



Who is Ready for Group Psychotherapy?

Therapy groups can be very supportive, but they can also be very challenging. Profitable group participation requires a willingness to take risks and to experience uncomfortable emotions, at least long enough to think about them and try to understand where they come from.

To be a good group member you need to be curious about yourself and how you work, and about others and how they work. It means you need to be willing to try to figure out what you are feeling and thinking, to try to express your real thoughts and emotions, and to do this in a respectful way that can help all members grow.

Learning what works for you in group helps you understand what works in relationships outside group.

Isn't Group Therapy Just Cheap Therapy for People Who Can't Afford Real Therapy?

No. Group therapy is something different from individual therapy. For many people—for example, people who are nervous around others or have low self-esteem—group therapy can be *more effective* than individual therapy. For some people, the ideal is to be in both group and individual therapy, where feedback from the group can be processed in sessions with the individual therapist, and growing self-understanding from individual work can allow one to be more real in group.

How are our psychotherapy groups different from other groups?

There are many, many types of groups, and our ongoing interpersonal process groups are only one type. Many groups focus on a particular problem, such as depression or dealing with medical illness. Some groups are support groups, where members find support without a goal of helping each other grow. Some groups are primarily educational groups, for example, learning about a certain diagnosis. Some groups focus on specific ways of helping yourself, for example through cognitive therapy or mindfulness training. (In our department, a 12-week group balancing interpersonal support and education about mind-body connections is offered at regular intervals. For more information, call 626-7664.)

Certainly our interpersonal process groups provide nonjudgmental support and respectful empathy, but the focus goes further as members push themselves and each other to grow beyond the interpersonal patterns that keep them stuck and lessen their quality of life.

What does group therapy cost?

Many insurance companies cover the cost of group therapy just as they do individual therapy. If you do not have insurance that will pay for group therapy, we are willing to consider a sliding scale for group participation. The standard fee for group therapy is \$100 per session, but if you cannot pay this much, this fee can be reduced, sometimes substantially, depending on your income. If your insurance or circumstances change, your fee will be adjusted. Sliding fees are reviewed at least once a year.

Who Are the Group Leaders? Are group leaders supervised?

Psychotherapy groups at the Department of Psychiatry are run by psychiatry residents, medical doctors who have completed medical school and are licensed physicians in the state of Arizona. Psychiatry residents lead psychotherapy groups (and do individual therapy and medication management) as part of their third year of the four-year psychiatry specialty training. All clinical work by residents is carried out under the supervision of Department of Psychiatry faculty members.

All group leaders meet together weekly to discuss their groups with the group therapy supervisor. These weekly meetings help improve the skills of the leaders and help them provide optimal group experiences for the members in their groups.

The faculty supervisor observes most group sessions live through a camera, in order to provide specific feedback to the group leaders and to help assist them in better understanding and serving group members. Sometimes audio recordings are made temporarily, to review aspects of a session with leaders or if the supervisor is not available live. No one other than group leaders and their supervisor observe groups or hear the recordings, and recordings are erased once they have been reviewed.

What is Group Psychotherapy?

Group therapy is a form of psychotherapy in which a small, carefully selected group of individuals meets regularly with one or more therapists. Groups in our department are normally co-led by two therapists.

Our groups are *interpersonal process groups*, meaning that the goal of the groups is to learn about ourselves and how we interact with others, *by interacting with others* in an environment of mutual respect. In group psychotherapy we are encouraged to do what is so difficult in most of our interactions: Talk openly and honestly about what we are feeling and thinking, give others constructive feedback, and open ourselves to feedback about how we appear to others.

In everyday life, we rarely have the time, focus or courage to examine ourselves and the parts we play in our relationships—or even how we create and maintain our own problems. Often our anxiety, depression, and other problems derive from worries about what others think of us, but getting honest answers about what others think can be difficult in our ordinary interactions.

In group psychotherapy we learn how to ask for feedback, how to take in the feedback we are offered, how to think through the message in that feedback, and how to change our attitudes and behavior in light of that feedback. And we learn how to give effective feedback to others and help them grow.

What will be expected of me if I become a group member?

- Regular attendance is crucial for maintaining the continuity and safety of the group. If you cannot attend regularly because of other commitments or logistic problems, another group or another time will be better for you.
- You will be expected to maintain strict confidentiality, and never repeat outside of group anything you heard in group. If you speak to others of your group experience, you must only speak about yourself, and never about what others have revealed, or even who they are.
- You will be expected to maintain a respectful attitude toward others in the group, speaking your truth, but also respecting theirs.
- The most important group topic is what group members are feeling in the group room at a given moment, especially about others in the group. While discussing life events and experiences is important, it is also important to focus on your feelings and thoughts while relating your experiences or listening to others experiences.
- Group therapy involves a willingness to experience a range of feelings, and the courage to face discomfort. You will be expected to stay at times with uncomfortable feelings and to understand ways you are tempted to avoid these feelings. Silences are ok. Don't feel pressure to "fill in the silence."
- Participating in group is taking a controlled risk with the potential for great change!

- You will be able to experiment by interacting in group in ways you might not risk with family, friends, partners or coworkers.
- You will be expected to provide honest feedback to others, and to discuss your fears about how others might react, and you will be expected to be receptive to feedback.
- Because it is important for group members to understand the interpersonal dynamics between members, you will be expected not to form social relationships with other group members outside the group. If any contact or conversations occur between group members outside the group sessions, you will be expected to bring these interactions back to the group so that no secrets are kept from the group.
- If you join a group, we ask that you commit to attending four sessions before deciding to stay or leave the group.
- And most importantly, you will be expected to do all of the above imperfectly. Hey, if you were perfect, why would you need us?

Have you ever wondered....

- *Is it OK to feel angry? ...to say something that might anger others?*
- *Does your opinion matter to others?*
- *Do others see your intentions as you see them?*
- *Are your experiences worth sharing?*
- *How might it feel to let others know you care about them or to accept that others might care about you?*

Group Psychotherapy

University
Physicians Healthcare

Department of Psychiatry



For More Information...

For more information about group psychotherapy at University Physicians Healthcare Psychiatry, or to request an interview for possible group membership, please contact:

Ron Wright, MD/PhD
Director of Group Psychotherapy
University of Arizona
Department of Psychiatry
Tucson, AZ 85724-5002
(520) 626-7118

To find out if your insurance will pay for group psychotherapy, please call 626-7664.

An important offering of the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Arizona is ongoing group psychotherapy. This brochure describes the group psychotherapy experience that we offer, including who might benefit from it, what those benefits might be, and what would be expected of you if you join one of our groups.

Group leaders change each July, but groups continue. Here is the current schedule for our groups:

Mondays 4:15 – 5:30 p.m.

Thursdays 9:30 – 11:00 a.m.

Fridays 8:30 – 10:00 a.m.

If after reviewing this brochure, you are interested in joining one of our groups, please call Dr. Wright at 626-7118.