse also is an important area of focus because substance abuse issues are a serious problem in the home and substance abuse often leads to physical abuse.

The article then provided an overview of group counseling. Group interventions can be quite helpful but the question is what format should be utilized. Three main group types were outlined. Education/guidance groups may address social skills issues, Counseling Groups are target towards children with developmental challenges, and therapy groups are used for more severe issues.

Group counseling formats incorporate four stages (Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing & Adjourning) which are directed towards first establishing a relationship, establishing boundaries, addressing basic rules, developing increased responsibility and recognizing unrecognized issues.

The next major section of the paper involves legal & ethical considerations for schools on a definition basis. The paper defined consent, which is permitted to participate in counseling (typically from parents). The paper then defined confidentiality which is the legal obligation not to disclose information surrounding treatment. Breaching confidentiality was covered insofar as confidentiality must be broken when a student poses a risk.

Special consideration should be given to how groups are selected & formed. The next special consideration was given for which topics should be considered in groups. Lastly the paper-covered details around adequate

notification, dangerous behavior parental disclosure, dual relationships, and counseling notes, Ethical risks and professional boundaries, group membership, topical groups (Which topics will the group focus on), the notification (The acquisition of informed consent).

After this point consideration was given for dangerous behavior and how to proceed if concerns arise in a dangerous situation. Parental disclosure is considered an important issue insofar as the group leader must make special consideration of when & if confidential information should be exposed to parents.

The paper concluded with the note that school-based groups have several issues in developing group counseling programs. Yet it makes sense to offer comprehensive group counseling programs.

From this paper one could conclude that a group counseling program can be beneficial however there are several special considerations that must be made before implementing the program. Given the unique needs of the multiple stakeholders, unfortunately, there is no 'one' simple solution.