Small group experiences

The need to affiliate with others and to be accepted by them is hypothesized to be as basic to our psychological well being as hunger and thirst are to our physical well being (Raviester and Leary, 1995). (Meeting, Liking, and Becoming Acquainted, SPT Reader P. 50) One doesn't begin to realize how important social interaction is until it is gone. Each individual seeks some sort of relationship throughout his or her lives, even as an infant. Relationships are looked as a bond between two individuals, but it is not limited between those two.

People all have the need to affiliate, but not all people are the same and differ in the strength of their need for affiliation. When meeting new people in a small group experience you are faced with many different emotions, situations, and many thoughts racing through your mind. If I viewed my small group experience through the concept of symbolic interaction theory, founded by Tom Shibutani, you begin to gain knowledge and an understanding of what is going on. The symbolic interaction theory is that people act on symbolic meanings that they find in situations.

Immersing yourself into the small group allows one to create different relationships around oneself. The challenge is to then create shared and similar meanings. The meanings are then personalized by an interpretive process, and after being processed one looks to others to externally view our modifications. When doing this you develop your own self-concept of one another. When we sat down as a group we each introduced ourselves. It was awkward at first, but then we all shared a similar thought and started to interact with each other to avoid awkward silence and situation.

The definition of the situation is the reactions to the shared agreements between one another and each member of the group expected one another to participate in the activity and share ideas together. Once established, we discussed the best way to meet people, what we found attractive, and how to start a conversation. Realizing how easy it is to be uneasy of one's self-esteem, I started to question my self and internalizing the judgments and body gestures from my small group members. When sharing my self -image and personal experiences made me realize the similarities and differences amongst the group and myself.

By engaging in a conversation of diverse issues and topics, I began to realize whom I relate to. Each member of the group, only aware of one similarity, attending the same class, seemed very shy and distanced from one another. At the start of the activity we were all conservative and shy of one another. Since not one member of the group took initiative to choose an engaging topic to talk about, it was difficult to create a conversation. It was awkward up until one person decided to pick a topic.

When we shared the same views and interest towards that one particular topic, the group became more alive and aware of the other members in the group. Since acting timid at the start of the group, I began to gain confidence and more stability in my own self-esteem, once the group became vivid and energetic. Being timid leads to defense, since starting the small group in my defense up it was hard to become acquainted with other members of the group. Once we proceeded and broke the initial barrier of awkwardness, I began to feel more at ease and calm when approached by another member.

According to Horney's theory, one consists of two selves; a real self and an idealized self. The " idealized self" is very similar to an " impossible self". The " real self" is similar to a more " possible self". When each individual were on similar energy levels, the group looked to be in sync with one another. Each individual in the group had a realistic view of themselves because of the lack of random behavior. I believethat not one of the group members was attempting to over achieve or be distant from the group.

I acted shy at first approaching the situation in " defense mode", and may have shown a lack of self-confidence, or the evaluation of my own self. I had a defense barrier when entering this small group experience exercise, but towards the middle of the conversation, I realized that my barrier was down and I was engaging in conversations as if I knew these individuals for years. Then I realized we all had similar opinions and set similargoals. Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needsbegin with Physiological needs likefood, water, etc.

Then " Safety", " Belonging", " Esteem", and finally, " Self-actualization", self-actualization is similar to self-fulfillment. If one cannot satisfy those basic needs you become susceptible to feelings and emotions of unhappiness. The personal need of mine in the group experience was to ask my peers a series of questions to gain information and to introduce myself to new individuals. I also wanted to feel like I accomplished my goals and feel like I did my part in this small group experience, these feelings lead to my " self-esteem" and my " self-image".

Having all shared the same feeling of fulfilling ones need amongst the group, brought the group together and helped me recognize my role. Each had their

own interpersonal needs; the need to feel " apart" of the group, and the need to control. This helped the group to the meaning to how and why we interacted in the first place. I believe once we finished he exercise that my won personal needs were met and so were that of the other individual. The needs that were fulfilled creating a sense of accomplishment and joy, we then exchanged email addresses and went separate ways.

In conclusion to this " experiment" or " experience", it was that of our basic and interpersonal needs that brought the group together. One looks for similar characteristics in others to fulfill our own wants and needs. Consciously and subconsciously one tries to satisfy ones own persons needs. The choices are made that decide who one wishes to surround themselves with based upon our judgments. Judgments decide a lot but most important it decides if one needs the person, then ultimately lead to one interacting or not.

Bibliography Society andPersonalityTamotsu Shibutani, 1961Sociology104 Reader Meloy and Mitchell