

Block

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SOCIAL GROUP WORK II

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EXPERT COMMITTEE

Prof. Surender Singh
Former Vice Chancellor
Kanshi Vidhyapeeth
Varanasi

Prof. Sanjai Bhatt
University of Delhi
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New Delhi

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New Delhi

Dr. Jyoti Kakkar
Jamia Milia Islamia
New Delhi

Dr. Ranjana Sehgal
Indore School of Social Work
Indore

Dr. Beena Antony
Delhi University
New Delhi

Prof. Gracious Thomas
IGNOU
New Delhi

Prof. Neil Abell
Florida State University
USA

Prof. Patricia Lager
Florida State University
USA

BLOCK PREPARATION TEAM

Units 1, 2 & 3 Dr. R. Nalini, Pondicherry University, New Delhi

Unit 4 Mr. Joseph Varghese, Christ University, Bangalore

Unit 5 Ms. Manju Kumar, Dr. B.R.A.C., University of Delhi, New Delhi

COURSE EDITOR

Prof. Gracious Thomas
IGNOU, New Delhi

PROGRAMME COORDINATOR

Dr. Sayantani Guin
IGNOU, New Delhi

PRINT PRODUCTION

Mr. Kulwant Singh
Section Officer (P)
SOSW, IGNOU

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BLOCK INTRODUCTION

The Block on “Social Group Work II” is the last block in MSW-031. It has five units.

The **first unit** on ‘Skills and Techniques of Social Group Work’ will give you an understanding of the roles of the group worker and elaborate on the various skills required for group worker and how to acquire them.

The **second unit** is on ‘Relevance of Life Skills Education in Social Group Work’. This unit describes the importance of life skills education in social group work. You will learn about the meaning of life skills education and programmes; its need and techniques of learning and how it is relevant in social group work.

The **third unit** titled ‘Programme Planning in Social Group Work’ will introduce the learners to the concept of programme planning. You will learn about the principles of programme planning and factors influencing it. You will also know about recording in social group work, its principles and types. The contents in a group work record have also been described in this unit along with some tips on recording.

In the **fourth unit** on ‘Group Work in Institutional Settings’ you will be exposed to the group work carried out in institutional settings like psychiatric setting, child welfare, hospitals etc.

The **fifth unit** elaborates on the ‘Role of Social Worker in Group Work’. Factors effecting roles of group worker, role of group worker according to the type of groups, stages of group development and the role of group worker have been described in this unit.

After going through this block, you will have a comprehensive understanding of different aspects of social group work especially in the Indian Context.

UNIT 1 SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES OF SOCIAL GROUP WORK

Contents

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Roles of the Group Worker
- 1.3 Skills and Techniques of Group Work
- 1.4 How to Acquire Group Work Skills?
- 1.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.6 Further Readings and References

1.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit you should be able to:

- understand the meaning of skills;
- elaborate on the various skills relevant for a group worker; and
- demonstrate how to acquire group work skills.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

A social worker has to understand and imbibe skills of social group work. It would be one of his or her major tasks in the job as social work often involves work with groups differing in its size and composition. What is a skill? “The term skill refers to a conscious, disciplined use of one’s self and one’s abilities which can be acquired reliably only through the disciplined experience of professional training for social group work, during which the potential group worker not only takes help in his learning from teachers and supervisors but carries responsibility in a group work agency simultaneous with his acquisition of group work theory. On the one hand the social worker has to understand his profession’s philosophic values and also draw from social work’s professional purposes. These are the roots of social group work skill. The capacity to translate values into professional efforts that precipitate movement toward the fulfillment of purpose constitutes social group work skill.” (Philips: 1957).

1.2 ROLES OF THE GROUP WORKER

A group worker plays two vital roles while working with groups: as a member and as a leader switching roles as and when tasks emerge. Membership and leadership skills are viewed jointly due to the following rationale:

For the group’s efficient functioning, the leader and his members need to be dealt with skillfully.

Similar concerns of individualistic communication emerge for leaders and members.

A group worker has to perform various functions which are broadly grouped into

(i) job oriented functions that facilitate the group to converge and concentrate towards fulfilling group's objectives (ii) individual oriented functions to cater to the personal needs of group members that ensure healthy group cohesiveness and (iii) maintenance oriented functions that ensure the consistency of group members' contribution.

1.3 SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES OF GROUP WORK

According to Trecker (1955), skill is the capacity to apply knowledge and understanding to a given situation. Trecker (1955: 36-37) also has specified skills for social group work as follows:

- 1) **Skill in Establishing Purposeful Relationships**
 - A) The group worker must be skillful in gaining the acceptance of the group and in relating himself to the group on a positive professional basis.
 - B) The group worker must be skillful in helping individuals in the group to accept one another and to join with the group in common pursuits
- 2) **Skill in Analyzing the Group Situation**
 - A) The group worker must be skillful in judging the developmental level of the group to determine what the level is, what the group needs, and how quickly the group can be expected to move. This calls for skill in direct observation of groups as a basis for analysis and judgment.
 - B) The group worker must be skillful in helping the group to express ideas, work out objectives, clarify immediate goals, and see both its potentialities and limitations as a group.
- 3) **Skill in Participation with the Group**
 - A) The group worker must be skillful in determining, interpreting, assuming and modifying his own role with the group.
 - B) The group worker must be skillful in helping group members to participate, to locate leadership among themselves, and to take responsibility for their own activities.
- 4) **Skill in Dealing with Group Feeling**
 - A) The group worker must be skillful in controlling his own feelings about the group and must study each new situation with a high degree of objectivity.
 - B) The group worker must be skillful in helping groups to release their own feelings, both positive and negative. He must be skillful in helping groups to analyze situations as a part of the working through of group or intergroup conflicts.
- 5) **Skill in Programme Development**
 - A) The group worker must be skillful in guiding group thinking so that interests and needs will be revealed and understood.
 - B) The group worker must be skillful in helping groups to develop programs which they want as a means through which their needs may be met.

6) Skill in Using Agency and Community Resources

- A) The group worker must be skillful in locating and then acquainting the group with various helpful resources which can be utilized by them for program purposes
- B) The group worker must be skillful in helping individual members to make use of specialized services by means of referral when they have needs which cannot be met within the group.

7) Skill in Evaluation

- A) The group worker must have skill in recording the developmental processes that are going on as he works with the group.
- B) The group worker must be skillful in using his records and in helping the group to review its experiences as a means of improvement.

Thus, the social group worker has many skills to master, but the important ones are discussed below:

Skills in Building Group Cohesiveness

The group worker must know his group members – their strengths, capacities, fears, problems and roles they can play in the group's progress. The following are the other factors the worker needs to concentrate upon in building himself within the group:

- Effective rapport building with the group members; to get on the same wave length with people easily and quickly
- Winning the confidence and trust of people by accepting members as they are and enabling them to see the worth of every job that has to be done in the group large or small
- Establishing a good working relationship, based on friendship and mutual confidence that would facilitate influence over the group members
- Ability to avoid splinter groups, especially sub groupism by empathizing and thinking for all the group members. The group worker has to be cautious to interpret the silence of the group members. Silence always does not denote negative aspects; it could just indicate the individuals' hesitation.
- Skill to remain cool and composed while listening to the distasteful – understanding and internalizing the fact that two people can look at the same thing and look at it differently. It is important that the worker has to strengthen his inner self without getting upset or hitting back at unpleasantness of the group. He needs to understand that this is in light of the larger good of the group.
- Capacity to get the group to willingly shoulder responsibilities rather than taking up all the burden on himself – the ability to segregate works that can be delegated and executing those which are best done by the worker.

Facilitation Skills

This involves the group worker helping the group to stay focused on the goals to be achieved, to ensure that the group members work towards a common direction.

Facilitating skill, also sometimes called the “here-and-now” of group interaction is often missed by the group workers. This is because group processes take a back seat when group interactions are intense. Also, at times the group worker may hesitate to intervene during a lively yet dispersed discussion.

However, the group worker has to acquire this skill to enable spirited group accomplishments. To help a group accomplish the goals it has set for itself, the worker will often find it helpful to guide the group’s interaction in a particular direction. By limiting or blocking a group member’s communications, by encouraging another member to speak or by linking one group member’s communication to those of other group members, the worker can guide the group’s interaction patterns. This method has been referred to as selecting communications patterns purposely (Middleman & Wood, 1990).

Helping the group maintain its focus can promote efficient work by reducing irrelevant communications and by encouraging a full exploration of issues and problems. The group worker does this by minimizing unwanted interactions and by stirring optimum search investigation of concerns and tight spots.

Skills of Information Collection and Evaluation

Information is power and this is true in working with groups too. It is handy in impacting communiqué designs in the group. Through information gathering and evaluation skills, the group worker bridges the gap between the process-oriented approach of facilitating group processes and the task oriented approach of using action skills to achieve goals and satisfy members’ needs. Without effective data gathering and assessment skills, workers’ interventions are not ground in a complete understanding of the situation. This can result in the use of premature, oversimplified, or previously attempted solutions that have not been carefully analyzed and weighed.

Requesting Information, Questioning and Probing

By skillfully questioning and probing the group worker may gather data effectively. A broad outlook to the task in question and to the pursuits of the group could be added (with this supplementary information) that could benefit the group immensely. Skills are needed in properly wording the questions – leading questions; double questions etc should be avoided. The questions need to extract information that is clear and precise. Care should be taken while dealing with sensitive issues and concerns.

Analyzing Skills

Once the data have been gathered and organized, the worker can use analyzing skills to synthesize the information and assess how to proceed. Analyzing skills include:

- Pointing out patterns in the data,
- Identifying gaps in the data, and
- Establishing mechanisms or plans for obtaining data to complete an assessment.

Synthesizing Skills

Another useful data gathering and assessment skill is blending verbal and nonverbal communications. Examples of synthesizing skills include:

- Making connections among the meanings behind a member's actions or words, expressing hidden agendas
- Making implicit feelings or thoughts explicit
- Making connections between communications to point out themes and trends in member's actions or words

Synthesizing skills can be useful in providing feedback to members about how they are perceived by others.

Listening Skills

We convey our listening skills verbally and non verbally. By appropriate feedback and playback the group worker conveys verbally whereas through his eye contact, gestures and body language he conveys it non verbally. Egan (2002) suggests that, in addition to body position and eye contact, skills that indicate that a worker has heard and understood a member are part of effective listening. Research has shown that effective listening skills are an important characteristic of successful leaders (Johnson & Bechler, 1998). Effective listening skills include repeating or paraphrasing what a member says and responding empathically and enthusiastically to the meaning behind members' communications. They also include what Middleman (1978) has referred to as 'scanning' skills. When scanning the group, the worker makes eye contact with all group members, which lets them know that the worker is concerned about them as individuals. Scanning also helps reduce the tendency of workers to focus on one or two group members.

Reframing and Redefining

Often, one of the greatest obstacles to the work of a group or an individual is failure to view a problem from different perspectives that block attempts to find a creative solution (Clark, 1998). Redefining and reframing the problem can help members examine the problem from a new perspective. Thus, a worker may want to reframe or redefine an issue or concern facing the group.

Action Skills

This includes modeling, role playing and rehearsing situations in the group. Action skills can be helpful in both task and treatment groups. Modeling refers to the worker or a member demonstrating behaviors in a particular situation so that others in the group can observe what to do and how to do it. Role playing refers to having group members act out a situation with each other's help. The two primary purposes of role playing are to assess members' skill in responding to an interpersonal situation and to help members improve particular responses. Responses can be improved through feedback, rehearsal of a new response, or coaching (Etcheverry, Siporin, & Toseland, 1987). Role playing can be a very useful tool when trying to help members improve responses to stressful situations.

Rehearsing refers to practicing a new behavior or response based on the feedback received after a role play. Because it is difficult to learn new behaviors or to diminish less adaptive but habituated behavior patterns, a member may have to practice a new response several times.

Confrontation Skills

From handling conflicts and resistance to enthusing group members, confrontation

skills could be a valuable tool for the group worker. Confrontation is the ability to clarify, examine, and challenge behaviors to help members overcome distortions and discrepancies among behaviors, thoughts, and feelings (Egan, 2002; Toseland & Spielberg, 1982). However, one has to vigilantly judge the state of affairs and about the acceptability of his interventions during confronting situations. He has to be fully aware that confrontations are forceful, emotionally charged and also anticipate strong responses. Since confrontations often involve indicating members' mistakes and limitations, the worker has to prepare the group for a candid examination on these lines by underlining the fact that ultimately such discussions aid in identifying potentials and abilities of the group.

Skills of Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution skills are needed to smoothen out frictions within the group and also with those outside the group – inclusive of social systems. There could be several grounds for conflicts among the members. The group worker should facilitate the group to consider conflicts as a factor nourishing the group's development. Conflicts, if constructive and issue based, help the group to get a clearer vision of its goals and discover individual strengths and weaknesses. It is well known that conflicts are bound to happen; through efficient group facilitation, conflicts could be minimized and antagonistic disagreements avoided.

