

Advance Course in Social Psychology

Lecture 40: Group Behaviour- Part VII

Hello friends, welcome back. Let us continue with the discussion related to group work. In this discussion, I will continue another form of group work that is psycho-educational groups. Group therapy in terms of psycho-educational groups are a form of group therapy that focuses on providing education through information sharing and the development of healthy coping mechanism. This kind of therapy is used at group level where people are informed about different kind of psychological issues that they face on their face itself and they encounter and they are being informed about their problems and how their family and significant others are being involved by letting them know that what exactly the patient is going through. So, in psycho-educational groups, there are informative sessions that bring family and patient together and learn about different psychological problems such as depression, anxiety or substance abuse.

Now when these disorders are being shared with the family and the patient, then they are also being made aware of the consequences of their behavioral issues and how through structured group sessions they are being made aware and are being taught to learn different kind of behavioral patterns and group activities so that they can improve their mental health issues. So, when we talk about psycho-educational groups, they are designed to focus specifically on the patient's life and the key aspect of this group is that they do not work to change the situation but rather they are being informed about what is happening in their life and what are the consequences that they are going to face if they do not change or alter their behavior. In other group therapies, they are being treated but in psycho-educational groups, patients are being made aware of their mental health issues and how they can improve themselves and if not, then what can be the dire consequences of their problems. So, psycho-educational groups reduces stress and fear while simultaneously improving motivation and feelings of self-worth.

It is not only about making them aware, during information sharing the patients also overcome different kind of fears they encounter. They have apprehensions that what if I am consulting any counselor or any counseling specialist then what can be the consequence. People have lot of apprehensions and they are hesitated to approach such therapist but based on these psycho-educational groups, people become aware, their fear is being diminished and they also tend to become open to these kind of therapies that enhances their self-worth and esteem. This form of therapy provides an excellent opportunity to communicate and establish network with other people in the group, understand the other person's experiences, how they have coped with their issues and create their own mechanism based on the experiences of the other people. In that case, when information is being given, they also create a network and that makes the recovery process fast and effective.

So, clients can learn from one another, help each other manage difficult situations and motivate each other even when times feel specially hard. So, this is how now in this kind of psycho-educational groups, people do not approach to any therapy or techniques. They tend

to come together, they tend to become aware of their own problems and then approach people through network ties that how they can enhance or improve their mental health issues or mental health problems and how they can share their experiences with other people. So, the goal of psycho-educational groups are to transfer information from those mental health professionals in attendance to the patient and family. Sometimes the family members also fail to understand the exact problem that a family member is facing, the patient is facing.

So, the family also become aware that what the patient is going through and how they have to help or have a curative influence on his mental health. It provides medication and treatment, plan support and education, offer training specially aimed at self-help and self-care for those in need. It creates a place for family to share emotional frustrations and concern about any negative impact. Even family members fail to create that kind of environment for the patient which makes them more frustrating and when they approach the psycho-educational groups then family members also find a way to handle those issues. Psycho-educational groups are powerful motivator in addiction treatment.

Simply knowing you are not alone in your struggles can make significant impact which has a curative influence and it reduces stress and fear while simultaneously improving motivation and feelings of self-worth. When knowing and interacting with people that it is not only him or her who is suffering from such problems and there are other people who are suffering from problem and how they have resolved their issues or developed a coping mechanism. They also tend to get motivated to undergo those kind of changes in their behavior and they prepare themselves for better recovery. And most importantly they facilitate greater self-insight and interpersonal functioning. And more insight about oneself that what one needs to reach at a point through treatment, through awareness that is a contribution of psycho-educational groups to an individual or at group level which makes not only life effective but most importantly interpersonal relationships effective.

The other is skill development groups or the SDGs. The goal of this group is to help acquire the skills needed to focus on one's own goals, lives and recovery. It talks about basic life skills that improving one's own demeanor, enhancing or developing skills to improve oneself in terms of self-worth and esteem that is the focus of self-development groups. These groups provide knowledge and skills for building leadership to manage conflict, enhance and take ownership of their own actions, making themselves more responsible and developing thought pattern which is more effective in terms of understanding the situation and have an effective influence in that situation. So when you are talking about self-development groups, these groups cultivate skills among people to achieve and maintain abstinence.

