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Working With Differences in Groups

Ethical Considerations

A Chinese student who is in her first semester in a mental health graduate program at a large university in the United States speaks English with difficulty. She volunteers to participate in a fishbowl group in a group dynamics class. The task of the fishbowl group is to practice group work skills. In her member role, she talks about her difficulty adjusting to living in a new country. Due to her challenges with the English language, the professor and group members find her comments very difficult to understand. However, despite their difficulty in understanding the student, the professor, the student who is taking up the leader role, and the other group members do not ask for clarification from the student, nor do they inform her of their difficulty in understanding what she says. On the contrary, they nod their heads and smile as if they understand what she has said. The group continues as if everyone understands the Chinese student's comments.

In a world of racial and cultural differences, it is important to embrace professional standards for competence and training, especially if we expect to engage individuals from diverse backgrounds in group work. Professional principles and standards help create an environment of respect and integrity for individual and group differences. In the vignette above, the question of whether the professor needs to address the group members' behavior of acting as if they understood the Chinese student, and the ethical implications of allowing people to think that they are understood when they are not, is an important one in today's multicultural environment. The students in the fishbowl may feel

uncomfortable at the prospect of stating that they do not understand what their peer is saying. The students may also feel awkward because they do not speak or comprehend the Chinese student's language of origin. Moreover, they may feel impatient with the situation and may not want to take the time to have the Chinese student repeat herself, which would serve to create an environment in which all members are working together in an effort to understand each other. The Chinese student may also feel uncomfortable and anxious about her level of fluency in English. She may also have a desire to express herself in her language of origin, and she may feel inhibited from acknowledging her feelings openly. Ethically, what does this mean for the clinical training of the Chinese student as well as the others in the class? What message is being sent to the students about the importance of engaging in authentic dialogue? In this instance, the issue of doing no harm and attending to the welfare of the student in training needs to be addressed by the professor.

Multiculturalism and Ethical Guidelines

Many people from groups that have experienced marginalization and disenfranchisement are skeptical about mental health and social service providers. Sue and Sue (2008) state that clients who do not speak Standard English, have pronounced accents, or have limited fluency in English may be victimized in therapeutic environments. The group setting presented in the vignette, while not therapeutic, embraces a training model that is culture-bound, stressing the importance of a focus on self-disclosure and verbal, emotional, and behavioral expressiveness. In this case, although the Chinese student is not a client, she is, as a student in training, being marginalized by the groups' withholding information about their difficulty in understanding what she is saying, by their not being honest with her, and by their failing to help her become more aware that others outside the group may have similar challenges in understanding her (especially her potential clients, who may not speak her language). This is an incident that could easily be generalized to therapeutic group settings with international clients. The influences of immigration, acculturation, and assimilation are important to consider in this context. For example, there is a growing population of Asians, as well as of individuals from other racial and ethnic groups whose ancestors emigrated to the United States either years ago or more recently. Some of these individuals have assimilated into American culture, having both American and bicultural identities, and thus may not experience any challenges with language fluency. Others struggle with language and cultural issues.

The Office of Ethnic Minority Affairs of the American Psychological Association (APA, 1993) has published "Guidelines for Providers of Psychological

Services to Ethnic, Linguistic, and Culturally Diverse Populations,” which recommends that psychologists recognize and respect ethnicity and culture as significant parameters in understanding cultural differences and psychological processes regarding family, language, community, religion, spirituality, and sociopolitical issues. The Association for Specialists in Group Work’s (ASGW, 2000b; <http://www.asgw.org>) “Principles for Diversity: Competent Group Workers” states as follows:

Issues of diversity affect group process and dynamics, group facilitation, training, and research. As an organization, we recognize that racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, and so forth affect everyone. As individual members of this organization, it is our personal responsibility to address these issues through awareness, knowledge, and skills.

