Gerald Corey
Marianne Schneider Corey
Patrick Callanan
J. Michael Russell

group techniques

FOURTH EDITION

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Group Techniques, 4th Edition

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Cover Design: Ingalls Design
Cover Image: Newbird/E+/Getty Images

WCN: 02-200-208

Library of Congress Control Number: 2013943672

ISBN-13: 978-0-534-61269-6

ISBN-10: 0-534-61269-5

Cengage Learning
200 First Stamford Place, 4th Floor
Stamford, CT 06902
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Printed in the United States of America
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 17 16 15 14 13

Dedicated to the people who have been members in our groups, especially those in our residential workshops, who gave us the opportunity to learn more.

About the Authors

GERALD COREY is Professor Emeritus of Human Services and Counseling at California State University at Fullerton. He received his doctorate in counseling from the University of Southern California. He is a Diplomate in Counseling Psychology, American Board of Professional Psychology; a licensed psychologist; a National Certified Counselor; a Fellow of the American Psychological Association (Counseling Psychology); a Fellow of the American Counseling Association; and a Fellow of the Association for Specialists in Group Work (ASGW). Along with Marianne Schneider Corey, Jerry received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Mental Health Counselors Association in 2011 and the Eminent Career Award from ASGW in 2001. He also received the Outstanding Professor of the Year Award from California State University at Fullerton in 1991. He regularly teaches both undergraduate and graduate courses in group counseling and ethics in counseling. He is the author or coauthor of 15 textbooks in counseling currently in print, along with more than 60 journal articles.

Jerry and Marianne Schneider Corey often present workshops on the topic of group counseling. In the past 35 years the Coreys have conducted group counseling training workshops for mental health professionals at many universities in the United States as well as in Canada, Mexico, China, Hong Kong, Korea, Germany, Belgium, Scotland, England, and Ireland. In his leisure time, Jerry likes to travel, hike and bicycle, and drive his 1931 Model A Ford. The Coreys have been married for 49 years; they have two adult daughters and three grandchildren.

Jerry holds memberships in the American Counseling Association; the American Psychological Association; the Association for Specialists in Group Work; the American Group Psychotherapy Association; the American Mental Health Counselors Association; the Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling; and the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision.

Recent publications by Jerry Corey, all with Brooks/Cole, Cengage Learning, and most having been translated into various languages, include:

- *Issues in Ethics in the Helping Professions*, Ninth Edition (2015, with Marianne Schneider Corey, Cindy Corey, and Patrick Callanan)
- *I Never Knew I Had a Choice*, Tenth Edition (2014, with Marianne Schneider Corey)
- *Groups: Process and Practice*, Ninth Edition (2014, with Marianne Schneider Corey and Cindy Corey)

- *Theory and Practice of Counseling and Psychotherapy*, Ninth Edition (and *Student Manual*) (2013)
- *Case Approach to Counseling and Psychotherapy,* Eighth Edition (2013)
- *The Art of Integrative Counseling*, Third Edition (2013)
- *Theory and Practice of Group Counseling,* Eighth Edition (and *Student Manual*) (2012)
- *Becoming a Helper*, Sixth Edition (2011, with Marianne Schneider Corey)

Jerry is coauthor (with Barbara Herlihy) of *Boundary Issues in Counseling: Multiple Roles and Responsibilities,* Third Edition (2015), and *ACA Ethical Standards Casebook*, Seventh Edition (2015); he is coauthor (with Robert Haynes, Patrice Moulton, and Michelle Muratori) of *Clinical Supervision in the Helping Professions: A Practical Guide,* Second Edition (2010); he is the author of *Creating Your Professional Path: Lessons From My Journey* (2010). All four of these books are published by the American Counseling Association.

Jerry has made several educational DVD and video programs on various aspects of counseling practice: (1) *Groups in Action: Evolution and Challenges DVD and Workbook* (2014, with Marianne Schneider Corey and Robert Haynes); (2) *DVD for Theory and Practice of Counseling and Psychotherapy: The Case of Stan and Lecturettes* (2013); (3) *DVD for Integrative Counseling: The Case of Ruth and Lecturettes* (2013, with Robert Haynes); (4) *DVD for Theory and Practice of Group Counseling* (2012); and (5) *Ethics in Action*: *DVD and Workbook* (2015, with Marianne Schneider Corey and Robert Haynes). All of these programs are available through Brooks/Cole, Cengage Learning.

MARIANNE SCHNEIDER COREY is a licensed marriage and family therapist in California and is a National Certified Counselor. She received her master's degree in marriage, family, and child counseling from Chapman College. She is a Fellow of the Association for Specialists in Group Work and was the recipient of this organization's Eminent Career Award in 2001. She received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Mental Health Counselors Association in 2011. She also holds memberships in the American Counseling Association, the Association for Specialists in Group Work, the American Group Psychotherapy Association, the American Mental Health Counselors Association, the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision, and the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development.

Marianne has been involved in leading groups for different populations, providing training and supervision workshops in group process, facilitating self-exploration groups for graduate students in counseling, and cofacilitating training groups for group counselors and weeklong residential workshops in personal growth. Both Marianne and Jerry Corey have conducted training workshops,

continuing education seminars, and personal-growth groups in the United States, Germany, Ireland, Belgium, Mexico, Hong Kong, China, and Korea. She sees groups as the most effective format in which to work with clients and finds it the most rewarding for her personally.

Marianne has coauthored the following books with Brooks/Cole, Cengage Learning, all of which have been translated into various languages:

- *Issues and Ethics in the Helping Professions,* Ninth Edition (2015, with Gerald Corey, Cindy Corey, and Patrick Callanan)
- *I Never Knew I Had a Choice,* Tenth Edition (2014, with Gerald Corey)
- *Groups: Process and Practice,* Ninth Edition (2014, with Gerald Corey and Cindy Corey)
- *Becoming a Helper,* Sixth Edition (2011, with Gerald Corey)

Marianne has made educational video programs (with accompanying student workbooks) for Brooks/Cole, Cengage Learning: *Groups in Action: Evolution and Challenges DVD and Workbook* (2014, with Gerald Corey and Robert Haynes); and *Ethics in Action: DVD and Workbook* (2015, with Gerald Corey and Robert Haynes).

Marianne and Jerry have been married since 1964. They have two adult daughters, Heidi and Cindy, two granddaughters, and one grandson. Marianne grew up in Germany and has kept in close contact with her family and friends there. In her free time, she enjoys traveling, reading, visiting with friends, bike riding, and hiking.

PATRICK CALLANAN is a licensed marriage and family therapist in private practice in Santa Ana, California. In 1973 he graduated with a bachelor's degree in Human Services from California State University at Fullerton; he received his master's degree in professional psychology from United States International University in 1976. In his private practice he works with individuals, couples, families, and groups.

Patrick is on the part-time faculty of the Human Services Program at California State University, Fullerton, where he regularly teaches an internship course. He also offers his time each year to the university to assist in training and supervising group leaders and coteaches an undergraduate course in ethical and professional issues. Along with Marianne Schneider Corey and Gerald Corey, he received an Award for Contributions to the Field of Professional Ethics by the Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling in 1986.

Patrick has also coauthored *Issues and Ethics in the Helping Professions,* Ninth Edition (2015, with Gerald Corey, Marianne Schneider Corey, and Cindy Corey). In his free time, Patrick enjoys reading, walking fast, and playing golf.

J. MICHAEL RUSSELL is Professor Emeritus of Philosophy and Human Services at California State University at Fullerton, a psychoanalyst in private practice, and a core faculty member and training analyst of the Newport Psychoanalytic Institute. At California State University at Fullerton, he has regularly taught experiential group courses and supervised students in the group leadership program. He has been leading workshops and teaching courses in personal growth since 1971, when he obtained his doctorate in philosophy from the University of California at Santa Barbara. His philosophical interest in self-deception broadened into courses he teaches in philosophical assumptions of psychotherapy, existentialism, death and meaning, theories and techniques of counseling, case analysis, and group leadership, and into workshops he conducts in leadership training. With his wife Valerie Russell, PhD, Clinical Psychologist, Michael leads ongoing groups for aspiring therapists and one for court mandated clients.

Michael became a National Certified Counselor in 1984, a registered Research Psychoanalyst in 1985, and a Graduate Psychoanalyst in 1988. He is a member of several professional organizations, including the American Counseling Association, the Association for Specialists in Group Work, the American Philosophical Association, and the American Philosophical Practitioners Association. He is particularly interested in integrating traditional academic material with in-depth personal exploration in a group format, drawing together his interests in psychoanalysis and existentialist philosophy. Some biography, course materials, publications, and articles are available on his Web page: http://jmichaelrussell.org.

Contents

Preface

Since the four of us began working together in 1972, we have been involved in almost every aspect of group work as members, leaders, teachers, and workshop conductors. In the course of this long association, we have found ourselves continually faced with questions about techniques in groups—their place, their usefulness, their abuse. In many of our training workshops and group courses we have observed beginning leaders having difficulty using techniques appropriately and effectively. Students are interested in learning about techniques but often have some anxiety over their ability to know when and how to draw on techniques in various group situations.

Our primary assumption in this book is that techniques are never the main course in group work. This assumption has many implications. It puts the focus on the members and the leader and on the quality of the interactions between them. Techniques are means, not ends, and their primary aim is to increase knowledge and awareness on the part of the group members. Techniques are fundamentally at the service of the group members, not the group counselor.

To avoid having the techniques described in this book used as the primary focus of group work, we concentrate on showing group leaders how to develop and use techniques in their own evolving groups. You can best use this book by reading a chapter, and then asking yourself what relevance the techniques described have for you in your situation and how they might be applied. We hope you will not borrow our techniques verbatim and use them without consideration for the members of your groups and their unique relationships with you and with one another. We expect that this book will stimulate your interest in the broad field of working with people in groups and in thinking about the theoretical and ethical dimensions of what you do.

