

Chapter 5

GROUP INTERVENTIONS IN SCHOOLS

Burcu PAMUKÇU¹

INTRODUCTION

Children and adolescents spend most of their daily time at school. The school counseling office is expected to help students in many areas, from meeting their developmental needs to solving their psychological problems. School counselors also play a key role in helping students get the help they need (Crespi, 2009).

Groups have many advantages in the provision of preventive and remedial counseling services. First, groups allow students to socialize (Kulic, Horne & Dagley, 2004). From a developmental point of view, students learn best from their peers and groups ensure that the peer group influence is used in a positive way (Pérusse, Goodnough & Lee, 2009). Groups are very precious with regard to helping students to gain different perspectives and not to feel alone about the problems they experience. In addition, in the groups, students learn to establish relationships with their peers, learn various life skills, and have the opportunity to practice new behaviors in a safe environment. Subsequently, they could transfer these new behaviors to real life (Falco, 2011; Kulic et al., 2004). In groups, students gain self-awareness by receiving feedback from their peers and increase their self-esteem by helping others (Shechtman, Bar-El & Hadar, 1997). Moreover, groups are also economical and practical in that they enable counselors to work with more than one student in a certain time period (Falco, 2011).

Groups provide not only individual benefits but also the opportunity to positively influence the whole School. Especially a systematic and comprehensive counseling program, including group interventions, can enable change in the whole School (Littrell & Peterson, 2002). Therefore, group interventions should be an integral part of the school counseling program (Thompson, 2002).

A review of the literature showed that counseling and psychoeducational groups are the most frequents group interventions in schools (Gerrity & DeLucia-Waack, 2006). In the next section, the characteristics of the counseling and psychoeducational groups will be discussed, respectively.

¹ Dr., Ege University, burcu.pamukcu@ege.edu.tr

one class hour for ease of planning. The number of sessions will vary according to the type and purpose of the group. While some groups may last 3-4 weeks, some groups may continue throughout the term (Jacobs et al., 2012).

There are some advantages and disadvantages of the group being homogeneous or heterogeneous based on gender. Mixed-gender groups are often preferred, as it is also important to acquire the skills to establish relationships with the opposite sex during adolescence. However, it may sometimes prevent members from disclosing themselves. Therefore, the school counselor should decide on gender homogeneity by evaluating these advantages and disadvantages (Jacobs et al., 2012). The places where adolescent groups are held should be arranged in accordance with group activities, just like other groups. Since confidentiality is very important for adolescents, the privacy of the group place is important (Brown, 2004).

Adolescents may be skeptical about trusting the leader and group members. Behaviors such as testing the boundaries of the leaders and questioning their authority are frequently observed in adolescent groups. In terms of self-disclosure behavior, adolescents may sometimes be extremely quiet or sometimes inappropriately disclose themselves. It is important for school counselors to establish an honest, sincere, genuine and non-defensive relationship with adolescents. The school counselor should establish a friendly relationship with the group member, but also make them feel that s/he is in a different position from them as a group leader (Brown, 1994; Rose, 1998).

When working with adolescents, it is important to clearly define some rules and boundaries to make them understand what is expected from them. When boundaries are clearly expressed, adolescents feel more secure, and they can function better (Brown, 2004). In addition, it is very important for the leader to be a model in adolescent groups and to use the positive aspects of peer pressure in the group process. Blocking is also an important counseling skill in adolescent groups. Monopolistic behaviors, hostile behaviors, inappropriate self-disclosure/feedback to draw attention are situations that should be blocked by the group leader (Jacobs et al., 2012).

REFERENCES

- Akos, P. (2005). The unique nature of middle school counseling. *Professional School Counseling*, 9(2), 95-103. Doi: 10.5330/prsc.9.2.c3172218176248x4
- Akos, P., & Martin, M. (2003). Transition groups for preparing students for middle School. *Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 28(2), 139-154.
- Association for Specialists in Group Work (2000). *Professional standards for the training of group workers*. (02.03.2021 retrieved from <https://asgw.org/resources-2/>).