The multicultural and diversity guidelines and principles are essentially geared to promote awareness, knowledge, and skill and to limit cultural encapsulation of group workers (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992). The term *group worker* is used by ASGW to capture the variety of ways the counseling professionals work with groups. Thus, the term is used to identify a broad group of professionals who engage in working with groups in a variety of ways that includes group counseling, group facilitation, group psychotherapy, and group consultation.

According to the “Principles for Diversity-Competent Group Workers” (ASGW, 2000b), group workers with multicultural competence have an awareness of their own attitudes and beliefs, knowledge about their own race, ethnicity, SES, gender, sexual orientation, abilities, religion, and spirituality and how these aspects of self might affect those they work with. They also seek to develop themselves through educational, consultative, and training experiences in order to help them better understand and work more effectively with groups different from their own. Group workers engage in developing an awareness of the worldviews of group members from different racial and cultural backgrounds, possess specific knowledge about the life experiences and social context of various social identity groups, and develop skills for facilitating groups across differences. Intervention strategies for working across differences include awareness and respect for religious and spiritual differences and valuing bilingualism and other languages, as opposed to viewing them as an impediment to group work. The principles also promote an understanding of social context and systems and how they affect peoples’ lives, especially the hierarchies of social class and other forces that influence interpersonal and group behavior. The multicultural and diversity guidelines that have been adopted by the above organizations owe much to a group of multicultural psychologists who have worked very diligently in addressing the multicultural issues related to ethics (see Pedersen, 1995; Sue et al., 1992). Pedersen (1995)

addressed some of the weaknesses of the ethical principles, such as their bias toward the individualistic perspective, the pull for minorities to adapt to majority cultural standards, and the assumption of “one size fits all” (p. 45).

The A. K. Rice Institute for the Study of Social Systems (AKRI), the organization that founded the group relations model in the United States, describes its mission and purpose as a national educational institution for the advancement of the study of social systems and group relations. It seeks to deepen the understanding and the analysis of complex systemic, psychodynamic, and covert processes that give rise to nonrational behavior in individuals, groups, organizations, communities, and nations (www.akriceinstitute.org). AKRI has implemented a set of competencies for consultants in group relations conferences that offer some guidelines appropriate for a broad spectrum of group work professionals. The first phase of competencies indicates whether a person has basic observational skills that serve as a foundation for group work: “(1) Demonstrates general curiosity about what is happening in the group-as-a-whole; (2) Demonstrates the capacity to accept the experiences of others to be as valid as his/her own; and (3) Demonstrates the ability to be reflective and self-examining” (AKRI, 2003). In the second phase of training, the trainee is expected to develop additional competencies that require more in-depth ability to examine unconscious processes and to demonstrate an ability for self-containment of one’s own emotions so as to distinguish the difference between self, the group’s emotional state, and that of the surrounding environment. Developing the competence to demonstrate a reflective ability to self-examine in role and to own mistakes in front of group members and staff associates is an important skill to acquire. Demonstrating this level of competence shows that an individual can take risks, make mistakes, and recover in a professional manner when working with diverse group members. Developing the capacity to recognize that each individual holds or expresses some aspect of the group-as-a-whole and that the group operates in the context of a broader societal level grounds events in the social, political, and economic context of experience and can be a crucial factor when working across differences.

In this chapter on ethics, we join Brabeck and Ting (2000) in calling for a mandate for creating fair and ethical structures in groups and organizations that ensure that all people are cared for attentively so as to nurture the potential of each group member. For those who are group workers with racially and culturally diverse groups, the issues of power in the context of the group and the broader society, levels of acculturation, and racial identity development can influence behavior that could unintentionally or intentionally do harm to members (Frame & Williams, 2005). Working with subtle and intense racial and cultural dynamics that can surface in multicultural groups can create some challenges to the personal morals and cultural values of the group worker,

especially when the clients' worldviews are very different. Ethical codes outline expectations for professional behavior, and in most cases there can be serious consequences for not adhering to them. For example, licensed professionals can risk losing their license, while others could face expulsion from professional organizations. There are potential legal ramifications for inappropriate behavior as well. We live and work in an increasingly multicultural world, and it is crucial that group workers develop awareness, knowledge, and skill in working with members from different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. Due to the complexity of multiple factors in multicultural groups, competency in working with differences is a dynamic process that requires practice and openness to different worldviews and behaviors that at first may seem unfamiliar and very different to the group worker and, possibly, to other members in a group.

