

# Modified Group Process: for drug dependent patient populations

by  
Jeffrey Georgi, M.Div., MAH, LCAS, CGP, LPC  
Consulting Associate  
Department of Behavioral Science  
Duke University Medical Center  
Georgi Educational Counseling Services  
jeff@georgicounseling.com

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Biological+Psychological+Social+Spiritual  
Vulnerability Liability Context Bankruptcy  
plus

Experience  
equals  
Addiction

---

---

---

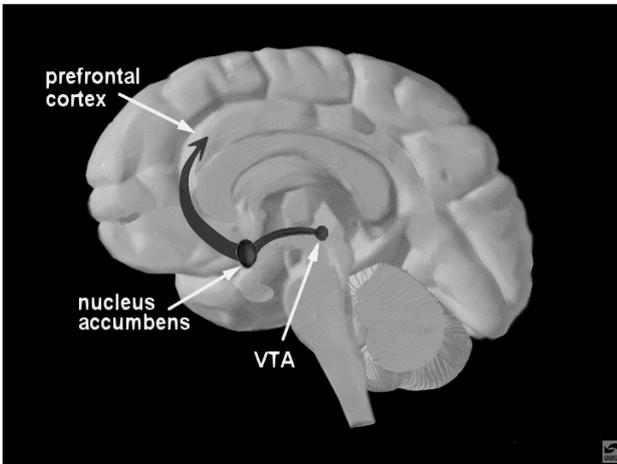
---

---

---

---

---




---

---

---

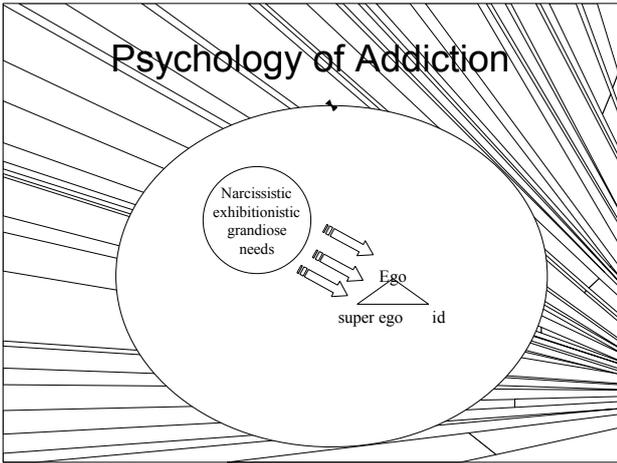
---

---

---

---

---




---

---

---

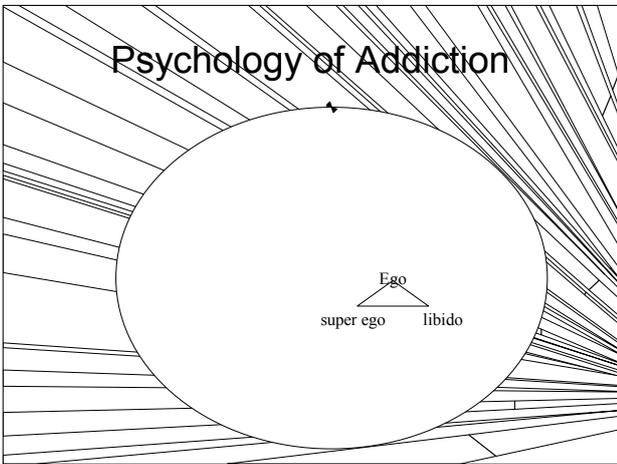
---

---

---

---

---




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Social Context

- We are thrust into our culture and defined by it.
- We can not separate ourselves or our identity from our social context.
- When we think we are “speaking” for ourselves, our personal truth is but an extension of context.

---

---

---

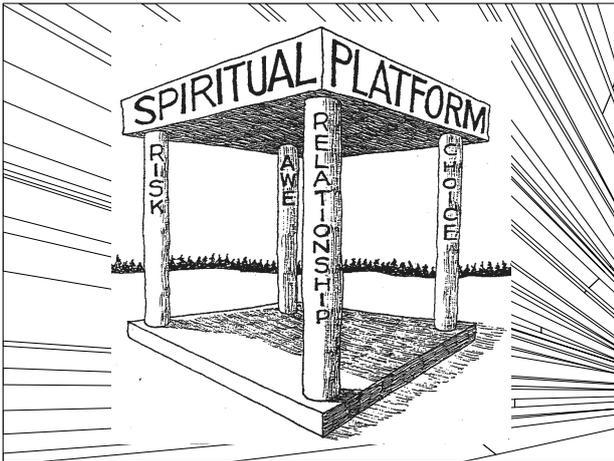
---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Modified Interactive Group why group heals

- Group represents a safe container for change.
- Group addresses the fundamental failure of attachment within lives of the addicted.
- Group creates a safe place for relational awareness and experimentation.
- Group re-creates the “family of chance” and allows for the experience of a “family of choice.”