Critiquing Skills

Constructive criticism is an important skill for the worker, for lots of learning happens while critiquing the group's progression and activities. It enables retaining the focus on the group's primary purpose. It also means appropriate questioning of the leader's inputs and interventions, contribution of members and patterns of group's functioning. Critiquing by members is healthier and many a times anticipates and prevents flaws.

Leadership Skills

This is a vital skill that is disputed by researchers – is leadership a trait or a behavior? Is a leader born or made? Despite differing views, it has been proved beyond doubt that leadership skill can be learned. However, there is no 'one size fits all' solution to mastering leadership skills. Group leaders have to constantly remind themselves that they are working with human beings each with different viewpoints, personalities and ways of functioning.

The key skill of the leader is communicating and keeping communication channels open within the group at all times. This means the leader has to involve all members in discussions – the quiet ones, the ones who may not be comfortable talking in groups or those who can be easily silenced. The other key skills of leadership are:

- Consensus seeking
- Gate keeping
- Setting standards
- Self understanding that leads to enhanced communiqué
- Inter-personal understanding that leads to understanding members' viewpoints
- Preventing disruptive behaviour such as diverting, blocking, dominating, silence, attention seeking, sympathy seeking etc

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

- 1) Mention the skills specified by Trecker for social group work.

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- 2) What do you understand by listening skills?

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1.4 HOW TO ACQUIRE GROUP WORK SKILLS?

Reach out and ascertain the qualities of individuals who are successful in working with groups. By checking yourself against this list of traits you could perhaps figure out where you stand with regard to working with groups. The most important point to be kept in mind is that no one individual shall possess all the qualities and that all of us can endeavour to imbibe them.

Keenly observing democratic leadership styles in action and understanding reasons behind all the reverence and influence these individuals possess over their groups. Experience shows that it is worthwhile observing good presiding officers and good discussion leaders. Do not stop with observation, but do take hold of the skills of competent leaderships.

Reading relevant material from libraries, authenticated websites, journals, reports etc will keep you updated on the latest in the field.

Maintaining a diary of everyday work with the group gives a written documentation for reference. It indicates the areas for improvement, when reviewed periodically. It is a tool for self evaluation if done methodically and with honesty.

Interacting with social work fraternity and with group workers in professional forums such as workshops, seminars, conferences, training programmes etc facilitates interchange of ideas and experiences in working with groups. It is a practical knowledge bank and feeds the group worker with skills largely demanded in the field.

Gain hands on training through observing a group or by becoming a member of an existing group.

Lastly, by lending a hand to others to acquire group work skills, one can constantly check and reinvent oneself about the skills needed in working with groups.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

- 1) Mention any two methods to acquire group work skills.

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1.5 LET US SUM UP

Thus group work skills described above are vital for successfully working with groups. The group worker needs confidence, love for people and a belief in team work to accomplish his task. For, “great people are those who make others feel that they too, can become great”.

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UNIT 2 RELEVANCE OF LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION IN SOCIAL GROUP WORK

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- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Understanding Life Skills education
- 2.3 The Life Skills Education Programme
- 2.4 The Indian Scenario
- 2.5 Need for Life Skills Education
- 2.6 Techniques of Learning Life Skills Education
- 2.7 Social Group Work and Education
- 2.8 Relevance of Life Skills Education in Social Group work
- 2.9 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.10 Further Readings and References

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit you should be able to:

- understand Life Skills Education and its components;
- comprehend the need and techniques of Life Skills Education;
- appreciate the role of Social Group Work in Education; and
- sketch the relevance of Life Skills Education in social group work.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Life Skills Education was evolved to equip individuals, especially the adolescents, with the aptitude to face life with its challenges and opportunities, successfully. “In the recent years enthusiasm for education about health and social issues has been growing in communities around the world. Though recognized by different names – “life skills”, “life skills based education”, “skills based health education” or “health and family life education” the central idea is shared: young people, especially girls and young women, regularly face risks that threaten their health and limit their learning opportunities. Life skills based education can endow girls with skills to manage challenging situations, particularly in the context of supportive communities and environments. Around the world, life skills based education is being adopted as a means to empower young people in challenging situations. It refers to an interactive process of teaching and learning which enables learners to acquire knowledge and to develop attitudes and skills that support the adoption of healthy behaviours. It is also a critical element in UNICEF’s definition of quality education”.http://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index_7308.html

2.2 UNDERSTANDING LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION

Life skills are problem solving ways fittingly and conscientiously employed in the regulation of our daily dealings. Found in the principles of experiential adult learning, life skills could be split into trainable, workable, components and taught to group members. Life Skills could be utilized in all of the 5 areas of our lives (self, family, job/school, leisure and community) lessons and programmes can be designed to meet the specific needs of a wide range of client groups.

Thus, Life Skills Education can be employed to take up a broad range of subjects that concern youngsters and its coverage is not restricted to a specific milieu. According to UNICEF, “life skills based education is behaviour change or behaviour development approach designed to address a balance of three areas: knowledge, attitude and skills”.

The term life skills refers to a large group of psycho-social and interpersonal skills which can help people make informed decisions, communicate effectively, and develop coping and self-management skills that may help them lead a healthy and productive life. Life skills may be directed toward personal actions and actions toward others, as well as actions to change the surrounding environment to make it conducive to health. It includes items intended not only to deal with young people’s personal identity but also to encourage them to reject, where they feel this is appropriate, comments on their behaviour which they believe is untrue. http://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index_7308.html

Life Skills Education Groups

A Life Skills Education programme is conducted with a group of participants led by a trained group worker. Whatever the type of group (occupation, youngsters, health, professional development) members begin with various skills and with varying capacities to utilize those skills. Gradually, by self-awareness and assessment of their skill levels, the members learn to assess their needs and focus on aspirations. Group members of Life Skills Education programme are expected (i) to cultivate the aptitude to draw from a gamut of problem-solving behaviours (ii) to face the tribulations of daily life with self-confidence and (iii) to grow to be well-adjusted, self-determined citizens.

Group Worker’s Role in Life Skills Education

A group worker is a trained professional, (mostly in social work) equipped with the knowledge, skill and experience in handling Life Skills Education programmes and also in working effectively with groups. He/She should be confident in dealing with a wide range of clients, not necessarily with problems but also those who seek to develop their personalities. A group worker facilitates group members of a Life Skills Education programme to:

- Periodically self-introspect, with honesty
- Think more productively
- Understand that they are not alone in their challenges and struggles
- Perceive and comprehend their ways of thinking
- Equip themselves with and utilize problem solving skills

- Balance their intellectual, physical and emotional requirements
- Build on apposite ambitions

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1) What do you understand by Life Skills Education?

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2) Briefly describe the group worker's role in Life Skills Education.

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2.3 THE LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Across the globe, Life Skills Education programmes are gaining grounds. However, keeping in mind the varying cultures and the equally varying demands of life skills accordingly, the components of the Life Skills Education have been deliberately kept broad and generic. "There is no definitive list of life skills. The list below includes the psychosocial and interpersonal skills generally considered important. The choice of and emphasis on different skills will vary according to the topic and local conditions (example decision making may feature strongly in HIV/AIDS prevention whereas conflict management may be more prominent in a peace education programme). Many skills are used simultaneously in practice. Ultimately, the interplay between the skills is what produces powerful behavioural outcomes, especially where this approach is supported by other strategies such as media, policies and health services". http://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index_7308.html

However, the World Health Organization has specified life skills for the youth in order to enable broad guidelines for life skills educators and professionals. "The World Health Organization (WHO) laid emphasis on LIFE SKILLS, which are necessary to all youth alike across the globe. In 1997 the WHO addressed this issue and a well-researched package of Life Skill Development was produced. "Life Skills are living skills or abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with demands and challenges of everyday life" (WHO 1997). The following are the ten generic skills the Life Skills Education hopes to transfer. They are five pairs of related skills.

Critical Thinking: It is the ability to analyse information and experience in an objective manner.

Creative Thinking: It is an ability that helps us look beyond our direct experience and address issues in a perspective which is different from the obvious or the norm. It adds novelty and flexibility to the situation of our daily life. It contributes to problem solving and decision making by enabling us to explore available alternatives and various consequences of our actions or non-actions.

Decision-Making: The process of making assessment of an issue by considering all possible/available options and the effects different decision might have on them.

Problem Solving: Having made decisions about each of the options, choosing the one which is the best suited, following it through the process again till a positive outcome of the problem is achieved.

Interpersonal Relationship: It is a skill that helps us to understand our relations with others and relate in a positive/reciprocal manner with them. It helps us to maintain relationship with friends and family members and also be able to end relationships constructively.

Effective Communication: It is an ability to express ourselves both verbally and non-verbally in an appropriate manner. This means being able to express desires, opinions, and fears and seek assistance and advice in times of need.

Coping with Emotions: It is an ability, which involves recognizing emotions in others, and ourselves, being aware of how emotions influence behaviours and being able to respond to emotions appropriately.

Coping with Stress: It is an ability to recognize the source of stress in our lives, its effect on us and acting in ways that help to control our levels of stress. This may involve taking action to reduce some stress for example changes in physical environment, life styles, learning to relax etc.

Self-Awareness: Includes our recognition of ourselves, our character, strengths and weaknesses, desires and dislikes. It is a pre-requisite for effective communication, interpersonal relationship and developing empathy.

Empathy: Is an ability to imagine what life is like for another person even in a situation that we may not be familiar with. It helps us to understand and accept others and their behaviour that may be very different from ourselves.

It is evident that the Life Skills are comprehensive including various areas like Thinking, Behaviour, and Emotions. The final target being self-awareness, self-esteem and accepting of others. In an individual, Life Skills develop over the years continuously in an active manner. There are many skills, which are needed to successfully negotiate each and every interaction". <http://www.leadership.fau.edu/ICSE12006/Papers/Pai.doc>

2.4 THE INDIAN SCENARIO

“In the Indian-Scenario considering the heterogeneity of the levels of childcare givers ranging from school teachers to grass root level NGO workers, the need of training are varied. The Indian Youth is currently at crossroads. India being a vast and diverse country, The Indian Youth is slowly undergoing a cultural transition in their outlook due to globalization, communication and media. 40 per cent of the one billion population of India are below the age of 16. Adolescents form about 10 per cent to 15 per cent of the population. In absolute numbers the Indian youth are a significant population of the world’s youth population. On an average 40 per cent

of the Indian adolescents are not in school, those in school are under severe stress due to a very competitive system of evaluation, heavy syllabus, and a low teacher – student ratio. Due to the above reasons motivation to stay in the schools system is very low especially in the rural areas”. <http://www.leadership.fau.edu/ICSE12006/Papers/Pai.doc>

However, after the Central Board of Secondary Education asked schools to ensure social well-being of children, teaching life skills now forms an integral part of the curriculum of almost all schools. Several life skills trainers, comprising of social workers, psychologists, school teachers, Human Resource (HR) specialists, and like minded professionals are engaging actively in Life Skills Education of varied clientele in India. Schools across the country and NGOs working with non school goers are the prime providers of Life Skills Education programmes, mainly catering to adolescents.

The contents of a Life Skills Education programme organized for school children in a rural Indian school are listed below:

- Learning about society
- Focusing on the family
- Reproductive health and related information
- Environment
- Current trends – changing social and economic realities
- Relating to others
- Self development

The sessions were put together in such a way that gender figured as the centre spread in all the themes that were taken up for discussion. The programme was designed to enable the school students to think critically about the world they find themselves in. The programme wanted to create an awakening in the minds of the students that they are the makers of their lives. They wanted to inculcate in them the habit of introspection so that they have an insight about themselves. At the end of the programme, the trainers found themselves responding to a deep need for information, counseling and understanding in the student population.

2.5 NEED FOR LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION

Acquiring Life Skills is a process that happens during an individual’s developmental years. As we all know, physical growth and development of mental faculties are two vital aspects to be fulfilled by any human being. Physical growth is visible to the naked eye in the form of height and weight, hair growth, and other noticeable changes in the child. Development is however, rather complicated involving multifaceted aspects.

Life skills calls for comprehending and equipping oneself in a different spheres of personality development such as (i) social skills (ii) interpersonal skills (iii) communication skills (iv) emotional stability (v) scholarly abilities and (vi) empathy/sensitivity to others. A child’s development in all these areas is largely shaped by the environment and the adults (parents, teachers, relatives) with whom he or she interacts on a daily basis. This process continues in adulthood also and

friends and peer group have an important role in an individual mastering the life skills. The ultimate aim of life skills is to enable the all-round development of an individual who will be able to face challenges and troubles with the right attitude and through appropriate problem solving techniques, cope with life's pressures and traumas. It is very important that the foundation for acquiring these life skills is laid at the right age and time. Life Skills Education is thus needed for equipping adolescents and young adults with the abilities, knowledge and aptitude to take on life with self-esteem, confidence and self-determination.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1) Mention the skills a Life Skills Education Programme seeks to enhance.