We also concur with Ridley, Liddle, Hill, and Li (2001), who state that the process of "making ethical decisions in multicultural counseling and therapy is a professional's multicultural responsibility" (p. 176). The authors define *multicultural responsibility* as a "fusion of personal and professional commitments to consider culture during all ethical encounters" (p. 176). They outline five criteria for the attainment of multicultural responsible ethical assessment and behavior for all mental health professionals: (1) examining one's philosophical assumptions about culture and ethics and making these assumptions explicit, by, for example, identifying racial stereotypes and biases within oneself and considering how these assumptions affect interactions with clients; (2) examining alternative philosophical assumptions that one may hold about culture and ethics, for example, becoming more knowledgeable about racial and feminist theories; (3) increasing one's understanding of the ways that culture is always relevant in counseling and therapy; maintenance of this view may help the practitioner to recognize the salience of cultural issues in the therapeutic relationship; (4) developing complex and creative thinking skills about multiculturalism and ethics, as opposed to more rigid or inflexible problem solving; and (5) making an emotional investment in multicultural responsibility that would take precedence over intellectual or professional investments.

Most professional organizations have established codes of ethics that are available on their Web sites. Those organizations most relevant to group workers doing counseling, psychotherapy, consultation, facilitation, coaching, teaching, and research are the APA, the American Counseling Association (ACA), the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), and the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT). The ASGW, a division of ACA, developed a set of best-practice guidelines (ASGW, 2000a), in addition to their "Principles for Diversity: Competent Group Workers" (ASGW, 2000b), which provide critical information for practitioners and scientists.

Principles of Ethical Behavior

Ethical codes are based on moral principles of behavior that are geared to protect the welfare and rights of the client. There are five principles that provide the foundation for the ethical codes: beneficence, nonmaleficence, autonomy, justice, and fidelity (Kitchner, 1984; Welfel & Kitchner, 1999).

Beneficence refers to promoting the welfare of the individuals and of the group-as-a-whole. Promoting the welfare of others requires some awareness and knowledge about who the members of the group are. It also requires some knowledge about the historical relatedness of the subgroups represented by members and how the boundaries between these groups have been managed, as well as some awareness about the effect of these experiences on the current socioeconomic and political context of general life circumstances. Being aware of the social context creates awareness of its impact on individuals and their relatedness to others and allows the group worker to provide services for the betterment of each member and the group-as-a-whole.

Nonmaleficence refers to avoiding situations that could potentially harm others as well as doing no harm to others. When group members come from diverse backgrounds, there is the potential for unintentional behaviors related to attitudes and to beliefs and feelings about self, one's identity group, and other members from different racial and cultural groups to impede group processes. Recent work conducted by Sue et al. (2007) on *racial microaggressions*, a concept that describes "daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color" (p. 273), suggests that group workers who are not aware of potential biases inherent in them and others in society may, along with members of the group, act as perpetrators of microaggressive behavior toward people of color as well as those from other stigmatized or disenfranchised groups.

Autonomy refers to being respectful of the right of others to make their own decisions about life choices. For group workers, this means that we are aware and respectful of the different forms of verbal and nonverbal expressions of group members from different racial and cultural backgrounds. For example, lack of eye contact and silence in a group are not necessarily acts of avoidance and resistance or a power ploy to obtain attention. Members have a right to make choices that are grounded in their own cultural traditions and that may be very different for the group worker and other members. For instance, some cultures view direct eye contact, particularly with those in positions of authority, to be rude and/or inappropriate. Moreover, some cultures do not value verbalizations as highly as, for example, American culture does. Emotional expressiveness, which is often the goal of individual and group counseling, may also be viewed as taboo in some cultures that value restraint of strong feelings (Sue & Sue, 2008).

