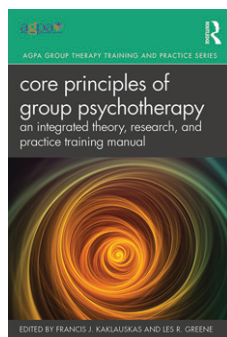


Book Review

Core Principles of Group Psychotherapy: An Integrated Theory, Research, and Practice Training Manual

Edited by Francis J. Kaklauskas, Psy.D., F.A.G.P.A., and Les R. Greene, Ph.D., D.L.F.A.G.P.; New York City, Routledge, 2020, 228 pages



It is finally here: a primer on group psychotherapy. *Core Principles of Group Psychotherapy: An Integrated Theory, Research, and Practice Training Manual*, edited by Francis J. Kaklauskas and Les R. Greene, fills a prominent gap in the available resources for psychiatric education and training by providing a comprehensive overview of the essential topics in group psychotherapy. I will surely be adopting this book as the text for my introductory group psychotherapy course.

The book is presented in five modules with two to three chapters in each module. Each chapter is concise yet packed with information. The task of the book, which encapsulates the need-to-know principles underlying both the knowledge and skills pertinent to group psychotherapy, is a daunting one, particularly when the product is a manual rather than a tome. In each chapter, the authors skillfully consolidate just about everything a reader would need to know about the topic at hand. Thus, the result reads much like a survey of the land: major landmarks are identified, briefly described, and placed into context amid the rest of the landscape. Each chapter could be unpacked at length, although an in-depth understanding of any of the topics will not be obtained without supplemental reading. The editors and authors fully acknowledge this need and masterfully direct the reader to additional resources in each chapter. The manual also contains constructive exercises throughout, which align with the book's vision of being integrated within a group psychotherapy curriculum. Other aspects of the book successfully contribute to this mission as well. Specifically, course objectives, which align with the group psychotherapy education requirements for obtaining the certified group psychotherapist credential awarded by the International Board for Certification of Group Psychotherapists, are stated for each chapter.

The first module, "Group Psychotherapy Foundations: Historic, Contemporary and Cultural Perspectives," provides a succinct account of the historical foundations of group psychotherapy and an overview of proficiency in therapy with diverse and multicultural populations. I was impressed with the breadth of

coverage and appreciated that the book included more than a perfunctory account of important issues in culturally responsive development. I appreciated the up-to-date coverage of these issues, including intersectionality, cultural humility, microaggressions, and the unpacking of privilege. The book presents clinical references, such as the tripartite multicultural model, which promote sensitivity, awareness, knowledge, and skills for the group psychotherapist and invite discussion of individual differences in therapeutic approach. The authors note that, despite our best intentions, "we are all prone to hold unconscious assumptions about people from diverse cultures and may inevitably 'other' people who are different from ourselves." Multicultural considerations and systemic inequities are a rapidly evolving area of study, particularly for group psychotherapists, and this section serves as a solid foundation for continued, lifelong learning.

The second module, "Group Structure and Dynamics," superbly conveys the basic tenets of group psychotherapy. All the main concepts, including those my students historically have struggled with, such as Bion's basic assumptions and project identification, are presented in a digestible format.

The third and fourth modules cover the nuts and bolts of group psychotherapy, including group formation, group stages, leadership tasks, and leadership skills. The chapter on group formation is one of my favorites because its structure adeptly walks the reader through all the considerations of launching a group in alignment with best practices. It is difficult to find missing content given the comprehensive nature of this book; however, a chapter dedicated to assessment and progress monitoring specific to group psychotherapy is warranted but not included.

The book concludes with a module on ethics, neuroscience, and personal style. I have been searching for a compact account of ethics in group psychotherapy for the beginning stages of training, and this one is invaluable in that regard, albeit limited by its lack of clinical illustrations and elision of the true complexity of the dilemmas that frequently arise when ethical principles compete.

Core Principles of Group Psychotherapy merits a place on any group psychotherapist's bookshelf. A novice group psychotherapist will likely find an approachable orientation to the field. Competent and expert group psychotherapists will likely find the manual to be a helpful refresher that will highlight areas worthy of further exploration and development.

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