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2) Briefly describe the need for Life Skills Education.

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2.6 TECHNIQUES OF LEARNING LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION

As evident from our discussion above, Life Skills are applied to various aspects of life. This includes (i) Interpersonal Relationships (ii) Understanding one's rights and responsibilities (iii) Promoting Good Health (iv) Mental Health (v) Prevention of HIV/AIDS, STD (vi) Prevention of Substance Abuse (vii) Self Development (viii) Preventing suicides and (ix) Promoting Peace

To achieve this goal of imparting Life Skills Education, various methods and techniques are used by the trainers. This includes (i) Vigorous training (ii) Functioning in small groups (iii) Brainstorming (iv) Play-acting (v) Empirical education (vi) Games and deliberations and (vii) Homework

The aim of Life Skills Education is to enable the group members to develop their aptitudes in exploring alternatives when faced with challenges. A group member on attending Life Skills Education programme should be able to communicate effectively; be assertive (the capacity to stay balanced between aggression and submission); assess pros and cons and arrive at logical decisions.

It also provides environment education, consumer education, education in socio-cultural issues and peace education. Finally, the significance of Life Skills Education

is that it empowers group members in taking positive actions, promoting healthy social relationships and in building confidence in self.

2.7 SOCIAL GROUP WORK AND EDUCATION

Social group work is a primary method of social work that utilizes the group as a conduit of goal accomplishment. Group work enables its members to bring about desired changes in their life, through collective efforts. Groups, comprising of people from varied backgrounds are social worker's key channels for enabling individuals to face life with all its problems, successfully. Social workers use group work in all fields of social work practice such as workplace, hospitals, schools, correctional settings, etc. Group workers work with children, women, disabled, substance abusers, elderly, adolescents and any other individuals wanting help to help themselves. Social group work tries to find remedies for social illness and strives towards social growth and integration. Generally, microscopic groups are thought of as constructive mechanisms of social transformation and progress.

“Social group work had its origins in progressive, informal, and adult education, in recreation, in camping, in settlement houses and in youth serving organizations. Much of the support, research, programming and education in group work have taken place outside the boundaries of social work and much continues to do so, particularly in the field of education. Partly for these reasons, group work and educational objectives have always been compatible. Whether these objectives are defined, as they used to be, as “citizenship training” or “character building”, or as they now often are as “creative problem solving” or “family life education”, there is a fundamental fit between group work and learning objectives. Perhaps this is because group work, more than other social work methods, views group members as learners, whose behavioural repertoires need to be enhanced and enlarged. Individual group members are viewed as creating and, in a sense, owning their group” Ephross, J. (1985).

According to Douglas the following are the assumptions on which the practice of social group work rests:

- Group experience is universal and an essential part of human existence
- Group can be used to effect changes in the attitudes and behaviour of individuals
- Group provides experiences which can be monitored or selected in some way for beneficial ends.
- Life outside the group is in no way neglected, it tends to be put out of focus.
- Group offers experience shared with others so that all can come to have something common with the sense of belonging and of growing together
- Groups produce change which is more permanent than can be achieved by other methods and the change is obtained more quickly also
- Groups assist in the removal or diminution of difficulties created by previous exposure to the process of learning
- Groups as instruments of helping others may be economical in the use of scarce resources, e.g. skilled workers, time etc.
- Group can examine its own behaviour and in so doing learn about the general patterns of group behaviour.

Thus, a careful analysis of these assumptions reveals that working with groups enables change amongst its members at an individual and collective level. The main feature of functioning with groups in societal milieu is that of reciprocal benefits. It is assumed that individuals progress and transform as they associate with others. Group work emphasizes that its members are not restricted to only take away but also put in their contributions to the group, directly or indirectly, knowingly or unknowingly.

2.8 RELEVANCE OF LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION IN SOCIAL GROUP WORK

Having discussed about Life Skills Education and social group work, let us try and understand the relevance of Life Skills Education in social group work. It is clear that both group work and life skills have the common goal of enhanced social functioning of its members. From its beginnings, group work practice and theory has been rooted in “social reform, social responsibility, democratic ideals, and social action as well as social relatedness and human attachment” (Lee, 1991: 3). The work done in groups was seen as purposeful activity that involved a process that considered both the individual in the group as well as the group as a whole as well as the larger community. A description of American Association of Group Workers’ (AAGW) nature and functions written in 1947 clarifies group work’s philosophy:

Group work is method of group leadership used in organizing and conducting various types of group activities. While group work developed first in connection with recreation and voluntary informal education ... its use is not confined to those fields. It is increasingly being used in various types of institutions, in hospitals and clinics, in the extra-curricular activities of schools in similar situations. The guiding purpose behind such leadership rests upon the common assumptions of a democratic society, namely, the opportunity for each individual to fulfill his capacities in freedom, to respect and appreciate others and to assume social responsibility in maintaining and constantly improving our democratic society. (http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0CYZ/is_4_28/ai_83530630/pg_11?tag=artBody:co11)

Life Skills Education is thus an important aspect of group work. “To apply group work premises to Life Skills Education is to try to incorporate role flexibility, responsiveness to stage of group development, and an ability to be comfortable with the shared human condition between worker and members. One needs to treat group members with respect for their group, not as an artificial stance but as a genuine component of the group’s life. As for the participants, the group members need to be viewed as motivated and competent people who are choosing to take part in learning experiences. They learn from each other through informal group interaction, as well as from a process of motivated inquiry. The primary task of the group leader is to motivate, to facilitate, to promote and to orchestrate teaching and learning resources. The subject of learning – the course topic is important for two reasons, both for its own values and as a vehicle around which interpersonal learning, role elaboration and behavioural modeling can take place”. <http://etd.rau.ac.za/theses/available/etd-04222004-100006/restricted/chapter1MATHesis.pdf>

Radin (1975: 605-613) states that school social workers must be concerned about all children in a school and not only with those with apparent problems and that all

children should be prepared for their future roles in society. To enable the social worker to reach more than just the individual pupil, working in groups enables the worker to attend to not only the individual with the group, but the group collectively.

The advantage of attending to pupils in a group context is that there are times for individual reflection and discovery but these are usually the outcomes of some group interaction. Personal learning is shared with at least one another person. Pupils have experience of being in a group in some form or other. Thus, to use group work is to use something to which most pupils can relate. (Rooth, 1995; Kruger, 1998).

Group work provides a context in which members help each other and learn from and with each other. Very importantly, group work teaches members to function in a democratic life style. Group work is also a method of participatory teaching (Rooth, 1999), which is based on democratic practices. It promotes the empowerment of the member in the group. The methods of group work are empirical and the group worker plays a facilitator's role.

Working in groups is in itself an important life skill (Nelson-Jones 1991: 89). According to Konapka, a healthy group life has the following ingredients:

- 1) Provision for identification with equals
- 2) Provision for warmth and belonging to more than one person. Fear of the threatened loss of the one and only beloved person is always present and becomes overwhelming if a wider relationship is not established in the course of life.
- 3) Freedom to be and to express one's self and to be different in the presence of others.
- 4) Freedom to choose the friends one prefers combined with a responsibility to accept others if they need to be accepted, even though no close friendly relationship can be established.
- 5) Opportunity to try out one's own individuality while at the same time permitting the enjoyment of the uniqueness of others
- 6) Opportunity to exercise independence and be allowed to be dependent when this is necessary and indicated, as in childhood or in distressing situations in adulthood.
- 7) Opportunity to give to others as well as receive from them
- 8) Opportunity to feel that as an individual or as a group, one has the strength to influence one's own fate (Konapka; 1972: 31)

Much of the education is based on the individual, competitive learning and teaching styles. This means that members get the opportunity to learn how to co-operate, compromise and work in a group and community context (Rooth 1999; Kruger 1998). Group work has many advantages besides being the method for empirical learning. Increasingly teachers use group work and find that it is an excellent way of teaching and learning (Nelson-Jones, 1991).

Social group work facilitates members in appreciating and treasuring their colleagues and peers. They understand that the transformation in their personality is also largely due to the contributions of the other members. This leads to increase in self-

confidence, self-belief and eventually enhancement of social skills and the role of group work cannot be undermined in this process. Simultaneously, group work causes increased coverage of themes, thereby resulting in increased member involvement and interaction. Responsibility and sense of empowerment can result from involvement in group work. Pupils need to be empowered and group work is one way that aids empowerment (Rogers, 1983; Rooth 1999; Kruger 1998).

The aim of Life Skills Education in group work is to get the members work in groups rather than as individuals or as a large gathering. Within the framework of the group, members may assume diverse functions and stimulate immense amount of learning. The collective endeavor of every group member is vital. Another objective is to present life skills in the group context as component of outcome-based education. Social group work with classroom groups is a preventative field of social work and since prevention is an ultimate aim of social work in any setting, it is believed that research in a preventative area would serve as a worthwhile contribution to school social work (Konapka, 1972: 113).

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

- 1) Mention any two assumptions of social group work.

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- 2) “Working in groups is in itself an important life skill”. Discuss.

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2.9 LET US SUM UP

Thus we understand the relevance of Life Skills Education in social group work. Group experiences are indispensable requirements of individuals. The mutual and vigorous communications involving people and environment are intrinsic in social

group work. Group work aids human beings in eliminating drawbacks and strengthening self to face life effectively.

Finally, practicing life skills leads to qualities such as self-esteem, sociability and tolerance, to action competencies – to take action and generate change, and to capabilities – to have the freedom to decide what to do and who to be. Life skills are thus distinctly different from physical or perceptual motor skills, such as practical or health skills, as well as from livelihood skills, such as crafts, money management and entrepreneurial skills. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Life_Skills_Based_Education)

2.10 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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Social Group Work II

- 7) http://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index_7308.html
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- 10) <http://www.expressindia.com/latest-news/life-skills-now-part-of-school-curriculum/394750>
- 11) <http://www.leadership.fau.edu/ICSE12006/Papers/Pai.doc>
- 12) http://www.iapindia.org/iapfiles/AFSI_MODULE/life_skills.ppt

UNIT 3 PROGRAMME PLANNING IN SOCIAL GROUP WORK

Cotents

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Concept of Programme Planning
- 3.3 Principles of Programme Planning
- 3.4 Factors Influencing Programme Planning
- 3.5 Recording in Social Group Work
- 3.6 Principles of Recording in Social Group Work
- 3.7 Types of Recording in Social Group Work
- 3.8 Contents in a Group Work Record
- 3.9 Tips on Recording
- 3.10 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.11 Further Readings and References

3.0 OBJECTIVES

This Unit describes programme planning in the social group work process. Tracing the concept, principles, skills in programme planning, the Unit journeys to recording, types of recording and culminates in programme planning model. After reading through this Unit you must be able to:

- Picture the concepts and principles of programme planning in social group work;
- Prepare a programme plan for a group; and
- Perceive recording and types of recording in group work

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Careful planning is necessary for any successful group and it is a very important, ongoing group process. A well planned programme gives direction to the group and enables each member to know and prepare his/her responsibility. The group worker should possess abilities and skills to guide the members through an effective programme planning process. The programme planning process includes (i) setting goals (ii) brainstorming with members (iii) planning the programme in line with the goals (iv) obtaining the approval of the group (v) assigning individual and sub group responsibilities (vi) implementation of the programme (vi) periodic evaluation and feedback (vii) Follow-up

3.2 CONCEPT OF PROGRAMME PLANNING

Groups achieve their objectives through programmes that are split into achievable

targets, tasks and activities. Therefore, deciding on appropriate programmes becomes very important for the progress and development of group and its members.

“Programme as a concept and working tool is not prominent in the group work literature. This may be because it tends to be equated with a structured, goal-oriented approach. In reality, every group has a programme if we define it as *what the group does as a means of trying to achieve its aims*. With this definition, a decision to run a group on an existential creative spontaneity basis is as much a programme decision as is an elaborate timetable of visits, talks and structured activities. There is distinction to be made between *potential* or *planned* programme and *actual* programme. The former is what is planned in advance, the latter is what the group actually does, and the two do not always coincide.

Some basic considerations affect decisions about programme. The first two are philosophical as well as technical:

- a) *Structure and Spontaneity*: Every group has to reach some balance between prearranged structure and spontaneous development. Some groups are so preplanned and rigid that there is no scope for response to the needs of individual members and their unique group. Others are so vague and unstructured that they drift along aimlessly, without anyone really knowing what they are there for, or what they are supposed to be doing. Groups need both the security of some known structure and the flexibility necessary for learning and change.
- b) *Person and Task*: Every group is concerned with its members as people, and with the tasks for which it is met. A group with person-centered aims, as in group psychotherapy, is likely to devise a person-centered programme. A group which is highly task-oriented, whether the task is located at the individual, group or community level is likely to devise a programme emphasising procedures, decisions and the monitoring of task achievement. Most social work groups require a sensitive balance between focus on persons and focus on task. This is one reason why programming is a highly skilled aspect of group work.
- c) *Individual Factors*: Programme depends on what the members are capable of, and this varies according to age, verbal ability, motivation and self-control. In groups with a wide ability range, programme needs to include activities adaptable to individual differences.
- d) *Group Factors*: Programme takes into account fixed factors such as group composition and size, and variable factors associated with the stage of development the group has reached, and its current state. This includes group morale, cohesion, conflict and the level of commitment to task.
- e) *The Individual and the Group*: Programme should be consistent with what has been agreed with individuals and the group in the initial contract, although as the group develops, needs and interests change, and opportunities for renegotiating programme should be available. Programme involves a blending of activities which include the whole group with those which individuals undertake on their own, or in pairs, or sub groups. As a guideline, individual and pairs activities may be more needed in the early stages when group experience is rather daunting for some members.

