Group Strategies for Tobacco Cessation

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Learning Objectives

• Define group counseling and goals of group therapy
• Discuss advantages of group counseling
• Identify the stages of group therapy and the role of the facilitator in each stage
• Understand group dynamics and discuss different types of groups
• Use facilitator skills to manage “challenging” behaviors
Group Counseling

Offers a setting for members to share concerns and develop self-awareness through self-disclosure and feedback.

The facilitator’s role is to set the stage so that the setting can support sharing.
Advantages of Group Counseling for Members

• An opportunity to learn coping techniques from peers.

• Increased ability to see issues more clearly when expressed by others.

• Increased willingness to share concerns which may seem “shameful” or “crazy”.

• An opportunity to learn from the diversity of other group members.
Starting a Group: Practical Issues

Needs assessment
Accessibility
Resources / funding
Synergy among agencies and healthcare professionals
Evaluation of quality and effectiveness

Stages of Group: Initial Stage
Orientation and Exploration

Facilitator Duties

- Introductions
- Discuss confidentiality
- Identify goals
- Evaluate concerns, hopes and fears
- Set rules

- Group Characteristics
- Vulnerability
- Members keep “public image”
- Members assess their place in group
Stages of Group: Initial Stage
Facilitator Skills

• Set rules
  • One person speaks at a time
  • Respect for all members
  • No eating/drinking/gum chewing
  • Start on time/end on time

• Identify goals of group members

• Clarify goals of each session

• Create trust through modeling

• Instruct on group process
Stages of Group: Transition Stage
Dealing with Resistance

- Facilitator Duties
- Encourage members to explore issues related to tobacco use
- Provide balance between support and challenge
- Assess group dynamics

Group Characteristics
- Increased anxiety
- Defensiveness
- Resistance
Stages of Group: Transition Stage
Facilitator Skills

• Create and maintain trust
  • Trust is attained by investing oneself
  • Provide positive feedback for sharing

• Dealing with fears
  • Fear may give rise to ambivalence
  • Give members the opportunity to express their feelings of fear

• Rolling with resistance
  • Validate
Stages of Group: Working Stage  
Cohesion and Productivity

- Facilitator Duties
- Reinforce desired group behaviors which promote cohesion
- Identify common themes among members that provide unity

Group Characteristics
- In-depth exploration and self-awareness
- Cohesion
- Members give and take feedback more freely
Facilitator Skills

- Facilitate interaction among group members and help them learn from one another.
- Check in periodically throughout the sessions to see if each individual feels he/she is moving forward.
- Ask a group member to summarize the session before dismissing the group.
Stages of Group: Ending Stage
Consolidation and Termination

Facilitator Duties

✓ Identify concerns regarding leaving the group
✓ Apply lessons learned to daily life
✓ Integrate and interpret the group experience

Group Characteristics

• Members express empathy and concern for one other
• Ambivalence regarding “boost of confidence” vs. sense of loss
Stages of Group: Ending Stage

Facilitator Skills

• Ask each group member to identify internal and external resources which will help them stay tobacco-free.
• Reflect on concerns about leaving the group.
• Encourage members to apply lessons to their daily lives.
• Interpret the group experience.
Group Dynamics

Defined: The collection of interpersonal styles and interactions which take place throughout the life of a group.

These dynamics constantly influence and shape the group.

People in group want to be included and feel safe. The facilitator looks to impact group dynamics in a way that promotes sharing.
Group Dynamics:
Group Member Characteristics

• Confident
  • Speaks appropriately
  • Listens well.

• Quiet, reserved

• Overly confident
  • Talkative; may give too much advice

• Struggling
  • May be lacking confidence to quit
Member Behaviors Which Are “Challenging”

• Monopolizing the group
• Storytelling
• Asking too many questions
• Inappropriately giving advice
• Being overly intellectual or detached
Facilitator Skills for Dealing with “Challenging” Behaviors

Do:

• Address the behavior in a caring, responsive manner

Do not:

• Continually ignore the behavior
• Label the individual
• Respond to sarcasm with sarcasm
Benefits of Co-Facilitating Groups

• Before the session - model how to relate to each other and to the group

• During the session - talk to each other to benefit the group process

• After the session - Provide each other with valuable feedback

• Teamwork and support
Factors Which Affect Group Outcomes

- Intervention
- Facilitator skills
- Member’s characteristics
- Setting
- Context
- Quality assurance

Types of Tobacco Focused Groups

• Self-help (Nicotine Anonymous)
• Relapse Prevention
• Support
• Closed
• Work site
Example of a closed six week abstinence/withdrawal support group

- Six week structured group.
  - Specific agreed upon goals (quitting smoking)
  - Active leadership

- Schedule - Individual intake
  - Session 1: Preparation for Quitting
  - Session 2: Quit day’
  - Session 3: Discuss ups and downs, triggers, make group commitment
  - Session 4: You’ve done the hardest part.
  - Session 5. You’re getting better.
  - Session 6. Celebration.
Discussion

Individual Consultation vs. Group Counseling
Six week treatment group

• Everyone quit on Week 2
• This is Week 3 of 6
• The group is cohesive and everyone knows each other pretty well

• The facilitator will cover the following:
  • Coping Skills – what is(n’t) working
  • Stress Management
  • Relapse Prevention