CMHC 6070: Group Counseling
School Counseling Edition
Utah Valley University
Department of Behavioral Sciences
Spring 2025
Tuesday, 5:30 pm – 8 pm

Instructor:
Paige Lowe, PhD, CMHC

Office Hours:
Tuesdays: 4 pm – 5:30 pm
Wednesdays: 2:30 pm – 5:30 pm
Online: Mondays flexible; Friday 9 am – 12 pm
Please email before to confirm I am available. If you are meeting online, a Teams meeting link will be sent to you.

Required Text:
Keperling, J. P., Reinke, W. M., Marchese, D., & Ialongo, N. (2017). *Group interventions in schools: A guide for practitioners.* Guilford Press.
Course Articles:
Assessed via Canvas online system, provided by the professor

Course Description:
This course is designed as an introduction to the use of groups in counseling practice. The purpose of this course is to provide counseling students with the primary theoretical bases as well as the essential knowledge and skills for understanding, organizing, and working with different types of groups. This course provides an opportunity for experiential learning in a group setting and is intended to help students explore group techniques and group dynamics in a supportive environment. Issues of diversity will be integrated and discussed throughout this course in order to promote culturally relevant and sensitive group counseling interventions.

Teaching Methods:
Students will participate in experiential learning exercises, lectures, small group discussions, and multimedia presentations to enhance knowledge of the group counseling process and ethical considerations in this subject area.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

After completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Explain the basic stages and processes of group counseling
2. Understand some of the major theoretical and practical approaches to group counseling
3. Identify and respond to professional and ethical issues related to group counseling
4. Develop a proposal for a group
5. Recruit and screen group members
6. Help group members work through the initial, transitory, working, and final stages of a group
7. Use counseling interventions/techniques appropriate and relevant in a multicultural society
8. Discuss the application of group process to individuals throughout the life span and in specific settings (schools, clinics, community, etc.)

The avenues for achieving these objectives will be through your reading, participation in discussion and experiential activities and completion of in-class and take-home assignments.

CACREP (2016 Standards)

6a. theoretical foundations of group counseling and group work

6b. dynamics associated with group process and development

6c. therapeutic factors and how they contribute to group effectiveness

6d. characteristics and functions of effective group leaders

6e. approaches to group formation, including recruiting, screening, and selecting members

6f. types of groups and other considerations that affect conducting groups in varied settings

6g. ethical and culturally relevant strategies for designing and facilitating groups

6h. direct experiences in which students participate as group members in a small group activity, approved by the program, for a minimum of 10 clock hours over the course of one academic term

CACREP Standards	Related Assignments
Class Lectures	6a – 6g
Class Readings	6a – 6g
Multimedia Resource & Reflection	6c, 6f
Community Group Resources	6c, 6f
Group Proposals, Presentation, & Practice	6e, 6g
Ethical Dilemma Essay	6a-6g

University Policies:
Accommodations/Students with Disabilities:
Students needing accommodations due to a disability, including temporary and pregnancy accommodations, may contact the UVU Accessibility Services at accessibilityservices@uvu.edu or 801-863-8747. Accessibility Services is located on the Orem Campus in LC 31

Academic Integrity:
At Utah Valley University, faculty and students operate in an atmosphere of mutual trust. Maintaining an atmosphere of academic integrity allows for a free exchange of ideas and enables all community members to achieve their highest potential. We aim to foster an intellectual atmosphere that produces integrity and imaginative thought scholars. In all academic work, the ideas and contributions of others must be appropriately acknowledged and UVU students are expected to produce their original academic work. Faculty and students share the responsibility of ensuring the honesty and fairness of the intellectual environment at UVU. Students are responsible for promoting academic integrity at the university by not participating in or facilitating others' participation in any act of academic dishonesty. As members of the academic community, students must become familiar with their rights and responsibilities. In each course, they are responsible for knowing the requirements and restrictions regarding research and writing, assessments, collaborative work, the use of study aids, the appropriateness of assistance, and other issues. Likewise, instructors are responsible for clearly stating expectations and model best practices. Further information on academic dishonesty is detailed in UVU Policy 541: Student Code of Conduct.

Religious Accommodation:
UVU values and acknowledges a wide range of faiths and religions as part of our student body and as such, provides accommodations for students. Religious belief includes the student's faith or conscience as well as the student's participation in an organized activity conducted under the auspices of the student's religious tradition or religious organization. The accommodations include reasonable student absences from scheduled examinations or academic requirements if they create an undue hardship for sincerely held religious beliefs. For this to occur, the student must provide a written notice to the instructor of the course for which the student seeks said accommodation prior to the event. The UVU campus has a place for meditation, prayer, reflection, or other forms of individual religious expression, as is described on their website.

