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Group Counseling: Definition and Implication for High School Counselors

Joyce Thompson

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GROUP COUNSELING: DEFINITION AND IMPLICATION

FOR HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELORS

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BY

Joyce Thompson

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I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS PLAN B PAPER BE ACCEPTED AS
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In recent years world developments such as the growing space
program, travel by jet, and the development of nuclear power, to
mention only a few, have caused experts from many fields to assess
where education stands in relation to supplying the "brain power"
needs of our country. Many suggestions have been made for improv-
ing the efficiency of our educational system. Critical observers
have suggested improving education by increasing and improving guid-
ance services offered by our schools. Recent legislation has added
impetus by granting financial aid to guidance programs and supplying
information and assistance.

Problems of a complex society such as we have in many areas of
our country, are isolating individuals from one another by making our
contacts with others more impersonal. "The loneliness of the adoles-
cent is a deep and utter loneliness, and the future may intensify it."[1]
This loneliness intensifies the need for personal identity.

> He needs to identify with new models, especially during
> the time he has rejected his parents and his religion in
> his struggle for independence and adult status. He is
> torn with conflict between love and rebellious hostility

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[1]Gilbert C. Wrenn. The Counselor in a Changing World.
(Washington 9, D. C.: American Personnel and Guidance Association,1962)
p. 6.

toward his family, beset with guilt feelings, and a sense of inadequacy.[2]

The adolescent student may feel he is nothing more than a card in a file, to be numbered, processed and put in place. As Cody has stated,

> One of the greatest dangers today is that the individual will be ignored . . . . Guidance programs are an attempt to meet effectively the challenge of mass education through meeting the diverse needs of individual students.[3]

The guidance program in secondary schools is a part of the education program but is a separate function.

> The concept which we wish to symbolize by the word guidance is one of assisting individuals to make plans and decisions and in implementing their development in accordance with their own life patterns.[4]

The need for personal attention and help to students seems to be accepted thinking in most educational institutions and, as evidenced by legislative action,[5] by many others.

Attempts to help individuals with personal problems indicate many of the problems the person faces are caused in part by his inter-personal relationships. Every person is born with many social relationships.

These must be acquired through social learning, and social

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[2]Helen I. Driver. Multiple Counseling: A Small Group Discussion Method for Personal Growth (Madison, Wisc.: Monona Publications, 1954) p. 20.

[3]John J. Cody. "Rethinking the Purposes of Guidance," The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, XLIIX. (April 1964).

[4]Carroll H. Miller. Foundations of Guidance. (New York: Harper Brothers, 1961) p. 6.

[5]Public Law 88-210 NDEA 1963 Amendment to NDEA 1958 Title V.

learning does not take place in isolation . . . . To
leave such learning to chance is not good for him or
his society. It is, however, often left to chance with
the result that the malfunctioning of groups is today a
major social problem. Evidence of the seriousness of
the problem may be found in family disintegration, groups
of juvenile delinquents, inter-group conflicts, and the
like . . . Children have always needed help in becoming
socialized . . . . Today young people do not find the
wealth of opportunity provided by the earlier simpler
society for acquiring social skills and understandings.
. . . Family and kinship bonds no longer operate . . . .
Urbanization, increased mobility of population, mass
communication, . . . are also isolating individuals from
one another by making human relations less warm and
intimate. Group work helps to counteract this isolation
for many individual's by providing them the group experi-
ences they need for discovering that the feelings and
thoughts which seem to isolate them are shared by many
other . . . . There is experimental evidence that
contributing to a student's social adjustment also helps
him to increase and improve his academic learning.[6]

With the increased demand for more counselors administrators
have been faced with the problem of how best to use the counselors
time. Working with students in groups, they theorized, would be a
more efficient use of time and staff than individual counseling.
Because of this interest in group counseling it has gained acceptance
as a valid concept of guidance. Increased use has been accompanied
by an awareness of some of its unique benefits. Even with the implied
benefits, few schools have had success using group counseling and few
individuals agree upon what group counseling means. Could there be a
relationship between these two?

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[6]Jane Warters. Group Guidance Principles and Practices (New
York: McGraw Hill Book Company, Inc., 1960) p. 4-5.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

From a review of the literature in the field of guidance there
seems to be differing opinions with regard to the nature and value
of group counseling.

An attempt will be made to present generalizations concerning
the meaning attached to the terms used in the guidance literature.

An attempt will be made to assess the unique characteristics
of group counseling and how these apply to counseling in the second-
ary school.

The relationship of group counseling to the total guidance
program will be explored.

An attempt will be made to discover some of the factors necessary
for the successful use of group counseling.

The interdependence of several factors that relate to the
success or failure of a group counseling relationship will be
illustrated.

SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study is to present a general description
of the concepts and purposes of group counseling as they are pre-
sented in current guidance literature.

Throughout the study primary importance will be attached to the
implications for secondary school counselors.

No attempt will be made to develop techniques or methods to be
used in group counseling.

CHAPTER II

RELATED RESEARCH

Group procedures have been applied with increasing frequency
in psychological counseling of emotionally disturbed patients.
Encouraging reports have resulted in research projects designed to
evaluate the effectiveness of similar procedures when applied to
guidance and counseling programs in educational institutions. Re-
search studies referred to in this chapter include group procedures
conducted in educational institutions during the last ten years.

A report of an experimental study describes a research project
conducted with a group of high school students in an Illinois school.
The students were all gifted underachieving boys. An induction
interview was conducted with each boy and with his parents. Though
the investigators stressed the point of voluntary participation by
the student, it was learned from student comments that every group
except one contained some students who participated because of
parental pressure.

