

15 Therapeutic Questions for Group Therapy Discussions

Group therapy serves two distinct goals. While it addresses exploration of issues very much in the same way as individual therapy does, it also serves the purpose of finding ourselves in the environment where we feel less isolated from other people because many of those in the room will share similar struggles.

Just as in individual therapy, clients often enact the same tendencies they bring to all their other relationships, and the client interaction within a group can often be a good reflection of how they show up in the relationships with other people in their lives (Yalom, 1983).

While the therapist is trained in delivering structure for the discussion and guiding the questions, the biggest benefit lies in the exchange between participants. Leaders within the group are usually appointed and tasked with looking for commonalities among members and encouraging everyone to be supportive of each other.

Most group therapies are done in a round-robin discussion format. Rules of conduct are established and adhered to, roles assigned for leaders of the group, and room set up usually in a circle to encourage collaboration and everyone having a voice. Questions used in group therapy often focus on very much the same themes as individual therapy and include the reasons for being there and the expectations for the future:

- Why don't we start by spending a few minutes talking about the benefits of group therapy and what **positive psychology groups** are about?
- Let's go around and have each member tell us what you expect to get out of the group
- Where else might you have been at this moment if you hadn't come to this group session today?
- What might you have chosen to do?
- Is it your own decision to come here, or did someone else encourage you to do so?
- How do you feel about coming here each week?
- What do you like best about this session?
- Is there something you don't enjoy about this group session?
- Are you particularly looking forward to anything?

Depending on the purpose of the group, be it anger management, bereavement, substance abuse, etc., the content and the topics of discussion may vary. Although in a typical session several topics and questions are provided, group leaders need not ask all questions or address all topics; instead, questions and topics should be selected as they relate to what is happening in the group. Some general questions could include:

- What brought each of you into the group?
- Tell us two or three words that best describe you.
- Now, thinking about those words, how do they relate to why you are here?
- What is your favorite thing about yourself, something that makes you feel positive and proud to be you?

- Is there something new that has happened in your life recently?

Homework assignments and progress logs can be used between sessions, and educational material and handouts may be distributed. Many sessions start with reviews of progress and end with a recap of the activities.