Equity and Title IX:
Title IX states that no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. Students who believe they have been excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or discriminated against because of their sex may contact the EO/AA office to make a report, ask questions, or share concerns by email at: titleix@uvu.edu, in-person at BA-203, or by phone at: (801) 863-7999. To learn more about the Equity and Title IX office please visit us online at: https://www.uvu.edu/equityandtitleix.

Mental Health Support Services:

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to visit UVU Care Hub. for access to a variety of resources. You may also email care@uvu.edu for assistance.

All of us have a need to maintain mental health and benefit from the assistance of professionals to do so. UVU offers mental health services at very low cost (some are free). While there may be a wait list for individual counseling, group counseling may be available in some circumstances. Student Health Services is located in SC 221, telephone 801-863-8876. The following community resources are available 24/7- the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255 and the Safe UT Crisis Chat & Tip Line. You may also access the Crisis Text Line 741-741 or call 9-1-1. If an emergency is happening on campus, call campus police 801-863-5555.

Campus resources
1. https://www.uvu.edu/success/resources.html
2. https://www.uvu.edu/ombuds (Student complaint procedures and conflict resolution)

AI Policy
Artificial Intelligence

AI applications should not be viewed as substitutes for your innate creativity, individuality, and analytical thinking skills. The art of writing, critical thinking, and research are disciplines that require cultivation over time to refine your unique voice. Simultaneously, it is essential to understand the appropriate utilization of AI tools and recognize the situations where AI can offer valuable assistance to your work. The use of generative AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT, Google Bard, etc.) is permitted in this course for the following activities:

- Brainstorming and refining your ideas;
- Fine-tuning your research questions;
- Checking grammar and style.
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The use of generative AI tools is not permitted in this course for the following activities:

- Impersonating you in classroom contexts, such as by using the tool to compose discussion board prompts/responses assigned to you or content that you put into a Teams/Canvas chat.
- Completing group work that your group has assigned to you.
- Writing a draft of a writing assignment.
- Writing entire sentences, paragraphs, or papers to complete class assignments.

It is your responsibility to ensure that the information you provide in response to an AI query adheres to certain standards, such as not infringing upon intellectual property rights, avoiding dissemination of misinformation, and refraining from unethical content. Proper documentation and citation of your use of AI tools are necessary to comply with university guidelines regarding academic integrity.

Students utilizing AI tools for their assignments must distinctly differentiate between their original work and the AI-generated content. In these instances, the portion of the student's work

generated by AI should **not exceed 15%.** If there are any uncertainties or confusion regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me for clarification before submitting your work.

Plagiarism occurs when you:
- Use another author or source's exact wording in a way that makes it seem like your own, regardless of the original form of those words (e.g., book, article, lecture, website, speech, graphic, or any other form like an AI text generator)
- Paraphrase another author's words in a manner that closely resembles the original passage without proper citation.
- Do not clearly acknowledge the authorship of someone else when submitting work.
- Create false information that is not supported by the actual research in a writing project
- Have someone else, whether paid or not, write your paper or use a paper mill website with pre-written papers
- Produce and submit a paper created using artificial intelligence, such as ChatGPT

Course Conduct:

1) *Participation*: The **quality and quantity** of your class participation may affect your final course grade. This <u>graduate-level</u> course contains lectures, group discussions, and assignments. All participants are responsible for being prepared to contribute to the class discussions (topics are listed online for each week), including asking questions, commenting on the subject matter, supporting or refuting ideas based on research and reading, expressing personal experiences, and contributing to an overall positive class process.

2) *Due Dates*: Due to the nature of the course, each class covers a week of material. Weekly assignments are due by **11:59 pm on Monday** (the day before the class). **Late work is subject to a 5% point penalty per day**.

3) *Professionalism*: This school counseling course leads to certification, licensure, and professional practice in school counseling. For this reason, students are expected to present themselves professionally. However, if the instructor notes any impairment in judgment or interpersonal abilities, the behavior will be brought to the student's attention for remediation. Due to instructor discretion, graduates of this program must be willing and able to endorse the ethical standards of professionalism in counseling.

4) *AI & Plagiarism:* This online class involves active participation through discussion boards and peer interactions. Please refer to my detailed AI statement for more information. It is important to note that using AI for discussion board prompts or responding to peers is **strictly prohibited**. Violations of this policy will result in a <u>zero for the assignment</u>.