The method consisted of nondirective group counseling sessions
as a basis for free discussion of problems. Control groups were
used and comparisons made before and after the counseling sessions.
The control group had no special counseling.

The changes noted in the boys were increased acceptance of

themselves and of others and improved behavior at home and at school. No significant change was noted in grades.[1]

Reports of group guidance programs designed for parents indicate a growing awareness of the problems parents face when attempting to help their children plan a realistic educational program. A survey of group work with parents indicated:

> Research during the past three years dealt primarily with programs aimed at helping parents to understand and utilize test data and other guidance information about their children. In general, reports of such programs indicate favorable responses from parents who participated . . . .[2]

A research study designed to help students make the transition from high school to college reported the effects of a series of group counseling sessions on college-bound high school seniors. Sixty college-bound high school seniors were subdivided into six groups of ten students. Students in one-half the groups participated in group counseling sessions. Parents of the students in the experimental group were invited to participate during sessions on college planning. Pre- and post-criterion measures on the Allport-Vernon-Lindzey Study of Values and on an Interest Plans checklist were obtained for parents and students of both control and experimental groups. In addition an index of adjustment and values and a self-concept scale were given to students in both groups. These statistically significant differences were found between the control

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[1]Merle M. Ohlsen. "Counseling Within a Group Setting" National Association of Womens Deans and Counselors Journal, XXII (April 1960) p. 104.

[2]E. Wayne Wright. "Group Procedures" Review of Educational Research, Vol. 33 (April 1963) p. 208.

and experimental groups: (a) The parents and students in the experimental group exhibited greater parent-child "empathy". (b) Students in the experimental groups displayed less anxiety concerning self before college entrance and showed less anxiety about self after entering college.[3]

Several reports indicate efforts are being directed toward helping mentally superior students become aware of their scholastic ability. One such study reported the use of combined clinical and remedial services designed to counteract the forces contributing to poor scholastic achievement. Students were identified as mentally superior based upon intelligence test scores; and as underachieving through comparison of these scores with grades received in high school classes. Clinical and remedial services included small group sessions designed to improve study skills and raise the level of aspiration; additional services included individual counseling and tutoring, and counseling of parents. There were individual students who showed decided improvement in school grades; however, most of the change seemed to have been in attitude.[4]

Recognizing that a lack of interest in education was a factor in the failure of many students from low socio-economic areas, a New York high school used a program of coordinated remedial, cultural, and guidance activities to stimulate interest in education. Group

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[3]Norman Kagan. "Group Procedures" Rev. Ed. Res. Vol. 36 (April 1966) p. 277-278.

[4]Irene H. Impellizzeri. "The New York City Talent Preservation Project: An Experiment in Guidance of the Mentally Superior" National Association of Women Deans and Counselors Journal, Vol. 23 (April 1960) p. 100-102.

guidance classes were conducted by a counselor once a week in English classes. Topics discussed included: orientation to school; study habits; preparing for tests; self-evaluation; the world of work; institutions of higher learning; college entrance requirements; transition from high school to college, business schools, and to jobs; and ways of adjusting to new situations. Group meetings for parents of the students enrolled in the project acquainted them with the objectives of the program and of possible benefits their children might receive. Parents were encouraged to visit the school.

Results of the project indicated many more of the students from deprived areas stayed in school than had similar students in previous years; academic achievement was higher for many of the students; and improvement was noted in behavior and attitude.[5]

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[5]Florence C. Myers. "Guidance Toward New Horizons" National Association of Women Deans and Counselors Journal, Vol. 23 (October 1959) pp. 17-20.

CHAPTER III

DEFINITION AND INTERPRETATION OF GROUP PROCEDURES

In reading and interpreting the literature in guidance and

counseling publications the counselor is confronted with a difference

in meaning ascribed to the same term by various authors. A comparison

of the works of two or more authors may show all use the same term but

each may assign a very different operational meaning to the concept.

Each author tends to reflect his point of view in the terminology he

uses to describe a theory, process, situation, condition or objective.

> To the layman, . . . any time a guidance worker
> engages in an individual interview he is 'counseling'.
> To others counseling means giving advice. For the
> counseling psychologist, however, this word has a
> different special meaning. To him 'counseling' has
> distinctive functions involving an emphasis upon
> personality development and upon an environmental under-
> standing of the client.[1]

As a result of the application of group dynamics principles to

education, guidance, and counseling, there has been more confusion.

Describing the confusion which has resulted through the use of

ambiguous terms in the literature pertaining to group procedures in

guidance.

One finds studies of basically different kinds of

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[1]Alfred Stiller. "The High School Guidance Counselor", The
Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals,
XLX (May 1961) p. 152.

group activities assigned to the same label. The most
common rubric used was 'group counseling'. On the
other hand, under such labels as group guidance, group
counseling, small-group discussion, multiple counseling
orientation groups, and study information groups were
found procedures which appear to be the same activity.[2]

Examples of terms in guidance and counseling literature that
are given different meanings depending upon the inclination of the
author or the circumstances of the situation (operational meaning)
will be quoted from selected literature. The quoted material will
be selected to represent concepts closely related to the work of a
secondary school counselor. The emphasis in this section will be
upon definition of major terms. Further consideration of the opera-
tional meaning of the terms will be considered in a later chapter.
An interpretation of the quoted material will be made after each
section. The author will attempt to discover one or more concepts
which describe the term under consideration as it applies to second-
ary school counseling.

