

### STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE PSYCHOANALYTIC GROUP\*

Dimension	Initial Stage	Working Stage	Final Stage
Key developmental tasks and goals	Key task is uncovering and exploring unconscious material. Focus is on historical causes of present behavior. Unconscious processes are made conscious by promoting freedom to express any thought, fantasy, and feeling. Focus is on re-creating, analyzing, discussing, and interpreting past experiences and on working through defenses and resistances.	The group resembles the original family, allowing members to relive their childhood and get to the roots of their conflicts. Key tasks include recalling early childhood experiences and reworking past traumas. The basic work entails recognizing and working through resistances and transferences. Multiple transferences occur in the group; members become aware of past relationships that are brought into the present situation in the group.	Key task is the development of insight into causes of problems. Analysis and interpretation of transference continues. Focus is on the conscious personal action that members can take and on social integration. Main goals are for members to analyze and resolve their own transferences toward other members and the group leader and to work through the repetition of behavior from early years.
Role and tasks of group leader	Leader offers support and creates a permissive and nonstructured climate. Leader's tasks include setting limits, interpreting, and getting a sense of the members' character structures and patterns of defense.	Leader makes timely interpretations that lead to insight; helps members deal with anxiety constructively; is aware of countertransference; and helps members deal effectively with resistances and transferences in the group.	Leader relinquishes much of the leadership functions to allow the members a greater degree of independence; guides the members to fuller awareness and social integration.
Role of group members	Members build rapport by reporting dreams and fantasies. They are expected to free-associate with one another's dreams. They are expected to work through resistances that prevent unconscious material from becoming conscious. Members encourage one another to examine their projections. Through mutual sharing and exploration, members gradually give up some defenses. Members need to identify ways in which they experience resistance in a group.	Members produce material in a free-floating manner; they ventilate and express feelings over past traumas. Emphasis is on working through transferences with leader and members. Members function as adjunct therapists by saying whatever comes to their mind; they also make interpretations for others. From observing the work of others in a group, the members learn that it is acceptable to have and express intense feelings that they may have kept out of awareness.	Resistances and transferences are worked through, and the focus is on self-interpretation and reality testing. Members become able to spot their own transference figures and relationships; they also contribute to the interpretation of the transference of others. Members gain increased awareness of how they dealt with competition as children and how their earlier experiences now affect their present relationships with others.

and resistances more dramatically than they can in individual therapy; and dependency on the authority of the therapist is lessened because members get feedback from other members.

## Glossary of Key Terms for Psychoanalytic Theory

**Anal stage** The second stage of psychosexual development, when pleasure is derived from retaining and expelling feces.

**Borderline personality disorder** A pattern characterized by instability, irritability, self-destructive acts, impulsivity, and extreme mood shifts. Such people lack a sense of their own identity and do not have a deep understanding of others.

**Brief psychodynamic therapy (BPT)** Applies the principles of psychoanalytic theory and therapy to treating selective disorders within a preestablished time limit of generally 10 to 25 sessions.

**Countertransference** The therapist's unconscious emotional responses to a client, resulting in a distorted perception of the client's behavior; unresolved conflicts of the therapist that are projected onto the client.

**Dialectical behavior therapy (DBT)** A blend of cognitive behavioral and psychoanalytic techniques that generally involves a minimum of one year of treatment.

**Displacement** An ego-defense mechanism that entails redirection of some emotion from a real source to a substitute person or object.

**Ego-defense mechanism** A device protecting the ego from threatening thoughts and feelings.

**Ego psychology** The psychological approach of Erik Erikson, emphasizing the development of the ego or self at various stages of life.

**Electra complex** Unconscious sexual desire of the daughter for her father, along with feelings of hostility toward her mother.

**Fixation** The condition of being arrested, or "stuck," at one level of psychosexual development.

**Free association** A basic technique for uncovering repressed or unconscious material by communicating whatever comes to mind, with as little censoring as possible.

**Genital stage** The final stage of psychosexual development, usually attained at adolescence, in which heterosexual interests and activities are generally predominant.

**Identity crisis** A development challenge, occurring during adolescence, whereby the person seeks to establish a stable view of self and to define a place in life.

**Insight** A cognitive and emotional awareness of the connection of past experiences to present problems.

**Interpretation** A technique used to explore the meanings of free association, dreams, resistances, and transference feelings.

**Latency stage** A period of psychosexual development, following the phallic stage, that is relatively calm before the storm of adolescence.

**Narcissistic personality disorder** A pervasive pattern of grandiosity, hypersensitivity to the evaluations of others, and lack of empathy.

