

Group Therapy: Broadly Effective, Diverse Applications

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Introduction

The landscape of mental health treatment continually evolves, with group therapy emerging as a foundational and highly adaptable modality across a spectrum of conditions and demographics. This approach harnesses the power of shared experiences and collective support to facilitate healing and personal growth. Recent research consistently highlights the efficacy of group interventions, validating their role in modern psychiatric and psychological care. The integration of technology has further expanded the reach and potential of these therapies, addressing long-standing barriers to access. For adolescents, specifically, group therapy has demonstrated considerable promise in addressing anxiety and depression. When blended with digital components, this method not only broadens access to essential care but also offers flexible intervention options, pointing towards a valuable direction for future mental health services for young people [1].

Similarly, individuals grappling with complex trauma derive significant benefits from group therapy interventions. These settings offer a unique and secure environment for processing shared traumatic experiences, actively fostering a strong sense of community, and enabling the development of robust coping mechanisms within a supportive peer network [2].

The increasing reliance on technology in healthcare has also reshaped group therapy delivery. Digital group interventions for various mental health issues have demonstrated substantial effectiveness, often proving comparable to traditional in-person group therapies. This underscores the profound potential of technology to deliver accessible and scalable mental health support, especially for individuals who encounter significant geographical or logistical barriers when trying to access conventional care [3].

More broadly, the collective experience inherent in group psychotherapy, characterized by shared insights and mutual support, consistently yields positive outcomes across a wide array of mental health conditions. A deeper understanding of the core processes that operate within these groups empowers clinicians to maximize therapeutic benefits, ultimately leading to improved patient well-being and more successful treatment trajectories [4].

Beyond general benefits, specific therapeutic models flourish within a group context. Group-based Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), for example, provides effective relief for individuals experiencing chronic pain. This powerful approach helps participants fundamentally shift their relationship with pain, fostering greater psychological flexibility and significantly improving their overall quality of life, rather than focusing solely on direct pain reduction [5].

Group Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is another modality proving highly effective, particularly for psychosis. It significantly reduces symptoms and markedly

improves functional outcomes. The shared experience within a group setting allows individuals to bravely challenge distorted thoughts and collaboratively develop adaptive coping strategies, thereby greatly enhancing recovery pathways for those living with psychosis [6].

Expanding on the utility of CBT, Group Cognitive Behavioral Therapy also effectively treats anxiety disorders in adolescents. It offers a structured yet deeply supportive environment where young people can learn and practice essential coping skills collectively, leading to a noticeable reduction in anxiety symptoms and an improvement in their overall emotional regulation abilities [7].

Mindfulness-based group interventions have also shown remarkable efficacy in reducing symptoms of anxiety, depression, and stress. The inherent group setting significantly enhances the practice of mindfulness, providing a communal space for participants to cultivate present-moment awareness and build robust emotional resilience [8].

Furthermore, group psychotherapy stands as a valuable treatment modality for eating disorders. It offers a critically supportive environment where individuals can safely share challenging experiences, develop robust coping strategies, and collectively challenge unhelpful thoughts and behaviors. This approach powerfully complements individual therapy by fostering essential connection and significantly reducing feelings of isolation, which are often prevalent in eating disorder recovery [9].

Finally, group-based interventions are highly effective for adults struggling with substance use disorders. The collective experience of recovery, coupled with invaluable peer support and shared learning within these groups, profoundly contributes to sustained sobriety and demonstrably improved psychosocial functioning [10].

In summary, the aggregated evidence highlights group therapy as a versatile, impactful, and increasingly accessible form of mental health treatment. Its capacity to address a wide range of conditions, from anxiety and depression to trauma, chronic pain, psychosis, eating disorders, and substance use disorders, underscores its central role in promoting well-being across diverse populations. The continuous evolution, particularly with digital integration, promises an even broader reach and greater efficacy for future interventions.

Description

Group therapy serves as a dynamic and adaptable cornerstone in mental health treatment, consistently demonstrating its efficacy across a broad spectrum of psychological conditions and patient demographics. Its unique strength lies in harnessing the collective power of shared human experience, fostering environments

where individuals can find mutual support, validate their struggles, and collaboratively develop effective coping mechanisms. This modality is not confined to a single therapeutic approach; rather, it effectively integrates various psychotherapeutic models to address complex needs. The growing body of research, particularly systematic reviews and meta-analyses, underscores the widespread positive outcomes associated with group interventions.