The terms considered to be essential to an understanding of the
group counseling process as it applies to secondary school counseling
are: guidance, counseling, group guidance, group counseling, multiple
counseling, group therapy and group dynamics.

Guidance

The two functions of education, instruction and
guidance, have the common purpose of redirecting human
behavior into new and more productive channels. Despite
this common central purpose, these two functions differ
from each other in significant ways. The differences

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[2]Norman Kagan. "Group Procedures" Rev. Ed. Res. Vol. 36
(April 1966) p. 277.

are primarily matters of emphasis, but the emphasis
has important consequences in practice.

. . . .

In guidance the emphasis is placed upon the student's
idiosyncratic interpretation of society's values; in
instruction the emphasis is placed upon the broad values
held in esteem by the society. In instruction, then, the
teacher becomes a representative of society, and is in-
vested by the society with the authority to interpret and
transmit these values to the young. The guidance practi-
tioner, on the other hand, is only secondarily a represent-
ative of society; he is primarily an agent of the individ-
ual, used by him to clarify, through interpretation, his
own value system.[3]

The purpose here is not to segregate teaching from
guidance but simply to maintain a meaningful distinction
between the major functions of teachers and of guidance
specialists in today's schools.[4]

Guidance focuses attention on the individual
pupil. Recognizing that problems are peculiar to the
individual facing them, it considers these problems in
relation to the continuous history of that individual
and in relation to the many phases of his life. It
recognizes that the solution to any particular problem
which may arise from a pupil's frustrating and irriating
experiences, in school and out, requires an understanding
of the whole picture of his activities, and that the
solution to any problem will influence the total develop-
ment of the individuals' personality.[5]

It seems desirable to think of the guidance program
as a program of services--services which may be defined,
recognized, administered, and evaluated. It is then
possible to define a guidance program as a program of
services . . . .[6]

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[3]Henry Weitz. Behavior Change Through Guidance (New York:
John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1964) pp. 59-60.

[4]Leo Goldman. "Group Guidance: Content and Process" Personnel
and Guidance J. V. 40 (Feb. 1962) p. 521.

[5]Merle M. Ohlsen. Guidance Services in the Modern School (New
York: Harcourt Brace and World, Inc., 1964) p. 3.

[6]Raymond N. Hatch and Paul L. Dressel. Guidance Services in the
Secondary School. (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown, Co., 1953) p. 18.

> . . . Guidance is broadly defined as any activity
> which influences an individual in making plans for his
> future.[7]

> Guidance is a function in its own right. Although
> a part of the educative process, it is not the same as
> instruction, or curriculum, or control.[8]

> Guidance services are . . . facilitating services
> which try to help the school do a better job of meeting
> individual pupils needs.[9]

Interpretation

A separation of the instruction and guidance services in the

schools may be made based upon the main function of each of these

educational services. The major emphasis in the instruction of

students is upon ensuring that the student acquire the knowledge,

skills, values, and attitudes that are believed to be worthwhile and

important to the student or those considered necessary to the sur-

vival of our society. The main function of the guidance services is

that of assisting the individual student make the most meaningful use

of the instructional services available.

Most writers agree that the guidance services of a secondary

school should include the following: testing, records, information,

counseling, placement, and follow-up surveys. The services of test-

ing, information, and records are designed to help the student gain

information about himself and his life situation. The purposes of the

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[7]Robert Hoppock. Group Guidance: Principles, Techniques and
Evaluation. (New York: McGraw Book Co. Inc.) 1949, p. 3.

[8]Carroll H. Miller. Foundations of Guidance. (New York:
Harper and Brothers, 1961 p. 15.

[9]Clifford P. Froehlich. Guidance Services in Schools. (New
York: McGraw Book Co., Inc., 1949) p. 8.

counseling service are to help the student develop decision-making

skills; to develop insight into himself, other people and his total

environment; and to help him clarify those things which have value

and meaning for him. For those students who need help in the transi-

tion from high school into jobs or further education the placement

service offers assistance. Follow-up surveys are designed to help

the student with any post-high school problems and as one way of

evaluating how well the guidance services are helping the students.

Counseling

Guidance appears to be best described as a planned
program of working with students one at a time . . . .
'Counseling' is the term employed to describe this
individualized process.[10]

A face-to-face relationship between counselor and
client in private interviews is implicit in the term
'counseling'.[11]

Because the counseling takes place in an educational
setting, it follows logically that its purpose also should
be educational.[12]

Counseling is unquestionably a process of learning,
but a much broader process of learning than we have
usually considered under that heading; a personality
theory in which traditional learning theory would play
but a minor role.[13]

[Counseling is] the setting in which the counselee

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[10]John J. Cody. "Rethinking the Purposes of Guidance," The
Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals,
XLIIX. (April 1964) p. 10.

[11]Helen I. Driver. Multiple Counseling: A Small Group
Discussion Method for Personal Growth. (Madison, Wisconsin: Monona
Publication, 1954) Preface.

[12]Carolyn A. Sechrest. New Dimension in Counseling Students.
(New York: Columbia University, 1958) p. 2.