In addition to being direct responses to problems presented by participants in groups we have led, the techniques in this book bear the stamp of our own therapists, of leaders of groups and workshops in which we have been members, and of a great many writers with various theoretical orientations. These techniques did not arise in a vacuum, and the Suggested Readings at the end of the book are provided to further your thinking about how you might develop your therapeutic style as a group counselor.

This book is designed as a supplementary book for group courses or for advanced group counseling courses with an emphasis on techniques. Students in an introductory group counseling course will want to learn more about group process and theories of group counseling than this book provides. This book is for students and

practitioners in any human services field, from counseling psychology to social work, where the group is an accepted modality. Intended readers include psychiatric nurses, social workers, counselors, psychologists, ministers, marriage and family therapists, teachers, clinical mental health professionals, and paraprofessionals who lead groups.

Some group-leading experience or prior course work in group counseling is important for students to benefit from this book. *Group Techniques* can be a valuable auxiliary text in a practicum in group work. The techniques described are most appropriately used with counseling groups with an open-ended agenda. In practice the book can be used to stimulate thinking and creativity in one's approach to group work, and it can be used in conjunction with supervision. *Group Techniques* can be used in various cultures, as is demonstrated by the fact that it has been translated into Portuguese, Korean, Japanese, and Czech languages.

In this fourth edition, we have given more attention to explaining the therapeutic rationale for the various techniques we describe. At times we link particular techniques to one or another of the eleven theoretical approaches to group counseling described in detail in *Theory and Practice of Group Counseling* (Corey, 2012). Specific chapter references are included to point readers to these comprehensive discussions.

In this fourth edition of *Group Techniques* we have fine-tuned the various techniques and given further thought to how these techniques can be applied to therapeutic groups. Discussions of techniques reflect current practices in working with therapeutic groups, and the examples of various techniques represent contemporary group work practices. More attention has been given to incorporating the contextual variables, especially multicultural and social justice perspectives, in implementing techniques in a group. This book is based on our collective experience with groups, and citations continue to be at a minimum. The annotated Suggested Readings at the end of the book have been updated and provide a comprehensive overview of group work literature.

We take an integrative perspective and avoid a single theoretical bias, but we emphasize throughout that a sound theoretical rationale is an essential guide when using any technique. We hope that the tone and spirit of this book will encourage group leaders to develop their own therapeutic style. At the same time we recommend necessary cautions, both procedural and ethical, as group leaders design and implement various techniques.

Guide to Using *Groups in Action: Evolution and Challenges* DVD and Workbook

Groups in Action: Evolution and Challenges, DVD and Workbook (Corey, Corey, & Haynes, 2014), is an ideal supplement to this book and is available at a reduced price when ordered as a bundle option with *Group Techniques*. At the end of Chapter 1 and

Chapters 4–7 we reference specific parts of the DVD and how its various programs fit with a given chapter. *Groups in Action* consists of three different interactive programs. The first program, *Evolution of a Group,* is a 2-hour educational video designed to bring to life the development of a group at a 3-day residential workshop cofacilitated by Marianne Schneider Corey and Gerald Corey. The group workshop included people who were group members willing to explore their own issues and concerns. They were neither actors following a script nor were they role-playing the topics. The second program, *Challenges Facing Group Leaders,* is a 90-minute educational video designed to address some of the most problematic situations group counselors often encounter. In this program the Coreys cofacilitated a group that was composed of members who role-played a variety of scenarios depicting critical issues in a group. The participants of the second program did not follow a script; rather, they improvised around themes that typically evolve in groups. Although participants were engaged in role playing, these sessions often reflected real personal involvement and genuine interaction in the group. In short, the participants demonstrate a blend of role playing and drawing on their experiences from the present and the past, both in their roles as group members and as leaders. The third program, *Lecturette on Theories and Techniques of Group Counseling,* consists of a 1-hour presentation by Jerry Corey in which he briefly describes four contemporary theoretical approaches to group work.

The first program, *Evolution of a Group,* illustrates significant group process and leadership techniques in a therapeutic group. You will see the development of the group process and how the coleaders facilitated that process as the group moved through the four stages: initial, transition, working, and ending. These stages correspond to Chapters 4 through 7 of *Group Techniques.*

In the initial stage, the focus is on building trust and emphasizing the here-and-now. The leaders set the stage by exploring ground rules for the group operation and assisting members in developing goals for this group. In the transition stage, identifying and challenging members' fears, hesitations, and resistance are the main topics. The level of trust deepens and members begin reluctantly to talk about personal material. The working stage is characterized by a high level of trust, clearer goals, and members exploring feelings, ideas, and beliefs. Group cohesiveness is high, and members interact with each other with less reliance on the leaders. In the ending stage, the group members review what they have learned, discuss how they will put this learning into action, and prepare for ending the group.

Throughout the *Evolution of a Group*, you see the Coreys coleading and facilitating the group process and using a variety of group techniques from various group treatment approaches. It is the combination of viewing both the implementation of group leadership techniques and the movement of the group through the four stages of group process that makes this a unique DVD training program. This multimedia integration is aimed at expanding the learning experience and skills for students of group counseling.

The second program, *Challenges Facing Group Leaders,* consists of improvisational enactments of problematic scenarios and critical incidents in a group. The Coreys encouraged the participants of this second program to be themselves as much as possible, even though they were at times enacting different roles. Some of the scenarios that are enacted include working with members who do not want to be a part of the group; dealing with a group when they are making little progress; addressing conflict; dealing with silence; exploring a member's reactions to being left with unresolved feelings about a prior group session; working with members who are uncomfortable with expressing emotions; addressing a member's concern over feeling pressured to talk; managing a member who assumes a role of assistant leader; dealing with trust issues and concerns about confidentiality; working with a quiet member; and the challenges in dealing with a range of difficult behaviors in groups. A significant part of this second program involves addressing the ways that diversity influences group process, including experiencing identity concerns; feeling different from others; dealing with stereotypes; speaking in one's primary language; looking to leaders for answers; and looking at the ways in which people are both the same and different.

The second program is intended to teach ways of understanding and effectively working with a range of challenging situations that group counselors frequently encounter, especially during the early stages of a group. Key points illustrated in the *Challenges Facing Group Leaders* program include the following:

- Group work is slow and tedious at times, which demands patience on the leader's part.
- Group facilitators have the responsibility of creating safety within a group.
- The earlier phases are critical in terms of laying a foundation for work at the later stages.
- Work takes place at all stages of group—not only during the beginning stages. How effectively a leader deals with challenges from group members at an early stage determines how effective a group will eventually become.

As students view this video program and respond to the questions in the accompanying workbook, we want them to do so with an openness to learning how group process works—and with a willingness to examine their own beliefs as a group leader. This program can provide the experiential component that helps students more concretely understand the nature of group process, and it can be a catalyst that prompts them into self-exploration. The art of group leadership is far more than a technical endeavor; it involves a group leader's capacity to use his or her intuition and human responses. To be sure, effective group leaders need a theoretical grasp of group process along with the knowledge and skill base to make effective interventions in a group. Competent group leaders possess self-understanding, knowledge of dynamics of behavior and group process, and technical skills in group facilitation.

The third program, *Lecturette on Theories and Techniques of Group Counseling,* consists of a 1-hour presentation of the main theoretical approaches to group work. The message of this lecture is that a theory informs the way group leaders operate in facilitating a group. It guides the work with members and defines both the leader's and the members' roles in a group. A theory provides a frame of reference for understanding the world of the client, especially when it comes to making an assessment, defining problems, and selecting appropriate techniques in meeting the goals of the members. Most theories have a variety of techniques for use in group counseling, and some techniques are applicable to more than one theory. Four general categories of theoretical orientations are described in this lecture program:

1. *Psychodynamic approaches*, which explore the individual's past and work toward gaining insight in therapy (psychoanalytic and Adlerian therapy).
2. *Experiential and relationship-oriented approaches,* which value feelings and subjective experiencing (existential, person-centered, Gestalt therapy, and psychodrama).
3. *Cognitive behavioral approaches*, which focus on the role of thinking and doing and tend to be action-oriented (behavior therapy, cognitive therapy, cognitive behavior therapy, rational emotive behavior therapy, and reality therapy).
4. *Postmodern approaches,* which stress understanding the subjective world of the client and tapping the existing resources within the individual for change (solution-focused brief therapy, narrative therapy, and feminist therapy).

In addition to these four general categories, Jerry Corey describes the integrative approach, which borrows and integrates concepts and techniques from a number of different approaches.

Acknowledgments

A number of individuals have provided us with input that has enhanced the fourth edition of *Group Techniques*. We appreciate the thoughtful commentary from the following reviewers:

Debra Giaramita, St. John's University

Derrick Paladino, Rollins College

Valerie Russell, forensic psychologist, state of California, and private practice

Eileen Russo, University of Bridgeport

David Tobin, Gannon University

Misty Wall, Boise State University

This book is the result of a team effort, which includes the combined efforts of several people at Brooks/Cole, Cengage Learning. We thank Jon-David Hague, product director, and publisher; Julie Martinez, content developer; Caryl Gorska, for her work on the interior design and cover; and Rita Jaramillo, project

manager. We thank Ben Kolstad of Cenveo Publisher Services, who coordinated the production of this book. Special recognition goes to Kay Mikel, the manuscript editor of this edition, whose exceptional editorial talents continue to keep this book reader friendly. We appreciate Susan Cunningham's work in preparing the index. The efforts and dedication of all of these people certainly contribute to the high quality of this book.