- Beelmann, A., Pfingsten, U., & Lösel, F. (1994). Effects of training social competence in children: A meta-analysis of recent evaluation studies. *Journal of clinical child psychology*, 23(3), 260-271. Doi: 10.1207/s15374424jccp2303_4
- Bennett, D. S., & Gibbons, T. A. (2000). Efficacy of child cognitive-behavioral interventions for antisocial behavior: A meta-analysis. *Child & Family Behavior Therapy*, 22(1), 1-15. Doi: 10.1300/J019v22n01_01
- Berg, R. C., Landreth, G. L., & Fall, K. A. (2006). *Group counseling: concepts and procedures*. NY: Routledge.
- Brigman, G., & Campbell, C. (2003). Helping students improve academic achievement and school success behavior. *Professional School Counseling*, 7, 91-98.
- Brown, N. W. (1994). *Group counseling for elementary and middle school children*. USA: Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Brown, N. W. (2004). *Psychoeducational groups: Process and practice*. NY: Routledge.
- Corey, M. S. & Corey, G. (2006). *Groups: Process and practice* (7th ed.). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Cobia, D. C., & Henderson, D. A. (2003). *Handbook of school counseling*. Prentice Hall.
- Crespi, T. D. (2009). Group counseling in the schools: Legal, ethical, and treatment issues in school practice. *Psychology in the Schools*, 46(3), 273-280. Doi: 10.1002/pits.20373
- Çakır, S. G. (2011). Grup çeşitleri. A. Demir ve S. Koydemir (Ed.). In *Grupla psikolojik danışma*. (pp. 49-72). Ankara: Pegem Akademi.
- Davis, T. E. (2006). Groups in schools. In D. Capuzzi, D. R. Gross, & M.D. Stauffer (Eds.), *introduction to group work* (4th ed., pp. 323-354). Denver: Love Publishing.
- Davis, M. K., & Gidycz, C. A. (2000). Child sexual abuse prevention programs: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology*, 29, 257-265. Doi: 10.1207/S15374424jccp2902_11
- Durlak, J. A., & Wells, A. M. (1997). Primary prevention mental health programs for children and adolescents: A meta-analytic review. *American journal of community psychology*, 25(2), 115-152. Doi: 10.1023/A:1024654026646
- Falco, L. D. (2011). Why groups? The importance of group counseling in schools. *School Counseling Research & Practice*, 3, 17-24.
- Fettes, P. A., & Peters, J. M. (1992). A meta-analysis of group treatments for bulimia nervosa. *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, 11(2), 97-110. Doi: 10.1002/1098-108X(199203)11:2<97::AID-EAT2260110202>3.0.CO;2-H
- Gazda, G. M., Ginter, E. J., & Horne, A. M. (2001). *Group counseling and group psychotherapy: Theory and application*. Allyn & Bacon.
- Gerrity, D. A., & DeLucia-Waack, J. L. (2006). Effectiveness of groups in the schools. *The journal for specialists in group work*, 32(1), 97-106. Doi: 10.1080/01933920600978604
- Greenberg, K. R. (2003). *Group counseling in K-12 schools: A handbook for school counselors*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Hazell, P., & Lewin, T. (1993). An evaluation of postvention following adolescent suicide. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, 23(2), 101-109. Doi: 10.1111/j.1943-278X.1993.tb00374.x
- Hoag, M. J., & Burlingame, G. M. (1997). Evaluating the effectiveness of child and adolescent group treatment: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology*, 26(3), 234-246. Doi: 10.1207/s15374424jccp2603_2
- Jacobs, E. E., Masson, R. L., Harvill, R. L., & Schimmel, C. J. (2012). *Group counseling: Strategies and skills*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole
- Kulic, K. R., Horne, A. M., & Dagley, J. C. (2004). A Comprehensive Review of Prevention

- Groups for Children and Adolescents. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 8(2), 139. Doi: 10.1037/1089-2699.8.2.139
- Littrell, J. M., & Peterson, J. S. (2002). Establishing a comprehensive group work program in an elementary school: An in-depth case study. *Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 27(2), 161-172. Doi: 10.1080/714860126
- Maree, J. G. (2019). Group career construction counseling: A mixed-methods intervention study with high school students. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 67(1), 47-61. Doi: 10.1002/cdq.12162
- May, M., & Housley, W. (1996). The effects of group counselling on the self-esteem of sexually abused female adolescents. *Guidance & Counselling*, 11(4), 38-42.
- Pérusse, R., Goodnough, G. E., & Lee, V. V. (2009). Group counseling in the schools. *Psychology in the Schools*, 46(3), 225-231.
- Prout, S. M., & Prout, H. T. (1998). A meta-analysis of school-based studies of counseling and psychotherapy: An update. *Journal of School Psychology*, 36(2), 121-136. Doi: 10.1016/S0022-4405(98)00007-7
- Ripley, V. V., & Goodnough, G. E. (2001). Planning and implementing group counseling in a high school. *Professional School Counseling*, 5(1), 62.
- Rose, S. R. (1998). *Group work with children and adolescents*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage
- Shechtman, Z. (2014). Group counseling in the School. *Hellenic Journal of Psychology*, 11(3), 169-183.
- Shechtman, Z., Bar-El, O., & Hadar, E. (1997). Therapeutic factors and psycho educational groups for adolescents: A comparison. *Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 22(3), 203-213. Doi: 10.1080/01933929708414381
- Steen, S., Bauman, S., & Smith, J. (2007). Professional school counselors and the practice of group work. *Professional School Counseling*, 11(2), 72-80. Doi: 10.1177/2156759X0701100201
- Thompson, R. A. (2002). *School counseling: Best practices for working in the schools*. New York: Brunner-Routledge.
- Utay, J. M., & Lampe, R. E. (1995). Use of a group counseling game to enhance social skills of children with learning disabilities. *Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 20(2), 114-120. Doi: 10.1080/01933929508411334
- Webb, L. D., Brigman, G. A., & Campbell, C. (2005). Linking school counselors and student success: A replication of the Student Success Skills approach targeting the academic and social competence of students. *Professional School Counseling*, 8(5) 407-413.
- Whiston, S. C., & Quinby, R. F. (2009). Review of school counseling outcome research. *Psychology in the Schools*, 46(3), 267-272. Doi: 10.1002/pits.20372
- Whiston, S. C., Brecheisen, B. K., & Stephens, J. (2003). Does treatment modality affect career counseling effectiveness? *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 62, 390-410. Doi:10.1016/S0001-8791(02)00050-7