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8.5. Group-based interventions

Knowledge

- An ability to draw on knowledge of the characteristics of the target group population for whom the group intervention is designed (e.g. age/ developmental stage, presenting problems etc.)
- An ability to draw on knowledge of the aims, principles or model of therapy underpinning the group intervention

Ability to plan the group

- An ability to estimate the likely demand for the group by identifying the children/young people who:
 - meet the criteria for the group (e.g. in terms of presenting difficulties or challenges)
 - are likely to be receptive to a group approach
 - would be able to attend the group at the expected frequency
- An ability to ensure that there is team support for the group (e.g. assuring appropriate accommodation, time and resources)
- An ability to plan the basic structure and content of the group, e.g.:
 - practicalities (e.g. setting, timing)
 - outline content of sessions
 - roles of staff running the group
 - any additional/specific resources required for group sessions
 - any evaluation procedures

Ability to recruit children/young people to the group

- An ability to maintain optimism and a positive attitude towards the group in the face of challenges to initiating and maintaining group membership
- An ability to specify and apply inclusion and exclusion criteria for the group
- An ability to provide participants with information on the content and purpose of the group
- An ability to explore (and where possible address) any barriers to participation in the group, e.g.:
 - practical barriers (e.g. other concurrent meetings)
 - emotional barriers (e.g. social anxiety)
 - historical factors (e.g. previous negative experiences of groups)
- An ability to help each group member identify what they would like to gain from the group



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Ability to follow the aims/model of group intervention

■	An ability to implement the components of the group intervention, including:
	■ structuring the group (e.g. ordering and timing of material, use of media, practice assignments)
	■ any specific intervention techniques
	■ management of group and change processes
■	For groups that follow a manual, an ability to adhere to the sequence of activities outlined in the manual, and:
	■ an ability to draw on knowledge of manualised activities so that they can be introduced fluently and in a timely manner

Ability to manage group process

Establishing the group

■	An ability to establish an environment that is physically and emotionally safe, by:
	■ discussing the ground rules of the group (e.g. taking turns to speak, starting and ending the group on time) in a way that is appropriate to the developmental stage of group members
	■ discussing boundaries (e.g. whether and how information discussed in the group is shared outside the group)
	■ safeguarding the ground rules by drawing attention to any occasions when they are breached, in a way that is sensitive to the developmental stage of group members
	■ helping all group members participate by monitoring and attending to their emotional state
	■ monitoring and regulating self-disclosure by members and group leaders, to maintain an environment where members can share
■	An ability to identify and manage any emotional or physical risk to group leaders and group participants

Engaging group members

■	An ability to engage group members in a way that is appropriate to their developmental stage and congruent with the therapeutic model being employed
■	An ability to match the content and pacing of group sessions, presentations and discussions to the characteristics of group members (e.g. in terms of age range, ability levels, attention span, cultural characteristics)
■	An ability to build positive rapport with individual members of the group, and:
	■ an ability to monitor the impact of these individual relationships on other members of the group, and, if necessary, address and manage any tensions
■	An ability to manage the group environment in a way that helps all members to participate on a level they feel comfortable with



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- When appropriate to the model of therapy, an ability to use modelling and explicit social reinforcement to encourage the participation of group members

Managing potential challenges to group engagement

- An ability to recognise when individuals form subgroups, and to manage the impact of these relationships on overall group dynamics
- An ability to plan for, reflect on and manage potential challenges to the group, including:
 - disruptive behaviour
 - persistent lateness/absence, or non-engagement in sessions
 - anyone leaving the group early
 - members who are over talkative or dominate the group
 - high levels of distress displayed by a group member:
 - if a group member's emotional state impacts on the other group members, an ability to attend to this to ensure others do not become overwhelmed or disengaged

Ability to manage the ending of the group

- An ability to prepare group members for the ending of the group by signalling the ending of the intervention at the outset and throughout group sessions, as appropriate
- An ability to draw on knowledge that the ending of the group may elicit feelings in group members connected to other personal experiences of loss/separation
- An ability to help the group member express any feelings of anxiety, anger or disappointment that they may have about ending the group
- An ability to review the themes covered in the group, in a way that is appropriate to the developmental stage of the participants and the model being applied
- An ability to reflect on progress made because of participation, and to celebrate it in a way that is appropriate to the developmental stage of the group members and the model being applied

Ability to evaluate the group

- An ability to review the child/young person's goals for the group
- An ability to draw on knowledge of appropriate strategies and tools for evaluation, based on the resources available, and:
 - to provide a rationale for the evaluation strategy to children/young people
 - to feedback evaluation in a sensitive and meaningful way

Ability to use supervision

- An ability to use supervision to reflect on group processes
- An ability for group leaders to reflect on their own impact on group processes