

Group Facilitation Session and Reflection

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Group session – Empower and Express

The purpose of this group session was to identify the barriers to healthy communication skills by identifying triggers and current communication challenges. The session aimed to identify self-awareness among members regarding their communication styles and to present additional techniques for overcoming barriers by promoting open conversation and active listening. The goal was to support clients to build stronger relationships both personally and professionally by using healthy communication.

I began the teen session with an activity, dividing the group of 11 into groups of 2, a speaker and an artist. The speaker is to describe a scene, and the artist is to draw it. The speaker cannot look at the picture. When complete, it is a great description of how well we speak and how well we listen. This opened the conversation for the group, while some were very close, others were not. For both team members, it allowed them to recognize that effective communication and understanding are mutual processes involving both individuals.

My primary objective was to create a safe and supportive environment that encouraged active participation. I employed a combination of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) principles and solution-focused techniques. ACT emphasizes psychological flexibility, mindfulness, and acceptance of thoughts and feelings, which helped participants become more aware of their internal experiences related to communication challenges (Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 2011). The solution-focused approach, on the other hand, concentrated on identifying existing strengths, resources, and possible solutions to improve communication patterns.

One key prompt used during the session was a question to engage conversation among the group. Clients were asked to identify barriers they face in their interactions—such as miscommunications and emotional challenges—and then brainstorm strategies to address these

issues. For example, some clients shared that they often interrupt others or struggle to listen without judgment. I introduced solution-focused questions, encouraging clients to envision their ideal communication scenarios and to identify small, actionable steps they could take to move toward those goals.

The activity on communication barriers was particularly effective; clients shared personal experiences and offered peer support, which contributed to a collaborative environment. I observed that the use of experiential techniques grounded in ACT helped participants become more mindful of their internal processes, while the solution-focused questions provided a practical framework for change. This combination proved effective in promoting both insight and motivation for behavioral change.

Reflecting on my role as a group facilitator, I felt confident in my ability to manage the session smoothly. I maintained eye contact, used open body language, and employed active listening skills to ensure clients felt heard and valued. My approach was to create an inclusive environment where everyone's voice could be heard, fostering engagement and mutual respect. I also paid close attention to group dynamics, ensuring that each member had opportunities to contribute and that no one dominated the discussion. This facilitated a balanced and respectful exchange of ideas, which is crucial for effective group work.

In terms of ethical and legal considerations, I adhered to established guidelines for group facilitation. I ensured that informed consent was obtained at the outset of the session, clearly explaining the purpose of the group, confidentiality limits, and clients' rights to withdraw at any time (American Counseling Association, 2014). I also reviewed site procedures regarding documentation and emergency protocols, ensuring that all activities aligned with the organization's policies. Maintaining confidentiality was emphasized, and I reminded clients to

respect each other's privacy to foster trust within the group. Additionally, I was mindful of cultural and individual differences, ensuring that activities and discussions were inclusive and respectful of diverse perspectives.

In conclusion, this session provided valuable insights into the importance of combining evidence-based techniques like ACT and solution-focused approaches to enhance communication skills. The experience reinforced my confidence as a facilitator, especially in engaging clients, fostering active involvement, and managing group dynamics effectively. Moving forward, I plan to continue refining my facilitation skills by integrating reflective practices and seeking feedback from peers and supervisors.

References

- American Counselling Association. (2014). Code of Ethics. <https://www.counseling.org/Resources/aca-code-of-ethics.pdf>
- Gingerich, W. J., & Peterson, L. M. (2013). Effectiveness of solution-focused brief therapy: A systematic qualitative review of controlled outcome studies. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 23(3), 266–283.
- Hayes, S. C., Strosahl, K. D., & Wilson, K. G. (2012). *Acceptance and commitment therapy: The process and practice of mindful change*. Guilford Press.