Working in Groups

Curative Factors in Group Work…. Yalom, 1975 "The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy" (An essential guide to group work.. of interest to TA therapists is that even though in footnotes Yalom is critical of TA he does not acknowledge that he based some of his conclusions groups run by the Gouldings…)

- Instillation of Hope.
- Universality
- Imparting information.
- Altruism.
- Corrective recapitulation of the early family experience.
- Development of socialising techniques.
- Interpersonal learning.
- Imitative behaviours.
- Group Cohesiveness.
- Catharsis.
- Existential factors.

Berne was clear that he did not choose clients for particular groups… he insisted on mixing everyone into the same groups except for reasons of safety.

Berne described 8 therapeutic interventions… (See also the addition of holding to this list of empathic transactions by Helena Hargeden and Charlotte Sills).

1) Interrogation: "Tell me about the situation in…"
2) Specification: Clarification of the client's story; includes reflection of their story and their position.
3) Confrontation: "That does not fit with how you told the story before", also includes confronting passive behaviours.
4) Explanation: Describing the process with may be the use of theory.
5) Illustration: story telling, and use of metaphors, etc.
6) Confirmation: Reinforcing the client's new self awareness and decisions.
7) Holding … the psychological holding of the client in their process (addition by charlotte Sills and Helena Hargeden)
8) Interpretations: Leading to deconfusion of the child ego state.
9) Crystallisation: Bringing together the decontaminated Adult and deconfused Child.

Berne described the PAC of the group:

- Parent: group etiquette
- Adult: technical culture
- Child: group character

Bion: A psychoanalyst described healthy groups as ones in which each member took responsibility for their feelings and the group task. He described three processes which cause difficulties in groups:

1. Flight and fight responses
2. pairing,
3. dependency.

He states that the group members expect the leader to resolve these conflicts when they arise.

Co-creation… not the importance of recognising that all groups exist in a co-created space… the whole group reflects not only the individuals within it but also the matrix created by the interpersonal acting out of each individuals intra-psychic / unconscious processes.

Stages of Group Development:
Contracting: The contract for the group sets the scene for the group… note the types of contract… business / treatment or outcome contract/ process and for each session that the group meets… early in the life of the group it will have to decide if it is to be task orientated or process orientated.
The first few transactions: As Berne pointed out the first transactions contain the process… discounting / games / script patterns which are likely to be carried through the life of the group… the therapists taks is to hold these and to confront and to facilitate change in these patterns.

Tuckman 1965: Described 4 stages of group development, others later added the 5th stage of mourning.

1) Forming; when the group first get together to form the group. Transactions are at a safe social level, while people wait to find out what they and others are going to do in this group.
2) Storming; Establishing of roles and of power differentials. Establishment of boundaries.
3) Norming; Establishment of the group norms, rules and culture.
4) Performing; Group gets on with the task of the group.
5) Mourning; Not in the original list.. but the ending of the group and saying goodbyes.

Berne:
1) Undifferentiated: The individual group is not yet able to distinguish other members of the group as individuals in their own right.
2) Partially differentiated: Some of the group members are seen as themselves while others are still transferrential objects still.
3) Differentiated: The group is now a collection of individuals in their own right… while working together in the group

See also: Stages of group-dynamic – role of leader "Group Imago and the stages of Group development TAJ Jan 1991 Petruska Clarkson.
This article emphasizes similarities between Berne's concept of group imago adjustment and the stages of group development as conceptualized by Tuckman (1965) and Lacoursiere (1980), highlighting the most relevant tasks of group leaders at different phases of a group's maturation. Feedback from practitioners and trainees is used to identify useful group leader behaviors at different stages. The article focuses on how developmental phenomena related to the group as a whole can be understood and used as an adjunct to individual psychotherapy in the group, not as a substitute for it. Particular factors in the blending of individual and group psychotherapy are also discussed.

The following is based on Tuckmann: 1965, and lacousiere's (1980) work, developed by Uta Hoehl TSTA

The roles of a leader...

