

# Preface

This book, which is intended for psychologists, school counselors, and school-based health practitioners, discusses the theoretical structure of group interventions in schools, and gives examples of how to use these interventions. Although there are many forms of group interventions in school-based settings, this book concentrates on group-centered interventions, which are prevention-oriented group programs that enable students with academic-based problems to learn to function more successfully.

Group-centered interventions focus on helping students develop cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills through structured, hands-on group sessions. An element of play is added for children, and programs for adolescents incorporate service to the community. As the term *group-centered* implies, all interventions discussed in this book use the therapeutic power of groups. If properly harnessed, group cohesion can be a powerful agency for change.

This book is written for those who wish to learn how to use group-centered interventions in school-based settings. School-based settings offer opportunities not only during school hours, but also before school and after school, and includes community-related programs for schoolchildren.

For school counselors who have limited training in designing and facilitating group interventions with children, this book can serve either as a training manual or as supplemental reading. It can also help group specialists who wish to fine-tune their skills, and beginning practitioners who have little group experience. By the end of this book, the reader will know how to use group-centered interventions in a school-based setting.

It is difficult to understand how to use groups by simply reading case studies or theory. Find a group to observe or work with as you read. Putting concepts into a real-world setting brings theory to life.

Each chapter begins with a case study from a group-centered intervention in a school-based situation, and ends with an observational exercise and a ready-to-use group intervention that reinforces the chapter's theoretical principles. Chapters 1 through 4 outline the theoretical structure of group-centered interventions. Chapter 5 looks at the advantages and disadvantages of using group interventions. Chapter 6 gives a detailed look at how to use a group-centered intervention in a school-based setting. Chapters 7 and 8 discuss applying, selecting, and designing

a group-centered intervention to meet school-based needs. Chapter 9 outlines how to evaluate the effectiveness of your group intervention program. I hope that this book will energize the reader's creative skills and excite the desire to use group-centered interventions.

Working with children and adolescents takes patience, and, most of all, the desire to help young people reach their full potential in life. Young people desperately want to belong, to be accepted. They spend much of their lives in school or with school groups; while they are there, we have the chance not only to educate them but also to help them improve their lives. If we fail to meet their needs today, we will most likely not have another chance tomorrow. Group-centered interventions can help us chart a pathway that will help today's children and adolescents find a brighter tomorrow.

Aiken, SC

Elaine Clanton Harpine



<http://www.springer.com/978-0-387-77315-5>

Group Interventions in Schools

Promoting Mental Health for At-Risk Children and Youth

Clanton Harpine, E.

2008, XVI, 108 p., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-0-387-77315-5