Group Work Theory & Practice

Training for LINKS Groups

November 2017
Aims of the day

• To introduce/remind participants about the definitions of group work
• To inform/refresh participants’ memories about group work theory
• To explore motivations for using group work with young people
• To identify and discuss the benefits and challenges of undertaking group work with young people
• To practice group work skills
What is a group?

Social groups are made up of 3 or more people who:

• depend on each other in some way
• have their own rules, procedures and shared ideas
• are small enough for people to know something about each other
• have a shared goal

What is group work?

Group work refers to a method of social work practice which is concerned with the recognition and use of processes which occur when three or more people work together towards a common purpose.

What is group work?

It also refers to the context within which social work or youth work practice takes place, when such practice is conducted with groups.

Stages of group development

- Forming
- Storming
- Norming
- Performing
- Ending (mourning/adjourning)

(Tuckman, 1965 cited in Trevithick, 2005)
Let’s look at a highly performing group!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DI4zp7yeuMU
Group roles

What roles do people play in groups?
Roles people play in groups

• Task roles (Constructive)
• Maintenance roles (Supportive)
• Hindering roles (Non-productive)

• Multiple roles may be adopted by group members
Task/Constructive Roles

- Initiating
- Seeking information or opinions
- Clarifying
- Summarising
- Consensus testing
Maintenance/Supportive Roles

- Encouraging
- Harmonising
- Expressing Group Feelings
- Gatekeeping
- Compromising
- Standard Setting and Testing
Hindering/Unproductive Roles

- Dominating
- Withdrawing
- Degrading
- Uncooperative
- Side Conversations
- The Clown
The Dysfunctional Group

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6z5PK6H96yw
Why use group work with young people?

What are the benefits and challenges of using group work with young people?
Overcoming the challenges

How could these challenges be overcome?
Participation – Lundy’s Model (2007)

Conceptualising Article 12 of the CRC

- SPACE
- VOICE
- INFLUENCE
- AUDIENCE

The right to express views
The right to have views given due weight

ARTICLE 12
Checklist for group work

- Physical space to meet
- Food/refreshments
- Enough time
- Enough staff/volunteers to facilitate
- Usual consents, voluntary participation, travel expense etc
- Information for yp, e.g. purpose of group; open or closed; time limited or continuous;
- Contract (may need to be revisited)
- Acknowledgement of work of group
- Recording of the group’s work
- Critical reflection with colleagues
- Support from management
What other support do you need?

In terms of group work and/or participation skills development what, if any, other support do you need from NCB?

Please record on your evaluation sheet
Shallow small group...a funny moment!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NMyTmJU6E
Summing up & evaluation
Thank you for coming to today’s workshop

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