Evaluation & Grading

Assignments	Point Value
Multimedia Resource & Reflection	50 points each, a total of 150 points
Community Group Resources	75 points
Group Proposals & Presentation	125 points

Ethical Dilemma Essays	200 points
	Total: 550
Extra Credit: Completed SRI	5 points

A:

      A-(95-100%): 541-550 points
      A- (90-94.9%): 495-540 points

B:

      B+ (87-89%): 491-494 points
      B (83-86%): 471-490 points
      B- (80-82%): 440-470 points

C:

      C+ (77-79%): 415-439 points
      C (73-76%): 385-414 points
      C- (70-72%): 360-384 points

D:

      D+ (67-69%): 330-359 points
      D (63-66%): 305-329 points
      D- (60-62%): 290-304 points

Course Requirements:

- **Multimedia Resource & Reflection (3 total) (50 points each, a total of 150 points)**
    a. Objective: Engage with a multimedia resource and share your insights with the class.
    b. Instructions:
        i. Search for a multimedia resource (e.g., video, podcast, article, infographic) that resonates with the course material. You can find inspiration in the "Assignment Resources" section on Canvas.
    c. Post your chosen resource on the class discussion board.
        i. Write a reflective paragraph (minimum 3 sentences, APA style) on what you gained from the resource. What did you learn? How did it relate to the course material? What questions or insights did it raise for you?
    d. Tips:
        i. Be creative and choose a resource that sparks your interest!
        ii. Keep your reflection concise and focused on your personal takeaways.
        iii. Use proper citation and referencing for the resource you share.

- **Community Group Resources (75 points)**

    Description: Students will research and compile a guide to local support groups, agencies, and online resources relevant to everyday student needs (e.g., anxiety, grief, bullying, substance abuse). Then, post the resources in the group discussion. (5 resources)

Grading Rubric:

    a. **Comprehensiveness:** Includes a wide range of resources relevant to diverse student needs, provides accurate and up-to-date information, and organizes resources logically and user-friendly.

    b. **Annotation:** Provides clear and concise descriptions of each resource, highlights key features and target populations, uses objective language, and cites sources accurately.

    c. **Relevance:** Select appropriate resources for the local community and target population and consider cultural relevance and accessibility.

- **Group Proposals & Presentation: Psycho-educational Intervention Groups (125 pts)**

  Description: Students will develop a proposal for a group intervention program relevant to their field placement setting. They will present their proposals to the class, then provide the intervention in a practice group in class for 30 minutes.

  Grading Rubric:

      a. **Needs Assessment:** Clearly identifies the target population and their needs, provides compelling rationale for the group, supports claims with data or anecdotal evidence.

      b. **Program Design:** Outlines clear goals and objectives, describes the group's format and structure, provides a detailed plan for implementation (including recruitment, screening, materials), addresses ethical considerations.

      c. **Evaluation:** Proposes methods for evaluating the group's effectiveness (pre-post assessments, qualitative feedback), aligns evaluation strategies with program goals and objectives.

      d. **Presentation:** Delivers a clear and engaging presentation, effectively communicates key information, uses visuals appropriately, and responds thoughtfully to questions.

      e. **Practice**: The following week, you will lead a practice group to demonstrate your Psycho-educational Intervention in action. See the appendix for more information.

- **Ethical Dilemma Essay (200)**

  Description: The final exam assesses your ability to analyze and apply ethical decision-making in complex group counseling scenarios. You will be presented with 5 ethical dilemmas commonly encountered by school counselors facilitating groups. You will choose 3 dilemmas to respond and write a response. Please see the appendix for the prompts. The responses must include the following:

      a. **Identify** the core ethical issues at play. Reference specific ethical codes from relevant organizations (e.g., ASCA, ACA).

     b. **Analyze** the potential consequences of different courses of action. Consider the short-term and long-term impacts on individual members, the group dynamic, and your professional role.

     c. **Propose** a course of action you deem most ethical and justify your choice. Explain your reasoning and connect it to ethical principles and best practices.

- **Grading Criteria**:
  a. Accurate identification of ethical issues and relevant codes (30%): Demonstrates a clear understanding of the ethical principles and guidelines relevant to each dilemma.
  b. A thorough analysis of potential consequences (30%): Considers the multifaceted impact of different decisions on the stakeholders involved.
  c. Justification of chosen course of action (30%): Provides a well-reasoned and ethical approach grounded in professional standards and best practices.
  d. Clarity and organization of writing (10%): Presents arguments in a clear, concise, and organized manner.

Note: These dilemmas are designed to be complex and open-ended. There are no "right" answers, but rather opportunities to demonstrate your ethical reasoning and decision-making skills.