- f) *Resources*: many activities need resources, both cash and in kind. This may be a real limitation on programme and it is unethical to raise members' expectations about exciting activities unless necessary resources will be available.

Given these basic considerations, the groupworker then faces a number of questions. The choice within this range is dependent not only on the task, resources and member capabilities, but also on the skills and capability of the groupworker. Group members are quick to sense whether the worker feels comfortable with the methods she is using, and if she reveals excessive anxiety and uncertainty it will be transmitted rapidly to others. It may make them reluctant to engage in the activity, and more vulnerable to failure. Groupworkers wishing to extend their repertoire of activities and skills by trying out a new approach for the first time, can usually do so with more confidence if they have rehearsed it beforehand in the relatively 'safe' setting of the team or a training session, perhaps using video play-back" (Brown, A; 1994: 97-98).

For people to be served effectively in a group, sound preparation for the initiation and subsequent development of that group is essential. Thorough and thoughtful planning contributes mightily to the success of social group work. Planning comprises the thinking, preparation, decision-making, and actions of the group with facilitation by the social worker. Max Siporin notes, the planning process is deliberate and rational, designed to assure the achievement of specific objectives. The programme decisions are based on knowledge of social contexts, group processes, agency policies and procedures, and assessments of clients in their networks of interacting social systems.

3.3 PRINCIPLES OF PROGRAMME PLANNING

Providing a programme of activities is one of the main tasks of a group. Planning the group's activities in advance helps a group run smoothly because:

- Members understand and accept their responsibilities
- Optimum utilization of resources
- Better coordination between group members, agency and the worker in accomplishment of objectives

Programmes in group work have to be effective since the groups' effectiveness is largely dependent on its programmes. Programme planning is an instrument in the hands of the group and the worker and its efficient use results in feasible, well thought out programmes. Programme planning in social group work has to follow certain principles, termed by Trecker (1955) as the 'criteria of effectiveness':

- Programme should grow out of the needs and interests of the individuals who compose the group
- Programme should take into account such factors as age of group members, cultural background, and economic differences
- Programme should provide individuals with experiences and opportunities which they voluntarily choose to pursue because of their inherent values
- Programme should be flexible and varied to satisfy a variety of needs and interests and to afford a maximum number of opportunities for participation

- Programme should evolve from the simple to the more complex with movement coming as a result of group growth in ability and readiness. Movement from initially “personal” to “social” or “community” concerns should be an ultimate objective if our programmes are to have a greater social significance.

A Set of Guidelines to Programme Planning

Stage 1

- What is the objective of the programme?
- What is the group members’ wants/welfare
- What are the resources accessible?
- What is the relevance of the programme to the group’s objective?

Stage 2

- Splitting the programme into smaller realizable goals and tasks
- Actual implementation commences

Stage 3

- Periodic evaluation of the programme and progressing to the next phase of the programme based on the evaluation and inputs of members themselves

Stage 4

- Reflection – giving members a chance to look back on their experiences of the programme and see how they have progressed, in the process.

3.4 FACTORS INFLUENCING PROGRAMME PLANNING

All initiatives and efforts of the group in pursuit of fulfilling its goal is considered to be a programme in the social group work context. Though one tends to equate programme with activity, let us be clear that programme is a concept that comprises of not only activities but also emotional aspects such as group bonding, communications, experiences etc. One important aspect is that all these should result out of conscious planning by the group under the guidance of the worker. Programme is thus a process rather than the periodic culmination of a process. In the light of the above, let us discuss the factors influencing programme planning:

The primary responsibility for programmes in groups lies with its group members – the group worker is only a facilitator in the entire process. The programmes have to be person-centered, catering to the requirements of its members. The group members, therefore, have to engage themselves to their best possible extent in programme planning, fully understanding that its successful implementation calls for their cooperation and contribution.

If a programme has to be person-centered, it has to respond to the wants and welfare of the group members. The group worker has to make the group understand

that (i) there is a vast distinction between the wants of the group members and their welfare (ii) This can be gathered when group members put across their views during programme planning sessions. However, when group starts spelling out ideas for the programme, the worker needs to carefully evaluate them on the basis of collective interests, fine foundation, feasibility in terms of resources and agency's objectives, feasibility of personal partaking of members and also of group's cooperation.

It is of equal importance that the worker consistently taps the wants and welfare of the group from its members. Gathering this vital information is not a one time affair to be done in the initial stages of the programme, but has to flow at periodic intervals to ensure that the programme is on the right path. The worker has to understand and also convey to the group members that programme planning is an ongoing process – that as the programme evolves in sequence, one could comprehend the group's progress as well.

Any discussion of programme in social group work must take into account such items as content and area, media of expression, and methods of conducting it. Programme area or content refers to a segment of life experience that has general meaning for the individuals at their specific point of development. The programme process is not segmental; in actual work all these are interrelated and almost indistinguishable (Trecker; 1955).

In order to grow and execute its programmes, the group has to have systems for:

- Decision-making and its support from group members
- Delegation of responsibilities and its accountability
- Develop whole-hearted involvement of all the group members, in all the phases of a programme such as planning, execution, evaluation etc.
- Direct day-to-day affairs of the agency and its members

The group worker enables the group to understand their role in programme planning and implementation – that programmes are successful largely due to the members' willingness to share responsibilities. During the planning stages, the group members should clearly assign and accept duties and responsibilities – individually, in pairs or through forming smaller committees within the group. The group worker assists the members in functioning in unity towards executing the programme.

Healthy, purposeful and friendly communication among group members is the essence of programme planning and development. The group worker's role here is imperative. He steers the group members to meaningful communication which in turn leads to the group working towards aims that reciprocate with the agency's functioning. Thus communication is a fundamental mode on the road to the group's goals.

Thus, the programme planning process is influenced by various factors such as: (i) consistent unearthing of the wants and welfare of members (ii) identification of the point wherein the programme shall commence (iii) studying and scrutinizing work responsibilities involved in programme execution (iv) delegating duties and responsibilities to various members (v) synchronization of individual efforts and striving for harmony among the group members and programme evaluation

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

- 1) Mention some basic considerations that affect decisions about programme in group work.

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- 2) What is stage 1 in ‘Set of Guidelines to Programme Planning’?

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A Sample Programme

The following is a very brief outline of a programme to help a group learn listening skills.

- The ‘Indicators’ are how the leader identified the need of the group and what skill to develop
- The ‘Activities’ are how the group learned and practiced the skills
- The ‘Skills Practiced’ breaks the skill down into small achievable steps and each activity is matched to the step it helps the group to take
- ‘The Learning’ is the aim of the programme/activity

Identify The Need	Activities	Skills Practiced	The Learning
A group has trouble listening to each other Indicators	Group games	asking and waiting for a reply listening for another person’s voice	Listening is important for having fun and achieving
• Members have trouble taking turns to make a point	Listening games & group discussion	Awareness of listening skills	What skills make me a better listener
• disagreements caused by not taking time to understand others	Problem solving game in which the group has to listen to each other	Practice of the skills learnt so far Practicing the skills Recognition for being good at the skills	The group works better when we listen to each other
• difficult to facilitate group discussions			

The above outline shows how very different activities can help the group learn listening skills. Lots of different skills can be developed in this way from practical skills like swimming to complex skills like team work.

<http://www.cdysb.ie/publications/PDF/Programme%20Planning.pdf>

3.5 RECORDING IN SOCIAL GROUP WORK

Writing and maintaining group work records is an essential element of professional social work. A recording well done saves the group worker the trouble of having to emphasize to the agency about the group's progress in various aspects. But how seriously does the social work fraternity take up recording or written communication? Let us read what experts have to say on this:

“We believe that it is important that social work educators, students and professionals focus on developing their written communication skills for a range of reasons. These include:

- Writing is a core mode of communication in many fields of social work practice. The capacity to communicate effectively in writing can enhance practice in many ways, from promoting inter disciplinary team communication to advancing the capacity to attract funds and influence policy
- Writing skills, like all professional skills, can be learnt. Just as social work professionals can develop effective spoken communication skills, so too their professional writing skills can improve through sustained attention and effort
- Written communication can represent complex matters better than speech can. So it is a vital tool for social workers, who are often involved in complex situations with individuals, families and communities and need to be able to convey the intricacies to others who may have limited first-hand experience of the specific situations. In addition, some professional writing tasks, such as completing tender documents, can require the integration of detailed and complex information in a succinct and cohesive format.
- Social workers' approach to writing should reflect the distinctive character of their professional purpose. This is shaped by the institutional context and audience, and must always be driven, at least in part, by professional knowledge and an ethical value base” (Healy & Mulholland; 2007: 2-3).

3.6 PRINCIPLES OF RECORDING IN SOCIAL GROUP WORK

Recording in social group work aims to make better the quality of service to the members. The agency could assess the quality of its service, thereby understanding its efficiency. Group records are imperative in study, research and experimentation.

Principle of Flexibility: the record must be adapted to the agency's purpose because group work practice and agency purpose are inseparably interwoven

Principle of Selection: worker does not include everything in his record but selects significant material in the light of individual and group development

The Principle of Readability: form and style are important and that clarity of expression is essential for all written material

The Principle of Confidentiality: the record is a professional document and that as such its contents are guarded by as sense of professional ethics.

The Principle of Worker Acceptance: the worker must accept his responsibility to write records because of his conviction that records have value in rendering high quality professional service. (Trecker; 1955: 208)

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

1) Mention any two principles of recording in social group work.

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3.7 TYPES OF RECORDING IN SOCIAL GROUP WORK

Group work recording is more difficult than recording one-to-one interviews because of the complex nature of a small group. In groups with a task oriented focus, recording will be concerned with tangible tasks, plans, actions and decisions. In a person-oriented group, where feelings, relationships, and non-verbal communication receive high priority, recording is dealing with intangibles, perhaps the most difficult of all to write about. Most group records attempt to communicate both content and process. Group work recording has several different purposes as follows:

- Agency requirements
- Training and skill development
- Planning, evaluation and research
- For direct use in work with members (Brown, A; 1994: 99-100).

Thus recording in group work is based on (i) Contents and (ii) Process.

Content Recording:

Numerical information on registration, enrolment and attendance of individuals and groups

Programme reports, depending on the types of activities the group is involved in.

Process Recording:

Another kind of record kept by group workers is the chronological narrative write up of the group-work process as it develops. In this kind of record each meeting of the group is described in full detail. It is a process record in the sense that primary attention is given to the participation and interaction of the members, with a view of determining the role of each individual in the affairs of the group. The major value of the narrative process record from the standpoint of the worker is

that such records help the worker to do a more effective job with his groups. Every other purpose is in a sense a sub purpose of this major one: to improve the quality of experience provided for the group. The record is thus a tool in the process of understanding the group and learning how to help it. The process records help the worker to (i) become more aware of the members of the group (ii) see emerging and changing interests of the individuals (iii) see evolving needs and how these needs are being met (iv) see the development of skills and social attitudes (v) becomes sensitive to special problems which may interfere with the individual's full use of the group (vi) it shows the variety of patterns of interpersonal relationship which take place within the group (vii) The development of the worker's relationship and role can be ascertained from careful recording of what he does while helping the group. (Trecker; 1955).

3.8 CONTENTS IN A GROUP WORK RECORD

A group record is expected to hold the following information. This is especially important in the case of a worker leaving the group and when a new group worker takes over. By referring to the group records, (assuming it is done professionally), the new worker can be relatively at ease since group records consist of information that enables him to take hold of the appropriate 'strings'.

Given below is a gist of the contents a group work record shall consist of:

- Individual behaviour of the group members
- Nature and degree of members' involvement in the group's affairs
- Source and progress of suggestions, initiatives and innovations
- The worker's role with minute details of what he exactly does in executing his responsibilities
- The worker's thoughts and feelings about the group situation
- The development, transformation and evolution observed in members and in the group as a whole
- Affiliation among the group and the agency community relationships inclusive

3.9 TIPS ON RECORDING

Thus, recording skills calls for the worker's keen observation, understanding of dynamics of relationships within individual members and among the group as a whole and understanding the importance of how group cohesiveness is built. The worker also consciously puts in writing his contribution to the group's functioning.

