

## **In Person Group Therapy**

### **Reflections and ethos for engagement 2024**

This document is a work in progress and reflects my current approach to facilitating group therapy. I welcome any questions or feedback from you regarding these reflections.

In terms of facilitating group therapy, my picture is for each individual group participant to be respected and prized (a lovely word used by Rogers) by me and one another. As a developmentally based, relationally focused integrative psychotherapist I will seek to honour your relational needs as the here and now adult you are. In keeping with humanistic principles our work together will be based as far as possible in the here and now.

I picture the group as an entity - something greater than the sum of its parts – and my role as facilitator is to measure the group pulse and energy.

When appropriate I will make interventions to ensure the smooth running of the group, thus also ensuring each group participant feels secure. By secure I mean a visceral sense that in the here and now your physical and emotional vulnerability and wellbeing will be protected by me and other group members. I will seek to help you create an environment where you can express yourself more authentically and be open to giving and receiving contact differently. This includes attending to everyday ruptures and repairs along the way.

Being a group therapy participant is an invitation to keep your needs, the needs of others and the needs of the group equally in focus. Group therapy provides the opportunity for the individual to be curious about their experience in the group and to inquire how others experience/see them and to inquire how others are experiencing themselves in the group.

Transference or enduring relational themes are an ordinary part of life and do not need to be regressed as such. As a humanistic therapist my way of facilitating these types of regressive experiences will be to focus on helping individuals to tease out what is an archaic pattern and what about their here and now experience is about here and now happenings. The group can help with this.

Sometimes group participants will want to understand more deeply how these archaic patterns were cooked up in childhood, at other times they may want to experiment with making the choice to stay in the here and now whilst attending their wounded inner child part. Where there is the choice to work non regressively, I will work non-regressively.

Group therapy is an opportunity to reach out and negotiate how to draw on the resources and support of others in the group, something that childhood adverse experiences may have made challenging to do.

There is the invitation to work at the boundary of your window of tolerance in experimenting with new ways of being. Each person is invited to say 'Yes' and 'No' to any invitation to work. This will always be respected. The invitation is to notice and reflect on what is happening in you and the group phenomenologically and to share this either in words, or creatively with movement or some other form of expression.

The group will meet for 2 hours, and I will open the doors 15 minutes earlier so that you can settle in for a prompt start at 6pm. It is important to be punctual.

At the start of the 10 sessions, we will spend time articulating the relational conditions we all need to work cooperatively together. This first session will also be an opportunity to start to share with the group your hopes and fears around engaging in group therapy. It will also be an opportunity to begin to identify the internal and external resources you bring to the group to access for yourself and possibly share with others.

Each time we meet we will spend some time warming up together, maybe using a short psychodrama type activity to help us arrive more fully in the here and now group environment.

We will then settle into the main body of the work together which will emerge naturally from what people share.

I will ensure we have time towards the close of the session for sharing how the main body of the work that session has landed in you or touched you in some way.

As each group therapy participant is a therapist, they will of course bring all this experience and wealth of understanding to bear in the group. However, there is an invitation to allow yourself to be a client and leave the role of therapist to one side when we work together in the therapy group.

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