- **Extra Credit: Completed SRI (5 points)**
  a. Email a copy of your completed SRI
  b. Received 5 extra credit points to your overall grade.

CMHC 6070: **Group Counseling: School Counseling Edition**, Spring 2025: Tuesday 5:30 pm- 8pm, BA 012				
Week	Date	Weekly Theme	Readings *Due on class day*	Assignments *Due on class day*
1	January 7	Orientation to Group Counseling in Schools		
2	January 14	Group Dynamics and the Power of the Group	Keperling Ch.1	
3	January 21	Stages of Group Development	Keperling Ch. 2 & 3; Tuckman's article; Mellon et al	Discussion Board: Multimedia Resource & Reflection #1
4	January 28	Assessment and Screening	Keperling Ch. 4 & 7	
5	February 4	Ethical and Legal Issues	Steen; Falco & Shaheed	Discussion Board: Multimedia Resource & Reflection #2
6	February 11	Group Leadership: Skills and Styles	Keperling Ch. 5 & 6	
7	February 18	Interventions: A Toolkit for School Groups & Social Skills Groups	Keperling Ch. 9	Discussion Board: Community Group Resources
8	February 25	Bullying Prevention and Intervention	Keperling Ch. 8	
9	March 4	Group Counseling for Anxiety and Stress Management	Saunders & Merlin-Knoblich	Discussion Board: Multimedia Resource & Reflection #3 Group Proposals *(due in-class)*
10	March 11	Spring Break		
11	March 18	Project Presentations		Group Presentations *(due in-class)*
12	March 25	Practice Groups		
13	April 1	Practice Groups		
14	April 8	Practice Groups		
15	April 15	Ethical Dilemmas in Action		*Final Exam:* Ethical Dilemma Essays
16	April 22 – 30th	Finals Week		

Appendix:
Psycho-educational Intervention Practice Groups

Objective: To practice effective communication and active listening skills in a group setting, promoting empathy, understanding, and conflict resolution.

Rationale: Effective communication and active listening are essential skills for school counselors to develop in order to build strong relationships with students, parents, and colleagues. This activity helps you practice these skills in a simulated group setting, which can be applied to real-life scenarios.

Instructions:
- During weeks 11 -13, you and a co-leader will lead a psycho-educational intervention group for 30 minutes. You will design a scenario: a fictional student group (e.g., a high school students struggling with anxiety) who is seeking help from a school counselor.
  a. You will play the role of the school counselor, while part of the class will as the "student clients"
- Group Ideas
  a. Group 1: Stress Management
        1. Topic: Managing Stress and Anxiety
     - Objective: To teach students effective coping strategies for managing stress and anxiety
     - Activities:
          o Guided relaxation techniques (deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation)
     - Mindfulness exercises (body scan, mindful walking)
          - Problem-solving and goal-setting
  o Group 2: Social Skills
     - Topic: Building Positive Relationships
          - Objective: To teach students effective social skills for building positive relationships
     - Activities:
          - Role-playing exercises (e.g., initiating conversations, active listening, conflict resolution)
          - Group games
     - Discussion topics (e.g., communication styles, empathy, boundaries)
  o Group 3: Coping with Loss
          - Topic: Grieving and Coping with Loss
     - Objective: To provide students with a safe space to process their emotions and develop coping strategies for dealing with loss
     - Activities:
          - Group discussions (e.g., sharing stories of loss, exploring emotions)
          - Creative expression (e.g., drawing, writing, music) Guided imagery and relaxation techniques

- o Group 4: Self-Esteem
  - Topic: Building Self-Esteem and Confidence
    - Objective: To help students develop a positive self-image and build confidence
  - Activities:
    - Positive affirmations and self-reflection
    - Group games (e.g., "The Human Knot," "Trust Walk")
    - Creative expression (e.g., writing, drawing, music)
- o Group 5: Bullying Prevention
  - Topic: Understanding and Preventing Bullying
    - Objective: To educate students on the effects of bullying and provide strategies for preventing and responding to bullying
  - Activities:
    - Group discussions (e.g., exploring the impact of bullying, identifying bystander roles)
    - Role-playing exercises (e.g., responding to bullying, being an ally)
    - Creative expression (e.g., drawing, writing, music)

Observer Feedback Form
Group Information:

Group Topic: _____

Group Leaders: _____

Date: _____

Group Dynamics:

    1) How would you rate the group's overall dynamics? (Scale: 1-5, where 1 is "poor" and 5 is "excellent")

    2) What did you notice about the group's communication style? (e.g. active listening, respectful, dominant/dominating)

    3) Were there any moments of conflict or tension in the group? If so, how were they handled?