[13]Clifford P. Froehlich. "Counseling, Its Use and Abuse."
Chico State Counseling Lectures (Summer 1962) p. 90-97.

expresses his point of view toward the world. The
assumption in counseling is that this point of view
is distorted. [Evidenced by the presence of a problem.]
It is assumed that through the process of counseling
. . . the individual will revise his distortions and
thereby alter his behavior. The emphasis is on the
present, and on verbal material that is within the
individual's immediate awareness or that he can easily
be made aware of.[14]

The counselor here must be prepared to shift his
attention from problems or specific services to the
persons who are in need of help. In general, solutions
will take longer and the counseling relationships will
be more intense and meaningful . . . . Feelings and
behavior patterns of which the client was previously
unaware play a larger role in these situations; and,
to a much greater degree than in finding solutions for
particular problems, what we know as personality change
may be involved.[15]

. . . The counselor tries to help the patient to
identify and clarify the problem which disturbs him,
to improve his understanding of himself and of his
situation, to define, examine, and test alternative
solutions for his problem, and to select an alternative
on which he acts. The relationship which the counselor
develops with each patient enables them to discuss prob-
lems which heretofore the patient was unable to discuss
adequately.[16]

Interpretation

The process of successful counseling is essentially a learning

process. Through counseling a person learns something new about him-

self, his situation, or other people; he discovers a new element in

his situation. The person who comes for counseling must have a

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[14]Arnold Buckheimer and Sara Carter Balogh. The Counseling
Relationship (Chicago: Science Research Associates 1961) p. X.

[15]Douglas W. Orr. Professional Counseling on Human Behavior
(New York: Franklin Watts Inc., 1965) p. 249.

[16]Merle M. Ohlsen. "Counseling Within a Group Setting" N.E.A.
National Association of Women Deans and Counselors Journal, XXII
(April 1960) p. 104.

recognition of a problem or feel that something is bothering him. The recognition of a problem must come from within the person who is to be helped; persons sent for counseling by another may or may not feel they have a problem. Until the person becomes aware of a problem and is seeking a solution, efforts to change his behavior or to teach him new ways of behaving are not likely to be effective.

Individuals behave as they do because of their perception of their situation - what they believe to be true about themselves, other people, and the conditions of their life. A person reacts to his environment in ways consistent with his perception of the situation - if his perceptions are not consistent with the reality of the situation a distortion in behavior may occur. Any attempt to change behavior is not likely to be effective unless a new perception, a new belief about the situation becomes apparent to the person. Through the process of counseling the person is helped to identify his problem, explore its various elements, determine how they fit together, and to examine possible solutions to his problem. During counseling the person may gain insight into himself and others, and into his particular situation. He may become able to recognize, think through, and "try out" new ways of behaving and to decide which ways seem best for him. A satisfactory solution to a problem will not be reached, nor will a new way of behaving be carried through, unless the person has a new perception of his situation which causes him to feel a change is necessary or desirable.

Group Guidance

Group guidance . . . the imparting of information.[17]

When the group is large and the role of the worker is somewhat that of a teacher, group guidance may be a more appropriate term than group counseling.[18]

Group counseling is on a continuum ranging from group guidance which is primarily information giving, to group psychotherapy . . . .[19]

Orientation as a group guidance approach . . . orientation may be regarded essentially, as a group process where a new group of individuals become better acquainted with the older group. Newcomers are made familiar with traditions, purposes, rules and regulations, facilities, special services, the student body, and with curricular and extracurricular activities.[20]

Many group procedures in guidance are essentially applications of traditional classroom activities (e.g., vocational study units and occupational and career lectures), . . . classroom group guidance procedures often give explicit or implied counseling orientation to students . . . provide opportunities for helping students anticipate the kinds of help they might obtain from counseling.[21]

Interpretation

Group guidance is used by several authors to indicate imparting

information to a group. Frequently mentioned examples of this kind of

activity included career days, homeroom activities, assemblies,

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[17]Walter M. Lifton. _Working With Groups_. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc. June 1961) p. 11.

[18]Jane Warters. _Group Guidance Principles and Practices_ (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company Inc.) 1960, p. 172.

[19]Leo Goldman. "Group Guidance: Content and Process," _Personnel and Guidance Journal_, XL (Feb., 1962) pp. 518-522.

[20]Roy DeVerl Willey and Melvin Strong. _Group Procedures in Guidance_ (New York: Harper and Brothers 1957) p. 165.

[21]John W. Loughary. _Counseling in Secondary Schools_ (New York: Harper and Brothers 1961) p. 123.

occupational information classes, orientation, employment opportu-
nities, and parent - information meetings. Other group guidance
activities were concerned with obtaining information by group test-
ing or through standard forms such as those required for cumulative
records, for job application, and college entrance. These group
guidance activities are a necessary function of the secondary school
counselor because of the time required for working with large numbers
of students on an individual basis. Group guidance activities often
stimulate a need for individual counseling; students should be made
aware of the availability of individual counseling at the time of the
group activity.

Group Counseling

> Group counseling, as we see it, is a dynamic,
> interpersonal process through which individuals within
> the normal range of adjustment work within a peer group
> and with a professionally trained counselor, exploring
> problems and feelings in an attempt to modify their
> attitudes so that they are better able to deal with
> developmental problems.
>
> . . . .
>
> The term 'dynamic interpersonal process' refers to
> ongoing relationships between and among group members.
> It is through interaction that individuals in the group
> form the kind of cohesive in-group relationships so
> essential to the development of a satisfactory problem-
> solving atmosphere. This is particularly important in
> an educational setting. Individuals tend to learn and
> adopt best through a process of interaction, which pro-
> vides opportunity to live through personal experiences
> and to find personal meanings.[22]
>
> When the counselees are 'normal' individuals who
> seek help with their emotional problems, group counsel-
> ing rather than group therapy is needed. It is generally

