Advance Course in Social Psychology

Lecture 38: Group Behaviour- Part V

A very warm welcome to all the students in the discussion of group behavior. In the previous discussions, I have talked about group properties in terms of roles, status, norms and cohesiveness. Today, I will talk about a very different aspect of group behavior in terms of group work. Group work, which is very much related to the different aspects and functions of any group that help members or any association to overcome not only the functional difficulties that members face while performing the job, it can also have some positive impact in terms of supporting the other members of the group in terms of skills, in terms of treatments to which addresses mental health issues and how the behavioral changes can help the group to become more effective and functional. So, group work is an association of members who benefit from cooperative learning and improves the overall output of the activity when compared to doing it alone. For instance, people will come together to resolve any conflict in the organization.

In one particular department, maybe there is one conflict that has evolved, but that particular department fails to resolve that conflict, then how other members of the organizations tend to come together, they form a group and tend to help the group to resolve that conflict. Now, this entails not only judgment, but also helping people to cope with different kind of or develop coping mechanisms to overcome some psychological issues as well. So, they have all the different kind of purposes to come together and offer help in form of intervention, in form of committees or in form of resolving conflicts. So, group work not only benefits from cooperative learning and improves the overall output of the activity, it is also compared or aims to accommodate individual differences, develop skills in terms of communication, in terms of collaboration and socially acceptable attitudes or create confirming standards of behavior and judgment.

The idea of group work is to foster moral practices which aims to promote positive behavioral change in the group and there are certain objectives that why this group works are being formulated. To generate a large number of potential solutions to the problem, that means to have varied perspectives to a problem and how different solutions can be offered to resolve any problem, it allow members to work on a goal that may appear too large or complex for them to handle them on their own. As I gave the example that if any department faces some conflict, then how other members of the organization come forward and offer their expertise to resolve the conflict. Allow members from various backgrounds to contribute their unique knowledge, experience or skills to the project or any task and explain their perspectives to others. That means offering and soliciting more perspectives to enhance the functioning of the group, allow members to teach and contribute to one another, provide members with a structured experience to encourage problem solving, creativity and innovation and new practices or skills that can that are applicable to the unique environmental circumstances.

Form a practical standpoint that is group work also fosters interpersonal skills that are highly valued by employers and most importantly promotes participation and interaction. So, based

on these purposes, social psychologists have identified different kinds of group work at social level, at organizational level. At organizational level, there are two types of groups, command and task groups. Command groups are composed of superiors and subordinates who carry out orders on the basis of the authority within the group. That is these groups are formed based on the authority which is being rendered to all the employees based on their position, based on their status and what kind of orders they can impose in order to make the group highly functional.

This type of group is determined through the hierarchical start of the organization and it is relatively a permanent group and undertakes certain regular activities of the organization. For example, a marketing manager having a group of sales personnel under his department. So, there is a hierarchy, there is a marketing department where there is the chief manager, then we have a regional manager, then we have a area manager and then the sales manager. So, in this command group, there is a hierarchy and there is hierarchy of orders and how every member at every hierarchy tend to interact and report to the higher authority in order to maintain the accounts. This is command group where there is hierarchy which is permanent, the structure is permanent and ultimately there is coordination of organizational activities.

Whereas task group is a group of individuals who come together to accomplish a certain task irrespective of the departments. These groups are created to capitalize the experts of different individual towards the accomplishment of a particular project. For instance, developing a shopping mall, it requires different expertise. It can be a civil engineer, it can be an electrical engineer, it can be an architect and how their expertise are pulled together to come for a common purpose. Thus, the task groups can be formed beyond the lines of hierarchical chart of the organization.

For instance, any conflict has to be resolved, then one member can also come forward from one different department, may be finance, may be marketing, may be sales and how all these members are coming together to resolve one conflict because everybody has their own expertise and how they use that expertise to resolve any conflict or issue. So, these are command and task groups. The other is the therapy groups. As I mentioned that there can be number of ways and different types of groups that come forward to offer different kind of services and solutions to not only overcome organizational problems but also personal problems in form of mental health situations. So, group therapy is a form of psychotherapy just to mention it is a psychological intervention to understand and provide treatment to the people who are suffering or having mental health issues that involves one or more mental health practitioners and deliver psychotherapy to several individuals in each session.

So, there is a counselor, there is a psychotherapist who understand people in a group with different perspectives and how they offer some services, counseling services and therapies so that people can overcome their behavioral problems or mental health issues. So, group therapy is commonly utilized to help clients develop support network, improve communication and practice themselves in the shoes of others and in most therapy settings clients explore different topics in depth and participate in activities and other approaches to group therapy that are more

specialized and issue focused. So, there is more interaction, there is more mutual understanding among members, people tend to understand and expose themselves to different kind of social and real life situations and tend to understand the other person by stepping into their shoes and finding solutions to their problems based on therapies. So, apart from command group and task group, group can also be perceived in form of therapy groups. So, the group therapy is used to treat wide variety of conditions such as attention deficit, hyperactivity disorders.

These are completely based on reactions of an individual when a person experience lot of difficulty in focusing on any issue and there is lot of distraction he experiences that is ADHD, attention deficit hyperactivity. Either the person extremely active that he cannot focus on any issue or maybe there is so much of deficiency with an individual to have focus on particular issue. It can be about treatment of depression, eating disorders, generalized anxiety disorders, understanding different issues that how small small petty issues also leads to anxiety within an individual, panic disorder, phobias, post traumatic stress disorders, substance abuse and social anxiety. At the same time it also helps group therapy also help people overcome grief, obesity, chronic pain, weight loss, anger management, domestic violence, cultural trauma and chronic illness. So, what are the key therapeutic principles of group therapy? If we talk about command group and task group, they have organizational perspectives to resolve   any organizational issue, but group therapy has more profound therapeutic principles that what they offer to people who has some behavioral issues, problems or mental health problems.