Recording is not difficult, but thinking and analysis that precede the actual writing is difficult. Here are some tips for recording in social group work:

- Organize a concise, thematic sketch prior to putting things in writing as it facilitates in arranging the information/facts and in the choice of the main issues
- Clear-cut language, concise sentences, frequent paragraphing along with appropriate titles all through the document assists in subsequent assessment
- All the records should be accompanied with the dates, place and time to ensure

- The dating of all entries is important because it shows continuity
- Regular summations of individual and group progress are important means for appraisal of the group's development

Check Your Progress III

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

1) What are the contents in a group work record?

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2) Mention any two tips on recording in social group work.

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3.10 LET US SUM UP

Thus, programme planning is a significant part of social group work and the group worker is expected to navigate the group with its individual members in this process.

All groups have natural processes or group dynamics and the skill of the group worker lies in developing a programme of activities which phase in with the stages and condition of the group, to provide the best possible opportunities for task achievement. Group workers need to be flexible and pragmatic in their use of programme, drawing on different sources and ideas (Brown, A; 1994).

A proper record of all his initiatives will be a knowledge bank from which academicians and practitioners alike can draw from and build upon.

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UNIT 4 GROUP WORK IN INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS

Contents

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Group Work and Child Welfare
- 4.3 Group Work and Geriatric Care
- 4.4 Group Work in Psychiatric Setting
- 4.5 Group Work in Hospitals
- 4.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.7 Further Readings and References

4.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading the unit you should be able to:

- know the role of group work in different institutional settings; and
- know the principles how group work in these settings can be made effective

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Group work is used in numerous institutions- hospitals, child welfare institutions, alcoholic and drug rehabilitation agencies, old age agencies, family counselling agencies and industries. Group work, if effectively used can alleviate the problems and reduce its psychosocial effects.

Every institution has its own ideology, implicit or explicit. It influences the way the organization leadership and other employees' view group work. It will determine to a large degree, the support, the group worker will get from institution for doing group work. The institution will also expect the group work sessions to further those goals that are set by the organization. Thus the group worker will be expected to work within the framework.

Group work in formal institutions has its own advantages and limitations. The group worker will have to understand the organizational context in which group is being done. Every organization is unique and has to be understood in its own way. This unit will introduce the different institutional settings; their unique characteristics and the use of group work in these settings.

According to Kirby (quoted in Trecker, 1972) the major areas in which the group worker performs in an institutional setting are as follows

- 1) The direct practice of social group work with small groups of clients and patients.
- 2) Working with other staff members toward helping them understand the group process in the institution.

- 3) Sharing with other staff members the group worker's observation and recommendations with reference to individual and group behaviour in the agency.
- 4) Sharing with other staff members the group worker's observation and recommendations with regard to social climate and group living factors in the institution.
- 5) Analyzing the need for and recommending the formation of various kinds of groups to meet the needs of the individual clients of the agency.
- 6) Assuming the responsibility for coordinating and enriching the recreational program along with supervising and training recreational staff and students.
- 7) Assuming the responsibility as a professional group worker for helping in maintaining the limits and standards of the agency.
- 8) Interpreting the agency programme to the community through contacts with volunteer groups, community agencies, service clubs and similar organizations.

4.2 GROUP WORK AND CHILD WELFARE

The function of child welfare is to ensure that workers evaluate incidents of potential maltreatment, supervise children deemed at risk for ongoing abuse and neglect, develop effective services to reduce re-occurrence of maltreatment, and discharge those children believed to be safe (Rittner, 2002 quoted in Rittner in Handbook of Social Work with Groups, 2004; 245). Child welfare programmes in India are reflected in the constitution and five year plans. The National Policy for children 1974 provide the much needed guidance. The constitution advocates that the State shall provide adequate services towards children, both before and after birth and during the growing stages for their full physical, mental and social development. A comprehensive health programme, supplementary nutrition for mothers and children, free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14 years, promotion of physical education and recreational activities, special consideration for children of weaker sections like SCs and STs and prevention of exploitation of children are some of the major benefits enlisted. The legislations related to the child welfare are *The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929*, *Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986*, *The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000*, *The Infant Milk Substitutes, Feeding Bottles and Infant Foods (Regulation of Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 1992* The Pre-conception and Pre-natal Diagnostic Technique(Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act, 1994, The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956, *The Guardian and Wards Act, 1890*, The Young Persons (Harmful Publications) Act, 1956.

Various governmental ministries and departments look after child welfare in India. In the Union government the Ministry of Women and Child Welfare, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Ministry of Labour along with other ministries are involved in child welfare policies and programmes. State governments run observation homes, children home for boys and girls, sishu bhavans etc. The state governments also run the juvenile justice board and child welfare committee. The civil society is also engaged in a large scale in child related issues. Many NGOs have taken up the cause of child rights, prevention of child labour, adoption services and, the care and rehabilitation of juveniles. Orphanages and homes for children are also run by

NGOs and religious organizations. It is but natural that a variety of organizations at different levels work for the welfare of the children-they being future citizens of the country. Child welfare and child rights are important areas of social policy. From social work profession point of view child welfare is important for one more significant reason. Many problems of adults are directly related to their experiences as a child. The Adverse Childhood Experience Study on about 17,000 adult participants show significant correlation between childhood trauma and negative sequences in later life. Thus to prevent social problems later on, it is important that problems of children are handled effectively and sensitively.

Group work has been used effectively to deal with many of children's problems in different institutions. We will see how it is used in different settings. It would be not be possible to cover all settings. Before we see how group work principles and knowledge is useful for practice with children its usefulness to the professional themselves has to be highlighted. Different professionals work in these organizations and often have to work together- a group activity in itself. Social workers often work with lawyers, doctors, child psychologist, policemen and public officials to solve children problems.

Group work objectives in child welfare agencies are:

- 1) Training them in alternate behaviour patterns. Many children are from dysfunctional families and lack appropriate role models in the family. Handling frustration, anger, and disappointment becomes difficult for these children leading to harmful reactions.
- 2) Training in survival skills-maintaining relationships, seeking assistance, keeping jobs etc.
- 3) Treatment for symptoms related to anxiety, depression, posttraumatic stress disorder, substance abuse and poor interpersonal relations. Many children in the street are addicted to fluids (mainly whiteners) and drugs, which need cure. Incidence of Psychiatric problems is also high.
- 4) Training in personality development especially building self-confidence and self-esteem, public speaking and ability to face personal interviews.
- 5) Recreational activities in their free time- play groups etc

Group work in juvenile homes

According to the Juvenile Justice Act 2000, two types of children need intervention (i) children in need of care and protection and (ii) Children in conflict with law. The first category are children who have been child labourers, found begging on the street and the second category are children who have committed crimes but cannot be tried in normal courts as the law does not allow children (below the age of eighteen) to be tried here. The first category children are produced before the Child Welfare Committee(CWC) which then determines what is the best course of action for securing the child's future. The CWC may order the child to be placed in a government run Children home for Boys/ Girls if they find that the family does not exist or is incapable of looking after the child. Alternatively it may hand over the child to NGO run fit institution. Either way these institution will then look after the child till he is an adult and fend for himself or herself. Meanwhile if any parent wants him back arrangements are made.

An effective child rehabilitation programme will be sensitive to the child's psychological condition and his social environment.

Unfortunately, the organizations are bureaucratic in nature and the special needs of children are ignored. Problems of the child due to ill treatment and abuse are not addressed adequately. Current research demonstrates that if earlier maltreatment occurs, most likely the child is to develop associated behavioural and emotional problems. (Heffernan & Cloitre 2000, Zanarini et al., 2002) To make matters worse often the condition of children deteriorates after they experience neglect and abuse in these organizations. The group worker should be able to take into consideration these factors when he plans his group work programme.

The purposes of doing group work in juvenile delinquents centers are -

1) It seeks to facilitate adjustment in the center

Group can be used to develop a positive attitude in the inmates about the agency. The inmate will learn to accept the unavoidable strains of life there and make use of the opportunities available.

2) It seeks to further diagnostic understanding

Individual's behaviour in a group situation helps the social worker in getting data about the inmate. This data is useful to understand his present situation and to plan his future.

3) It sought to contribute to the beginning of the treatment process

Again it is in the group situation that the nature of the inmate relationship with others can be assessed. The value systems that the inmates have are understood and its consequences are known. Through the group process the inmates receives feedback about his behaviour and gains insight into his behaviour. Greater self-awareness could be the beginning of the treatment for the inmates.

4) It sought to meet normal growth needs

The inmates are experiencing a crucial developmental phase in their lives and confinement to the agency can be frustrating. Opportunities for making choices, self-expression, exhibiting leadership and participating in activities could help them develop healthier personalities.

5) It seeks to influence the institutional milieu

Obtaining opinions, feedback and views of the inmates improves the agency climate.(quoted in Trecker, 1972)

Example of group work in juvenile delinquent

Group approach to intervene in client problem is used in an agency for juvenile delinquents. The agency is a fit institution under the Juvenile Justice Act, 2000. It is allowed to reside delinquents who have been ordered by the juvenile justice board to be placed in institutions for reform and observation. Most inmates are from economically backward and dysfunctional families. Often families are unwilling to accept them after the police charge them with a crime. Arrested for crimes and public humiliation as a result of it, and bitter experience in the police station and with the police causes trauma to the juvenile. His self esteem and confidence is negatively affected. There is a need therefore to reconstruct his personality.

The agencies training programmes and activities are done in groups. They are open-ended groups which do not go beyond the use of groups in a very general way. But group work is used in the weekly meeting this agency has with the inmates. It is held every Sunday with the director and the inmates only. Other staff members are not allowed so that free communication takes place in the group. The aim of the group sessions is to empower the inmates by giving them opportunities to participate in the functioning of the agency. Secondly, there are often problems between inmates as they live together in the agency. There are quarrels and fights between inmates. Thirdly, many issues related to division of responsibilities and common problems faced by inmates are addressed through group work. Often, there are complaints about the staff members' actions which the inmates find offensive. The aim of group sessions is to address these issues. There is no restriction on the members raising any issues if they are done so in a proper way. But the issues are to be resolved in democratic and participatory way. The director who is also the group worker discusses the matters raised by the members. The aim is to train the inmates in democratic ways of behaviour and control of frustration and anger. Further the self esteem and self confidence of the inmates is improved as they are treated with this respect. The group feedback improves the agency's functioning as bureaucratic and insensitive practice are identified and set right. This group can be termed as a training group which trains new behaviour to the inmates.

Group work with street children

An international NGO conducts a week end camp for street children. Street children many of whom come to their open shelter- shelter for street children are without any compulsions or rules and regulations. Children are free to come and leave the shelter whenever they please. The shelter provides them facilities to sleep, to take bath and watch television. Many children become attached to the agency and to the staff members. Once a rapport is established the staff members' attempts to influence the child's behaviour through various life skills and survival skills are common. A variety of means are used to do this- activities mainly group based, games and sports, film shows etc.

An important element in the education of street children is organising an annual camp. The annual camp is held for three days in a location away from the city. The location has an informal situation again with minimum restrictions- only time for various activities are fixed and children are not allowed to hurt each other. Otherwise the campers are allowed to move freely and act without restrictions. Learning sessions are organised where information about various issues are given. Issues are directly related to the life of a street child. Issues like HIV/AIDS, substance abuse and vocational trainings are discussed. Animators who can communicate skillfully with the target group conduct these sessions. Subjects are presented in very simple and informal way. Question regarding the subject is thrown open to the audience and they are encouraged to try answer them. Clarifications are given when necessary. The sessions prove to be beneficial to the campers.

In between the sessions camper spend their time watching movies and playing games. Some climb the coconut trees and pluck coconuts. Others even indulge in habit of inhaling whiteners and smoke.

The agency has adopted this strategy to reach to the most vulnerable and at the same time the most unreachable section of children. Street children for all the trauma they experience in the street still prefer to be free and away from the fetters

of the institution. Thus the agency has modified its institutional approach to the open approach.

Group work has been also modified in line with this approach. No longer does the group worker insist on the group meeting on the predetermined place and time regularly. However, most of the principles of group work can be observed in the approach. Principles of acceptance, group self determination, functional flexible organization are used with suitable modifications. Self-help and mutual aid are stressed. Members are encouraged to help and learn from each other. Networks among the children are encouraged to substitute for families as a support system. mentoring by 'senior' street children of the younger children is done purposefully.

The approach of the agency can be seen as a innovation in group work in institutional settings. Its adaptation of the group work is creative and can be used in other agencies.

Group work with parents of mentally challenged children

An NGO work with Spastics children organizes support group for the parents of the children of mentally challenged. A staff member of the agency says that the parents of these children need treatment as much as the children do. Newly enrolled parents are encouraged to join existing groups. These groups are meant for sharing and learning session. Parents are often in the state of denial about the condition of their children. They cannot see why this should happen to them and their children. Parents are depressed and anxious about the future of the children. They do not know how to react when their children are unable perform the actions that other children are able to do. Answers to most of the problems are found in the group-shared knowledge and from the experiences of other parents. The group facilitates the process of universalization of experience and the installation of hope.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

- 1) What are the group work objectives in child welfare agencies?