[22]Benjamin Cohn et al. "Group Counseling: An Orientation"
Personnel and Guidance J. Vol. 42 (December 1962) pp. 355-356.

agreed that group counseling is a more appropriate term
than group therapy for describing the work as it is
ordinarily provided in schools and colleges. The emphasis
is upon group counseling for normal but troubled individuals.
The group members are individuals who are handicapped in
achieving their goals because of strong feelings of anxiety,
insecurity, or inferiority; or they are persons who have set
too high or unrealistic goals for themselves and to some
extent are aware of the discrepancy between themselves and
their aspirations; or they are people who for some reason
feel dissatisfied with themselves and want help in achieving
changes in feelings and behavior patterns. They may be
persons who are aware of some conflict between personal
desires and environmental demands, . . . or young people
overly troubled by the anxiety and confusion considered
'natural' to adolescents in our society.[23]

Interpretation

The purpose of group counseling in the secondary schools is to
help individual students learn to solve their problems of adjustment
that are based upon faulty perception of themselves or other people.
The members of the group help each other gain new perspectives by
helping each other define, clarify and interpret the aspects of their
behavior that may be contributing to interpersonal problems. The
freedom necessary for frank discussion of their problems implies an
atmosphere of acceptance and understanding that allows each student
to explore his negative feelings, attitudes and ideas without losing
status in the group. The counselor stimulates this feeling of
acceptance and understanding through his respect and concern for each
member. This attitude helps the group members as they try to under-
stand and accept each other. Through this supportive and reassuring
relationship the student is helped to compare his behavior - ideas,

[23]Jane Warters. Group Guidance. (New York: McGraw Hill Book
Co. Inc. 1960) pp. 172-73.

feelings, attitudes, and actions - to those of his peers; and to acquire some understanding of how his behavior may be related to his problem. By gaining insight into problem aspects of his behavior he may become motivated to change his behavior.

Group counseling in secondary schools is concerned with helping students who fall within the normal range of adjustment; what is considered normal for persons of their age in a similar school situation. The group members need help to meet a problem situation which is troubling them but which has not resulted in behavior which could be classified as mental disease, severe personality disorder, or a severe social or emotional problem. Students who have problems of this severity require the services of a psychologist or psychiatrist; they represent problems requiring a depth of training and experience beyond that of most secondary school counselors. Personal development of other group members would tend to be retarded by the presence of a member with problems of this severity. A discussion of the selection of group members and the competence of the counselor will be given further consideration in a later chapter.

Multiple Counseling

> The multiple counseling method described . . . uses a small-group discussion activity as the learning medium for personal growth of participants, conjunctive with individual counseling by the group leader . . . .
>
> . . . .
>
> A group project can be called multiple counseling only if individual counseling accompanies the group activity. A face-to-face relationship between counselor

and client in private interviews is implicit in the term counseling.[24]

In this type of guidance the leader and the group participate in the counseling of an individual member who describes his educational or vocational dilemna. Members share their experiences, often bringing reassurance and encouragement, as well as information, to the member who requested counseling. This kind of counseling would deal with positive growth factors in the individual, not with serious personal or emotional problems.[25]

Multiple counseling . . . a situation in which the counselor counsels with more than one individual at a time, but each on a coordinate basis. In other words, multiple counseling, thus conceived, is concerned with helping each counselee make individual decisions within a group setting.[26]

Interpretation

Multiple counseling and group counseling are generally considered to be interchangeable terms with group counseling the more commonly used term.[27] The major difference between the terms is the insistence of some advocates of the multiple counseling concept that in addition to group meetings, regularly scheduled private conferences be held with each student, insisting that the one-to-one relationship is essential to the counseling relationship. It is proposed by those

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[24]Helen I. Driver. Multiple Counseling: A Small Group Discussion Method for Personal Growth. (Madison, Wisconsin: Monona Publications, 1954) Preface p. 19.

[25]Ruth Strang. "Newer Emphasis in Counseling and Group Technique" N.E.A. Nat'l Assn. of Women Deans and Counselors J. XXIII (June 1960) pp. 152-157.

[26]E. Wayne Wright. "Multiple Counseling Why? When? How?" Personnel and Guidance Journal. Vol. 37 (April 1959) p.

[27]E. Wayne Wright. "Group Procedures" Review of Educational Research, Vol. 33 (April 1963) pp. 203-6.

preferring the term group counseling that counseling does not

necessarily imply a one-to-one relationship and that some objectives

of the individual may be more fully or more easily achieved in a

group setting. They would agree that individual counseling should

be available to group members but would not insist upon regularly

scheduled individual interviews in addition to the group meetings.

It would seem that the counselor in a secondary school would probably

find the insistence upon individual meetings an unnecessary burden

and would prefer the concept of group counseling for this reason.

Group Therapy

> Writers who use the terms 'counseling' and 'therapy'
> or 'psychotheraphy' differently generally do so on the
> basis of the worker's competence and the seriousness and
> complexity of the client's problems. Group therapy
> rather than group counseling is needed when the clients
> are seriously disturbed or maladjusted and when the
> worker should be competent to function as a clinical
> psychologist or psychiatrist.[28]

> Group therapy would then cover those groups which
> are designed as a means through which people's needs and
> attitudes could be expressed. The therapy group would
> serve only as a vehicle for an individual's clarification
> of his own ideas and values as he tries them out on his
> peers. Actually in a true learning situation the goal of
> the person . . . providing help is to help the individual
> discover what he possesses as personal tools he can use
> to solve problems. The ultimate goal of any therapeutic
> situation is not the solution to the problem. Rather it
> is an attempt to seek problem solving techniques.[29]

> The objective of psychotherapy is the treatment
> of illness. The very suffix 'therapy' demands that

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[28]Jane Warters. Group Guidance (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co.
Inc., 1960) p. 172.

