Creating the Group: Selecting Members

- Selecting group members is one of the group leader’s/therapist’s most important functions
- Quality of interpersonal relationships among members = core of successful group treatment

Creating the Group: Selection Interviews

- Determine potential members’ motivation
- Encourage client to ask questions
- Correct misperceptions or misinformation
- Inquire about any pending life changes
- Inquire about what client sees as a need to work on
- Establish and clarify initial group contract
Creating the Group: Group Contract

- Goals and purposes
- Time, length, frequency of meetings
- Place of meetings
- Start/end dates
- Addition of new members
- Attendance

- Confidentiality
- Member interaction outside the group
- Participation of members and therapists
- Fees

Personality Characteristics

- Motivation for therapy (particularly group therapy)
- Personality variables such as extraversion, openness, and conscientiousness

Personality Characteristics - continued

- Effect the person will have on the others in terms of ability to bring curative factors into play
- Balance in members’ behavior or characteristics
- Homogeneity of members in terms of vulnerabilities or ego strengths
**Therapeutic Groups**

- Many goals we set for ourselves cannot be achieved without membership in groups and families; cooperation and coordination can achieve goals that could not be reached through individual effort alone.
- Mental health can be preserved, maintained, and restored through interaction with others in productive groups and families.

**Purposes of Therapeutic Groups**

- Health teaching
- Psychoeducation: provides clients with the opportunity to:
  - Seek validation
  - Give and receive interpersonal feedback
  - Test new and different ways of being that may improve quality of life
- Supportive purposes

**Here-and-Now Emphasis**

- The here-and-now work of the interactional group therapist occurs on two levels:
  - Focusing attention on each member’s feelings toward other members, therapist(s), and the group
  - Illuminating the process
Here-and-Now Activation

- Self-reflective loop: becoming aware of here-and-now events (what happened) and then reflecting back on them (how and why)
- Events in the session (here-and-now) take precedence over those outside (there-and-then)

Illuminating the Process

- Second step of interactional group therapy: moving beyond a focus on content toward a focus on process (how and why of interactions)
- Clearing the air: making covert interpersonal difficulties overt, a major step in interpersonal needs approach

Family Dynamics

- Family roles: patterns of behavior sanctioned by the culture to accomplish family developmental tasks
- When roles are not negotiated satisfactorily, family disequilibrium results.
**Family Boundaries**

- Family boundaries define:
  - amount of emotional investment
  - who participates
  - amount/kind of experiences available outside the family
  - how experiences are evaluated
- Boundaries may be clear or conflicting, rigid or diffuse.

**Power Structures**

- Hierarchical power: creates safe environment for young children’s growth and development
- More diffused power as children mature
- Chronic discord over power is seen in some dysfunctional families.

**Relationship Strains/Conflicts**

Strains and conflicts may arise:
- In the family: between individual members
- Among various parts of the family: between one member or a minority of members and rest of family
- Outside the family: between family and community
Self-Fulfilling Prophecies and Life Scripts

- Self-fulfilling prophecy
  - Idea or expectation that is acted out, mostly unconsciously, thus proving itself
- Life script
  - A plan decided by experiences early in life

Family Myths and Themes

- Family myths
  - Well-integrated beliefs shared by all family members
- Family themes
  - Family’s perception of its development and history

Family Coalitions

- Family coalitions: arise basically to affect distribution of power
- Dyadic communication: most common form of communicative exchange
- Triad: characterized by shifting alliances; fixed and rigid triangles are an effort to reduce stress and restore balance in a dysfunctional family but actually perpetuate problems
Deviations in Adult Partners’ Coalition

- Schism: Children are forced to join one or the other camp of two warring parents or adult caretakers.
- Skew: One mate is severely dysfunctional.
- Enmeshment: One adult is over-controlling and anxious about losing control; family has diffuse boundaries.
- Disengagement: Family members are unresponsive and unconnected to each other.

Pseudomutuality and Pseudohostility

- Pseudomutuality: Family functions as if it were a close, happy family, with ritualized and stereotyped ways of relating.
- Pseudohostility: Family has chronic conflict, alienation, tension, and remoteness, but family members deny the problems.

Family Assessment

- The nurse must not have bias against family’s involvement.
- The nurse’s own family experiences influence how the nurse perceives and reacts to the client’s family.
- Family’s insights should be included in assessment and, if appropriate, planning of care, particularly post-discharge.
Family Assessment Data

- Demographic information: gender, age, occupation, religion, ethnicity, family functioning
- Medical and mental health history: pertinent health facts in family of origin, extended family, and family history; developmental stage of family
- Family interactional data: family rules, roles, communication, and cohesion

Family Assessment Data - continued

- Family burden: difficulties/responsibilities in caring for relative with psychiatric disability
- Family system data: interaction with outside world; family alliances
- Needs, goals, values, and aspirations: determine if essential needs are met and if goals and values are articulated and understood by other family members
- Family genogram: cultural, spiritual, forensic

Family Interventions

- Family members have an in-depth understanding of the client’s illness; their insights should be included in assessment and planning.
- Assessments can be formal or informal; nurse must establish trust and secure client’s permission to release information to the family.
Family Interventions - continued

- Two main goals for involving family in client’s treatment plan:
  - Enlisting the family as an ally in promoting therapeutic progress
  - Supporting family caregivers

Family Interventions - continued

- Three types of family intervention:
  - Family psychoeducation: designed to help family cope with loved one’s illness
  - Referral to National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) for general information, referral to state and local groups, and support from trained volunteers
  - Family therapy: family system as unit of treatment

Psychoeducation

- Family psychoeducation
  - Addresses all family members’ emotion regulation and interpersonal skills deficits
  - Serves a supportive function in an accepting environment
Family Therapy

- Insight-oriented therapy
  - Psychodynamic: problems arise because of developmental delays, current interactions, or stress
  - Family of origin: goal is to foster differentiation among members and decrease emotional reactivity and triangulation

Family Therapy

- Behavioral-oriented therapy
  - Structural: focuses on systems, subsystems, boundaries, and deviations
  - Strategic: problems from inequality, flawed communication, and maladaptive family interactions
  - Cognitive/behavioral: changing thinking and behavior, problem-solving, and developing skills

Resources

- [http://www.aamft.org](http://www.aamft.org)
  The American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy site offers current resources on issues that affect families, such as infertility, loss, adolescent substance abuse, and postpartum depression. The site includes a directory of marriage and family therapists.

- [http://www.calm4kids.org](http://www.calm4kids.org)
  Child Abuse Listening and Mediation is a private nonprofit agency whose sole mission is to prevent, assess, and treat child abuse by providing comprehensive, culturally appropriate services for children, adults, and families.
Resources - continued

  The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration provides access to current information about critical issues in family mental health, such as suicide, school violence, discrimination and stigma, and children’s mental health.

- http://www.na.org
  Narcotics Anonymous provides a recovery process and support network that relies on the therapeutic value of addicts working with other addicts through application of the principles in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of NA.

Resources - continued

- http://www.psychotherapy.net
  This site provides resources for therapists, including the DVD set “Understanding Group Therapy” by Irving Yalom.