1. Arrive – warm up – orientation) stage forming

Destructive:
- Excessive excitement of leader
- No structure
- Role confusion
- Aaggressive or manipulative
- Too orientated on the aim
- Too much rules (Authoritarian)

constructive:

- Clear contract
- Cear time-structure
- Leader take clear responsibility for group boundaries
- The group structures are clear. (breaks, etc)
- Creates a positive kind of excitement

2. Fermentation and clarification (Tuckman: storming)

Destructive:

- Leader ignore aggressions or conflicts
- Anger/rebellion of members will be seen as an individual pathology (in a negative way)
- Leader makes the impression to be weak/frail
- Leader does into one of the roles of the drama triangle
- Leader supports polarisations or looking for a "black-sheep"
- Either no or unfair sanctions (consequences)
- Leader let the group psychological alone

constructive:

- Leader takes feed-back serious
- Does not follow manipulations of group-members
- Esteems the feelings and opinions of group-members (who have a right of own points of views)
- Without giving up his/her own right of having own feelings/opinions.
- O.k. – O.k. position
- Is flexible about topics or wishes to change group-culture
- Sees the difference between changes/compromises which support the development of the group or and those which hinder it
- Supports the holding and management of problems/conflicts between members by themselves
- Delegates step by step responsibility, jobs/functions to the group
- Opens the possibility of group members showing strength and competence

Tuckmann. Norming

Destructive:

- Strokes for to being rigid
- Hinders the group-development in the direction of autonomy (because leader want not to loos the central control)
- Allows that destructive people stay in the group
- Want not to give up own expectations how the group should be
- Rules instead of norms
- Pressures the points of view of group members

Constructive:

- Strokes when members are open and critical of the norms
- Is flexible and open for different ways to reach the group aims
- Supports norm-development from the group
- Leader is aware and confronts when the impression is that the finding of norms grounds on introjects or un-reflected rules
- After reflection/supervision etc. excludes destructive group-members
- Show respect for the individuality of every group
- Open/clear expression about the own values
- Working-lush and productivity

Tuckman working-phase
Destructive:

- Criticizes in a destructive kind
- Needy of strokes
- Insists on too much time-structure
- Supports drivers (rather than confronting the script issues.)
- Cool, distanced, impersonal
- Has in the centre of awareness the task/aim of the group, not the group-cohesion
- Does not allow autonomy of the group

Constructive:

- Gives up more and more the central role and responsibility of leadership (more part of the group)
- Minimum of control and maximum of protection.
- Strokes for being and doing
- Allows group to make decisions
- Supports autonomy, authentic, competences
- Shows that he/she loves the work

End of the group
Destructive:

- Leader has problems to let the group (or members) go
- Wants to hold them , ignoring the meaning of saying good bye

Constructive:

- Gives time and space for the process of saying good bye
- Speaks openly about own feelings, without inviting symbiosis

Berne's ideas on Groups and his diagrams of the dynamics in games…. see: The principles of group Treatment in which Berne describes 6 diagrams he used for understanding groups:

1 Seating Diagram
2 Authority Diagram
3 Structural diagram (Indicates the sub – groupings witin the group) Demonstrates internal and external boundaries.
4 Dynamics diagram in which he highlights the minor and mad major processes in the group… the major between leader and group member and mnor between group members.
5 Group imago… the sub-marine diagram.
6 TA proper… in order to analyse transactions and transferences.

I would also add that any of the TA diagrams are also useful to understand the process… especially games and the drama triangle and to understand how the intra – psychic gets acted out within the group the impasse theory diagrams are helpful… along with an understanding of script etc.

Eric Berne's Theory of Organisations… TAJ October 1975 by Elliot Fox:
The second major work published on the subject of transactional analysis was Eric Berne's Structure and Dynamics of Organizations and Groups. It appeared in 1963, and except for passing references here and there it has been generally ignored ever since, both by Berne himself and by most other contributors to the growing body of TA literature. This neglect, it seems, has been due partly to a pre-eminent concern with clinical applications and partly due to the fact that the book is not easy to read. The difficulty arises from the organization and, in some cases, from a lack in development of the ideas. During the course of the work, the author covers roughly the same ground several times, each time with a somewhat different emphasis, additional terminology and further nuance of meaning. Also, he makes a number of interesting and apparently significant observations that are not developed fully enough to make it clear exactly what application he has in mind. The result is a fascinating collage of ideas that seem to be related, though it is not always clear just how, and a number of pregnant thoughts that mainly provide questions for further thought. Nevertheless,

from his special vantage point, Berne offers a way of looking at organization that has considerable potential, and we may well wish that he had developed his ideas on this subject further.

The work of JL Moreno – Psychodrama…. The father of therapeutic group work and active interventions in group work:

These notes are based on the book: **J.L. Moreno – by A Paul Hare and June Rabson Hare…**
This book is published by sage publications and is part of the "Key figures in counselling in psychotherapy series"

Moreno's work has contributed greatly to TA therapy in practice… as Eric Berne noted in 1970 - he and Perls shared with other active psychotherapists what he described as "The Moreno problem": The fact that nearly all known active techniques in psychotherapy had already been tried out by Moreno in psychodrama. So it is difficult to come up with an original idea.