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Modified Interactive Group why grouping heals

- Group creates a safe environment for healthy limbic resonance to occur.
- Group becomes a relational laboratory.
- Group helps to move beyond the isolation of addiction.
- Group provides an opportunity to care and to be cared for by other people without shame.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Modified Interactive Group why grouping heals

- Group helps patients identify the expression of shame within their lives.
- If done well, group can detoxify shame.
- Group tends to lower the intensity of transference and countertransference.
- Group is the essentially human.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Modified Interactive Group the leader's role

- Leadership is inherently manipulative.
- You are active but not central.
- Convene the group.
- Select the membership.
- Create a group culture of respect and safety.
- Foster member to member communication.
- Constructed and maintain the group agreements.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Modified Interactive Group the leader's role

- Reinforce procedural norms and agreements.
- Model involvement and respect.
- Accept your own professional and personal fallibility.
- Support appropriate self-disclosure.
- Explained and model "**meta** disclosure."
- Reinforce the "here and now" focus of group.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Modified Interactive Group the leader's role

- Connect to the group with its history.
- Identified group members mutual helpfulness and support.
- Executive decisions regarding the addition or the elimination of a group member is **exclusively** the responsibility of the group leader.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Modified Interactive Group group agreements

- Beginning and ending on time.
- Confidentiality.
- The group accepting responsibility for itself.
- Putting feelings into words not actions.
- The group is only as important as the members make it – make it important.
- Group members are the agents of change.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Modified Interactive Group group agreements

- Group is a safe place to give and receive support.
- Respect to your fellow group members.
- Make specific agreements related to issues of comfort.
- Asked the group what other agreements they may wish to put in place in order for the group to be safe.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Modified Interactive Group group preparation

- Conduct or review a thorough assessment, get to know your group members.
- Explain the group expectations.
- Review the group contract.
- Review and discuss anticipated group agreements.
- Explaining the “here and now” group focus if applicable.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Modified Interactive Group group preparation

- Preparation may include an introduction exercise, a review of a tape or may even be discussed in group.
- Preparation continues throughout the early stages of group, if not throughout the entire life history of the group.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Modified Interactive Group group contract

- Continue in group until you have met the goals to have set for yourself.
- Attend all groups.
- Remember, group is therapeutic not social.
- Put feelings into words not behaviors.
- Claim your own space and time. If you decide to leave the group let the group be a part of the process and say goodbye.
- Pay (my) fee.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Modified Interactive Group therapeutic factors

- Universality
- Self understanding
- Altruism
- Corrective re-experience of the family
- Group cohesiveness
- Interpersonal learning (about self)
- interpersonal learning (about others)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Modified Interactive Group therapeutic factors

- Guidance
- Catharsis
- Identification
- Installation of hope
- Existential factors.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Modified Interactive Group

- Remember, no matter what kind of group all of the therapeutic factors are in play.
- Different groups will stress different factors.
- Even in a psycho-educational group attention to process as well as content is important.
- "Process" is proceeding whether or not you are aware of it.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Modified Interactive Group

suggestions for an effective treatment group

- Beginning and end on time
- BREATHE – WAIT – TRUST, don't push the process or "when in doubt don't."
- Help keep the group focused on the "here and now", the group will naturally move to "the then and there."
- Interventions such as "I wonder", "it seems as if" are appropriate in this model because they help move the group from their "gut" to their head.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Modified Interactive Group

suggestions for an effective treatment group

- Facilitate member to member interaction.
- Facilitate member to group interaction.
- Remain active but not central.
- Stay involved.
- Avoid the "guru" mentality.
- Limit your self-disclosure.
- When working with co-therapists spend adequate time preparing and debriefing.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Modified Interactive Group

suggestions for an effective treatment group

- Pay attention to your own involvement in the group.
- Listened to your gut but **do not** trust it.
- Use body language intentionally.
- Let the group know that you are involved.
- Acknowledge each group member at least twice in each session (this can be nonverbal).

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Modified Interactive Group

suggestions for an effective treatment group

- What goes on in the group goes on the outside of the group.
- What goes on outside of the group goes on inside the group.
- “Patients do not to bring their problems to group they live them there.”
- Self-disclosure is always a relational act.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Modified Interactive Group

suggestions for an effective treatment group

- The group leader must always keep in mind the power attributed to them by group members.
- Consistency is extremely important.
- Group therapy represents a reality that is often more “real” than our everyday lives there in lies the power of group.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Modified Interactive Group

suggestions for an effective treatment group

- Move to promote rapid development of cohesiveness by identifying member to member connections.
- Find ways to help group members look at themselves in group and received feedback from others.
- Encourage appropriate self-disclosure on the part of group members as they become more vulnerable and open.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Modified Interactive Group

suggestions for an effective treatment group

- Quickly expanded group members common ground beyond their mutual drug use experiences.
- Encourage open discussion of both their vulnerabilities and competencies.
- Help develop a “middle ground” which is often preferable to the extremes taken by the addicted.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Modified Interactive Group

suggestions for an effective treatment group

- Help group members recognize that their time together is more about finding meaning in relationships than simply staying abstinent.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Modified Interactive Group termination

- If termination is not being addressed in the group, let the group know.
- Saying goodbye is not easy – in our culture we are extremely skilled at avoiding it.
- Saying goodbye takes practice and makes the next hello both possible and more meaningful.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Modified Interactive Group termination

- A goodbye includes the following:
  - Acknowledgments – the shared awareness of gifts given in gifts received.
  - Appreciations – the open communication of shared meaning.
  - Regrets – sadness overworked left undone.
  - Resentments residual sadness over difficult shared experience.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Modified Interactive Group termination

- Despite all the parental promises to the contrary - life is unfair.
- There is never enough time.
- There is no escape from life's pain.
- There is no escape from death.
- Facing these realities helps set priorities.
- I am responsible.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Modified Interactive Group  
termination

■ **This** is all there is and – it is enough.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---