

## Book Review

### ***Theory and practice of group counselling (9<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Cengage Learning. Corey, G. (2014).***

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This ninth edition of Corey's book is an invaluable resource which presents an overview of various theoretical models of group counselling, and how these can be applied to group counselling. The basic elements of group counselling are outlined—the ethical and professional issues specific to group work; the key concepts, techniques and approaches to group counselling have also been discussed, which can help the practitioner to develop their own synthesis of various aspects of these approaches (p. xix). This book is suitable for use by students, and mental health practitioners such as counsellors, nurses, social workers, ministers, psychologists, psychiatrists and General Practitioners.

This edition is organised into three (3) parts which consists of 18 chapters. Part I comprises Chapters 1 – 5. Chapter 1 introduces the user to different counselling groups and the basic elements of group work regardless of the group type or the theoretical orientation of the group leader. Chapter II explores group leadership and uses examples of personal characteristics required for effective group leadership. Chapter III addresses ethical and professional issues that guide group practice. Chapter IV deals with the early stages of group development, the challenges that leaders may encounter at each stage; and the roles they need to play to guide the group process. Ethics related to counselling with diverse populations have also been discussed.

Part II of this book comprises Chapters 6 – 16 in which eleven (11) major theoretical approaches to group counselling which have been descriptively presented under the following sub-headings: *biographic data of the theory proponent, key concepts, role and functions of the group leader, theory application, techniques and procedures, group developmental stages and their implications for group work,*

*contemporary trends in group work, application in schools, and with multicultural populations.* Each theory is evaluated for its strengths and limitations. Self-reflection and discussion questions are provided to help the practitioner define their own understanding of a given theory.

In Chapter 6, Freud's psychoanalytic theory is described as the most influential of all counselling approaches. Psychoanalysis focusses mainly on the influence of the past on personality functioning (p.124) and, according to Corey; other theorists have modified, extended or reacted against it. Chapter 7 discusses the Adlerian approach to group counselling in which Adler contested the Freudian "sexual repression theory contending that neurosis is...a perceived failure in a life task" (p. 161). Chapter 8 explores the use of Moreno's psychodrama in groups – which Corey describes as a complex technique, philosophy and theory that weaves together imagination, intuition, physical action, and various dramatic devices to explore a wide range of psychological problems. In addition, Moreno is cited as stating that some aspects of the mind cannot be adequately accessed through words (p.191).

Chapter 9 describes the Yalom's Existential Approach - which is considered a way of thinking as opposed to a particular style of practising group therapy. This approach places special emphasis on helping clients to understand existential discourses and how these affect their lives. Chapter 10 presents the Person Centred Approach (PCA) – in which Cook et. al., (2009) describe founder Carl Rogers as the most influential figure in the psychotherapy field (p. 257).. The major tenet of the PCA is a basic trust that the client will move forward if conditions fostering growth are present (p. 258). Chapter 11 discusses the Gestalt Therapy proposed by Poster & Poster, and influenced by Perls & Moreno. Specifically, the Gestalt Therapy challenges clients to see how they *tend* to avoid responsibility or feelings. This therapeutic style is characterized by theatrics, abrasive confrontation, and intense catharsis (p. 239).

In Chapter 12, Corey presents the Transactional Analysis by Berne, a theory of personality characterised by language of behaviour grounded on the assumptions that individuals make current decisions based on their early experiences (p. 325). It is similar to psychoanalysis. The Transactional Analysis emphasizes cognitive and behavioural aspects to help people change their maladaptive behaviours .

Chapter 14 discusses Albert Ellis' Rational Emotive Therapy. Ellis was the first therapist to emphasize the influential role of cognition in

behaviour (p. 349). Behaviour is a result of what an individual thinks of the world or people around him/her. Chapter 15 presents the Choice or Reality Therapy postulated by Glasser, supported by Wubbolding and which contends that people choose their behaviour and are therefore able to alter it (p. 399). Basically, people can unlearn behaviours that they learned earlier in their lives, if they so choose.

The 11<sup>th</sup> approach, which is Solution-Focused Brief Therapy and Motivational Interviewing founded by Berg, de Shazer and supported by William Miller, is discussed in Chapter 16. The key concept of this theory is the assumption that people are resourceful and competent, and have the ability to construct solutions that change the direction of their lives (p. 421).

Finally, part III of the text deals with the integration and application of theories in group work, and consists of chapter 17 & 18. Chapter 17 deals with comparisons and contrasts of the theories, as well as integrating several theoretical approaches in group counselling allowing the leader to decide on the goals of group work. Chapter 18 looks into the evolution of the group, and how various theoretical approaches can be applied in each developmental stage of the group.

In conclusion, this ninth edition by Corey (2014) is not only presented in a colourful eye-catching manner, but has been simplified in such a way that both novice and seasoned group leaders can easily comprehend it. This is a highly informative and practical guide to group work; especially as it is based on the author's experience in working with groups. Corey has written extensively on groups and group counselling and most of his work remains to guide group work in counselling worldwide.

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