

Things to Consider, Reflect Upon, and Explore Within Your Group:

This semester offers a valuable opportunity to deepen your self-awareness, identify areas for growth, seek support from your group, build confidence in a group setting, and explore the roles you naturally take on within group dynamics.

1. Revisit Your Group Contract

- Take time to review your group contract. Are there additional agreements you'd like to include now that you're working in a new, smaller group? This is an opportunity to refine expectations and boundaries together.

2. Set Your Personal Development (PD) Goals

- Reflect on your PD goals for this semester. Consider how these goals align with your growth as a counsellor and what support you may need from the group.

3. Use "I" Statements

- Practice taking ownership of your thoughts, feelings, and experiences by using "I" statements. This builds accountability and helps create a safe, respectful space for sharing. This is an important aspect of Gestalt therapy.

4. Explore Your Authenticity

- Reflect on how you show up in the group. Consider:
 - How authentic do you feel in this space?
 - What parts of yourself are you comfortable sharing?
 - What aspects are you hiding or suppressing, and why?
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5. Hold Space Without Rescuing

- Resist the urge to "rescue" your peers from discomfort. Instead, practice being present with them, holding space for their emotions while noticing your own.

6. Be Mindful of Questions

- Reflect on the types of questions you ask. Are they open and invitational, or could they feel intrusive and like an interrogation? Check whether direct questions are truly necessary or if they might shift the focus away from the speaker or an embodied process.

7. Clarify Needs Around Feedback

- Before giving feedback, ask whether the person sharing would like a response. Similarly, have the courage to express your own needs, whether for feedback, silence, or something else.

8. Practice Congruence

- Practice congruence when responding to others. Own your feelings and reactions without projecting them onto others. Be honest, but also kind.

9. Respect Speaking and Listening Boundaries

- Check in to ensure someone has finished speaking before moving on.

10. Pay Attention to Bodily Reactions

- Notice your somatic responses during group interactions. Are there moments when you feel tension, ease, or other sensations? Be curious and kind in exploring what these might signify.

11. Explore Your Presence

- Reflect on how present you feel in the group. Does your level of engagement shift depending on the person speaking or the topic being discussed?

12. Challenge Your Internal Narratives

- Pay attention to any stories you tell yourself about others or situations in the group. Are these based on assumptions or biases? Challenge their accuracy and consider alternate perspectives.

13. Notice Your Inner Critic

- Be aware of your critical inner voice. How does it influence your participation or feelings about yourself in the group? Practice self-compassion as you observe these patterns.

Exploring Roles, Responsibilities, and Group Dynamics:

1. Identify Your Role in the Group

- Reflect on the role you naturally take on in the group (e.g., leader, listener, challenger, mediator). How does this role serve the group, and how does it align with your PD goals?

2. Understand Group Dynamics

- Observe how dynamics shift depending on who is speaking, what is being shared, or the group's overall energy. Consider your contribution to these dynamics.

3. Explore Power and Influence

- Reflect on how power, influence, and decision-making manifest within the group. How do these dynamics affect your sense of belonging and your interactions?

4. Manage Conflict and Discomfort

- Consider how you handle moments of tension or disagreement. What does this reveal about your approach to conflict resolution as a future counsellor?

5. Balance Support and Challenge

- Reflect on how you balance supporting your peers with offering constructive challenges. How does this balance impact the group's growth and your own?

6. Examine Boundaries and Responsibilities

- Explore how boundaries are maintained within the group. Are there moments where they feel unclear or need reinforcement? Consider your responsibility in respecting and upholding these boundaries.

7. Seek and Give Feedback Thoughtfully

- Reflect on how you seek and provide feedback within the group. Are there ways to make this process more meaningful or impactful for everyone?

8. Observe Emotional Dynamics

- Be curious about the emotional atmosphere of the group. What emotions tend to surface, and how do they influence the group's interactions?

- Continually reflect on the needs arising in the group
- Consider Maslow's Hierarchy of needs
- Ask yourself, "What do I need to do to help someone have the opportunity to belong?" Remember that someone might not want to belong.
- Reflect on what conditions you need to be present to feel safe and a sense of belonging.
- Reflect on "do I like to be in the middle, edge or the centre or outside the group?"
- Reflect on how your group is functioning
- How many elephants are in the room, how big are they?
- Are you risk-interested?
- What are your group values?
- Who holds power in the group and in what ways?
- Patterns of communication forming?