Justice or fairness refers to treating members fairly. It requires a balancing of member interests in a manner that is clearly defined. For group workers, this involves acknowledging the context of power and the reality of privilege in many different forms (e.g., white privilege, gender privilege, social class, ethnic, heterosexual, age, etc., given the social context of the group) and how they affect the work and behavior of the group.

Fidelity or “being faithful to commitments” and the capacity to be loyal to one’s words and promises create trustworthiness in the group worker’s relationship with group members (Welfel & Kitchner, 1999, p. 135). Group members from different social identity groups often scrutinize the leader for signs of credibility. Credibility is related to how the role is taken up in terms of authority, consistency of behavior, identity, and SES (Sue & Sue, 2008). The skill of the group worker in demonstrating awareness of racial and cultural issues as well as knowledge about the historical relatedness of the groups represented by members will be observed and taken up quite seriously by members. Individuals from minority groups are usually very conscious of this but may not feel comfortable speaking about it in a group. The skill for group workers lies in the ability to hold on to the knowledge they acquire during the life of the group until they learn more about who the individual members are and how they may or may not be affected by their respective group identities. For example, a consultant in a small study group acknowledged the differences among members in a general sense but did not speak to any specific differences. The mention of the differences opened an avenue for a Jewish man in his 50s to speak to the tension he felt toward a young woman in the group who proudly claimed her German nationality. The young woman was surprised; the Holocaust and Germany’s role in it was not something that had been talked about much in her family or community. She was more concerned about age than ethnic differences or historical relatedness between groups and individuals. In these types of group scenarios, the group worker’s awareness, knowledge, and comfort level in working with differences helps create an environment that will enhance open, honest discussions and fidelity in the group.

Ethical Issues in Group Work

Some of the ethical issues most prominent in multicultural groups are training, role clarity and values of the leader, dual relationships, informed consent, and psychological risks to members.

TRAINING

Over the past 20 years, professional organizations such as ACA (1995) and APA (2002) have implemented guidelines specifically geared to develop

multicultural competence among counselors and psychologists. One of the criticisms of the ethical codes is that they impose one set of behaviors of the dominant culture on all groups with no regard for diverse cultures (Pedersen, 1997). This focus on one set of behaviors can lead to cultural encapsulation where reality is defined in a one-dimensional perspective and the multiplicity of cultural values is ignored (Pedersen, 1997; Wrenn, 1985). Multicultural guidelines call for group workers to develop awareness and knowledge of their own racial, ethnic, and cultural selves as well as that of their client population and to demonstrate skill in working effectively with attitudes and stereotypes that might lead to discriminatory or biased behavior (Sue et al., 1992). These guidelines were an important step in recognizing the need for a multidimensional perspective when working with multicultural populations.

AKRI competencies for group relations consultants pay attention to the covert and unconscious aspects of behavior (Hayden & Carr, 1993). From a group relations perspective, the professional working competently with diverse groups is (1) curious about others; (2) has the ability to self-examine and to reflect on their own behavior as well as that of others; (3) is able to acknowledge his or her own mistakes publicly when necessary; (4) is aware of power differentials related to social identity factors that exist in groups, organizations, and the broader societal context; (5) is able to maintain a professional role and work within the boundaries of the stated task of the group when confronted with both positive and negative reactions from others; and (6) has an understanding and appreciation for the complexity and range of unconscious processes (AKRI, 2003).

When group members come from diverse backgrounds, there is the potential for unintentional biased behaviors related to attitudes, beliefs, and feelings to affect group dynamics. The group worker needs to be aware of their biases and open to confronting other possible biases that may be stimulated by group membership. Issues of oppressed versus oppressor or victim versus victimizer in the group can stimulate unresolved feelings in the group worker and make it difficult to work in a fair and just manner for the group-as-a-whole. It is the group worker's role to be aware of intergroup characteristics such as boundaries, power, affect, and belief systems that members hold about their own group and other groups and to be open to exploring these aspects within themselves before working with others.