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4.3 GROUP WORK AND GERIATRIC CARE

Geriatric care is becoming important in the present world as people are healthier and live longer. The problem is more in Western countries than in India and other developing countries. In India the breakdown of joint families, rise of the nuclear families, individualism and lack of living space in urban areas have made the care of old age a challenge to society. The government of India has list of about 1000 old age homes in India which provide free care while others do so on a paying basis. The number of old age homes are likely to increase in the future.

Old aged persons suffer from a number of mental and physical ailments. More

importantly, their social situation and their somatic condition affect their physical condition. They need special care and attention. According to Corey and Corey(1982;348) some of the major characteristics of the old aged are-

- 1) Intense loneliness and social isolation; loss; poverty; feeling of rejection; struggle to find meaning in life; dependency; feeling of uselessness, hopelessness and despair; fear of death and dying; grief over other people's death
- 2) Difficulty in reaching the old aged and greater resistance to counselling and other intervention.
- 3) Short attention span
- 4) Medication induced problems of concentration.
- 5) Poor reality orientation
- 6) Poor attendance at group sessions
- 7) Need for support and encouragement is greater than that of confrontation
- 8) Greater need for being listened to and understood.

The types of group that can be organized for the aged are the following.

1) **Support group**

These groups can give psychosocial support to the members which will address the problems of social isolation and loneliness. Very often the elderly live together but have minimal interaction because of some of the problems mentioned above. Groups bring the members together and promote interaction. Often the focus of discussion is the feelings of hopelessness, uselessness, despair and regret over past events.(Susan Rice in Greif and Ephross,2005; 152)

Many group activities have been suggested - going on an imaginary trip with the other members, picking up a new name and discovering what it means to them, drawing picture of yourself and your family and describing pleasant experiences of the past(Corey and Corey, 1982;343). Reminiscencing in an important process for the elderly and is proved beneficial for them. It can be in the oral or written form. Butler called reminiscences as 'a naturally occurring, universal mental process characterized by the progressive return to consciousness of past experiences and particularly the resurgence of unsolved conflict, simultaneously and normally these reviewed experiences and conflicts can be surveyed and reintegrated. (Quoted in Campbell in Gravin et. al.2004; 281). However Campbell also mentions that not all want to review past experiences and the technique should be used based on the need and willingness of the elderly themselves. Another technique used is to list down the various items related to the life of the members- Most stressful situation, aspect in the personality one want to change and something one wants to self disclose (Corey, *ibid*; 354)

2) **Recreational group**

These groups can be used to enable the elderly spend time in an enjoyable manner. Activities can include group games which will involve all the members of the group either as direct participants or as a team. Depending on the physical and mental condition games can be chosen.

3) Therapeutic groups

Therapeutic groups include standardized and non-standardized group therapies. The standardized group therapies are Dialectical behavior therapy and Cognitive behavioural therapy while the non-standardized therapies use non structured means focusing on emotional condition of the members and life review. Studies have found these therapies to be useful. (Campbell in Gravin et.al.; 2004;278-280). Members have been empowered by these group experiences, reducing isolation and achieve greater control and meaning in their lives.

Group workers who have worked with elderly found that much of the “information” about the elderly are wrong and based on false assumptions. Some of the false assumptions include (1) The inability of the elderly to change for the better (2) Ability to contribute positively to the betterment of others (3) Willingness of the elderly to take part in group activities. On the contrary group have been found to be generally beneficial to the elderly.

4.4 GROUPS WORK IN PSYCHIATRIC SETTING

Group work is an important component in the treatment and care of mentally ill people. It is being increasingly used in mental health setting in India and abroad. The incidence of mental illness is high in India. A trend in the care of mentally ill which is influencing the practice of group work is de-institutionalization- increasing numbers of mentally ill people were being taken care in the families and in their homes rather than being confined to the hospital. (Gravin in Greif et al.; 2005)

Some of the characteristics of the seriously mentally ill are-

- 1) Many suffer from multiple problems- Mental illness with substance abuse or alcoholism.
- 2) Severe mental illness limits the ability to cope with stress and function adequately in stressful situations.
- 3) They are unable to perform daily tasks.
- 4) Their behaviour is unpredictable leading to difficulties to the family members and others
- 5) Incidence of homelessness and destitution is high
- 6) Many of them having exposed to drugs and alcohol exhibit aggressive and rebellious behaviour which makes managing them a big challenge to the social workers and other professionals. Gerhart, 1990, quoted in Garvin in Greif, 2005; 32)

According to Rostov the goals of group work in psychiatric settings are:

- 1) to socialize including forming satisfying social relations, establishing an awareness of others, learning and relearning social skills
- 2) to offer ego supports and develop ego strengths as well as broadening interest and scope of activities, building self confidence, self esteem, self worth, achieving tangible things, acceptance..
- 3) to test and see cause-and-effect relationship

- 4) to increase responsibility, develop good judgments and self control and handle group living problems
- 5) to influence one another in a positive way, develop better morale , and challenge group hostility
- 6) to feel and exert some control over one's future
- 7) to adjust to a new mode of living and interrupt the deterioration process and counteract the regression of institutional living
- 8) to prepare and test for discharge and return to community life
- 9) to promote insights, develop the proper perspective on problems and feelings, release and drain off tensions
- 10) to accept one's illness and prepare for and use the individual and other therapies more positively
- 11) to increase the opportunities for observation and diagnosis by the staff. (quoted in Trecker,1972; 178)

Research available has indicated that group work has been useful for the members. George Getzel surveyed the available research and summary of his findings are presented here. Some of the research he surveyed -Moore and Starkes observed that the use of group work with mentally ill individual in short stay homes increased their capacity to avail its services. In other words the organizational milieu improved when group work was used. Somewhat similarly, Robert and Smith found that group work created a sense of community in the psychiatric ward and improve their capacity to adjust to the external environment. Armstrong who observed that groups do prepare the mentally ill for the future did increase their capacity has supported these conclusions. Group work has also been found to be useful in the treatment of mental illness.

Garvin suggests principles, which has been found useful in the process are:

- 1) Groups sessions with the mentally ill should be highly structured, meaning that the group worker should take control of sessions by planning the activity well. Patient's condition does not generally allow them to take initiative and contribute to the session beyond a certain level. Hence, it will be upto the group worker who has to plan how he is going to give his presentation to share information, identify problems and resolve the various issues.
- 2) Training the members in new skills is an important component in the treatment process which while increasing their capacity to become self reliant to the extent possible also increases their confidence.
- 3) Each group session should be a rewarding one in the sense that the members should derive some pleasure and enjoyment from it. Patients may be undergoing significant stress to attend the session and unless they feel good they may not want to attend the sessions. A game, a play, a music or a craft may be ideal activity.
- 4) The group worker must be able to create a sense of accomplishment and achievement in the members which can be done by teaching a social skill or improving on the existing skill.

- 5) The group worker should also be careful that anxiety producing events and actions should be avoided and be prepared to deal with them. For example, the abnormal behaviour of one of the members like hallucinations, will create fear in others. The behaviour should be explained to the members, if possible or else avoided altogether.

Example of group work in mental health setting

Group sessions were conducted for patients in a mental health setting for Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD). As you know OCD is a neurotic disorder that compels individuals to repeat specific behaviour though he or she has no desire to do so. It may affect 2 to 3 percent of the population. The main activities were role-plays, counselling and skill training. At the end of the group sessions the researcher finds that adherence to treatment and social skills are improved. (George, Tony Sam, 2002)

4.5 GROUP WORK IN HOSPITALS

Hospitals are important settings for social work practice. Psychological factors and physical health are related. Adverse psychological negative factors can worsen the health conditions of the patients. The recognition that the healing process is more than what the medical model advocated is wide spread in India and more so in the developed countries. Getzel notes an increase in the interest in group work practice and corresponding increase in the health system 's efforts to make group work more responsive to the clients need.(Getzel in Garvin ;2004;196).

Another important factor is the growing importance of multidisciplinary teams which will address the various dimensions of the illnesses and its effect of the patient. Teamwork, therefore is an important method of work in health care settings. Thirdly, group work is seen as humanizing the bureaucratic system and giving holistic care for the clients. Lastly group work is cheap and effective in disseminating information to the clients.

Type of groups that are used in the hospital are:

- 1) **Educational Groups-** Educational groups disseminate information about the disease and its effects on the patients. They educate the person about the causes of diseases, its effects on the body, its pattern of progression and its debilitating effects. They are trained to avoid those behaviour patterns that will worsen the conditions. Adherence to the treatment process like taking medicines and taking the necessary tests are taught. For example, cancer affected individuals are told about the cancer and its treatment. In the sessions the group members are educated about the various aspects of cancers- its causes and its effects. Fears about early death, pain and disfigurement are discussed. Patients fear about the effects of chemotherapy on the body and hair are discussed. Clarifications and doubts are removed. Often it is the members themselves rather than the group worker who provides knowledge to the group members. Experiences are shared in the group to help others.

The free sharing of experiences and information is more an effective tool for educating the patients rather than through other methods

- 2) **Support groups-** These groups provide the necessary social and emotional support to the patients. Often the experience of knowing that a potentially life threatening illness is shocking to the patient.

Weissman defines 15 coping strategies in cancer patients but the same coping patterns have been applied to other types of patients(Lillington, Barbara: !985)-rationalization; seeking of additional information; sharing concerns with others; Displacement; confrontation; Fatalism Acting out ; repeating previous behaviour; Tension reducing behaviour like taking alcohol ; social isolation; blaming others; compliance to authority and masochistic surrender. Many of these coping strategies have a negative impact on the psychosocial health of the patients.

Group work can enable the patients to have an appropriate coping mechanisms keeping in mind the individual's needs and her environment. It will result in better quality of life and better adherence to treatment programme. Universalization of the experience and identification with others are important processes which take place in the group. Newcomers whose have been recently diagnosed with cancer are relieved to see the cancer survivors who have successfully battled with the disease. Cwikel and Behar(1999) study of intervention in cancer patients found that group interventions helped in the treatment phase.

- 3) **Training groups-** Training groups focus on teaching new social skills to the patients which would help them after they are discharged from the hospitals.

Practice principles health settings

Daste and Ross (in Grief and Ross;2005) make following suggestions:

Firstly, Group work in health setting needs to understand that patients suffer from pain and fatigue due to illness and often due to their treatment. She should therefore encourage patients to attend the meetings but not use excessive pressure.

Secondly, the group worker should be flexible in her approach to group. The treatment cycle may vary with person to person and therefore the time period of attending the group sessions cannot be specified.

Thirdly, individualization of clients is another important aspect, as client's characteristics will differ in terms of stages of disease, social support available in family, community and workplace and the psychological condition. Fear of death, fear of disease recurrence, problems related to treatment (pain, changes in appearances, fatigue), changes in relationship and economic issues (income, future job prospects, costs of treatment,) are important concerns that group worker must address.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

- 1) What are some of the goals of group work in psychiatric settings given by 'Rostov'?

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4.6 LET US SUM UP

The practice of social work in different settings has been described briefly and important practice principles have been highlighted. The list is not comprehensive and as group work in its generic form can be practiced almost anywhere. Also institutions differ in many ways even when they are dealing with the similar problems. This will no doubt influence the practice of social work. The group worker would therefore be flexible in his approach. Group work practice has to adapt to the institutional requirement and clients need.

These are some of the important institutions that group work is practiced. The practice of social work in different settings has been described briefly and important practice principles have been highlighted. The list is not comprehensive and as group work in its generic form can be practiced almost anywhere. Also institutions differ in many ways even when they are dealing with the similar problems. this will no doubt influence the practice of social work. The group worker would therefore be flexible in his approach. Group work practice has to adapt to the institutional requirement and clients need.

Group work is certainly being practiced in many institutions in India. But as mentioned earlier mostly non-professionals are practicing it in a generic form and in majority of the cases no particular theory seems to guide the practice. More importantly, no efforts are made to evaluate the process. Records maintained convey bare minimum from which nothing very significant can be learnt. The benefits of group work are evident. But there is need for evidence to show the importance of group work in these settings. Professional social workers have to work towards that goal.

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UNIT 5 ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKER IN GROUP WORK

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5.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- comprehend group worker's roles from different perspectives and along different dimensions,
- assess your functioning as a professional within your practice setting and with specific client groups ,
- improve your professional inputs in group work settings effectively,

5.1 INTRODUCTION

You may look at this Unit as a recapitulation of all that you have learnt about the method and practice of social group work, especially, in terms of what a group worker does in different kinds of groups, within the context of values and philosophy of social work profession.

Social workers adopt many roles to achieve their goals of social justice, the enhancement of the quality of life of people, and the development of the full potential of each individual, family and group in society. Some social workers act as planners and developers of services. Others manage services and try to ensure that systems work smoothly. Some act as advocates and negotiators for those discriminated against or unable to act for themselves. Other social workers work as therapists with individuals, couples, families and groups as they deal with issues that arise throughout their lives. Some social workers act as information givers, providing enquirers with information about a large range of resources and services. In some areas of practice, such as corrections and child protection, social workers make assessments of situations and may write reports with recommendations that may affect the lives of those with whom they work.