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Patrick Callanan
Michael Russell

CHAPTER

The Role of Techniques

Introduction

The title of this book is *Group Techniques*. What exactly is a counseling "technique"? This word is not as simple to define as you might think. Virtually anything a group leader does could be viewed as a technique, including being silent, suggesting a new behavior, inviting a group member to explore a conflict, maintaining eye contact, arranging seating, offering reactions to members, or presenting interpretations.

We generally use the term *technique* in a more precise way to refer to a leader's explicit and direct request of a member to focus on material, augment or exaggerate affect, practice behavior, or solidify insight. This definition includes the following procedures: conducting the initial interview, in which a prospective member is asked to focus on his or her reasons for wanting to join a group; asking a nonproductive group to clarify the direction it wants to take; asking a member to role-play a specific situation; asking a member to practice a behavior; encouraging a member to repeat certain words or to complete a sentence; helping a member summarize what she or he has learned from a group session; challenging a member's beliefs; and working with the cognitions that influence a member's behavior. We also consider as techniques those procedures aimed at helping group leaders get a sense of the direction the group might want to pursue.

When we facilitate a group, we may use techniques that flow from various therapeutic models. Techniques are tools to help group members broaden the ways they live in the world and become aware of their choices and their potential for action. We must have a clear rationale for using a specific technique and understand what we hope to accomplish by implementing it. We adapt the techniques to fit the needs of the group participants as we strive to understand the subjective world of our clients. When implementing techniques, we consider members' readiness to confront their problems, their cultural background, their value system, their trust in us as leaders, and the stage in the development of the group.

Using Techniques Effectively

Misconceptions about the use of techniques abound. When we give workshops on groups, participants sometimes ask us to suggest techniques for working with specific clients. The implication seems to be that there is a "proper technique" for every situation. Perhaps for some models of group counseling, such as behavior therapy, specific methods are appropriate to achieve well-defined behavioral outcomes. In many types of groups, however, the techniques that are most useful grow spontaneously out of the work of the participants and are tailored to the situations that are evolving in a particular session. Effective group counselors incorporate a wide range of techniques in their therapeutic style. Much depends on the purpose of the group, the setting, the personality and style of the group facilitator, the qualities of the particular client, and the problems selected for intervention. Effective group counselors continuously assess their group and decide *what* relationship

style to adopt; *what* techniques, procedures, or intervention methods to use; *when* to use them; and with *which* clients.

Given our assumption that techniques are means and not ends, we naturally have some concerns about how this book could be used:

- Will the book contribute to the problem of group leaders overemphasizing techniques?
- Will readers memorize specific devices and use them ineffectively rather than treating them as a means to deepen their own therapeutic inventiveness and judgment?

It is impossible to predict what the exact nature of a group will be. Relying on a recipe-book approach to therapeutic techniques may provide opportunities to try different procedures, but surely it does not replace the main function of a group leader. We suggest that you use your own creativity and learn to develop techniques spontaneously from the work being done. An excellent cook creates a different dish each time, and we encourage you to approach your groups with a little of the same creativity. Use your intuition, use what is available at the moment, and trust your own judgment.

PAYING ATTENTION TO THE OBVIOUS. Techniques can deepen feelings that are already present, and they should preferably grow out of what is already taking place. When a person says, "I'm feeling lonely," for example, it is appropriate to introduce a technique addressing loneliness to help explore this feeling further. For this reason, we generally prefer to work with the themes developed by the group. This is not a hard-and-fast rule; many group practitioners work effectively with preselected techniques, exercises, and themes. Indeed, for certain populations, this approach is indicated. Many short-term structured groups use topics and exercises to help members learn. These techniques are employed to help members accomplish their personal goals within the framework of the group's basic purpose.

In the groups we lead, we tend to use techniques to focus members at the beginning of a group and often also to summarize material at the end. We may use techniques to elaborate on what is already happening, letting members lead the way. It is best to follow the energy and the clues provided by the members rather than to be overly directive.

Most groups have moments of stagnation or reluctance. In these situations it is easy—but often unwise—to employ a technique to get things moving quickly rather than paying attention to the important material being presented, that is, the hesitation or reluctance. It can be therapeutically useful to teach group members how to assess what is occurring in the group process and how to mobilize the group's energy. By looking around the room, for example, you may notice that members show signs of disengagement: being bored, displaying distracting behaviors, or appearing to be frustrated. We think the best technique at such times is to ask the members about their sense of what's happening. As a leader, you might

say: "I'm willing to work hard to help you get what you came for. Most of you are silent and are not responding to each other. I'd like to hear from each of you what is happening with you now." You can then share your reactions at the moment, or you can save them until all members have expressed what they are experiencing. Do not try technique after technique to stimulate movement in a situation such as this. Deal with what is actually occurring within the group by describing without judgment the behavior you are observing and by encouraging the members to decide what they want to do about their level of involvement in the group.

When considering whether to introduce a technique, take into account the stage of the group's development. For instance, trust is often an issue at the initial stage of a group, and members may be silent and cautious. To introduce a technique to get things moving is to ignore the obvious and to impose a dynamic that is either premature for the group or that forces a process. Doing so can interfere with the group's natural development. By introducing a technique that stresses and clarifies what is happening, you augment the process rather than interfere with it.

MAINTAINING FLEXIBILITY. As group leaders, we encourage you to develop flexibility about which material to work with; it is important that you be ready to go wherever the members want to go. Be prepared to abandon a technique that seems to be going nowhere or modify it as needed. We once witnessed a therapist demonstrating work with an angry woman. He kept urging her to hit a pillow with her hands, apparently failing to notice that she was already twisting the pillow. A more insightful approach might have been to work with what twisting the pillow meant to her. To take a different illustration, a leader may determine that a client needs to pursue an issue with her father. The leader may introduce a technique designed to accentuate her sadness and yet should be alert to whether or not she is actually feeling sad.

In a group therapy session we supervised, a violent patient kept reiterating that he was "different." The leader tried to focus the client on dealing with his violent feelings rather than exploring his more pressing concern about being different. Either theme could have been worked with, but the outcome might have been more useful to the client had the leader pursued the member's feeling of being different. By being open to members' needs at the moment, the group leader can choose techniques that are most effective.

When material is presented by a member, the direction you choose to follow and the techniques you will use depend to a great extent on who you are as a person and your theoretical orientation. If you were to observe 10 different group leaders working with the same material brought up by a member, each of the practitioners might work quite differently, yet each one could be helpful in a variety of ways.

Although it is possible to make mistakes because of insensitivity to promising and pressing material, try not to be too anxious about pursuing the "right" or the "most pressing" material. There is rarely one "right" way to proceed. If you become

too focused on doing exactly the right thing at the right time, you are likely to impede your creativity. Your search for perfection can diminish your leadership skills and also stifle the work of the group members.

Often, several directions are equally worth pursuing. When we are asked why we chose one direction rather than another in a given situation, we frequently believe we also could have taken the work in a different direction. In addition to our theoretical orientation and therapeutic style, our own interests and level of energy come into play. Techniques are seldom picked randomly; rather, they are connected to a therapeutic process.

The Therapeutic Relationship

Much of the opportunity for significant change is based on the members' relationship with the group leader. Just as many of the behaviors we label maladaptive had their origins in faulty early relationships, new and more appropriate behaviors can be cemented through the new relationship with the leader and other group members. If this relationship is inauthentic, superficial, or otherwise impoverished, we doubt that clients will make significant changes. Changes must be attempted, and the therapeutic relationship provides this testing ground. Let's look at three issues in the use of techniques that illustrate the significance of the therapeutic relationship: timing, avoiding self-deception, and becoming aware of your motivations.

TIMING IN THE USE OF TECHNIQUES. A critical skill in group work is using techniques with consideration for whether clients are prepared for change. When we push beyond clients' readiness to change, we violate their integrity. To attack defenses without consideration for their importance in maintaining equilibrium is to expose individuals to possible psychological damage. No technique will provide you with information on how ready group participants are to give up their defenses. You need knowledge, wisdom, and, above all, a concerned sensitivity to your relationship with those in your groups. This relationship provides them and you with the hold on reality individuals need to move away from nonproductive and excessively defensive conduct.

As group members learn to trust you, they are likely to move toward change. In the absence of such a relationship, they are being asked to trust techniques without any sense of what the leader is all about. Clients in that position do well to resist. The group leader who pays attention to the leader–client relationship develops a sixth sense that makes it possible to gauge the course of therapy and to judge the optimal time for inviting clients into areas they previously avoided. This skill is above and beyond technique. To some degree it is a part of the practitioner's makeup, but it can be refined through training, supervision, and practice.

AVOIDING SELF-DECEPTION IN USING TECHNIQUES. Techniques are powerful sources for emotional release and can generate tremendous energy in the therapeutic group. But they can easily mask the relationship between the leader and

the members. When the intensity has subsided, any insights gained may be dismissed by clients as having been brought about by something foreign to their own resources: the power of a special environment or the magic of the leader's technical skills. At the other extreme, because of the impact of a cathartic moment, clients may cling to the false belief that the issue has now been worked on and is finished. Although catharsis can be beneficial, it can convey a false sense of change. The leader who is anxious to produce a heavy emotional session may use techniques to generate such emotion without being sensitive to the needs of the group members and their process.

BECOMING AWARE OF MOTIVATIONS WHEN USING TECHNIQUES. Some leaders use techniques to meet their own needs for power or to control the members of their groups. Group leaders who are unaware of their motivations may misuse techniques in various ways:

- Leaders may apply pressure on certain clients to get them to perform in desired ways.
- Leaders may use techniques to impress participants.
- Leaders may direct a member away from exploring feelings and issues the leader personally finds threatening.
- Leaders may use highly confrontational techniques and exercises to generate an emotional response from members.