Training for diversity-competent group workers requires both didactic and experiential learning formats. The authors of this text believe that creating experiential learning opportunities allows students and/or trainees to actually experience the application of theoretical concepts and to make conscious decisions about future practices in similar situations. Experiential learning also helps those in training to identify blind spots that could keep them culturally encapsulated. Internal exploration of the self in the group relations conceptual

frame requires awareness of your racial ethnic identity attitudes, perceptions, and stereotypes about your own group and others. It also requires emotional exploration of unconscious feelings that affect behavior unintentionally. According to the AKRI Training Competencies (AKRI, 2003) there are three competencies that focus on internal work for the group consultant. First is the ability to work with unconscious processes in self and the group, and second is the ability for self-containment of emotions, to “hold still long enough” in order “to identify and feel along the boundary between what resides in the group and the environment and what resides in one’s self” (p. 3). The third competency is the ability to examine one’s professional role in a reflective manner in front of group members and the staff one is working with, while retaining or regaining one’s professional role. Experiential learning can greatly enhance the development of these competencies for student trainees.

Competent group workers learn to track their own behaviors as well as the behaviors in the group, being mindful of who said what, when, and how; the pattern of verbal and nonverbal communication; the tone of the group; and what all of this has triggered for the individual group worker emotionally. Group workers monitor their own feelings as they work with the group. When conducting a group with members from different racial and cultural backgrounds, it is important to track events in terms of the specific identity groups while remembering that personality as well as racial-cultural factors are at play in the group. For example, the authors of this text come from working-class backgrounds. In working with people from middle- and upper-income backgrounds, our own social-class origins may trigger a multitude of feelings, including those of inadequacy regarding access to educational and economic resources. Continued self-exploration has helped us acknowledge the irrationality of these emotions, given the status of our present privileged positions as academics and organizational consultants; it has also helped us to be aware of how these dynamics could affect our work with the groups that we teach and/or consult to. When group workers are able to self-contain emotionally and to engage in self-examination, they increase their capacity to distinguish between the projected material of the group and their own projections that may be related to countertransference and/or unresolved issues that need to be worked on in personal therapy and/or professional supervision.

ROLE CLARITY AND LEADER VALUES

Clarity of roles and leader values help to create clear boundaries for engagement of the group. This is important, as “one’s own identity and history affect one’s work as well as calling forth particular fantasies and projections from others in a group context” (AKRI, 2003, p. 3). When group workers have an understanding of their own identity and history and what it might represent

for those in the group, they can be more in touch with the emotional state of the group. Becoming aware of one's multiple identities, internalized messages about the social identity groups, and cultural values that one may hold will help individuals take up their professional roles more effectively. At times, group workers may need to acknowledge their own values in service of making the group members aware that one of the tasks of the group is to explore group members' values, attitudes, and belief systems for the group to make more informed choices (Corey & Corey, 2006).

The group worker's role and values may be influenced by the power attributed to their role by the group members and by their personal identity. Thus, the race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, and religion (when obvious or when the information is provided) of the individual may influence how he or she takes up the role of group leader, especially in certain contexts. Some of the questions that group workers might ask themselves are "Is my role as facilitator or leader congruent with the group members' social identities?" and "How secure am I in taking up my work role, given my own social identity?" Lack of clarity or ambiguity of role and authority experienced by the group worker will be observed by the members, consciously and unconsciously, and will have an impact on the work of the group.

The perception of roles associated with class, race, and gender is a part of the socialization process for many individuals. Our perception of role is something that exists for both the group worker and the group member. Group workers are responsible for maintaining their role, which allows members to have an opportunity to try different roles. In doing this, the group worker provides a sense of consistent containment for the group. Different cultures attribute different values to role. Thus, in certain cultures, the role of the leader is perceived as the ultimate authority, someone who should not be challenged, while in Western cultures, challenging someone in authority is acceptable behavior. Age, gender, and social status, as they relate to authority, are also valued differently in various cultures.

