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Introduction to Group Work

None of us is as smart as all of us.

Kenneth Blanchard

We all grow up and live in groups, yet being in a group can be both something that is longed for and feared, sometimes simultaneously. This workshop would be useful for anyone who wants to know more about groups or for individual therapists or counsellors who are considering working with groups. Even though we may not have trained in groupwork, individual practitioners are sometimes asked to facilitate a group in a variety of settings: in the community, at a hospital, a G.P surgery or a counselling service. All those who work therapeutically with people benefit from an awareness of group dynamics as this can deepen their understanding of their clients; we are all part of groups - in families, in educational and social settings and at work, and by exploring this we can better understand how we relate to others.

Different models of group work will be explored, particularly the group analytic approach. We will reflect on theory and on commonly occurring phenomena in groups. These could include who to take into a group, phases in group life and how the therapeutic relationship can be developed within groups. Attention will be given to the particular therapeutic setting and the differences between long-term, short-term and theme-centred groups will be discussed.

Clinical vignettes from groupwork will form part of the discussion and you are welcome to reflect on your own experiences with groups. Please bring an experience of your own from any kind of group life. This will ensure that the work we do is closely relevant to the needs of the participants.

The aim of the workshop is to provide a theoretical and practical introduction to working with groups, with space for individual issues and questions and for learning from each other.