[29]Walter M. Lifton. Working With Groups. (New York: John
Wiley and Sons, Inc. June 1961) p. 34.

there be a patient around--that somebody be sick.[30]

Group therapy denotes treatment of people in groups rather than individually; . . . In its basis meaning, it refers to 'treatment of disease'.[31]

The therapist takes it for granted that help in changing attitudes and improving behavior is required of him because his group members are in treatment for some condition recognized to be more or less pathological.[32]

Interpretation

The degree to which the secondary school counselor feels capable of dealing with personal adjustment problems in group therapy or group counseling will determine to a large extent his inclination to use these group methods. The time required to organize and conduct these groups will also tend to determine the extent of the efforts directed toward such therapeutic work.

The term group therapy has, for some people, a connotation of "sickness" or "mental illness" which might create resistance among the students against joining a group, or create misunderstanding of the purpose of the group among parents, teachers, or administrators. Group counseling would, therefore, seem to be the more appropriate term for the therapeutic efforts of the school counselor.

The counselor is faced with the necessity of identifying the severity of the adjustment problems of the prospective group members.

[30]Clifford P. Froehlich. "Counseling, Its Use and Abuse." Chico State Counseling Lectures (Summer 1962) p. 90-97.

[31]Ruth Strang. Group Work in Education (New York: Harper and Brothers 1958) p. 9.

[32]Ernest Harms and Paul Schreiber (eds.) Handbook of Counseling Techniques (New York: Macmillan Co., 1963) p. 179.

In order to identify those students who need the help of a psychologist or a psychiatrist the school counselor should be able to recognize the symptoms of abnormality. The following discussion of behavior disorders may be helpful in establishing a criterion. It is sometimes exceedingly difficult to separate symptoms which are the result of temporary stress situations and those which have become relatively fixed over a period of time. Extreme caution should be taken in labeling any student as "abnormal" and the school counselor should seek the help of a psychologist or psychiatrist in all cases before such a diagnosis is made.

> Neuroses and psychoses are referred to as disorders
> of personality because in them the disturbance in one's
> interpersonal relationships is so fundamental. The dis-
> tinction between normal and abnormal personality, from
> our point of view, must rest upon the relative adequacy
> of a given individual's performance, in comparison with
> his society for persons of his status. One further
> distinction must be made. Normal personalities are not
> the same as ideal or perfect personalities. The latter
> do not exist; the former are on every hand. Everyone
> behaves in an irregular or unpredictable way now and
> then, but this does not automatically place him outside
> the broad range of normality.

> We would speak of personality as abnormal, for
> example, if at any age an individual who was otherwise
> in good health grew seriously or progressively in-
> effectual as a social person. We would call it ab-
> normal, if in order to carry on ordinary activities,
> he were obliged to expend disproportionate effort, in
> comparison with his previous level and with others of
> his age, physique, intelligence and training. We would
> speak of abnormal personality if an individual proved
> incapable of organizing and maintaining socially adequate
> relationships with other persons, if he proved unable to
> derive personal satisfactions from these, or if his be-
> havior became socially inappropriate in terms of the
> prevailing cultural norms.

> Behavior disorders, or personality disorders, are

relatively <u>fixed</u>, <u>crystallized</u> <u>patterns</u> <u>of</u> <u>nonadaptive</u>
attitudes and responses.33

Group Dynamics

The term group dynamics actually covers all studies
of group process and group roles 34

Group dynamics is concerned with the causes under-
lying behavior in a group . . . helps to explain the
changes that occur within a group; it involves a study
of the forces or conditions that influence the group as
a whole, and the process by which individual behavior in
a group is modified by the group experience . . . con-
cerned with <u>why</u> certain things happen in a group.35

The focus of group dynamics has been to study,
through observation and experience, those forces which
make for greater group productivity.36

This branch of social science has developed in
response to the need for a comprehensive and systematic
understanding of the nature of group functioning. Its
ultimate goal is the discovery of general laws about the
determinants of various properties of groups . . . the
endeavor to understand the bases of group life . . .
describing what happens in groups.37

Interpretation

Group dynamics covers those studies which are concerned with

understanding the nature of group functioning. It is concerned

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[33]Norman Cameron. The Psychology of Behavior Disorders, Leonard
Carmichael (ed) (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1947) pp. 7-9.

[34]Walter M. Lifton. Working With Groups. (New York: John
Wiley and Sons, Inc. June 1961) p. 19.

[35]Ruth Strang. "Newer Emphasis in Counseling and Group
Technique." Journal of the National Association of Women Deans
and Counselors XXIII (June 1960) p. 156.

[36]Hubert Stanley Coffey. "Socio and Psyche Group Process.
Integrative Concepts." Journal of Social Issues, VII (Spring 1952)
pp. 65-74.

[37]Dorwin Cartwright and Alvin Zander. Group Dynamics: Research
and Theory (Evanston, Illinois: Row Peterson and Co. 1953) p. 4.

with the principles of group process: the causes, forces, and
conditions of group behavior and with how an individual is
affected by experiences in the group. Application of group
dynamics principles to group guidance and group counseling should
help the counselor form groups that are of benefit to each member.