Group workers should have some clarity about their own cultural values. The model presented by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) is a useful framework for understanding individual and group differences. They provide four dimensions of human relations: time focus, human activity, social relations, and people/nature relationships. Different cultural values are associated with each of these dimensions. Thus, some cultural values are oriented to focusing more on the past, while others are more present or future oriented. Some cultures value human activity as just being or being and becoming, while others are more action oriented. In terms of social relations, some cultures value lineal or hierarchical relations, while others are more collectivist or individualistic. Perceptions of the leader role may vary according to members' cultural values. For example, members whose values are more lineal may feel more uncomfortable questioning the role of the group

worker, and those from collectivist cultures may have a strong sense of duty interpersonally and may tend not to question role. It is therefore important for group workers to be aware of their value orientation regarding these dynamics and how their beliefs will influence their work with a diverse group of members. Pedersen (1997) suggests that a major concern is unwillingness on the part of mental health professionals to acknowledge that in most instances the majority cultural values are imposed on minority clients. The favoring of the dominant culture allows for cultural encapsulation of group workers and will limit their ability to empathize and understand the cultural values of group members from diverse backgrounds.

DUAL RELATIONSHIPS

Dual relationships refers to the importance of maintaining role and boundary between the group worker and the group members. Group workers are warned to avoid dual or overlapping roles, to separate personal and social roles from professional ones. Group workers have a fiduciary obligation to recognize group members' emotional vulnerability (Welfel, 2002). Members of a racial and culturally heterogeneous group may perceive the role of the group worker differently. The role of group worker is one that carries a status and power different from that of group members. The group worker usually has the power to determine who stays in the group, sets the time and place of meetings, and provides and ensures the group a safe enough environment in which to work. If the group worker develops personal relationships with one or several group members outside the group, it could jeopardize the safety and trust needed for successful group work.

Another concern of dual relationships in academic settings is the requirement for students to participate in experiential groups led by educators as a part of their course work. This is a situation that could involve a conflict of interest because students may feel vulnerable about their participation due to the authority of the professor to provide an evaluation and a course grade. This conflict can be resolved by (a) employing post-master's students to lead experiential groups, (b) using a blind-grading system, (c) requiring students to participate in external groups, or (d) using "fishbowl" training techniques, where students co-lead and the instructor observes and helps to process group dynamics (Gladding, 2003).

INFORMED CONSENT

Informed consent, according to the "Best Practices Guidelines" (ASGW, 2000a), involves providing information on the nature, purpose, and goals of the group; the services to be provided; the roles and responsibilities of leaders and group members; and the qualifications of the leaders to conduct the

group. Those who participate in therapeutic and educational groups need to be well-informed so that they can make informed choices about their participation in the group. Since groups can be quite challenging emotionally, it is important that potential members have a clear idea of what is expected of them. Members need to be informed about the ambiguity and complexity of groups, since it is impossible to anticipate the course of the group's work (Lakin, 1999).

When working with individuals who are inexperienced or who have never done group work, it is important that they receive instruction in a respectable manner, in language that is appropriate to their level of understanding. It is important to inform prospective group members about what will happen and how they will know that they are improving and/or learning from the group experience, as well as the consequences of being absent or not participating.

PSYCHOLOGICAL RISKS

Learning about self in the context of a group can be exciting but challenging. Corey and Corey (2006) describe five potential psychological risks of therapeutic groups: self-disclosure, scapegoating, confrontation, maintaining confidentiality, and inadequate leadership. In this chapter, we have discussed these risks and modified them for working with racial and cultural differences. In diverse groups, vulnerability could be related to the power differential that exists between the group members and the historical relatedness of the various social identity groups represented, especially when these identities are salient to the experience of the members. Group members, whether they care to or not, can be perceived as representative of one or multiple social identity groups, with some being more salient than others, given the context of the group. Power differentials and histories of warring groups, ethnic cleansing, enslavement, the Holocaust, and religious conflicts can create tensions between group members and make it difficult to self-disclose. These types of challenges can lead to certain members being targeted as scapegoats within the group. Under these circumstances, confrontation can be more difficult or may be experienced in more threatening ways. Members may feel compelled to discuss their experiences outside the group with members of their own identity group so as to receive more support and empathy. These potential psychological risks require the group worker to be skilled in working with differences.