The very fact that social group work has been acknowledged as a method of social work implies that group work method shares with other social work methods the goal, basic premises, values and beliefs, generic principles and interventional strategies of social work profession. The concept of 'role' is widely used to clarify group worker's authority, responsibilities, functions, and tasks; thereby highlighting the impact of group work practice on persons who come together as members of a group.

For the sake of convenience, the term 'group worker' in the masculine, rather than 'social worker in group work', will be used throughout the following discussion.

5.2 CONCEPT OF ROLE AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR A GROUP WORKER

Role and status are two important concepts which prove to be valuable in explaining the responsibilities, obligations and power that devolve on the group worker in his capacity as a professional associated with some social agency.

Role: Definitions

The dictionaries define role as 'the actions and activities assigned to or required or expected of a person'; 'normal or customary activity of a person in a particular social setting'; and, 'behavior in relation to a specific function or task that a person (the group worker) is expected to perform'. The roles are concomitant to a status or a social position. A set of expectations govern the behavior of persons holding a particular role in society; a set of norms that defines how persons in a particular position should behave.

As a sociological term, a role is described as a comprehensive pattern of behaviour that is socially recognized, providing a means of identifying and placing an individual in a society. It also serves as a strategy for coping with recurrent situations and dealing with the roles of others.

The social 'worker' is an achieved status, a position that a person assumes voluntarily which reflects personal skills, abilities, and efforts. Roles associated with this status are governed by the norms, standards and professional ethics.

A role, therefore, is a series of actions which guide and determine our behaviour according to what is expected of us in a certain situation. Roles generate consistency and predictability of behaviour. All roles are functional in that they serve some purpose.

Each social status, further, involves not a single associated role, but an array of roles or role-set, that is, a complement of role-relationships in which persons are involved by virtue of occupying a particular social status. While working with groups the social worker performs a variety of roles, depending on different situations, groups and persons. However, the roles remain relatively stable even though different people occupy the position of a group worker.

The discussion of roles of group workers, therefore, is useful in conceptualizing their activities, evaluation of professional interventions, and training of new professionals.

Roles of a social worker working with Groups

Widely quoted authors Compton and Galaway (1984) focused on social worker's,

interventive roles whose enactment meant the translation of expectations (of the profession) into behaviour. These roles refer to the behaviours through which the client – an individual, a family, a group or a community – expects the worker to help accomplish goals, agreed upon mutually by the client and the worker. The roles conceptualized by the authors include the following:

- a) **social broker** – connecting the client system with the community resources based on broad knowledge of community resources and the operating procedures of the agencies; the worker may bring the specialized resources to the group; referral is a basic part of enactment of the broker's role.
- b) **enabler** – assisting clients to find coping strengths and resources within themselves to produce changes necessary for accomplishing the stated objectives with the supporting and enabling function for the client, whether individual or group; for example, the worker who assists a group of residents in a community in thinking through the need for and then in identifying ways of establishing a day-care centre; who helps a group to identify sources of internal conflict and influences blocking a group's goal achievement and then to discover ways of dealing with these difficulties is serving as an enabler in relation to the group. Encouraging verbalization, providing for ventilation of feelings, examining the pattern of relationships, offering encouragement and reassurance, engaging in logical discussion and rational decision-making are other avenues through which enabler's role may be enacted. (Compton & Galaway, 1984, p. 430)
- c) **teacher** – providing groups with new information necessary for coping with difficult situations, assisting group members in practicing new behaviour or skills. It is different from broker's role as it implies providing additional resources to members' environment; for example, supplying information about low cost nutritional diet; informing parents regarding child development for coping with difficult problems of children; providing vocational guidance to adult patients requiring rehabilitation after loss of limbs. Teacher's role helps group members make informed choices and cope better with social reality. One important dimension of this role is role-modelling - offering to group members a model of behaviour, of communication and relating.
- d) **mediator** – efforts to resolve conflicts that may exist between the client system and external systems like other persons or organizations by finding a common ground on which they might reach a resolution of the conflict (utilizing techniques of constructive conflict resolution); for example, residents' group wishing to secure a playground but not having adequate political clout to do so.
- e) **advocate** – Speaking for the client (individual, family, group or community) by presenting and arguing the clients' cause. It becomes essential when working with client-systems who belong to disadvantaged and marginalized groups in society, are oppressed due to structural social inequalities, or are invisible and voiceless. Advocacy is becoming increasingly popular role of social workers in the context of focus on social justice concerns and human rights. Unlike other roles, advocacy can be used without direct involvement of the client-system.

Besides these roles conceptualized by Compton and Galaway, others mentioned in social work literature include the roles of Organizer (covering planning and implementing action), consultant and facilitator. The role of facilitator is relevant in the changed perception of group members as interdependent entities engaged in

mutual aid based support groups and self-help groups which require minimal professional intervention.

On one point all the experts agree that the roles mentioned above are neither discreet entities nor comprise an exhaustive list. There is often blurring of boundaries and hence overlap. The roles also get into a new constellation as and when required by the demands of the situation, purpose of the group (the client) and the dynamics emerging out of interaction among the three basic elements of group work practice, that is, group (along with its members), worker and the social environment.

5.3 GROUP WORKER AS A LEADER OF THE GROUP

One of the frequently debated dimensions of the role of a group worker is that of leadership. While some authors perceive group workers in the role of group leaders others focus more on the worker's 'helping' role. A brief exposition of both the perspectives follows below.

- A) Leader refers to a person who is designated to exert positive influence over others. The process and the function through which he does so are defined as leadership. Leadership is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the group in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent. Leadership is critical—for the vision and to see the commonalities; to see the group through; and to identify and mobilise resources for the group.

The group worker occupies the position of a leader on account of his employment with the social agency; the position which gives the worker authority to accomplish certain tasks and objectives, based, in turn, on professional knowledge and skills.

As a leader, the worker is the '**central person**' in the group, often being the person who formed the group and to whom more communications are made than anyone else. At the initial stages of group formation, the worker decides about the membership, structure and the rules of conducting the group sessions. Even later, if the members are not sufficiently confident, the worker may have to play an active role in guiding members to take necessary decisions about group structure, norms and tasks to be performed by different members.

Another facet of the role as a leader is that the worker acts as an '**influence person**'. 'Influence has been defined as the general acts of producing an effect on another person, group, or organization through exercise of a personal or organizational capacity. Influence is powerful in that it can produce change, persuade or convince, overcome obstacles, motivate and bring about attitudinal changes. As a leader and an influence person, the worker's input is to create a climate favourable for the needed work (achieving the group goal), heighten the motivation of those who need to work, 'provide a vision' for the work to be done together, and deal with the resistance involved. An important base for influence is the skill and knowledge of the worker in developing and using relationships with a variety of persons in a variety of situations. The relationship between the worker and the group members is a major source of a worker's influence. Influence can be exerted by those who know about and can use the planned change process. Influence derives from understandings about human

development, human diversity, the variety of social problems, and the availability of services and resources. (Johnson, p. 89)

The real power of the worker arises, therefore, from his capacity to influence situations within the group - to influence, guide and direct group processes and interactions within the group. The fact that group work is described also as 'guided group interaction' goes to validate the group worker's role as a leader who guides as well as directs group situations and processes so as to achieve group goals. The worker is an important influence on members' behaviour, interpersonal relationships, patterns of communication, on roles members are willing to perform, and on realization of group's purpose. The worker may, for supporting the group's purpose, influence persons and systems operating in the external environment of the group in the form of negotiation, mediation, referral, and advocacy.

Despite the fact that the worker has authority and power to influence the group processes, the worker is bound by professional ethics or code of conduct to use this power in the service of the clients, that is, the group members and not for his own ends. Workers need to be aware of the nature of the power and influence they wield in relationship with the group members. Every effort needs to be made to guard against the potential for abuse of power with the clients (group members). These two facets of group work functions, namely, expertise and its selfless use for the benefit of group members place the worker at a distance from the members. Although the worker participates in the group processes, he is not a member of the group in the same way that the other participants are. Unlike the group members, a worker is mandated to participate in the group on account of his professional understanding of the members' needs and interests. The worker, in fact cannot deny authority devolved on him. "Reluctance or refusal by the group worker to provide leadership to act on his authority can be very damaging at critical stages of transition when the group rightfully looks to the worker for guidance, reassurance and structure". (Benson, p. 38)

- B) The other view point focuses on the worker in the helping role. The worker is seen in the group as an **enabler** to do things *with* the group rather than *for* the group. His influence, it is claimed, is indirect rather than direct. A great deal of facilitation may be done nonverbally, with eye contact and a nod to someone who is trying to participate or a smile when a member has made a valuable contribution. He works through the members of the group, helps members to determine group's objectives and purpose; helps them to develop group-feeling; acquire an understanding of their capacities and limitations; recognize internal conflicts and problems and to resolve the same with the worker's help. The worker helps the group to identify indigenous leaders to take responsibility for group's effective functioning. (Trecker, p.26)

Another role which is preferred by those favouring a non-leadership stance is that of a **facilitator**. The group worker is not seen as the only expert in the group. In fact, each group member is a potential leader and helper for the other members. The primary task of the group worker is to facilitate the group process so that the group becomes a prime influence on the behaviour of the group members. Facilitating the group process involves motivating and assisting members to participate actively and collaboratively in the process because the primary means of help in the group is the support and challenge members give to each other, supplemented by the

worker's inputs to the members' work. The group dynamics comprising of interactions, relationships, communications, and role performances within the boundaries set by the members themselves by definition, is the prime source of change, growth and satisfaction. The worker facilitates this process to run smoothly, without conflicts and road blocks so that members can benefit from positive and constructive group experience. The group worker makes it possible that the group becomes a mutual aid and mutual need-meeting system, a primary source of help.

In the role of a **teacher** the worker teaches the group how to function as a group. The group members, identifying with the worker, are likely to learn roles of a leader. Leadership will shift during the course of a group's life with several members taking turns as leaders, or sharing leadership depending on the session or content.

In a support group of parents of disturbed children, the worker and parents both perform the role of experts, though in different spheres. The worker has to appreciate the expertise of parents in the context of their experiences of having a disturbed child. In encouraging and guiding one parent, the worker shares his helping role with other members (parents) of the group.

The aim of the facilitator is a) to establish the conditions and trust in the group whereby members can help one another and then to 'get out of the way' to allow them to do it; b) to benefit the persons in a group through making as full use as possible of the potentials of the group as a medium for help. Although, the extent to which this is possible will depend on the type of group in question. (Whitaker, 1985) In the final analysis, however, the facilitator has ultimate responsibility for the group and can never give this over.

Social group work is often best done by combining these roles. A competent worker will move from one to the other as needed by the group. It is important not to be more active, not to be a leader or a teacher, when the group can do just fine with a facilitator or enabler. The idea of many groups is to have members exercise self-determination and learn how to make more effective decisions. The achievement of these goals is threatened by a dominant group worker. It is also important to recognize when the group needs a leader and to act effectively if so, or to teach when the group needs to learn new ways to interact or need new information. The most important thing is to be aware that groups have different needs at different times in their development, and that different groups need different mixtures of these roles. Three main activities of the worker, described first by Benne and Sheats in 1948 (cited by Benson, p.70) whether as a leader or a facilitator/enabler include task, maintenance and personal functions. Task functions refer to those needs and behaviours and roles that are required to help the group achieve its goals; the second, maintenance functions encompass those behaviours and roles that help the group look after its emotional and interpersonal well-being; and the third functions are concerned with personal motives, needs and interests that each individual member brings to the group.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

- 1) Describe briefly the roles that a social worker performs in group work?

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2) Explain the concept of group worker as a group leader.

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3) Differentiate between group worker's roles of leader and facilitator. Which role is more appropriate in group work practice?

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5.4 ROLE DIFFERENTIATION: FACTORS AFFECTING ROLES OF GROUP WORKER

In the preceding discussion, there have been numerous references to changes occurring in the perception of group worker's roles according to different group situations. Here we are selecting two important factors which influence the roles of a group worker, namely, the purpose and types of group. Because groups and the situations within which they operate are so different, the worker needs to first understand the group and the circumstances surrounding it before attempting to define specific aspects of his role. (Trecker, p.34)

5.5 PURPOSE OF THE GROUP AND ROLES OF A GROUP WORKER

Purpose for which a group comes into being is the most basic determinant of what the worker's responsibilities are. The amount and nature of help that the group members expect from the worker, the amount of autonomy that the members are anxious to retain and the content of the group experience (programme) that is essential or advisable to achieve the specific purpose – are some of the important determinants of the worker's role.