Every group is different: therefore, it would be helpful to
the counselor to have an understanding of why individuals behave as
they do within the group; how their behavior affects other members
of the group; and why certain things happen in the group.

CHAPTER IV

GROUP COUNSELING AND ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

The assertion that group counseling is appropriate to secondary
schools is based upon the distinctive characteristics of the adoles-
cent period. One concept related to the adolescent period is con-
cerned with the cultural demands encountered during adolescence;
another is centered around the conflict and inconsistency of his
particular life situation.

Cultural demands have been translated into a theory of develop-
mental tasks which state that as an individual passes from one stage
of life into another (e.g., birth to early childhood) there are:

> Certain fairly specific tasks - skills, attitudes, under-
> standings - which are appropriate to that level of
> maturity and which the society expects the individual
> to master at that time.[1]

Developmental tasks of adolescence (12-18 years) are:

(1) developing a clear sense of identity and self-confidence;

(2) adjusting to body changes; (3) developing new, more mature

relations with age mates; (4) achieving emotional independence from

parents; (5) selecting and preparing for an occupation; (6) achieving

mature values and social responsibility; (7) preparing for marriage

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[1]James C. Coleman. Personality Dynamics and Effective
Behavior (Chicago: Scott Foresman & Co. 1960) p. 89.

and family life; and (8) developing concern beyond self.[2]

At the time the adolescent is making adjustments to drastic body changes and changing cultural demands, he is also a victim of many of the inconsistencies and conflicts of our society.

> The adolescent would encounter minimal emotional strain if the society consistently demanded that certain responses be carried out, and always rewarded them; and also that certain other responses not be carried out, and always punished them. Unfortunately, our society is not nearly so consistent. . . . It demands simultaneously that responses such as competition, be both carried out and avoided. Or it insists that responses not be carried out at one stage of the individuals life, but that they be performed enthusiastically at a later stage (e.g., independence responses, sexual behavior).[3]

Many adolescents are prone to chronic anxiety that arises because of their inability to reconcile their needs with the cultural demands and the inconsistencies of their environment. Anxiety has been defined as:

> A persisting distressful psychological state arising from an inner conflict. The distress may be experienced as a feeling of vague uneasiness or foreboding, a feeling of being on edge, or as any of a variety of other feelings, such as fear, anger, restlessness, irritability, depression, or other diffuse and nameless feelings.
>
> The underlying conflict springs from a clash between incompatible impulses, desires, or values.[4]

An encouraging trend in secondary schools is the use of group procedures designed to help the adolescent cope with anxiety.

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[2]Ibid., p. 90.

[3]Paul H. Mussen and John I. Conger. Child Development and Personality, Gardner Murphy (ed) (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956) p. 533.

[4]Arthur T. Jersild. The Psychology of Adolescence (New York: Macmillan Co. 1965) p. 207.

In the past, counseling has been most concerned
with remediation of problems, but while this emphasis
is still prevelant, group procedures in schools are
increasingly preventive in nature, seeking to prevent
problems from growing beyond the point where the
individual requires special help to deal adequately
with them. Such procedure attempt to help students
anticipate difficulty, particularly at articulation
and decision points and to prepare them to deal with
such problems in an effective manner.[5]

The function of group counseling in schools has been in-

terpreted as one of helping "normal" adolescents acquire the ability

to deal with their problems that require new patterns of social

behavior.

The use of group counseling may be appropriate because of the

conflict between dependence-independence during adolescence.

As a consequence of strong societal demands for independ-
ence, in the face of incompatible and well-established
dependence responses, the adolescent is likely to be in
conflict. And the fact that this conflict is timed to
coincide with so many other demands related to puberty
and adolescence only increases its stressfulness.[6]

The dependency needs of the adolescent may be met through

group counseling while still maintaining his need for independence

from adults. Because the adolescent tends to be more dependent upon

his peers for emotional support he learns from them new attitudes,

beliefs, and techniques of social interaction that he cannot learn

from parents or other adults.

The development of new, more mature relationships with his peers

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[5]Merville E. Shaw and Rosemary Wursten. "Research on Group Pro-
cedures in School" Personnel and Guidance J. Vol. 44 (Sept. 1965) p. 28.

[6]Paul H. Mussen and John J. Conger. Child Development and
Personality Gardner Murphy (ed.) (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956)
p. 490.

may be encouraged through group counseling.

> The fact that others in the peer group have problems
> similar to his own reassures him, makes him feel that,
> after all, he is like the other teenagers . . . . The
> adolescent also wants to be reassured that his peers
> understand and accept him. In a counseling group he
> discovers that they not only understand and accept him,
> but that he also learns to understand them better.[7]

Within the group the student may be helped to develop new

patterns of social interaction based upon more mature perceptions

of himself and his relationship to others. The shy student who

withdraws from close contact with others may be encouraged to regard

others as approachable; the student suffering from inferiority feel-

ings may find that others share the same anxiety; and the student

troubled by rapid growth or voice changes discovers others have

similar worries. Through discussion, reassurance, and support they

become more able to accept and adjust to the problems of physical

and social development.

The development of concern beyond himself is one of the most

difficult tasks faced by the adolescent. Many individuals grow to

adulthood without developing a sense of social responsibility and

concern for others. The group relationship may foster the development

of mature social living.