It is a tendency to avoid those things or behavioral patterns which are harmful to them. Assume clients lack needed life skills and allow clients to practice skills that means identify the missing patterns or useful patterns of behavior, incorporating those skills and then you practicing those skills to enhance their life such as decision making or leadership skills are sensitive to client

struggles about client's past life will help client or will help specialist to identify the skills they need to overcome those struggles, hold positive expectations for change and do not shame individuals who seem overwhelmed. In support groups, members give and receive unconditional acceptance, unconditional acceptance about what they have and what they do not have, accepting them what they are. So the group also encourages its members to reflect on their personal beliefs and behaviors. When attending skill development groups, an individual receives positive reinforcement from peers because of the skills they use and develop effectively such as emotional control, relaxation and communication and develop a knowledge base to help oneself when decisions need to be made and appropriate action taken.

Therefore, self-development groups help clients to develop skills such as anger management, mindfulness and relaxation techniques although these techniques sounds to be very general but they have a larger impact on an individual who is missing out on these aspects of behavior or life skills which stops them or inhibit them to acquire better opportunities such as during their career or maintaining interpersonal relationships. And the last is support groups. These are the groups which are very much experienced when people come together who face common issues and share their problems with each other. For example, in any community they share the experiences and are able to offer support, encouragement and comfort to other group members and receive the same in return for any community group. They are support groups only and people tend to communicate, they tend to interact with each other, share their problems and they tend to take solicit, support and all the solutions from other members based on their experiences.

Therefore, support groups provide a wide range of benefits for people with a wide variety of mental health conditions. These groups bolster members efforts to develop and strengthen their ability to manage thinking and emotions and to improve interpersonal skills that recovers from substance abuse and improve members self-esteem and confidence. Ultimately, even support groups also focus on psychological problems, depression, anxiety, interpersonal conflicts, role conflicts and substance abuse. People come and share their experiences, the solutions they have and they tend to offer the solutions to the patients and how patients in a very cordial manner tend to modify their behavior based on support groups. Further, they also provide reinforcement because once a behavior has been changed by the patient, it should be encouraged or reinforced.

Therefore, support groups reinforce positive patterns of behavior, they model appropriate interactions, respect boundaries and foster open communication. Most importantly, members provide each other with various types of help and members with the same issue come together for sharing coping strategies, feel empowered and with a sense of community. The help may take the form of providing and evaluating relevant information, relating personal experiences, listening to and accepting others experiences, providing sympathetic understanding and establishing social networks. But this kind of help is only possible when members and the client or the patient is able to maintain a reciprocal communication among each other. Otherwise, these kind of benefits or advantages of support groups cannot be availed.

This is only possible when positive interactions are being reinforced. Thus, a support group may cover, may work to inform the public or engage in advocacy. They can also propagate for better human and mental health. They can go to public level to enhance or make aware people about different type of psychological issues and how they can overcome while contacting or supporting such type of groups or communicating with such type of support groups. So, basically support groups are exemplified by community groups itself.

How they tend to offer not only help at personal level, group level, but also at public level. Further, support groups facilitate discussion among members and they tend to identify the appropriate boundaries that beyond which even the patient can also cannot cross or even the members also cannot cross and how within remaining those boundaries a better treatment can be offered to the patient. Ensure that interpersonal struggles among group members do not hinder the development of the group and of any members. They have a theoretical framework that how a group can develop or how the members can offer or change their own behavior through specific interventions and most importantly interactions. They build connections among members which is common.

They foster social interaction as a group member engage in creative activity and help clients explore substance abuse, its origins, its impact on their lives and new options for coping. So, based on this we can say that even support groups like that of any community group also offers different kind of helps through interventions, through interventions, through communications and networking and how people based on communication tend to offer feedback and different kind of ways or coping mechanisms to open up about their own problems and resolve their mental health issues and lead a healthy lifestyle. So, these are the different kinds of group therapies or group therapies which tend to help and aim to help people to overcome the different kind of psychological problems that any person face in day to day life based on interventions, based on diagnosis, based on psychotropic medications, based on interactions, based on interventions and most importantly on feedback mechanisms such as psychoeducational groups. More communication will lead to more feedback which makes the person aware of his or her own mental health and benchmark that to what level the mental health can be improved. So, these are the basic types of group therapies and group works and how group works and group therapies function in order to enhance human life while making it more to the level of optimal functioning.

So, thank you so much for this discussion. We will meet in the next lecture. Thank you very much.