

# **A STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF GROUP COUNSELING SESSIONS TO COLLEGE STUDENTS OF HOLY NAME UNIVERSITY S.Y. 2005-2006**

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## **Introduction**

The trend of counseling in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is leading counseling groups and other development teams. Corey (1995) says that the group process has unique learning advantages as it is more efficient and it offers more resources or viewpoints. It is also economical and effective means of helping individuals who share similar problems and concerns (Gladding, 1996). Group counseling is a dynamic inter-personal process which focuses on conscious thought and behavior, and involves the therapy function of permissiveness, orientation to reality, catharsis, mutual trust, caring, understanding, acceptance, and support. The therapy function is created and nurtured in a small group through sharing of personal, educational, social, or vocational concerns with one's peers and the counselors. It is generally oriented towards the resolution of specific or short term issues. The focus of the group is often determined by members who are basically well-functioning individuals who do not require extensive personality reconstruction. In this approach, the participants are expected to know their maladaptive interpersonal relationships. According to Corey (1997) group counseling is especially suited for adolescents because it gives them a place to express conflicting feelings, explore self doubts, and come to the realization that they share their concern with their peers. Sandbery (1985) further states that this is an effective means for behavioral change. Having several clients meet as a group for a common purpose can save considerable time and effort. Groups provide a framework that promises to deliver services to the largest number of students, with the most efficient use of time (Phillips and Philips, 1992; Roland and Neitzchman, 1996). With an increasing population, counselors may no longer focus their efforts only with individuals.

## **Impact of Group Counseling Sessions**

The main purpose of the study is to determine the impact of group counseling sessions to students of Holy Name University-Tagbilaran for S.Y. 2005-2006. Specifically, it answers the question: What is the impact of group counseling sessions to students in terms of: 1.) Belongingness; 2.) Self-awareness and acceptance; 3.) Attitude and behavioral change; and 4.) Coping skills?

There were 1,569 college students who participated in the group counseling sessions in the past three years starting SY 2002-2003; 2003-2004; 2004-2005. Of the total population, 150 were taken as sample through random sampling. There were 30 respondents from each department, comprising the college of Computer Science, College of Commerce and Accountancy, College of Education, College of Engineering, and College of Nursing.

The self-made questionnaires were distributed to the respondents after which the data were collated and interpreted using the weighted means. The scale that was used as guide to measure the impact were as follows:

- 1 – fair;
- 2 – satisfactory;
- 3 – good;
- 4 – very good; and
- 5 – excellent.

The data show that the group counseling sessions of college students proved to have a “very good” impact as perceived by the participants in all colleges. The bulk of the average weighted means were consistently “high.” To them the sessions were fruitful and meaningful as many were really helped through their participation. Equally viewed as giving the highest impact to the participants were categories on belongingness, self-awareness, and self-acceptance. The college of Engineering participants benefited much from these areas as they were able to develop interpersonal relations and get group support and at the same time realize their weaknesses and limitations, explore self-doubts, gain self-knowledge, develop new sense of identity, and were able to enhance self-worth and self-esteem. Generally, it was advantageous to the group as a whole. The category on attitude and behavioral change showed the next behaviors in dealing with problems. More importantly, they were able to live by their own expectations and values based on the moral standards as they develop outlook of their lives. While the category on coping skills was most advantageous by the participants in the College of Nursing, however, it was generally perceived as the “least” to have impact among the group. As a whole, the participants were able to express conflicting feelings, release feelings and emotions, and gain therapeutic healing. The results simply confirmed to have consistency with the theory of Corey and Sandbery.

In sum, the group counseling sessions is, indeed, beneficial on the part of the students. It has given them productive opportunities for their psychological growth and development. The result of the data based survey would strongly suggest that this particular program should be sustained. For the students to avail of the activity, the counselor has to find ways and means to motivate them of their participation. All colleges or departments must be represented regardless of their size. Moreover, counselors should look into the curricular offerings of the different courses for the purpose of identifying those subjects that are or related to the objectives of group counseling so that they could propose to the teachers to include this activity in their respective syllabi.

#### **References:**

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### **Electronic Sources**

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