Purpose is the dynamic force that can be mobilized into different groups. Groups based on purpose provide different group experiences to its members. Accordingly, the interventive roles expected of the group worker also vary. While the basic three elements of the worker's role – task-achievement, group maintenance and personal need satisfaction – remain constant (though with varying emphases and combinations),

the purpose determines the nature of relationship between the worker and the group members through which these functions are performed. Given below are some of the categories of purposes for which the groups come into existence.

- Enhancement of relationships – to resolve problems in social relationships, to cope with deficits, to strengthen mutual and reciprocal relationships. Whether the purpose is to correct maladaptive patterns of relationships or to help ‘normal’ persons grow socially, the worker has to use his authority in a flexible manner. The specific purpose will determine whether he provides direction, support, a role-model, a comfortable and a stress-free environment in which to interact and relate; or he facilitates content of the group experience (programme) that offer opportunities for expression, mutual give and take, and growth.
- Dealing with problems of social functioning- One of the purposes which traditionally belong to group work practice is dealing with problems of social functioning. The worker engages the group members in problem-solving process and helps them to acquire coping skills in the context of problems of social functioning. Whether the worker has a more directive and active stance or relatively more non-directive depends more on the needs and capacities of the group members than on the worker’s orientation.
- Enhancing Social competence –is preventive in nature. The need for group work service stems from lack of adequate knowledge, social experience, and skills for coping with anticipated event or situation out of a psycho-social development phase or transition to a new or changed role like persons about to get married, or prospective adoptive parents; and persons with physical disability to get socialized into new or changed roles expected of them. Teaching, information giving, brokering, facilitating role-rehearsing and help develop a structure to the group that provides safe and comfortable group environment for experimenting are some of the roles expected of the worker. The worker may also have to engage in referral, negotiation for procurement of needed resources and services, mediation, and advocacy.
- Coping with stress –development of capacities to cope effectively with stress caused by situations due to life transition, life-threatening illness, divorce, physical violence, or rape. Members need support from the worker but also from their peers or members of the group. They need to disclose and manage emotions, release tension, enhance damaged self-esteem, and discover new ways of dealing with stress and realities of life. The worker’s role primarily is that of an enabler or even that of a therapist. The worker, though, encourages the members to draw upon the potentials of group processes as medium of help. He offers necessary information about available services and provisions that the members can have recourse to so as to deal with post traumatic experiences. Handling emotions, clarification and interpretation are important inputs by the worker. His role in establishing group structures and patterns of open communication, and encouraging participation in group processes go a long way in alleviating stress of the members.
- Empowerment – Democratic, empowering and participatory approaches are inherent in the ethos, Group Work as being a part of the broader Social Work Philosophy. “Helping people to help themselves” implies worker’s intervention to empower people to take charge of their own lives. However, empowerment

belonging to the category of purposes of group formation is more specific. It acquired prominence relatively recently due to social work's adopting securing of social justice as its mission.

Empowerment comes through being able to understand how the problem lies outside the individual and results from oppressive policies, practices, behaviours and the ideas on which these are founded. Empowerment becomes a strategy of choice while working with minority groups, disadvantaged groups, women or populations at risk. It is meant to provide the group members with support, skills, understanding needed to allow them take control of their own lives and achieve power in situations where earlier they felt powerless. Considering that power equation is tilted in favour of the worker in worker - member relationship, it is essential that the members feel equal to the workers, engage in a dialogue rather than submit to directives of the worker. Once the necessary information for consciousness-raising has been provided, the members are expected to take their own decisions, deal with internal conflicts, and negotiate with external systems. The worker may need to be more active initially while motivating the members to form the group; then, perform the role of a teacher, facilitate the process of capacity building, engage in supportive roles to enhance their self-esteem and sometimes assist in negotiating with the systems which have been oppressive and discriminatory towards the group members. However, the purpose of empowering the members precludes continued or active role of the professional. The mutual-aid potential of the group, rather than the expertise and authority of the worker, is heavily drawn upon. People, who come together as a consequence of having similar problems or concerns, find themselves in a position where they can collectively confront these forces of oppression, in ways which they could not do single-handedly. Empowerment connotes that members have acquired necessary capacity, skill and confidence to deal with oppressive life experiences. The role of the professional facilitator who is successful in empowering peer leadership will gradually transfer into that of a consultant to deal with specific work-related problems.

The discussion above does not include a complete list of purposes for which people come together in groups. It is only illustrative of how purposes affect the kind of roles a group worker is expected to perform in the group.

5.6 TYPES OF GROUPS AND ROLES OF A GROUP WORKER

One of the important determinants of roles of a group worker is the type of the group with which he is engaged. The worker's inputs, stance, approach and style is differentially aligned to the type of a group – is it voluntary group or involuntary? Has the group been deliberately formed or has sprung up spontaneously? Is group open-ended with fluid membership or closed with specified tenure and fixed membership? Is the group comprises of children, adults; able-bodies or differently-abled? Is it a support group, self-help group, social action group, interest group or a treatment group? Keeping generic roles in mind, the worker offers a combination of different roles, in varying emphases and perspectives.

Involuntary groups in which members' participation is mandatory- like group of probationers or delinquent youth – the worker has to put in considerable time and effort to clarify the purpose and win the members' trust. As the worker is perceived to belong to the establishment with power to supervise their behaviour and reactions,

maintaining records and reporting to authorities, this task is very tough and requiring deep empathic understanding. The worker has to deal with internal conflicts, to facilitate establishment of safe and stress free group structures and norms, and to encourage interest-based programme content. Challenging and confrontation, interpretation and building self-esteem along with provision of support are vital interventive roles of a worker in such groups.

In **open-ended groups**, the worker is responsible in helping existing members to accept new members, the latter to understand the group structure and rules of participation; and help members review group's purpose. Since composition of a group impacts the group dynamics in a significant way, the gate - keeping becomes an important function of the worker. Open-ended groups pose another challenge to group leadership-whether professional or indigenous -, that is, the size of the group at any given time. The kind of programme that the group wishes to engage in may present limitations either because the group has become too large or too small; the skill levels may also change. The worker has to quickly assess the situation and enable the group members to adapt to the new situation; divide the group into sub-groups or change the programme.

We have already mentioned that worker's role in **support groups** is of a facilitator; helping members to draw upon the helping potentials of their peers (members) in the group. The worker's role in **self-help groups** involves more behind-the-scene activities, such as recruiting, linking group members with other groups and systems, limited role as a facilitator within the group, supporting indigenous leaders and acting as a consultant. Worker rarely has an active role in the group's activities.

The worker has considerable control over who is invited to join a **therapy group**. Therapy groups seek to produce individual growth and change through the relationships established among members with the help of a professional therapist. Using professional methods, therapist encourages and interprets "here and now" events among members to produce insight and change. The worker often plays an active role in helping the members decide group structure and group norms. As far as the interpersonal relationships are concerned, the worker is more of an enabler than a leader. The worker, however, is responsible for group maintenance and personal growth tasks, encouraging the members to identify and plan positive programme content as an instrument for achieving treatment goals.

Task groups clearly focus more on accomplishing a specific task. While the task-related responsibilities of the worker take precedence over the other two, namely personal growth and group maintenance, the latter are nevertheless as essential because it is through the instrumentality of the positive group experience that the goal of task accomplishment is achieved. Depending on the level of skills and capacities of the members, the group - feeling in the group, the worker has to undertake roles comprising all the three components. **Recreational** groups also need development of group cohesion before the content of group experience adds to the pleasure and satisfaction of the members.

5.7 STAGES OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT AND ROLES OF A GROUP WORKER

In earlier units you have learnt that groups change overtime. Group process is "a frame of reference which limits, focuses and directs the worker's efforts in a group" (Saari & Galinsky quoted by Benson, p.74) It is based on the assumption that

group process can be controlled and influenced by the worker's actions. Group process can be defined as change over time in the internal structure, organization and culture of the whole or part of the group or individual member. There is a movement and change in the quality of interactions, relationships and communication patterns, in the degree of trust and cohesion, and in the nature of members' participation in group's programme. To observe and understand these changes occurring over time in the group's life span, comprehending the concept of group development is very useful for the group worker as it helps him to determine what needs to be done at a given point of time. Groups do not move sequentially through discreet phases; they may move backwards and forwards or sideways. Each group may spend different amount of time at any one phase of growth or may even move cyclically. Consideration of broad phases of development in terms of major tasks expected of the worker is likely to prove more useful, especially to a new professional.

At the **pre-group** or pre-affiliation stage, the worker acts as a visionary who establishes the need and feasibility of launching a group and then a motivator to recruit potential members to the group. The role of the worker changes once the members have come together. At the **initial stage**, variously designated as inclusion, forming, orientation or affiliation stage, the members look to worker for direction, structure, approval and help at difficult times. The worker has to be more active at this time as the members are dependent on the worker. The worker welcomes all the members; allays their anxieties; helps members to communicate with each other and explore; clarifies purpose; to make connections among the members; and establish tentative group structure and norms, that is rules for conducting group sessions and for members' participation. The worker assumes a nurturing and guiding stance with the members.

At the **beginning of the middle stage**, the previously friendly members may reveal a negative streak. The members here are seeking individual roles. In what is described as storming or stage of seeking power control, conflicts develop and there is search for individual autonomy. If not handled appropriately, there may be drop outs. The worker recognizes this conflict as a natural phenomenon and helps the group to revise group structure and group norms. Development of new norms is ensured through members' sharing of ideas and feelings about their expectations from the group and about how the group should function. Giving opportunity to the members to express their feelings and ideas, the worker plays a vital role in group maintenance. He encourages the members in the tasks of harmonizing, compromising, setting standards and expressing group feeling. At the same time he ensures that individual goals are not submerged in the group goals. He ensures that each member gets an opportunity for expression of ideas and feelings. The worker, while performing the roles of facilitator and enabler, does not relinquish his control over the group processes. Judicious use of challenging and confronting and clarifying issues helps the members to view their behaviour in the right perspective. His interventions enable the members move from less intimate to more intimate system of relationships within the group. Setting of norms (also called stage of **norming or negotiation**) and emergence of indigenous leadership take the group to the next level of development. The members engage in conflict resolution; goals, roles and tasks are designated and accepted. Group traditions are stronger, norms develop, personal involvement intensifies; group cohesion is stronger; and members are freer in sharing information and opinions. (Johnson, p.207)

After the control issues are resolved, the group now settles down to work on its

tasks and goals, whether dealing with personal problems and anxieties of the members or accomplishing tasks for which the group came into being. Various called **performing**, functional, operation or cohesion stage, the role of the worker becomes less active and more facilitative or consultative. The worker provides support, or relevant information, The members work together more effectively. There is growing ability to plan and carry out projects relevant to the purpose of the goal. There is higher degree of integration and cohesion. The worker moves into a less central role. The worker monitors the group's functioning, gives appropriate feedback to the group whether there is an affinity between the purpose and the group programme. Here the worker's influence is more indirect and subtle than direct. The group will expect the worker to be available and provide necessary inputs in case of crisis or some difficulty. Encouraging members to make choices and fostering creativity are other tasks that a worker performs at this mature stage of the group.

Termination, disintegration, separation, mourning or ending stage requires different set of inputs from the worker. According to Benson (p.155), the worker is again more dominant in this stage and offers a mix of nurturing, guidance, and protection and support roles. The worker deals with physical fact of separation; feelings of anxiety and facilitates members' intellectual understanding of what have they gained through the group experience. The worker helps the members to assess their group experience and to identify ways of stabilizing the gains achieved.

Identifying a group's stage of development allows the worker to respond to the group with better understanding about structures and functioning of the group – which is a means for enhancing the interactional process of the group. (Johnson, p. 208)

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

- 1) How does purpose of the group determine group worker's roles? Give one illustration.

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- 2) Explain the role of a group worker in self-help and support groups.

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- 3) Differentiate group worker's roles at the forming and performing stages of group development.

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5.8 LET US SUM UP

Depending on the needs of the individual members, purpose of the group and the stage of group development, the group worker performs a range of roles in his work with the groups- ranging from role of a leader, organizer, motivator, and planner to helper, broker, enabler, facilitator, guide, consultant, mediator, advocate and role-model.

Authority and power are inherent in a group worker's position on account of his professional knowledge, skills and access to certain resource. While the worker need not deny this, he is expected to make judicious use of his authority in the service of the client groups and not for his own benefit. The professional code of conduct offers a number of safeguards to make it possible. The challenge before the group worker is that even while performing the role of a leader, he shares this role with group members. Each group member is a potential helper in the group and may offer a particular kind of expertise. Even when he directs the group members, he is expected to facilitate the members' capacity to get empowered to do things themselves, to take control of their own lives; in short, encourage the emergence of indigenous leadership. The worker has to operate from democratic, empowering, participative perspectives maintaining strength - based orientation. He is committed to foster group's mutual-aid propensities. Besides, the worker does not perform any one role from among those mentioned above, at any given point of time. He is usually performing a mixture of different roles, the emphasis and amount of the ingredients being different in different groups and situations. As mentioned earlier, social group work is often best done by combining these roles. A competent worker will move from one to the other or combine them as needed by the group.

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