*(Glossary continues on page 74)*

Techniques	Individual sessions are used to create readiness for a group. "Go-around" technique is used as a free-association device, where members respond spontaneously to one another. Initial resistances are dealt with.	Main techniques include free association, interpretation, analysis of resistance and transference, interpretation and analysis of dreams, use of alternate sessions, and use of pregroup and postgroup sessions.	Attempts are made to help members integrate what they've learned in the group, and they apply new learning to daily life. Members review insights gained. Members focus on putting a new perspective on their problems and past experiences.
Questions to consider	<p>At the first group meeting, how can resistances to joining the group best be dealt with?</p> <p>What are some ways to use here-and-now material in the group to understand a member's past? How can one's past provide a framework for understanding current behavior?</p> <p>What are some ways to encourage members to give unrehearsed reactions to one another?</p> <p>What are some values of simply reporting and sharing dreams in a group?</p> <p>How can free association be promoted by the go-around technique?</p> <p>Are members looking to the leader for direction and cues?</p> <p>How can a trusting environment best be created?</p>	<p>How are members relating to others in the group in ways that are similar to relations in their original family?</p> <p>How can the group be formed so that it can best work with the recalling of early childhood experiences?</p> <p>What are some advantages and disadvantages of the leader's encouraging transference? How can this transference toward the leader be worked with therapeutically?</p> <p>As a leader, how can you utilize the projections of group members? What techniques can you develop to work with projections?</p> <p>What are some ways to make interpretations of individuals in a group without promoting their dependency on you? How can your interpretations stimulate their searching?</p>	<p>During the final stage, how can members be encouraged to take action based on their insight?</p> <p>What are some ways of helping members understand and resolve their transferences to the leader and others in the group?</p> <p>What are some ways of letting go of the leadership of the group so that the members are encouraged to become increasingly independent?</p> <p>What are some signs that a member is ready to terminate a group?</p> <p>How can alternate sessions promote a degree of independence in the members?</p> <p>What are some dangers of continuing the group for an indefinite period of time? What are the values of long-term group therapy?</p> <p>How can termination best take place in an analytic group?</p>

\*The transition stage has been omitted because there are no clear demarcations between the initial and working stages. The intent of this table is to give you an idea of the early, middle, and ending stages of a group.

Reactions: Summarize your reactions to the psychoanalytic perspective of group developmental stages. What do you like *most*? *least*? What aspects of this approach would you incorporate in your style of leadership?

- Object relations theory** A contemporary trend in psychoanalytic thinking, focusing on predictable developmental sequences in which early experiences of self shift in relation to an expanding awareness of others. It holds that individuals go through phases of autism, normal symbiosis, and separation and individuation, culminating in a state of integration.
- Oedipus complex** Unconscious sexual desire of the son for his mother, along with feelings of hostility and fear toward his father.
- Oral stage** The initial phase of psychosexual development, during which the mouth is the primary source of gratification; a time when the infant is learning to trust or mistrust the world.
- Phallic stage** The third phase of psychosexual development, during which the child gains maximum gratification through direct experience with the genitals.
- Projection** An ego-defense mechanism that involves attributing our own unacceptable thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and motives to others.
- Psychodynamics** The interplay of opposing forces and intrapsychic conflicts, providing a basic understanding of human motivation.
- Psychosexual stages** The Freudian chronological phases of development, beginning in infancy. Each is characterized by a primary way of gaining sensual and sexual pleasure.
- Psychosocial stages** Erikson's turning points, from infancy through old age. Each presents psychological and social tasks that must be mastered if maturation is to proceed in a healthy fashion.
- Rationalization** An ego-defense mechanism whereby we try to justify our behavior by imputing logical and admirable motives to it.
- Reaction formation** A defense against a threatening impulse, involving the expression of the opposite impulse.
- Regression** An ego-defense mechanism whereby an individual reverts to a less mature form of behavior as a way of coping with extreme stress.
- Regressive-reconstructive approach** A regression into each group member's past to achieve the therapeutic goal of a reconstructed personality that is characterized by social awareness and the ability to be involved creatively in life.
- Relational analysis** A contemporary form of psychoanalytic therapy that places emphasis on both the client's and the therapist's reactions and experiences within the therapeutic relationship. Transference is regarded as an interactive process between therapist and client.
- Repression** An ego-defense mechanism whereby threatening or painful thoughts and desires are excluded from awareness.
- Resistance** Reluctance to bring into conscious awareness threatening unconscious material that has been repressed or denied; anything that prevents members from dealing with unconscious material.
- Transference** The client's unconscious shifting to the therapist of feelings, attitudes, and fantasies that stem from reactions to significant individuals from the past.
- Unconscious** The thoughts, feelings, impulses, motivations, and events that are kept out of awareness of the conscious ego as a protection against anxiety.
- Working through** The final phase of the analytic group, consisting of a resolution of basic conflicts that are manifested in the client's relationship to the group therapist and to other members.