For those familiar with TA's approach to psychotherapeutic work then many of the following ideas will be recognised as having being incorporated into our work.

The essence of psychodrama:

1. Experience the situation as vividly as possible.
2. Express unspoken thoughts / feelings
3. Group members become therapeutic agents for their colleagues in the group.
4. Clients are encouraged to be creative in their lives.

Moreno's Background: He stated himself that he was born on a boat – however there seems like there is some doubt about this – his mother denied it! He was born in Bucharest 18 May 1889…

He described his work as starting as a psycho-dramatist when aged of 4years old - he was God and his friends were God's angels. He directed them in their play – until one suggested he try flying as well… resulting in a fall and a broken arm! Throughout his work he saw himself in a similar role… he had seen himself as an extra- ordinary person placed on the planet to fulfil an extra- ordinary mission… he lived the rest of his life attempting to do so.

The greatest impact in the psychotherapy world has been his developments in group work – he also sought to develop groups for social interventions and to create a system for understanding social relationships.

He developed a skill in story telling and creating dramas… sitting against trees or in them he attracted children and groups of adults to listen to him telling / creating the life of fairy stories… making the unreal real in the moment of the telling.

When aged 23 he met Freud (1912) – In this encounter he told Freud that he would start where Freud stopped: "*Well Dr Frued; you meet people in the artificial setting of your office I meet them on the street and in their home and in their natural surroundings. You analyse their dreams. I try to give them courage to dream again. I teach people how to play God!"*

1913 – Group work starts – with Prostitutes.
After meeting and talking with a prostitute he began to organise a group of friends / colleagues to run group sessions for the prostitutes - aiming to provide them with dignity and respectability – he decided to work therapeutically with them - through mutual support and help. Morneo began to see that one individual could become the therapeutic agent for the other. He also involved other doctors to treat the physical side of their problems.

Moreno described active interventions with other clients - including suicidal a suicidal client in 1919 whom he told that as a doctor his role was to make people feel better – not to help them die… they went on to act out many scenarios – "the tragedies seem to become much lighter"

As Moreno had a Jewish background and therefore had to escape to the USA – where he went on to create various institutes of group work…

1965 and 1969 His partner (Zerka Moreno – herself a leading training and thinker) published 15 rules for psychodrama… these are central to most of our work as group psychotherapists… (note as I write this in 2009 these ideaas are accepted as the norm… at the time Moreno was developing them they were truly revelotionary!)

15 rules for psychodrama

1) Action: The subject (client) acts out their conflict instead of talking about them.
2) Here and Now: the client acts out their drama as if it is happening in the moment… Moreno believed that speaking about the past removed the client from the immediacy of the experience… He required – act as if it is happening to you now...
3) Subjectivity: the client acts out his / her own truth as he feels / perceives / thinks. "The client must be given the satisfaction of being accepted in their subjectivity prior to retraining / behaviour changes.
4) Maximal expression: The client is encouraged to maximise all expression / actions / verbal communication – rather than reducing it.
5) Inward movement: The warming up proceeds from the periphery to the centre… that is start with the less interesting "safe experiences" and move towards the more traumatic. The therapist starts with the more superficial and allows the client to carry him deeply towards the core.
6) Client choice: the client chooses all aspects of their work…
7) Restraint – psychodrama can be about restraint – although not repression!
8) Acceptance of non- expressiveness. The client is allowed to be as he is at this time.
9) Interpretation: which can be acted out by all involved.
10) Action is Primary: even if verbal interpretation is given the action is primary – the client may need emotional identification rather than analysis.
11) Cultural adaptations: the important thing is to use appropriate cultural expectations… to know how to begin – although the important thing is not how to begin but that we do begin!
12) Three Part Process: the warm up … the action – the post action sharing by the group.
13) Identification with the client… never leave the client believing they are the only one with this kind of problem… use the audience to identify with the client or / and the therapist.
14) Role play: the client must learn to take the role of all those he is meaningfully related.
15) Flexibility: trust the therapeutic process – the psychodrama is the final arbiter and guide in the therapeutic process. When the therapist (called director in psychodrama) is objective, spontaneous, and available then the psychodrama therapeutic method will lead systematically to the heart of the client's suffering. The therapist and all in the group become a cohesive force to maximise emotional learning.

Moreno also described various techniques all of which involve the client and the group entering fully into the clients experience…

Two of these techniques seem to be specifically significant to me as they are frequently used by psychotherapists of varying approaches… but rarely credited to Moreno.

a) Dream Presentation: The client enacts his / her dreams - possibly going on to create new outcomes.
b) Future projection: Enacting in full a future event…