For young people, group therapy offers tailored solutions. Blended group therapy, which combines traditional group sessions with digital components, has shown considerable promise for adolescents experiencing anxiety and depression [1]. This innovative approach not only increases the accessibility of care, making it available to more individuals regardless of geographical constraints, but also introduces flexible intervention options that can be adapted to the diverse needs and preferences of young people. Building on this, Group Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) has been specifically recognized for its effectiveness in treating anxiety disorders in adolescents [7]. Within a structured yet supportive group setting, young individuals learn and practice essential coping skills, which leads to a significant reduction in anxiety symptoms and an improvement in their overall emotional regulation. These findings highlight the critical role of group formats in adolescent mental health.

Beyond adolescents, group therapy interventions are profoundly beneficial for adults facing severe and complex mental health challenges. Individuals experiencing complex trauma, for instance, find a unique and crucial environment within group settings. Here, they can safely process shared experiences, build a profound sense of community, and collectively develop coping mechanisms, all within the protective embrace of a supportive peer network [2]. This shared journey can be transformative in overcoming the isolation often associated with trauma. Similarly, Group Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) for psychosis significantly reduces symptoms and improves functional outcomes [6]. The group dynamic allows participants to challenge distorted thoughts in a supportive context and collaboratively develop adaptive strategies, thereby enhancing recovery pathways for those living with psychosis. This demonstrates the power of the group to tackle deeply ingrained and challenging conditions.

The versatility of group therapy extends to chronic physical conditions and specific psychological disorders. Group-based Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) provides effective relief for individuals experiencing chronic pain [5]. This approach empowers participants to shift their relationship with pain, moving beyond a sole focus on reduction to foster greater psychological flexibility and an improved quality of life. Furthermore, mindfulness-based group interventions are highly effective in reducing symptoms of anxiety, depression, and stress [8]. The group setting naturally enhances the practice of mindfulness, offering a communal space where participants can cultivate present-moment awareness and build emotional resilience. These distinct applications illustrate the broad spectrum of conditions amenable to group treatment.

Group psychotherapy also stands as a valuable treatment modality for eating disorders. It provides a supportive environment where individuals can share experiences, develop coping strategies, and collectively challenge unhelpful thoughts and behaviors [9]. This collective aspect complements individual therapy by fostering connection and significantly reducing the isolation often felt by those with eating disorders. Concurrently, group-based interventions are highly effective for adults grappling with substance use disorders [10]. The collective experience of recovery, combined with invaluable peer support and shared learning, contributes significantly to sustained sobriety and improved psychosocial functioning. The communal bond forged in these groups is often a critical factor in long-term recovery success.

The integration of technology has further broadened the reach of group therapy. Digital group interventions for various mental health problems demonstrate sub-

stantial effectiveness, often comparable to traditional in-person group therapies [3]. This technological advancement highlights the significant potential to deliver accessible and scalable mental health support, particularly for those who face geographical or logistical barriers to accessing conventional care. Ultimately, the collective experience in group psychotherapy, marked by shared insights and mutual support, consistently yields positive outcomes across diverse mental health conditions [4]. Understanding and leveraging these core processes within groups allows clinicians to maximize therapeutic benefits and significantly improve patient well-being, solidifying group therapy's integral role in contemporary mental healthcare.

Conclusion

Group therapy is consistently effective across a diverse range of mental health conditions and populations. For adolescents, blended group therapy, integrating digital components, shows significant promise in treating anxiety and depression, enhancing accessibility and offering flexible intervention options. Digital group interventions, in general, prove as effective as traditional in-person therapies, making mental health support more scalable and available, especially where geographical barriers exist. This modality extends its reach to complex trauma, providing a unique environment for shared processing and the development of coping mechanisms within a supportive peer network. The core benefits of group psychotherapy, encompassing shared insights and mutual support, contribute to positive outcomes across various conditions.

Specific therapeutic approaches thrive in group settings. Group-based Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) effectively helps individuals manage chronic pain by fostering psychological flexibility, while Group Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is vital for reducing symptoms and improving outcomes in psychosis. Furthermore, Group CBT is highly effective for adolescents with anxiety disorders, equipping them with collective coping skills. Mindfulness-based group interventions are powerful in mitigating anxiety, depression, and stress, cultivating present-moment awareness and resilience. Group psychotherapy offers a supportive space for eating disorders, fostering connection and challenging unhelpful patterns. Finally, group-based interventions are highly effective for adults with substance use disorders, promoting sustained sobriety through peer support and shared recovery experiences. These findings underscore group therapy's broad utility and significant impact on well-being.

Acknowledgement

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Conflict of Interest

None.

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