

INTRODUCTION

The American Group Psychotherapy Association (AGPA) has developed this course manual in order to update the original “Principles of Group Psychotherapy” Core Course Manual. The intention of this is to provide a basic overview of theory and practice in group psychotherapy in order to assist trainees in learning and demonstrating basic group psychotherapy concepts.

The basic course will continue to meet the 12-hour Group Psychotherapy Education requirement for certification by the National Registry of Certified Group Psychotherapists (NRCGP). In addition, the following requirements are necessary:

1. **Clinical Credentials:** Mental health professionals with a minimum of a Master’s Degree in a clinical mental health field who are licensed at the highest level for their discipline in the state in which they practice. In those states where discipline licensure is not available, membership or certification at the highest level in designated national professional organizations may be used to verify clinical credentials.

2. **Group Psychotherapy Experience:** 300 hours of group psychotherapy experience as leader or co-leader accrued during or following graduate training.

3. **Group Psychotherapy Supervision:** 75 hours of group psychotherapy supervision during or following clinical graduate training. The supervision must have occurred with an approved group psychotherapy supervisor in either an individual or group format and must have involved the regular presentation of group psychotherapy clinical material.

While the basic intention remains the same, and while the essential, structural aspects of this new manual are consistent with the previous edition, the following changes were made:

1. The order of presentation of the modules was changed to the following:

Module I—Foundations of Group Therapy

Module II—Group Dynamics and Group Process

Module III—The Change Process in Group Psychotherapy

Module IV—The Role of the Group Leader

Module V—Short-Term, Structured and Thematic Group Approaches

2. A fifth module, “Structured, Time-Limited and Theme-Centered Group Therapy,” has been added, in order to take into account major changes in the delivery of group services in clinical and institutional settings, as well as in private practice.

3. An outline of curriculum objectives and topics to be covered is included with content material drawn from various recommended readings and outlined with detail for use by faculty instructors in preparing and teaching the introductory course. The detailed outline is not intended to hamstring faculty in their development of an introductory course that is congruent with their own experiences and teaching styles, nor is it intended to ignore the particular needs of the context in which training occurs.

4. While this manual specifies and makes explicit the content of the course, the spirit of the first manual remains and allows for an adaptation of the course to the particular needs of the sites and trainees taking the

course. Faculty are still encouraged to select methods and approaches that are congruent with their own experiences and teaching styles. Sharing clinical experiences, simulation, role play, discussion of affective and cognitive perceptions, skill demonstrations and clinical observations are among some of the teaching methods that can complement didactic presentations (lecture).

5. In order to assist faculty to develop their curriculum, a more extensive bibliography is included that updates the literature reviewed and affords each faculty instructor the opportunity to use references that may have been particularly useful and valuable to his or her own study of group psychotherapy theory and practice in addition to the works already referenced in the detailed outlines.