In all such cases, the leader's needs become primary, and members' needs assume a secondary role. Even experienced leaders sometimes are slow to recognize their motivations in the use of various techniques. Self-reflection is critical in recognizing the motivation for our practices. Coleaders can provide us with insights and useful feedback.

Choosing Techniques for Various Types of Groups

The type of group you lead will determine, to a large degree, the appropriateness of various techniques. Some techniques may be ideally suited for a therapeutic group, yet they may not be appropriate for certain groups with an educational focus. The majority of the techniques we describe in this book work best in therapeutic groups. Some of the techniques we describe in the chapters on the transition and working stages, for example, would not be suitable for a short-term structured group with children. However, our purpose is not to present techniques with the idea that you will copy them. Instead, we provide many examples of techniques we have used in our therapeutic groups to stimulate you to create techniques suited to your particular population, your specific groups, and to you.

In designing groups, you will certainly need to focus clearly on the basic goal you hope to attain. The time structure, the setting, the techniques you employ, the candidates you accept for the group, and your role as leader are all largely

determined by the type of group you are designing. It is of central importance to consider the role techniques will play in the service of clients. In certain task groups, you may want to employ structured exercises and use a clear agenda to guide your group sessions. If you are conducting a psychoeducational group for adolescents in a school, you may rule out certain techniques designed to bring about an exploration of intense emotions; these techniques are better suited to therapeutic groups. In creating and using techniques, you must always keep clearly in mind the primary purpose of your group. Techniques are tools to help you and your members accomplish that goal.

In addition to a range of suggestions about recruiting, screening, informing, and preparing group members (see Chapter 3), we recommend a generic technique for virtually all groups. This consists of some form of invitation for members to declare their perception of the group, what they want from it, or something that will involve them in formulating the group's direction. Specific suggestions for these "check-ins" are found throughout the book. We routinely ask group members at the outset of a workshop, a group course, or a session of an ongoing group to say something about what particular hopes, expectations, and fears they bring with them to the group.

In any given situation in a group, several different techniques can be used, and each may be equally beneficial to a client. What basis does a leader have for choosing one technique rather than another? Leaders do well to consider factors such as their theoretical orientation, the population that makes up the group, and the personality of individual group members.

THEORY AS A BASIS. The theoretical persuasion of the group leader can determine the selection of a technique. For example, free association by clients with minimal intrusion from the leader usually leads to regression and reexperiencing earlier memories. Asking individuals to pay attention to what they are thinking and feeling as others are working tends to focus a person on the here-and-now. Techniques of reinforcement for behavior direct attention away from intrapersonal dynamics. Thus, the choice of techniques depends to some extent on the theoretical framework of the therapist.

We devise techniques that tap the thinking, feeling, and behaving dimensions of human experience. Each of the theoretical frameworks has a good deal to offer in providing strategies for creative work. At times, members can benefit from exploring their beliefs and assumptions, some of which can be self-limiting. At other times, they need to experience their feelings more deeply. Finally, members need to develop an action plan for translating their insights into new behaviors. The same person can profit from a different focus at various stages in his or her work.

In working with group members, we emphasize the *thinking* dimension. We typically assist members in thinking about the decisions they have made about themselves. We stress paying attention to "self-talk." How are members' problems

actually caused by the assumptions they make about themselves, about others, and about life? How do members create their own problems by their thoughts and beliefs? Many of our group techniques are designed to tap members' thinking processes, to help them think about events in their lives and how they have interpreted these events, and to work on a cognitive level to change certain belief systems.

We also value approaches that emphasize helping members identify and express their *feelings*. Group members often get stuck due to unexpressed and unresolved emotional concerns. If allowed to experience the range of their feelings and talk about how certain events have affected them, their healing process is facilitated. If members feel listened to and understood, they are more likely to express feelings that previously have been out of their awareness or that they have kept to themselves.

As you will see in the many case examples presented in this book, group members can benefit from an emotional catharsis (the release of pent-up feelings), but some kind of cognitive work is also essential if the maximum benefit is to be gained from the emotional experience. Both the thinking and feeling dimensions need to be addressed.

A *behavioral dimension* is essential if the goal is behavior or personality change. Members can spend countless hours gaining insights and expressing pent-up feelings, but at some point they need to get involved in an action-oriented program of change. Bringing feelings and thoughts together by applying them to real-life situations focused on current behavior is emphasized by many of the cognitive behavioral approaches.

Underlying our integrated focus on thinking, feeling, and behaving is our philosophical leaning toward the existential approach, which places primary emphasis on the role of choice and responsibility in the therapeutic process. We facilitate members' awareness of the choices they *do* have, however limited they may be, and encourage them to accept responsibility for choosing for themselves. Most of what we do in our groups is based on the assumption that people can exercise their freedom to change a situation or at least to change their response to it. Thus, we encourage members to focus on what they are thinking, feeling, and doing rather than attempting to change others. This integrative model of group work is described in detail in *Theory and Practice of Group Counseling* (Corey, 2012, chaps. 16 & 17).

CLIENT POPULATION AS A BASIS. Sensitivity to the population with whom you are dealing is manifested in the techniques you choose to use. One cannot use the same techniques with an inpatient group that one would use with clients in a personal growth group. Similarly, techniques that tend to bring strong emotions to the surface need to be used cautiously with a group for people considered to be violent. Techniques used for group therapy clients may be inappropriate for professionals such as nurses or teachers in a group for developing interpersonal skills. There is an almost limitless variety of groups, and a leader needs to ask: "What is the goal

and purpose of the group? Is this technique suitable for this group of people? Is it the best available technique for this population in this situation at this time?"

CLIENT PERSONALITY AS A BASIS. A technique needs to be chosen with the personality of the individual group member in mind. If it does not fit, it most likely will not lead to productive work. Imagine asking a reserved elderly person to beat a pillow as an expression of her anger. Although the therapist may feel it valuable for her to express her anger, it is equally important to respect her inability to express anger in this fashion. There needs to be a congruence of the technique, the person introducing it, and the person for whom it is intended.

Adapting Group Techniques to the Client's Cultural Context

In choosing techniques, it is essential to consider the ways in which the client's cultural background influences his or her personality and values. If a technique goes against the grain of a member's personality and culture, it will probably result in alienating the client from the group. The key is to present techniques in a way that respects the uniqueness of an individual's personal and cultural context.

If you expect to lead groups with culturally diverse populations, you must discover ways to modify your strategies to meet their needs. Perhaps our genuine respect for the differences among members in our groups and our willingness to listen to and learn from them will be the most important foundation on which to build a bridge between ourselves and them. It is particularly critical to monitor our own behavior so that we avoid making generalizations about individuals within a particular social or cultural group.

It is the responsibility of leaders to inform potential members of the values and norms that guide group interaction. These values or norms may include staying in the here-and-now, expressing feelings, asking for what one wants, being direct and honest, sharing personal material with others, learning how to trust, improving interpersonal communication, learning to take the initiative, dealing with conflict, being willing to confront others, and deciding for oneself. Some of the values generally associated with group participation may not be congruent with the cultural norms of some clients. For instance, some individuals might have difficulty being direct because their culture frowns on directness. Other clients may experience trouble putting themselves in the central place or taking up group time, largely because they have learned from their culture that to do so is rude and insensitive. Some members will not be comfortable making decisions for themselves without considering their extended family. Although some group techniques are designed to assist members in more freely expressing their feelings, certain members will find this offensive. Because of their cultural conditioning, certain individuals are averse to expressing emotions openly or to talking freely about problems within their family. They may have been taught that it is good to withhold feelings and that it is improper to show emotional reactions publicly.

The Association for Specialists in Group Work (ASGW, 2008) guidelines state that ethical practice requires leaders to be aware of the multicultural context in group work, as can be seen in this recommendation regarding group practice:

> **Group** Workers practice with broad sensitivity to client differences including, but not limited to ethnic, gender, religious, sexual, psychological maturity, economic class, family history, physical characteristics or limitations, and geographic location. Group Workers continuously seek information regarding the cultural issues of the diverse population with whom they are working both by interaction with participants and from using outside resources.* (Guideline B.8)

Cultural diversity affects the issues that members bring to a group and the ways in which they might be either ready or reluctant to explore these issues. Group leaders need to sensitize themselves to the clues that members give indicating that they would like to talk about some aspect of how their culture is affecting their participation in the group.

Group leaders will not have knowledge about every culture, but it is important for group leaders to have a basic knowledge of how culture affects group process. As a microcosm of society, groups provide a context for addressing issues of power, privilege, discrimination, social injustice, and oppression. As these themes emerge in a group, it is the group leader's responsibility to help members openly explore them.

Multicultural and social justice themes are intertwined in the practice of group work. In addition to becoming competent in working with diverse client populations, group leaders need to acquire social justice and advocacy competencies. The ASGW (2012) *Multicultural and Social Justice Competence Principles for Group Workers* specifically addresses the scope of competence in both multicultural and social justice areas. These competencies include the following:

- Group counselors discuss why social justice and advocacy issues are important in a group and how these issues influence the practice of group work.
- Group counselors address issues of status, privilege, and oppression that arise in group work facilitation.
- Group counselors are concerned with empowerment and build on the strengths of each group member and the resources of the group as a whole.
- Group counselors promote egalitarianism by educating group members about their rights and assisting them in assuming an active role in bringing about social change as well as individual change.
- Group counselors become familiar with ways that local, state, national, and international policies may influence their work with a diverse range of group members.

