

10 Curative Factors of Group Counseling

1. **Imparting of information.**
Included in this function is didactic instruction by the counselor, as well as advice, suggestions, or direct guidance about life problems offered by either the counselor or other group members.
2. **Instillation of hope.**
Pregroup high expectations for success, and hope and faith in the treatment mode, have been demonstrated to be related to positive outcomes in groups.
3. **Universality.**
The participation in a group experience often teaches people that they are not alone or isolated with the "uniqueness" of their problems which are shared by others. This knowledge frequently produces a sense of relief.
4. **Altruism.**
Group members help one another by offering support, suggestions, reassurance, and insights, and by sharing similar problems with one another. It is often important to group members' self-image that they begin to see themselves as capable of mutual help.
5. **The corrective recapitulation of the primary family group.**
Groups resemble families in several significant ways. Many group members have had unsatisfactory experiences in their original families; the group offers an opportunity to work through and restructure important family relationships in a more encouraging environment.
6. **Development of socializing techniques.**
Although methods may vary greatly with the type of group, from direct skill practice to incidental acquisition, social learning takes place in all groups. The development of basic social or interpersonal skills is a product of the group counseling process that is encouraged by member-to-member feedback.
7. **Imitative behavior.**
A group member often observes the work of another member with similar problems. Through "vicarious" therapy the group member can incorporate or try out new behaviors suggested or modeled by the group leader or other members.
8. **Interpersonal learning.**
Man is a social animal living in communities. The group functions as a social microcosm providing the necessary therapeutic factors to allow corrective emotional experiences. Group members, through validation and self-observation, become aware of their interpersonal behavior. The group, through feedback and encouragement, helps the member see maladaptive social/interpersonal behavior and provides the primary supportive environment for change.
9. **Group cohesiveness.**
Cohesiveness is defined as the attractiveness a group has for its members. More simply it is "we-ness," "groupness," or "togetherness." Cohesiveness in a group is analogous to the rapport or relationship between individual counselor and client. The acceptance and support demonstrated by the group, after a member has shared significant emotional experiences, can be a potent healing force.
10. **Catharsis.**
The group provides members with a safe place to ventilate their feelings rather than holding them inside. The process encourages learning how to express feelings toward the leader and other group members.