Short-Term Group-Analytic therapy with outpatients: Workshop

AGPA Annual meeting,
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Plan for the workshop

- Short presentation of a short-term group-analytic therapy (STG)
- Research evidence for the effectiveness of STG
- Selection criteria for patients to STG
- Four stages of group work
  - Engagement
  - Differentiation
  - Interpersonal work
  - Termination
- Preparation of patients
- Participants present their patient
- Participants role play the 10th session (‘Interpersonal work’)
- Discussion
- Evaluation
Group Analytic Psychotherapy

Working with affective, anxiety and personality disorders

STEINAR LORENTZEN
Short-term guidelines (Lorentzen, 2013)

- Theory, methodology, technique, clinical examples

- Group analytic theory (Foulkes), interpersonal theory /Yalom/Leszcz)

- Ideas from individual short-term therapy (f.e. Malan, Sifneos, Davanlo), Time-managed group psychotherapy (Roy MacKenzie, 1997)

- My training and clinical practice in group analysis, time-limited psychotherapy, and psychoanalysis
The therapist’s tasks

- Develop a group culture
- Engage group members and the group in the therapeutic process
- Facilitate the group process
- Maintain group structure
- Pursue the goals of therapy
- Keep an eye on the individual group members and the group
Therapy objectives

- For the patient it is to work with central dysfunctional interpersonal patterns
  - Understand existing
  - Try out new, more functional strategies

- For the group it is to develop an accepting and safe culture of enquiry
  - Explore the ongoing (repetitive?) interactions in the group, plus significant narratives presented
  - Understand more of self and others
Special aspects of therapist role in STG

- Work with a back-drop of phases

- Preparation of patients. Focus for therapy

- More structure
  - Higher therapist activity
  - More use of boundary incidents
  - More focused work
  - Group process (stages)

- Work in the here-and-now

- More attention to termination
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Themes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening, engagement</td>
<td>2–4 sessions</td>
<td>Feeling of companionship, what happens in group is unique</td>
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<tr>
<td>Differentiation</td>
<td>2–4 sessions</td>
<td>Assert oneself, develop strategies for solution of tension and conflict</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpersonal work</td>
<td>8–12 sessions</td>
<td>Confrontation, introspection, work with dysfunctional interpersonal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Termination</td>
<td>2–3 sessions</td>
<td>Loss and separation, to get enough – in therapy and life, personal</td>
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<td>responsibility for self</td>
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Engagement

- Boundary focus: external group
- Threat to individual: unacceptability
- Resolution to threat: universality, self-revelation
- Individual task vs. danger: ‘we are all in the same boat’ vs. isolation
- Group task: group identity, cohesion
- Resolution of group task: Acceptance of membership, commitment to participate
Differentiation

- Boundary focus: individual member, interpersonal
- Threat to individual: conflict, exploration
- Resolution to threat: assertion, cooperation
- Individual task vs. danger: ‘I am different’ vs. collaboration in polarizations
- Group task: conflict resolution
- Resolution of group task: tolerance of difference, resolution
Interpersonal work

- Boundary: intrapsychic, interpersonal
- Threat to individual: self-esteem, rejection, inequality
- Resolution to threat: introspection, acceptance of implications of relationship
- Individual task vs. danger: ‘Others can understand me’ vs. danger to openness (for self and others)
- Group task: understanding individual and relationship patterns
- Resolution group task: tolerance self/others, openness, equality
Termination

- Boundary: external group
- Threat to individual: aloneness
- Resolution to threat: internalize group, acknowledge loss/aloneness
- Individual task vs. danger: ‘I can exist though I’m alone’ vs. nihilism
- Group task: close in presence of separation/autonomy
- Resolution of group task: acceptance of self-responsibility, acknowledgement of group’s importance
Preparation (2-3 individual sessions)

- What to expect from the group

- What is expected of them?

- Goal(s) for therapy? Interpersonal and circumscribed

- Issues they may have to deal with (‘tasks’)

- Start building an alliance (‘bond’)

  - Easier to enter the group

  - First seeds in growing a group culture

- Contract
Interpersonal circumplex

Figure 1. Inventory of Interpersonal Problem, 8 sub-scales
Patient 231 at t0  STG  PD -
Patient 417 at t0 STG  PD -
Patient 438 at t0  STG  PD+
Patient 231 at t0 and after 7 years
Patient 407 at t0 and after 7 years
Patient 417 at t0 and after 7 years
Patient 438 at t0 and after 7 years

Dominant
Intrusive
Overly nurturant
Exploitable
Avoidant
Cold
Vindictive

Series2
Series3
References


- Lorentzen et al.. (2015). Comparing short- and long-term group therapy. 7 year follow-up of a RCT. Psychother and Psychosom, 84, 320-321

Evaluation - Learning objectives

- Evaluate suitability for short-term dynamic group psychotherapy

- Learn techniques for establishing focus, and work in the here-and-now

- Recognize aspects of different phases: engagement, differentiation, interpersonal work, and termination