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* Quotations in this book are from "Best Practice Guidelines," by the Association for Specialists in Group Work. Copyright 2008 by the ASGW. This and all other quotations from this source are reprinted by permission. Consult Appendix A for a copy of the 2008 ASGW "Best Practice Guidelines."

- Group counselors are prepared to intervene at an institutional level when working with culturally diverse groups.
- Group counselors expand the concept of being a client to include systems and communities when they are examining change.

An overarching theme is the centrality of multicultural competence as a basis for doing effective social justice–oriented group work. To deepen members' awareness of social justice as a basic value, group counselors create a climate within the group that encourages open discussion of cultural diversity and social justice considerations, especially issues of power and privilege.

Various techniques provide members with an opportunity to talk about certain aspects of their culture. Several examples come to mind. One group member, Ramon, had a difficult time with a female coleader who tended to be direct and say what was on her mind. His culture had conditioned him to use more indirect ways of communicating. Ramon had particular difficulty with a woman speaking her mind with such candor. In his culture it was not appropriate for a woman to confront a man. Ramon also experienced problems with assertive women outside the group, and he let the leader know that he did want to talk about this situation. Another member, Rosalie, wanted an opportunity to let others in the group know that she had a hard time letting others take care of her. Her culture had reinforced her for taking care of all her brothers and sisters, but it had not reinforced her for asking for others to nurture her. She had difficulty letting others in the group give to her, and she devoted much of her energy to taking care of members in the group who were in pain. Both Ramon and Rosalie expressed a desire to question some of their cultural upbringing and felt that they were better understood after they had had a chance to let others know what their culture had taught them and how these lessons were affecting their current behavior. Once they felt that others understood their cultural frame of reference, it was possible to introduce techniques that would accentuate selected cultural themes and help these members decide whether or not they wanted to modify some of their behavior. It is important that group participants decide what they want to change in their lives.

We highlight cultural material as it emerges in a group session by providing individuals with an invitation to identify relevant dimensions of their culture. We might suggest any of the following:

- Tell us something about your culture and how you think it may influence your participation in this group.
- If you think some members of this group might have a certain cultural perspective different from your own, perhaps you can share with them some of the things that you are likely to see differently?
- Pretend for a moment that you are home among members of your cultural group. Try to explain to them what this group is all about. What would you say?

The point of techniques of this kind is to bring certain cultural material to the surface so that misunderstandings or potential conflicts can be dealt with openly. If these themes remain latent, unspoken thoughts and unexpressed reactions are likely to interfere with the development of cohesion. Although members do share some universal human concerns, the members are also different from one another. Likewise, members of the same culture can be different. A group is an ideal place for people to learn how to understand, appreciate, and respect their cultural differences at the same time as they discover ways in which they are bonded by common concerns.

Appendix B contains the ASGW's (2012) *Multicultural and Social Justice Competence Principles for Group Workers*, which can help you gain a fuller appreciation of issues pertaining to cultural diversity as this reality influences the evolution of a group. Multiculturalism and social justice concepts are often intricately linked in group work. Review these guidelines to get a clear picture of what is involved in incorporating a multicultural and social justice perspective in training group workers, conducting research, understanding how multiculturalism and social justice affect group process, and assisting group workers in various settings to increase their knowledge and skills in developing competence in addressing multicultural and social justice themes in group work. The principles embodied in this document emphasize the acquisition of awareness, knowledge, and skills that will assist you, as a group leader, in working ethically and effectively with diversity issues in your groups.

Introducing Techniques

It is important to pay attention to how you introduce techniques. To what extent do you explain them? What is your rationale for using a particular technique? How do you ask members to participate in an exercise? How do you work with members who are reluctant to follow your suggestions? Let's discuss each of these questions in some detail.

EXPLAINING TECHNIQUES. Part of the preparation of group members should include a general discussion about techniques and how they are implemented during the course of a group. However, explaining a particular technique in detail before using it may render the technique useless. For example, some members have given Brianna feedback that they are intimidated by her critical interpersonal style, which she vehemently denies. Brianna complains about her critical father and states she is glad she is nothing like him. Operating on a hunch that Brianna disowns the critical side of her personality, we ask her to assume the role of her father. Brianna is asked to imagine and say what her father might be expressing to different members of the group. She does so with gusto. Suddenly she stops herself, smiles, and says, "I am too good at this. I sound just like him." Coming to this insight experientially is more powerful than sharing our hunch with her

prematurely. A lengthy explanation might have interrupted her work and could have prevented her from acquiring this increased awareness.

At times it may be appropriate for a member to ask about the general purpose of a technique. For example, Ferdinand said he felt cut off and lonely in the group. When the leader requested that he go into the next room, Ferdinand asked for a reason. Instead of insisting that he "just do it," the leader supplied a brief explanation: "I'd like you to have some sense of what it would be like to accentuate your feeling of being cut off so that we can explore that." At this point the leader might not want to explain certain other reasons for using the technique. For instance, she might have a hunch that Ferdinand was typically sent out of the room as a child and that this exercise would bring back those feelings and allow connections between them and his current loneliness to emerge. This hunch would be sabotaged if explained at the beginning, but it might be explained afterward. In general, as the trust among members develops, increasingly challenging techniques may be used.

HAVING A THERAPEUTIC RATIONALE. Although leaders cannot predict exact outcomes, they should have some idea of how a technique is connected with the material of the moment and how it can help the member. Do not become so preoccupied with thinking about the rationale for a technique that you become timid. However, if a colleague were to ask what the rationale was for using the technique, you should be able to offer an explanation based on some theoretical framework. A supervisor, a colleague, or a group member might ask, "Why did you use that technique?" or "What did you hope to gain from it?" It is a good practice to pose these questions to yourself prior to leading a group. Being aware of the purpose of a technique can become second nature and does not have to be incompatible with the ability to follow a hunch spontaneously.

The rationale for using a technique usually comes from the context of what the individual has revealed. Every effort should be made to remember key themes from different episodes in the individual's work. For example, one week Jiwoo talked about his fear of becoming involved in an intimate relationship. During a later session, he sprawled in his chair and seemed about to fall asleep. During another meeting, he said that he felt he was being treated coldly by others in the group. Remembering these episodes, the group leader attempted to bring them together by inviting Jiwoo to sprawl out and look sleepily around the room, saying to each member a sentence that started with, "A way I keep myself removed from you is ___." In this example the leader had a rationale: he sought to connect already existing material with the direction the technique was likely to take.

INVITING MEMBERS TO PARTICIPATE. We invite group members to go along with a technique and to proceed only when we have their permission. We tend to use such phrases as these: "Are you willing to take this further?" "Are you willing to try this?" "I have something in mind that might help you understand better

what you are saying. Let me tell you what it is, and see whether you are willing to go along with it."

An invitational stance both offers respect and encourages group members to challenge some values and behaviors. If we are working with Brian, a client who is ethnically different from us, we make room for the fact that his differences might partially account for behavior in the group that could be perceived as "resistance." For example, he may be very quiet yet observant in the group, and he may seek advice from us about what would be the right course for him to take in coping with his problems. We do not quickly assume that he is resistant and dependent. Instead, we pursue with him the possible meanings of his behaviors. In doing so, we may learn that he is silent because he has learned that this is a sign of respect. His culture may have taught him not to put the focus of attention on himself. Also, his conditioning may prime him to seek direction from people he considers authorities. By respectfully gathering data about Brian with his help, we are in a better position to teach him ways to get what he needs from the group without violating his cultural norms.

WORKING WITH GROUP MEMBERS' RELUCTANCE. If group members say that they are not willing to participate in an exercise, we might ask, "Are you willing to talk about your hesitation?" If the answer is still negative, we usually let it go. If individuals develop a style of declining invitations to work, we point it out to them and ask if they are interested in doing anything about this pattern. Group participants should not be pressured or pushed into doing what they are unwilling to do, but members need to be challenged if they want to get something from the group.

Note that we ask our clients to talk about why they do not want to go along with what we suggest. This is a genuine request, and we do not automatically label their behavior resistance. Their hesitation may be because we have missed something important about them, as in Brian's case, which is a good illustration of how we can work with what appears to be a member's reluctance to participate in a respectful, yet challenging, manner.

Much "resistance" is justified caution on the part of the client. Most often members are willing to talk about their reluctance, and almost inevitably this discussion leads to important issues for the group, such as the trust or distrust felt toward certain members or perhaps toward the leader. If such issues arise, the sensitive leader abandons the technique, perhaps introducing a different technique appropriate for pursuing the theme of lack of trust. For example, the leader might now say something like this: "I would like to be able to work with you, but I'm having trouble knowing how to proceed. You've indicated that you don't feel safe in here yet, and that perhaps explains your reluctance to go along with some of the exercises. I hope that you're willing to talk about what it would take for you to feel more trusting. Would you be willing to say something to each person in this group, myself included, as to what makes it easy or difficult for you to feel trust?" This technique

can lead to good outcomes for the group, increased cohesion, and willingness in the future to go along with suggested techniques. The manner in which we approach group members can increase or reduce their reluctance.

In a Nutshell

In this section we highlight a series of points that clarify some of the underlying principles of why we lead the way we do. As group practitioners, we draw upon concepts and techniques from most of the contemporary therapeutic models and adapt them to our own unique personalities. As mentioned earlier, our conceptual framework takes into account the *thinking, feeling,* and *behaving* dimensions of human experience.

We want to emphasize that these are our views and that we are presenting them for you to consider and to adapt for yourself in a way that makes sense to you. These are not pronouncements about the best way to lead a group, but they are ideas that have worked well for us. As such, we describe them for your consideration.