> The group situation provides rich opportunity to gain
> new understanding of others and of oneself in relation
> to others. It provides opportunity for immediate practice
> in more mature living. One often observes a member of a
> group who has successfully worked through his problems,
> continuing his active participation in the group because
> of his concern for other members. His identification with

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[7] Merle M. Ohlsen. "Counseling Within a Group Setting" National
Association of Women Deans and Counselors Journal, Vol. 22 (April 1960)
p. 105.

the group, once mainly a source of support, becomes a matter of readily accepted responsibility for others.[8]

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[8]Nicholas Hobbs. "Group Centered Counseling" in C. Gratton Kemp, Perspectives on the Group Process (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1964) p. 156..

CHAPTER V

INTERDEPENDENCE OF FACTORS IN GROUP COUNSELING

The attainment of individual counseling goals within a group

counseling activity would seem to be particularly well-suited to

the needs of adolescents; however, it has become apparent that such

activities conducted in the secondary school have not proven to be

as successful as was anticipated.

> Group methods of guidance and counseling seem to
> have experienced many failures, perhaps most notably in
> schools. Repeatedly one hears of group activities that
> were tried and abandoned: homeroom guidance, occupations
> unites in classes, and special guidance and counseling
> groups.[1]

The success of group procedure is related to a number of inter-

dependent factors; each must be considered when planning a group

activity. The factors of primary importance to the success of a

group activity are: the purpose for which the group is formed; the

method used to achieve the purpose; and the personal qualities of

the participants.

Purpose of Group Counseling

The broad general purposes of group counseling are to help

students gain self understanding; to compare themselves with their

peers; and to acquire insight into their problems of interpersonal

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[1]Leo Goldman. "Group Guidance: Content and Process", Personnel
and Guidance Journal XL (Feb. 1962) p. 518.

relationships. In addition a particular group will have goals related to the adjustment problems of individual members.

The purpose of a group counseling activity in the secondary school may be either remedial or preventive. A remedial group may be formed for the purpose of helping a group of able students who are failing in their course work. An example of a preventive type group would be one composed of high school seniors who plan to attend college. The purpose of this group would be the prevention of problems related to adaptation to college. In both examples the purpose of group counseling is to understand the underlying motives, feelings, and attitudes connected with the situation as they apply to each individual in the group.

Method Used in Group Counseling

Small group discussion is the method used to help individual members reach their goals. The emphasis in group counseling is placed upon discussion of feelings, thoughts, and ideas in order to gain self-understanding. The content of the discussion may be directed toward a particular area such as adaptation to college life but the individual is encouraged to examine problems that are particularly relevant to him. Discussion is conducted within a small group. The small group is considered a necessary component of the group counseling method. The group is limited to five to seven members, rarely including more than nine. The small number of persons involved ensures that each will have a chance to contribute to the discussion. The limited number ~~also~~ allows members to become better acquainted. Also related to the small groups concept ~~is the~~ are

development of group morale, cohesivesness, and closeness necessary
to promote free exchange of ideas, feelings, and attitudes. The
counselor or group leader works to promote a climate of acceptance,
understanding and respect for the individual that, in turn, en-
courages the members to develop similar attitudes toward each other.

Although the counselor will need to define the limits of the
problem and explain the role of the group member, control of the
group should remain within the group.

Membership in a group is assigned upon the basis of a similar
problem. Within the framework of a group discussion on family
relations, many more personal problems such as one's relationship to
a particular family member may be included. The different experiences
of each person in this area serves to widen the perception of all
members. Differences of experience, attitude, and values are useful
to the group but care should be taken to ensure enough similarity to
maintain communication.

Other considerations necessary to the process of group counsel-
ing include the provision for a sufficient number of meetings in order
to allow enough time for changes to take place. Some problems may
be resolved in a few meetings others will require extended time; prob-
lems of a complex and involved nature may require individual counsel-
ing in addition to the group sessions.

Personal Qualities of Participants

Personal factors are those qualities possessed by the partici-
pants that contribute to the group counseling process. Qualifications
used to explain the term "professionally trained counselor" imply

the person responsible for group counseling should possess: (A) the
necessary competence; (1) successful experience in individual
counseling, (2) broad understanding of personality dynamics, and
(3) good facility for communication with others, (B) practicuum
experience; (1) with groups, (2) supervision and consultation by
experienced group counselors or by other staff members.[2]

Personal qualities other than competence and training seem to
have an effect upon the group members "change may be related not only
to what the counselor does but also to what he is".[3] The personal
warmth and non-judgmental attitude of the counselor are essential to
the development of emotional climate or atmosphere that encourages
freedom of expression.

The personal qualities of the individual group members that
facilitate group counseling include previous experiences, skills, and
knowledge that are helpful to himself and to the group. Group members
need verbal ability and the willingness to participate in the dis-
cussion by sharing information, ideas and feelings with others.
Motivation toward personal goals consistent with the broad goals of
the group and the enthusiasm necessary to sustain interest are
important to both personal and individual development.

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[2]Benjamin Cohn et al. "Group Counseling: An Orientation"
Personnel and Guidance Journal, Vol. 42 (Dec. 1963) p. 355.

[3]Norman Kagan. "Group Procedures", Rev. Ed. Res., Vol. 36
(April 1966) p. 285.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to define and interpret the terms considered by the author to be essential to an understanding of group procedures in guidance and counseling in the secondary schools. The terms discussed were: guidance, counseling, group guidance, group counseling, multiple counseling, group therapy, and group dynamics.

An attempt was made to indicate how the particular cultural demands, conflicts, and inconsistencies of the adolescent stage of development make the group counseling method appropriate for secondary school counseling.

In order for the counselor to plan a successful group counseling experience he must consider three interdependent factors: the purpose of the group, the method to be used, and the personal qualities of the participants.

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