

## **Group Psychotherapies for Substance Addiction Clients in Therapeutic Community Setting**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The substance addiction clients need psychotherapies to overcome the psychological effects of substance addiction. There are varied group psychotherapies provided by Therapeutic Community as a treatment and rehabilitation center. The common purpose of these groups is to facilitate the positive psychological changes for the clients. Nevertheless, each groups has its own in format, objectives and methods.*

*Keywords: Substance Addiction, Group Psychotherapies, Therapeutic Community*

### **Abstrak**

Klien pecandu narkoba memerlukan psikoterapi untuk mengatasi efek psikologis dari kecanduan narkoba. Ada berbagai psikoterapi kelompok yang disediakan oleh Therapeutic Community sebagai pusat pengobatan dan rehabilitasi bagi pecandu narkoba. Tujuan umum dari groups adalah memfasilitasi perubahan psikologis yang positif bagi klien, Namun setiap groups memiliki format, tujuan dan metode masing-masing.

Kata Kunci: Kecanduan narkoba, psikoterapi kelompok, Therapeutic Community

### **INTRODUCTION**

Substance addiction has both physiological and psychological components. The effects of substances/drugs show the power of psychological dependence to drugs which take more time to overcome than the physical dependence. The psychoactive effects of the substance change the substance addicts perceptions, thoughts, emotions and behaviors. To overcome psychological dependence to drugs and its psychological effects, the treatment and rehabilitation for substance addiction clients should provide varied individual and/or group psychotherapies to meet the clients' needs for healing and recovery.

Psychotherapies are critical components of effective treatment for addiction. Since group psychotherapies can be very beneficial to individuals with substance addiction problems, Therapeutic Communities (TC) as a treatment and rehabilitation center for substance addiction disorders provides variety groups to facilitate positive psychological changes and

enhance the healing process for the TC residents (drug addicted clients). Group psychotherapies are done through group counseling and group therapies.

Group counseling is the practice of the relationships and activities of counseling in group or, more simply, the counseling of people in groups. (R. Nelson-Jones, 1982). Group interaction and relationship are used to help members to attain personal objectives. C.A. Mahler (1969) defined group counseling as the process of using group interaction to facilitate deeper self understanding and self-acceptance .

Group therapy is defined as a meeting of two or more people for a common therapeutic purpose or to achieve a common goal. (Kristen Lawton Barry, 1999). In group therapy the therapist creates open- and closed-ended groups of people previously unknown to each other.

### GROUP PSYCHOTHERAPIES IN THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITY SETTING

George De Leon (2000) divided community groups in two type: TC-oriented groups and non-TC-oriented groups. The TC-oriented groups as the main clinical groups are encounter, static, probe, extended (marathon and retreat). These groups process are facilitated by TC clinical staffs (counselors). Though these groups have common purpose to facilitate the individual clients positive psychological changes, each groups has its own in format, objectives and method. De Leon views encounter as the cornerstone of group process in the TC. Encounter group's basic objective is to heighten individual awareness of specific attitudes or behavioral patterns that should be modified. As an important behavior shaping tool encounter group is designed as a safety valve for the residents/clients to ventilate verbally their anger, hostile, frustration and other negative feelings toward others in appropriate way (Fernando Perfas, 2003). Static groups is provided for every TC residents to attend along the primary treatment process throughout their stay in the TC Facility. The group is facilitated by a staff member as the primary counselor for the residents who are in his counseling caseload to provide the residents assistance, emotional support and monitor their treatment progress

The non-TC-oriented groups are conducted to meet clients' specific needs. These groups address varied special issues through special theme groups. Theme or specialized groups are facilitated by professional staff psychologist, social workers (CSW), therapists, and experts from specific fields. Following are several theme groups mostly conducted in TC settings: anger management, loss and bereavement, art feelings workshop, women/men groups, conflict resolution/management.

Since anger is one of negative feelings that most often surfaces when substance addicts stop using drug which can cause relapse, Anger Management Group is facilitated by professional staff to give the resident tools to manage their anger and breaking the anger-relapse cycle. This group meets weekly for a minimum 90 minutes in each sessions.(Anthony Gelormino, 2000). Step by step through each session the resident are assisted to gain insight how anger can cause relapse and provide them necessary anger management and coping skills to break the anger-relapse cycle. During the process the residents as group members are assisted to explore how role models and past experiences shaped and continue to influence their feelings, thoughts and behavior. They are helped to identify triggers and cues that activate the anger-relapse cycle. The professional staff also give group members assignment to fill worksheets of The Anger Management-Relapse Prevention Journal. The Journal is designed to help the residents identify and track current pattern of feeling, thinking and behavior across time. The residents also need to use the worksheets to document cues and reactions when they feel becoming angry or at risk for relapse (Jo Clancy, 1996).

Art Feelings Workshop is one of theme group sessions practice in TC setting as an emotional healing tool. It takes root from abstract expressionism which popularly used by Jackson Pollack in 1940's and 1950's. The art feelings workshop based on the basic premise that painting is a vehicle of expression. An expressionistic painting comes from the inside out. Through expressionism the TC residents as painters are aiming to stimulate and motivate the inner person, while giving them the courage to try to express their feelings through abstract painting. Its primary purpose is to assist each TC residents in experiencing their own feelings and help them acquire new insight that will expose their feelings and breakdown defenses which are limiting interaction. The workshop facilitate a safe, non-threatening arena to help the residents articulate their feelings. It is done in several sessions. In the workshop sessions the staff give a brief orientation on the concept of the workshop and explain the use of the paints, then the residents are given a theme to focus on. The theme relates to issues that they currently addressing in their treatment. Themes are designed for each treatment phase for all residents attend the group. Varied different themes are used to address specifics issues. In special sessions, with the staff's guidance the residents will select their own theme. The workshop functions are to empower the participants in dealing with their frozen feelings and provide an outlet for their feelings. Written feedback is provided by the staff on each resident/participant. The feedback is also very useful to clinical staff.

Loss and Bereavement Group is conducted for TC residents/clients as group members to gain a clearer understanding of the impact of loss and develop effective coping skills in addressing it, which is done in several sessions. Each session has its objectives to achieve. The objectives of session I is to learn about various types of losses. Group members are guided /directed to identify losses they have experienced and relate how losses have impacted their present situation. The session II objective is to explore their feelings related to loss. The group members are asked to write a letter to the person they have feelings of loss or abandonment towards and discuss feelings they expressed in their letters. The objective of session III is learn about the 5 stages of loss (proposed by Elisabeth Kubler Ross). The professional staff as group leader talk about the features acquainted with each stage of loss and guide the members to identify which stage(s) they are currently in. The session IV objective is to discuss coping skills to address loss in present and future. In this session group members discuss what they have learned from the group and how they will use the information & lesson in the future.

## CONCLUSION

Group psychotherapies is essential treatment tools for substance addiction clients for their healing and recovery process to overcome their addiction and its psychological effects, providing them problem solution skills and preparing them to live their lives in healthy, positive and constructive ways.

Bandung, August 2008

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