RECOGNIZE THE PRIMACY OF THE CLIENT. In this book we may seem more directive and structured in our leadership style than is really the case. Although we take an active role in leading, we are constantly responding to our clients and taking clues from them. We see therapy as a kind of dance: sometimes we lead and sometimes we follow, but in either case we try to be aware of how we can best move with our partners. Sensitivity to and respect for clients are fundamental to the therapeutic interaction. We seek to fit techniques to clients rather than mold clients to fit our needs and our techniques.

REALIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF PREPARATION. It is a good practice to prepare both yourself and the members for a group experience. Adequate preparation maximizes the effectiveness of group work. Preparation includes informing potential members about the nature of the group, teaching them about how they might get the most from a group experience, and encouraging them to focus on the specific issues and concerns they wish to explore. You can get yourself psychologically ready for a group by taking time to reflect on your own life and to think about your objectives for the group. Preparing with a coleader whom you can learn from and who complements your own style can be ideal.

EMPHASIZE CONFIDENTIALITY. Group participants are not going to reveal themselves in meaningful ways unless they feel quite sure that they can trust both you and the other members to respect what they share. One of your key responsibilities as a group leader is to protect members by defining clearly what confidentiality means and helping them understand the difficulties involved in maintaining it. Indeed, the limitations of confidentiality need to be clarified at the outset, such as those situations in which you are legally obliged to divulge confidences.

At appropriate times throughout a group, you might remind the members how crucial maintaining confidentiality is for effective work to occur.

Although members will inevitably want to talk about their group experiences with significant people in their lives, it is wise to caution them about the subtle ways in which they might unintentionally violate others' confidentiality in this process. As a general rule, members do not violate confidentiality when they talk about *what* they learned about themselves in a group. They tend to get into trouble when they begin to talk about *how* others made changes by describing what others did or what techniques were used.

USE TECHNIQUES AS MEANS, NOT ENDS. Techniques are no better than the person using them and are no good at all if they are not sensitively adapted to the particular client and context. The outcome of a technique is affected by the climate of the group and by the relationship between the group leaders and the members. Techniques are a means to an end; they amplify material that is present and encourage exploration of where that material is leading. If you become more concerned with techniques than with what is best for the members, or if techniques become ends in themselves, positive group outcomes are jeopardized.

APPRECIATE THE READINESS OF THE GROUP MEMBER. Techniques should not be sprung on group members or be imposed without regard for the degree to which a relationship with the members has been established. Particularly with techniques that evoke emotions, it is important to gauge the readiness of the individual to work with us and with the exercise we are proposing. Instead of commanding, we invite participants to experiment with new behavior. It is our task to earn their trust by demonstrating our goodwill.

USE TENTATIVE LANGUAGE. We characteristically introduce a technique by saying "I wonder if you would be willing to ___?" "How would it be if you ___?" or "Do you suppose you could ___?" When we offer an interpretation, we typically begin with phrases such as "I have a hunch that ____." or "If I were you, I might feel that ____." We try in our choice of words not to give the impression that we know exactly what is going on. It is important, however, not to water our words down with meaningless qualifiers. We give our own challenging feedback in a more direct and unqualified way, but employ tentative language that gives the person room to gracefully decline when providing interpretations or introducing techniques.

USE SIMPLE LANGUAGE. Introduce techniques in a simple and clear manner. Groups inevitably develop their own special language and metaphors, but we tend to discourage using overworked popular expressions and psychobabble such as "getting in touch with your feelings." We strive to use language that is clear and descriptive.

ENCOURAGE VERBALIZATION. Many of our techniques emphasize verbal behavior: role playing, sentence completions, and go-arounds. This emphasis fits with our theoretical commitment to thinking, feeling, and doing as a package because what

we say reveals how we think, feel, and act. Typically, when we ask group members to say something, we hope to promote their talking spontaneously, making their internal rehearsals known to others. Internal ruminations that are harshly judged by an individual are often met with acceptance and respect by others in the group.

BE AWARE OF NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION. Be conscious of the nonverbal communications of group members and of how you nonverbally present yourself to the group. To establish a trusting relationship, we choose our words to communicate a basic respect for the people with whom we work. We recognize the importance of paying attention not only to the content of a member's speech but also to the manner in which the client presents messages. We look for patterns of nonverbal communications, yet we generally avoid quickly interpreting the meaning underlying these messages. Instead, we ask clients to become aware of their own body language and other nonverbal forms of communication and to attach their own meanings to patterns that emerge within the group. However, a caution is in order. It can become annoying to group members if leaders continually point out a person's particular body language or overly attribute meaning to nonverbal gestures.

PUT ASIDE PREJUDICES AND ASSUMPTIONS. If you want to be a therapeutic agent, it is essential that you put aside your preconceived notions about the people with whom you work. It is critical to develop an awareness of the negative impact of stereotyping individuals because of their age, disability, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, or sexual orientation. Your techniques will certainly take into account factors such as the client's age and cultural background, but try to avoid making assumptions about clients. Be open to letting members tell you who they are and what is important to them. In this way you can avoid imposing your values and your vision of reality on clients who differ from you. For instance, if you are working with adolescents and introduce a technique that assumes they feel rebellious, or if you are working with older adults and introduce a technique that assumes they are no longer sexual, you are imposing your preconceived notions rather than allowing your clients to tell you who they are.

ADAPT YOUR TECHNIQUES TO THE NEEDS OF CULTURALLY DIVERSE CLIENTS. Culture does influence a client's behavior, whether or not the group counselor is aware of it. Responsible and effective practice entails an understanding of the range of cultural similarities and differences. It is useful to consider culture from a broad perspective that includes factors such as ethnicity, family traditions and beliefs, religion, race, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and gender. Each of these categories influences how we view the world, who we are, how we behave, and informs the way people see us. If you hope to build bridges of understanding between yourself and group members who are different from you, recognize your possible position of privilege and the power of your professional role in the group. Discover ways to modify your strategies to meet the unique needs of a group composed

of culturally diverse members. Your genuine respect for the differences among members in your groups will be an important foundation on which to build trust. Effective multicultural practice calls for an open stance on your part and a flexibility in adapting your techniques to fit the needs and situations of the individuals within the group. No one "right" set of techniques can be utilized across the board, irrespective of a client's cultural background.

EMPOWER MEMBERS THROUGH YOUR USE OF TECHNIQUES. Many people who participate in groups have experienced discrimination and oppression in their lives, and these group members may display healthy suspicions about being involved in a group. Group leaders have a responsibility to ensure that the group experience does not become another force of oppression. Any technique should be designed and implemented within the context of furthering social justice. Members of a group can be encouraged to talk about their pain and the social injustices they have encountered. Power and privilege dynamics operate in a group, and the imbalance of power can be addressed and safely explored within the group. In any group, it is likely that some members have power and that others have been denied power in their lives. This reality can be addressed as these power dynamics emerge within the group. By virtue of their role, group leaders have power, and they can use that power to empower group members. It is crucial that leaders do not perpetuate social injustices, either intentionally or unintentionally.

LET THE CLIENT LEAD THE WAY. We sometimes introduce a technique thinking we know what is going to happen, but the material that emerges may lead in another direction. Or a client may misunderstand our directions and do something quite different from what we had in mind. We also find that a technique may work well once or many times, but we cannot count on it working the same way every time. We may have a sense of what we would like to introduce into a session, such as a focus on a particular theme or topic, but the group may show little interest in pursuing our agenda. In all these instances, we prefer to let the clients lead the way.

BE WILLING TO EXPERIMENT. In some ways the difference between an experienced leader and an inexperienced one lies in not being afraid to experiment and to forge ahead. We depend on our emotional and cognitive resources in creating techniques to fit a context. We teach beginning group leaders to be aware of certain pitfalls and to take necessary precautions, but we equally encourage them to trust themselves. If you find yourself becoming stale or uncreative, you might consider getting more supervision, working more with different coleaders, or attending different sorts of workshops as a participant.

BE WILLING TO SEEK CONSULTATION. There will be times when you can profit from the input of colleagues or supervisors. There are many reasons to seek consultation. If you are questioning your competence with a particular group or a population, consultation is in order. Ethical practice involves the willingness to

seek appropriate professional assistance when you become aware that your own personal problems or conflicts are likely to impair your professional judgment and your work with clients. Additionally, it is a mark of professionalism to seek out consultation or supervision regarding ethical concerns when you encounter difficulties that interfere with your effectiveness in carrying out leadership functions.

REALIZE THAT PERSONAL COUNSELING MAY BE NECESSARY. As a group counselor, you should recognize that exploring your own life is an ongoing process. You probably cannot, and, in any case should not, take your clients any further than you yourself are willing to go. Remain open to seeking personal counseling at times in your life when you are unable to work through a personal difficulty or crisis. Personal therapy is called for when your unresolved problems prevent you from being as effective as you might be.

LINK THE WORK OF CLIENTS. For group techniques to be most effective, they generally ought to enable several members to work at the same time. Some individual work in a group setting can be fine, but involving several clients better utilizes time and resources. In this area the leader orchestrates the group using creativity and intuition to identify common themes from the information clients have provided and to indicate how members can work together on these themes.

USE THE CLIENT'S METAPHORS. We try to follow the lead provided by our group members' material, and we see techniques as a means of enhancing what is going on rather than trying to generate a direction according to our own agenda. A key aspect of this view is that we design techniques that utilize the phrasings and metaphors introduced by the group member. The member's language finds its way into our ideas for techniques, and it provides us with the occasion for creative work.

In supervising student group leaders, we find that, out of anxiety, they often focus on the client's literal message. They may not "hear" the member's metaphor, or if they do, they often miss the source of meaning contained in it. For example, when members say they feel empty inside, it is therapeutically useful to ask them to describe this emptiness and how they experience it. If they feel empty, what may they be missing? What are they inclined to do with this feeling?