Group Leader's Skills:

    1) How would you rate the group leader's overall performance? (Scale: 1-5, where 1 is "poor" and 5 is "excellent")

    2) What did you notice about the group leader's communication style? (e.g. clear, concise, empathetic)

    3) Were there any moments where the group leader could have improved their skills? If so, what were they?

Group Activities:

    1) Which activity(s) did you find most engaging or effective? Why?

    2) Were there any activities that you felt were less effective or could be improved? Why?

    3) Were there any moments where the group activities seemed to fall flat or lose focus? If so, what could have been done to improve them?

Overall Impression:

    1) What did you learn from observing this group?

    2) What did you find most impressive or impressive about the group?

    3) Are there any suggestions you have for improving the group or its activities?

Additional Comments:

    1) Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experience observing this group?

Ethical Dilemma Prompts

Dilemma 1: Confidentiality and Disclosure

- During a group session for students struggling with social anxiety, one member, "Sarah," discloses she has been self-harming to cope. She pleads with the group not to tell anyone, especially her parents, fearing they will overreact and restrict her freedom further. You are aware that Sarah is already seeing a therapist outside of school. You are also aware that school policy mandates reporting any self-harm disclosures to parents or guardians.
- Ethical Considerations: Consider Sarah's age (is she a minor?), the severity and frequency of the self-harm, and the potential consequences of both honoring her confidentiality and disclosing this information. How will your decision impact Sarah's trust in you and her willingness to participate in the group?

Dilemma 2: Dual Relationships and Boundaries
- You are running a support group for students dealing with grief and loss after a classmate passed away in a car accident. One of the members, "David," is a student you have known for years and mentored through a difficult family situation in middle school. He was close friends with the student who passed away. David begins confiding in you about his struggles outside of the group context, seeking individual advice and support. He shares that he is having trouble sleeping, experiencing panic attacks, and feels like he is "falling apart."
- Ethical Considerations:: How do you navigate your pre-existing relationship with David while maintaining professional boundaries within the group setting? Is it ethically appropriate to continue providing both group and individual support to David? What are the potential risks and benefits of each course of action?

Dilemma 3: Group Member Conflict and Safety
- Two members in a group focused on improving social skills and managing anger, "Alex" and "Jordan," have a significant falling out outside of the group. Their conflict stems from a misunderstanding that escalated into a verbal altercation witnessed by several students. Their conflict spills over into the group setting, creating tension and impacting the ability for others to participate. Alex demands that Jordan be removed from the group, stating he feels unsafe and threatened by Jordan's presence.
- Ethical Considerations: How do you address the power imbalance and potential safety concerns within the group? What interventions might be necessary to address the conflict and create a safe space for all members? Consider your responsibility to both Alex and Jordan, as well as the group as a whole.

Dilemma 4: Parent Permission and Group Participation
- You are starting a new social skills group for students identified by teachers as having difficulty with peer interactions. One student, "Emily," expresses great interest in participating and her parents are supportive. However, another student, "Ben," refuses to attend, stating that he doesn't need help and doesn't want to be "labeled." Ben's parents are aware of the group but haven't enforced his participation.
- Ethical Considerations: How do you balance student autonomy and parental rights in this situation? Is it ethically permissible to encourage Ben's participation without his full consent? What alternatives might be available to address Ben's needs while respecting his wishes?

Dilemma 5: Romantic Relationships and Group Dynamics

- Two members, "Lisa" and "Mark," start exhibiting signs of a budding romantic interest in each other. They begin arriving and leaving sessions together, exchanging shy glances, and whispering during group activities. While their behavior hasn't been explicitly disruptive, you notice other members seem less engaged and some have started making comments about Lisa and Mark outside of the group. However, midway through the group process, Lisa and Mark experience a messy break-up. The dynamic in the group shifts dramatically. Lisa and Mark are both visibly upset during sessions, and the other group members seem unsure how to behave. Some members are openly taking sides, while others are hesitant to share their own experiences for fear of upsetting Lisa or Mark further.

- Ethical Considerations: How do you repair the group dynamic and rebuild trust after such a significant disruption? How do you balance supporting Lisa and Mark's individual needs while ensuring the group as a whole can still function effectively? How do you manage potential breaches of confidentiality if members start discussing Lisa and Mark's relationship or personal issues outside of the group? How do you maintain a neutral and supportive stance with both Lisa and Mark, even if one or both parties try to confide in you or solicit your support against the other?