DIVERSITY IN GROUPS

- Diversity in groups is inevitable and can be beneficial
- Leader must use evidence-based practices in leading groups, considering the leader, clients, agency setting, and specific intervention being used
- Leader must have multi-cultural competence – knowledge, skills, and willingness to ask questions and learn
- Leader should pay attention not only to group content but also to the underlying processes
- Leader must notice, identify, and address issues of privilege and oppression
- Leader must attend to power dynamics both inside and outside of group

GROUP LEADERSHIP

- Leader’s responsibility begins when group is first conceptualized
- Considerations include:
  - Stability of leadership: should have the same leader(s) consistently, so that members know what to expect
    - Advantages/disadvantages of co-leadership vs. single leadership (see Unit 11 – Common Elements of Social Work Groups Quick Guide)
  - Leadership skill-set:
    - Strategic planning
    - Teamwork
    - Conducting meetings
    - Recruitment
    - Public speaking
    - Negotiating
    - Mediating
    - Time management
    - Comfort with group conflict
    - Dealing with decision-makers
  - Instrumental and affective skills (see Unit 12 – Conducting Group Therapy Quick Guide)
  - Various leadership roles, such as administrative, managerial, and team-building

CONFLICT IN GROUPS

- Conflict in groups is normal and can also be beneficial
- Leader must learn to differentiate between functional/cognitive/task-related conflict and dysfunctional/affective/emotion-related conflict
- Cognitive conflict should be allowed to play out as it:
  - Decrease groupthink and increases safety for members to express diverse opinions
  - Helps group feel survivable
- Affective conflict should be de-escalated as it:
  - Interferes with group information processing
  - Interferes with group safety and communication


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