Consider the possibilities of these metaphors: "I feel that I have a hole in my soul." "I am surrounded by walls." "I am a bottomless pit." "I feel like a doormat." Any of these symbols can speak volumes about the experience of a member. For instance, it is therapeutically useful to pursue the person's experience of being a "doormat." Members seldom realize the depth of their metaphors, and leaders need to tune into that.

USE HUMOR. Humor can be misused to deflect painful or uncomfortable situations in a group, but if used appropriately and timed well, it can be therapeutic. We are struck by how clients can laugh about topics they were crying over only a short time before. We don't hesitate to have fun and to make humor part of the

techniques we introduce. For genuine and constructive humor to be used in a group, there has to be a high level of trust. Furthermore, humor should never be used to denigrate a member. In a climate of respect, the humor involves laughing *with* members, not at them. Again, let us stress that humor is not to be used to avoid serious work.

GO WITH THE OBVIOUS. Although we may use interpretations as a way of thinking about our clients, we work with what is present and obvious. When a group seems to lack energy, you might be tempted to assume responsibility by using techniques to "get the group going." Rather than trying to bring energy to the group, we suggest that you call attention to what is obvious to you and describe what you see to the members. Describing what you see without judgment or labeling is very respectful of what the members are experiencing and cannot express.

THINK ABOUT THEORY. We emphasize the importance of continually rethinking our theoretical orientations. A theory is a cognitive map, but not a fixed map. Our theories about how to work are open to modifications based on experience. We try to be aware of how we are viewing human nature and how this view affects our style of therapy, what our rationale is for introducing the techniques we do, and what our vision is of what we have to offer clients. Some practitioners have a high regard for their intuitions and hunches but downplay the intellect and are unwilling to reflect on what they are doing. Leaders must be willing to review their theoretical assumptions if their techniques are to be meaningful.

RECOGNIZE THE LIMITS OF RESPONSIBILITY. We see the therapeutic partnership as an opportunity to examine our lives, our feelings, and our possibilities for being different. Earlier, we used the metaphor of therapy as a dance, in which the therapist sometimes leads, sometimes follows, but always seeks to go with the shared movement. Responsibility for the success of the dance is not ours alone. We see our responsibilities primarily as preparing ourselves and our members for the group experience, providing a context in which meaningful work is possible, making ourselves available to hear and encounter our clients, providing skills and techniques that facilitate the explorations of the group, and seeking to maximize the opportunity to learn from the experience. If a group goes well, it is not all to our credit, and if a group is unproductive, it is not all our fault.

DON'T ATTEMPT TO CHANGE PEOPLE DIRECTLY. We assume that our clients may change under our influence, but we don't see these changes as something we do to them as if they, like the sculptor's clay, were the passive recipients of our technical manipulations. We do not think that people's lives simply and passively undergo transformation as a result of what we do. We seek to provide an optimal environment, or context, within which group participants can reexamine and rethink decisions they have made, express what they feel, try out new behavior, and, in short, consider how they could change. Although a technique we introduce

can invite participants to change and encourage them to do so, we do not think it is the technique that creates the change. The technique simply enhances the client's awareness of the possibility of being different. Once the client is aware of these options, the hardest work begins as the client attempts to carry what has been learned into daily life.

ATTEMPT TO INTEGRATE THINKING, FEELING, AND DOING. Our thinking, feeling, and acting are necessarily interdependent. One dimension of human functioning invariably affects other aspects of behavior. Thus, our techniques work better when we strive to utilize all modes of experience. If we sometimes ask clients to refrain from thinking about what they are saying, our goal is to have them eventually think clearly and be in a position to change. Some theories of therapy emphasize feeling as opposed to thinking; some stress thinking rather than feeling; some accentuate behavior independently of thinking or feeling. We emphasize the integration of these three dimensions. We seek through our use of techniques to give our clients an opportunity to experience and express their emotions. But we are also concerned to have them reflect on how their feelings connect with their belief systems, the assumptions they make, and the early decisions on which these assumptions may be based. We focus considerably on what they are currently doing, realizing that their actions are influenced by what they are thinking and feeling. Then we encourage them to try out different ways of behaving within the group and, lastly, to consider ways of carrying concrete behavioral changes into their lives outside the group.

EXPLORE POLARITIES. To achieve our goal of integrating thinking, feeling, and doing, we seek to acknowledge and work with polarities in our clients. Clients have opposite sides within them, even though they often do not want to acknowledge or own them: a thinking side versus a feeling side, being like one parent versus being like the other, being dependent versus being independent, being passive versus being active, being trusting versus being suspicious, and being open versus being closed. Many of our techniques ask group members to exaggerate one side of themselves to get more information about it and to decide whether it is a way they want to be. Our techniques do not aim at getting rid of one side. Rather, we find that having clients acknowledge various sides of themselves through techniques that emphasize polarities is a prelude to their accepting parts of themselves that they have needlessly rejected, rejecting parts they have needlessly accepted, and considering possibilities for integrated change.

WORK WITH THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE. Some leaders think of their groups as having a present, or here-and-now, orientation. Others focus on the past based on the premise that the past influences present choices. Still others emphasize the direction we are moving toward, or a future orientation. The groundwork for change involves helping clients clearly understand who they are now based on their personal histories. Our techniques move back and forth among all three

temporal frames of reference. Typically, we begin with current concerns introduced by group members and with dynamics we see in the group. We assume that present material is rooted in childhood lessons, but when we introduce techniques that focus on the past, we seek to use only material that can be made experientially present. We also operate on the assumption that if we focus on the client's present state, this person's unfinished business from the past will become evident.

There are themes in a person's life, and we are interested in seeing connections between one's past and one's current personality. To make the past more relevant and to explore it in a more lively way, we frequently ask clients to bring their past into the present by imagining and reliving significant scenarios. We may ask: "If you could be that hurt child you were then, what would you want us to know about you? What would you want from us?" or "What do you want to say to your father now that you did not or could not say then?" We avoid exploring past history in an abstract and detached way. We seek to examine the relevance of the past by reliving it and connecting it with current struggles. The point of such techniques is to put clients into a position to choose how they want to be now in light of their beginnings.

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO CONSOLIDATE LEARNING AND TO PRACTICE NEW BEHAVIOR. The final stage of a group presents an ideal opportunity for using techniques that enable members to remember the specifics of their group experience, to seek a cognitive framework for lessons they want to take away, and to practice new behavior. Ideally, if the group is to be more than a passing experience, the group leader will promote consolidation, generalization, and transfer of learning.

Concluding Comments

Techniques are valuable and important, but they must be used with caution. Because of the immediate progress that techniques seem to promote, the therapist may draw on techniques mechanically or may fail to explore material that they bring out. Techniques should be chosen in and for the situation; they are not to be memorized and then imposed on the group process. Our main concern in this book is not to equip you with an arsenal of group strategies but to encourage you to design techniques that are extensions of yourself, your own sensitivities, and the work of group members. We certainly are not urging you to memorize the techniques discussed here. Instead, we hope you use this book as a tool for improving your own ability to devise techniques and to think through the rationale for and the possible consequences of the techniques you invent.

Questions and Activities

At the end of each chapter we provide some questions and activities that we hope you will use to clarify your own positions and to integrate what you have read. We list far more questions and activities than we think any one person will be interested in pursuing in depth. We encourage you to read all the questions and then select the ones that have the most interest and value for you, modifying them to match your own interests, client population, and situation. If you are using this book as a classroom text, many of the questions and activities can be adapted for small group discussion, role playing, essay questions, and debates. The activities can be tried out in experiential groups.

Here are some questions and activities related to the discussion of topics in this chapter.

1. What is your view of the role that techniques should ideally play in the group process?
2. As a group leader, to what extent do you use techniques, and when do you think it is appropriate or inappropriate to do so?
3. What do you think about approaching a group with a planned agenda rather than letting the group take its own course? Give an example of a population or a group for which a planned agenda is appropriate.
4. What are your ideas about using planned group exercises and techniques as a means of stimulating interaction in a group?
5. Give some examples of how and when techniques might interfere with the group process.
6. What are some ways in which you can adapt your techniques to fit the needs of the culturally diverse clients who are likely to be in your groups? How can you create techniques that will accommodate the differences among clients rather than forcing these clients to fit a predetermined technique?
7. We spoke of the importance of the relationship between leader and client. In what ways could this relationship be affected by the use of techniques?
8. What is your understanding of resistance? How would you work with resistance?
9. Have you participated in a group as a member? What did this experience teach you about yourself? about the group process? about leading groups? How might it help you or hinder you if you had no group experience?
10. In the section "In a Nutshell" we described key aspects of our philosophy of the place of techniques in group counseling. What three key points most interested you?

Guide to Using *Groups in Action: Evolution and Challenges* DVD and Workbook

Challenges Facing Group Leaders (DVD and Workbook). Here are some suggestions for making effective use of the first chapter of this book along with Part 2 (Challenges of Dealing With Difficult Behaviors in Group) of *Challenges Facing Group Leaders,* the second program in *Groups in Action*.