The first therapeutic principle is altruism to support and cooperate people who need help. Tharsis, they allow expression of feelings and emotions before the therapist no matter what comes to their mind, but they open up, they release all their emotions before the therapist. The corrective recapitulation of the primary family group, the therapy group is much like a family and they explore different kind of experiences and contribute to their personality and they also learn to avoid behaviors that are destructive or helpful in real life. So, this is the most important function of any group therapy that how they train people to avoid unhealthy aspects of behavior or destructive people in life and how they can   construct their own personality. A lot of socialization techniques where people come together and practice new behaviors while interacting with each other and supporting their thought patterns.

 Existential factors while working within a group offer support and guidance and help members realize that they are responsible for their own lives, actions and choices which is a very basic problem that any individual will face that any bad happens to a person, we start accusing the external world, but actually the person has to realize in his own that maybe his action was wrong which has led him to this in this particular situation or condition. So, all these principles help the person in form of group therapy. Imitative behavior, individuals can model behavior of the other members and observe and that how they can correct the behavior. If they are wrong, then that therapy can help the person to imitate. The other is instill hope that throughout the treatment process people tend to interact, share, adopt new behaviors and it instills hope that they can overcome their psychological problems and start a new life.

Interpersonal learning by interacting with people there is sharing of information and feedback from the therapist and people gain a larger or more understanding about their own life and themselves. Universality this is again an acceptance of a worldwide fact that whenever we are approaching to any group therapist, then in principle the group therapist actually makes a person experience that it is not only what they are suffering from, the whole world is suffering from some or the other kind of ails or pain. So, universality refers to being part of the group of people who have the same experiences help people see what they are going through is universal and that they are not alone. It is a way to accept that what we are and then bring some positive changes within oneself. Group cohesiveness when people interact, they become more close proximal to each other, they become more united and there is a greater sense of belongingness and acceptance.

And affordability group therapy is often affordable instead of focusing on just one client, the therapist can devote their time to a much larger group of people which reduces the cost for participants. So, the major objective of group therapy is to engage people in different kind of interactions, make people aware of themselves and other person situations, adapt new patterns of behavior and new lifestyle at group level. So, the significance of understanding the pre-principles of group therapy is that when we are talking about group behavior, it is not only applicable to organizations or to any social group situation, it can be applicable in form of therapy as well. Next comes the types of group therapies. When we are talking about different types of group therapies, then there are different type of groups which offer such kind of therapies.

They are psychoeducational, interpersonal, cognitive behavioral groups, support groups and skill development groups. And all these groups have different objectives at group level. It is not only at individual level, but also at the group level. So, the most common types of group therapies are the cognitive behavioral groups. This is one of the most usable therapy that is being used by psychotherapist to offer help people at group level.

And this kind of behavioral group centers on identifying and changing inaccurate or distorted thinking pattern, emotional responses and behaviors, where therapist helps people to align, align an individual's thought passion patterns, actions and emotions into one alignment and enhance their personality and behavior. Support groups, they are developed to join people together who are dealing with similar difficult circumstances and offers a safe place where a person can get information that is practical, constructive and helpful. It is a very practical solution to anybody's problem when people who is facing some problem and he meets and tend to interact with the person who is also facing a similar kind of problem or have faced similar kind of problem, then what kind of solution the person can derive based on the experiences. This is the significance of support groups. Psychoeducational groups, these are the groups which provide information in form of providing education in the development of healthy coping mechanisms.

And these group focus on mental health conditions and clients learn about potential triggers and how to develop healthy coping mechanisms and avoid pitfalls in the future. It is not only

about coping mechanism, identifying triggers that what leads you to a particular destructive situation. So, how to handle and avoid those triggers and maintain a composure that is the significance of psychoeducational groups. This imparts education in form of ways to avoid and at the same time to develop those coping mechanisms to overcome those problems. And the other is skill development groups.

This encourage people to meet with similar interest, build skills in various areas which are meaningful. They are designed to help individual maintain abstinence. Abstinence means to avoid not to do it. For example, substance abuse, cultivate skills and develop a healthy lifestyle. At the same time the triggers and cope with urges and solve real life problems.

These groups teach individuals to maintain a powerful effect on your psychological functioning and build confidence to sustain a healthy lifestyle. So, these are the different kind of groups. The other is interpersonal groups. As the term implies that people tend to share and focus their attention on different kind of psychological behavior and emotional problems and emphasize the curative influence of exploring the interactions among group members. The more they interact, the more they have a proximity, the more they maintain interpersonal relationship that helps them to cure their emotional problems.

In this approach the group serves as a social microcosm that provides corrective emotional experiences. People tend to approach people with similar kind of emotional problems and those people act as therapist and as well as an observer and the goal of the approach is to enable group members to gain valuable insights while learning to relate to each other in everyday life and outside of group setting. So, this is only possible when interpersonal relationships are being maintained, people open up, there is catharsis and at the same time there is observation, there is a therapist who tend to create a link between people and how people tend to develop a healthy lifestyle based on their emotional problems or overcome their emotional problems. At the same time to mention interpersonal problems are also called as interactive group psychotherapy. So, these are the different kinds of groups that we have discussed today.

In detail I will continue in the next discussion. Thank you so much. Thank you very much.