1. As you view this second program, what characteristics do you observe in this group that illustrate difficult turning points in a group? In general, how would you describe the techniques used by the Coreys?
2. The Coreys view their task as intervening in a way that makes the room safe and provides a climate whereby members can talk about their hesitations and any resistance they may be experiencing. What is the importance of carefully working with whatever members bring to a group regarding their fears, concerns, or reservations? How is this kind of exploratory work essential if you hope to help a group move to a deeper level of interpersonal interaction? From reading this chapter and viewing *Challenges of Dealing With Difficult Behaviors in Group,* what are you learning about techniques to effectively work with members?
3. As you watch and study the second program (*Challenges of Dealing With Difficult Behaviors in Group*), notice signs of problematic behaviors on the part of members. Also notice signs of defensiveness and reluctance and how members express and work with their defensive behavior. The themes that are enacted in this video program are illustrative of challenges group leaders typically encounter in many different groups. These themes include the following:
   - Checking in: What was it like to return to group?
   - The leaders let me down.
   - I'm not feeling safe in here.
   - I didn't want to come back to group.
   - I'm in this group against my will.
   - Emotions make me uncomfortable.
   - I'm self-conscious about my accent.
   - I want the leaders to disclose more.
   - I learn a lot by being quiet.
   - Silence serves a function.
   - I feel pressured to disclose.
   - What's wrong with helping others?
   - Can't we stop all this conflict?
   - I feel weak when I show feelings.
   - Checking out: What are each of you taking from this session?

4. In small groups, explore these questions: What kind of difficult group member would present the greatest challenge to you? Do you have any ideas about why a certain problematic member might "trigger" you more than others? What do you see the coleaders doing when members display behaviors that could be seen as problematic? What lessons are you learning about how to work therapeutically with challenging behaviors of members? How would you describe the manner in which the Coreys use techniques?

CHAPTER

Ethical Issues in Using Group Techniques

Introduction

In this chapter we discuss some ethical concerns about using techniques in group work, with a focus on their responsible use. The abuse of techniques does not always stem from a lack of concern for members; it can also arise from a lack of awareness of the potential effects of procedures. We do not attempt to address the broad ethical problems of group work in this chapter. Instead, we are concerned mainly with the following specific ethical issues posed by the use of techniques:

- The group leader as a person (how the personal and professional aspects of group leadership are related to effective ethical group practice)
- The leader's motivations and therapeutic stance (the possible misuse of techniques for personal reasons and the leader's rationale for the techniques employed)
- Group preparation and norms (providing members with information about the leader, the group's structure and function, and basic policies)
- Multicultural and social justice issues (understanding how techniques can attend to multicultural and social justice issues as they play out in a group)
- Techniques as avoidance devices (using techniques to avoid dealing with members directly or omitting material with which the leader feels uncomfortable)
- Pressure traps and how to avoid them (pressure from peers and leaders to participate, misuse of aggressive and confrontational techniques, forced touching, and inappropriate catharsis)
- Protection of members (when physical techniques are used)
- Leader competence (knowing when to use particular techniques)

You can develop a level of competence and can devise techniques creatively. However, you need to strike a balance between this creativity and a healthy caution in using techniques. If you have a solid academic background, have had extensive supervised group experience, have acquired some skills in group work, have had your own therapy, and have a fundamental respect for your clients, you are not likely to abuse techniques. Furthermore, specific knowledge about the group process and specific skills in facilitating groups are essential for effective and ethical practice of group work.

The Leader as a Person

We emphasize the leader's involvement in moving the group forward. In this regard, the leader's character, personal qualities, and philosophy of life are more important than any technique for facilitating the group process. As a group leader, you are more than the sum total of your skills. From this viewpoint, when you take from another source a technique that is not a reflection of your own character and style, you are introducing something that may be alien to you. If you are a low-key person and you introduce a highly dramatic technique, the discrepancy may inhibit

the group. You can, instead, use your unique personal qualities as a part of your therapeutic style. You may have a wit that can be used appropriately. Your playfulness and supportiveness can become an integral part of how you facilitate a group. Whatever personal dimension you draw from, it is critical to remember that in many ways the person you are is your best therapeutic instrument. Ethical behavior cannot be separated from the person that you are.

Some group leaders depend on techniques far too much to get out of difficult situations, to get groups moving, or to keep them moving, and in doing so they can become mechanical facilitators. This practice ignores the most powerful resource for reaching group members: the leader's personal reactions to the members and the reactions going on between group members at any given moment.

Both the existential approach to groups and the person-centered approach to groups (see Corey, 2012, chaps. 9 & 10) place primary emphasis on the personal qualities of the group facilitator rather than on techniques of leading, because the main role of the facilitator is to create a healing climate in the group. Both approaches to groups put more emphasis on experiencing the group member in the present moment than on using a particular set of interventions. Technique follows understanding, which means that the primary concern of the group counselor is to be *with* the group member and to understand his or her subjective world. These theoretical orientations are based on the assumption that there are no "universally appropriate" techniques, because the task is accomplished through the therapeutic encounter between members and the group facilitator.

It is important to acquire knowledge of how groups function, to learn the necessary skills and techniques to implement your knowledge in actual group work, and to do so in such a way that your techniques become an expression of your personal style and an extension of the unique person you are. You can take what we have to offer in these chapters to create your own variations—to develop a repertoire that suits your leadership style. We are proposing an experimental attitude, and encourage you to try out techniques and different ways of working in a group to gradually learn what works for you and the members, as well as what does not.

How can you use techniques that are an extension of yourself as a person and part of your therapeutic style? Although the techniques you implement are an expression of who you are as a person and as a professional, techniques must fit the cultural context and the character of the group members. We offer the following suggestions for your consideration.

PAY ATTENTION TO YOURSELF. A good place to begin is by monitoring your own experience in the group, including looking at the impact you have on the members. This process involves assessing your level of investment, your directness, your willingness to model what you expect of your members, and your willingness to be psychologically present for them. How high is your own energy level and your own

readiness to be responsive to the group? You will tune in to the group more sensitively if you are in the habit of tuning in to yourself.

LEARN TO TRUST YOURSELF. Learning to trust yourself is another essential part of the task of finding a style that suits your personality. If you do not trust your hunches, you may hold yourself back from even trying certain techniques. One way to develop this kind of trust is by being willing to follow your hunches and by trying variations of the techniques we describe. If a technique does not work, the consequences do not have to be horrible. Simply acknowledging that an exercise or a technique is not working is often the best way of pulling yourself out of a situation that could otherwise become worse. It is not helpful to worry so much about making mistakes that you block yourself from making any interventions. If you believe you must be absolutely sure before you act, you will miss countless opportunities for action, and your clients will be deprived of opportunities as well. It takes courage to admit that a particular intervention did not work. What is crucial to us is how we recover from an intervention that did not work out well.

MODEL BEHAVIOR FOR MEMBERS. Another way to be sure that your use of techniques reflects your personality is through modeling. You can invite members to broaden their range of group behavior by demonstrating certain behaviors yourself. You can teach directness through your own directness. You can encourage members to give sensitive and honest feedback to others by doing so yourself. If you model nonjudgmental confrontation in a way that shows your concern for the person being challenged, your group members will learn how to confront one another in the same fashion.

Modeling is a powerful way to teach and influence the behavior of group members. Group leader behaviors that are hallmarks of ethical, professional, and effective practice include (a) demonstrating acceptance of the person of the client; (b) avoiding responding to sarcastic remarks with sarcasm; (c) educating the members about group process; (d) being honest with members rather than harboring hidden agendas; (e) avoiding judgments and labeling of members, and instead describing the behavior of members; (f) stating observations and hunches in a tentative way rather than dogmatically; (g) letting members who display difficult behavior know how they are affecting others in a nonblaming way; (h) detecting their own countertransference reactions; (i) avoiding misusing their power; (j) providing both support and caring confrontations; and (k) avoiding meeting their own needs at the expense of the members.

SELF-DISCLOSE APPROPRIATELY. Disclosing to group members what you are experiencing in the here-and-now context of the group is generally appropriate. Through your openness, you invite members to share what they are experiencing. However, when it comes to disclosing your problems from outside of the group, you need to have guidelines for when and how you engage in self-disclosure.

You must be clear about your motivations for revealing your own personal issues, and you need to monitor the impact of this on the group. A potential danger is that you may monopolize the group. Your self-disclosures should be relevant to what is going on in the group, and the time you take should not be at the members' expense. Your disclosures should facilitate self-exploration and interaction within the group rather than burdening the members with your personal problems.

BE PRESENT. Approaching group sessions with a sense of enthusiasm can generate enthusiasm within the group. Your vitality and your being psychologically present for members are in themselves powerful modeling agents in getting groups to move. Your degree of aliveness and enthusiasm may be an index of the degree to which your groups are able to function in a vital way.

KNOW YOUR VALUES. A group leader's values are a basic part of the leader as a person. A central ethical issue in the practice of group counseling involves group leaders' awareness of their values and the potential impact these values have on the interventions they make in their group. The leader's central function is to help members find answers that are congruent with the members' own values.

In summary, techniques have more impact if you are able to maintain a relationship based on trust with group members. Such trust is best created through the personal qualities that you project, especially through your presence. In other words, techniques do not work in isolation from your personality and your relationship with members. You make a difference.

From our perspective, the leader's function is to assist members in evaluating their behavior to determine how it is working for them, rather than to advise members on the proper course to adopt. If members come to the realization that what they are doing is not serving them well, they are more open to thinking about alternative ways of behaving that will enable them to reach their goals.

Group Preparation and Norms

The ASGW's (2008) "Best Practice Guidelines" (see Appendix A) are a set of professional and ethical guidelines for group practitioners. These guidelines are intended to clarify the application of the American Counseling Association's *Code of Ethics* to the field of group work by defining the responsibilities and scope of group workers. The guidelines address group workers' responsibilities in planning, performing, and processing groups. Some specific areas include guidelines for assessment, program development and evaluation, professional disclosure statement, group and member preparation, professional development, best practice in performing, and best practice in group processing. As you review the ASGW guidelines, you will see how ethical issues can be identified and addressed in a variety of counseling groups. In the following pages we examine some of the issues raised in these guidelines as they relate to group preparation and group norms.