1. *Self-disclosure*: Self-disclosure is essential in groups because it creates a cohesive atmosphere where members can share personal information and learn that they are not alone with their feelings (Yalom, 1995). However, members should receive guidelines about appropriate types of self-disclosure and assistance in determining what to disclose and when self-disclosure is facilitative to the

group's process and development (Corey & Corey, 2006). Members of minority groups who have experienced discrimination and racism may be less open to self-disclosure in mixed-race groups. The continued experience of racial microaggressions, as described by Sue et al. (2007), may make it more difficult for individuals who may fear experiencing pain and disappointment. The group worker's awareness and sensitivity to group members' anxieties about the potential risks of self-disclosure in cultural contexts will allow them to work at creating a safe enough environment for all member self-disclosures.

2. *Scapegoat*: This is a form of destructive role differentiation in groups where one member is targeted as being the holder of negative and undesirable attributes. In a biblical sense, the scapegoat represents the sins of the tribe and must be sent into the wilderness for atonement (Wells, 1990). For example, in a small study group that consisted of about half black and half Asian members, two of the Asians were men (all the black members were women), one a young student, the other a mature mental health professional. During the group sessions, there was tension between the Asian and black women as they struggled for power and leadership in the group. The younger Asian man became the scapegoat in the group due to his behavior of saying things that the other members may have felt but were too embarrassed to say. For instance, he questioned whether the African American women could identify with Africa only as a continent, not as many countries with specific and diverse cultural values. In saying things that the others members found difficult to say, this member represented the bad parts, the competition and anger, of the other members. He seemed to willingly take up the role and then informed the group that he was aware that they were making him their scapegoat.

In racially mixed groups, the risk of those who belong to minority groups that are stigmatized due to race, social class, religion, sexual identity, or physical challenge is to become the target and/or the representative of otherness and negativity in the group. In another small study group, a Latina became the scapegoat in the group when she refused to participate verbally. The other members reacted negatively to her silence and eventually began to blame her for the group's difficulty in moving along. Her affect indicated that she seemed to enjoy the attention she received from the other members, and she continued to be silent in the small group. In the small study group, this woman seemed to hold the unspeakable, unmovable, angry parts for the group. However, during the large group sessions, a group setting that often seems more challenging for members to speak in, she spoke regularly. The scapegoat can be a necessary part of group development and member interaction. However, when behavior toward the individual who is being scapegoated is allowed to escalate, it can be dangerous to the survival of the group, primarily because it isolates the negative feelings in one member. It is the responsibility of the group worker to help the members identify scapegoating behavior, primarily by acknowledging that

it is occurring and identifying projective processes within the group that contribute to this type of behavior. The members need to have assistance in taking back projections and freeing the member who is being scapegoated from assuming full responsibility for the negative feelings and anxiety experienced by the group (Wells, 1990).

3. *Confrontation*: Confrontation in groups is usually done with the goal of increasing awareness and initiating change (Kline, 2003). However, it is a powerful tool that can elicit defensiveness, especially when it is done in a manner that is perceived as aggressive and/or hostile. The power differential and historical differences that serve as a backdrop for racial and culturally mixed groups require the group worker to be unafraid to confront members who are from different social identity groups. However, confrontation must be done with respect, awareness, and an openness to explore how members may perceive the confrontation.

4. *Maintaining confidentiality*: Confidentiality refers to the right of group members to discuss their feelings and thoughts in the group with the expectation that others will not disclose this information outside the group (Gladding, 2003). The psychological risk in racially and culturally mixed groups is the pull to discuss fears and difficult experiences in the group with those of similar backgrounds and values outside the group. It is the group worker's responsibility to inform members of the importance of confidentiality at the outset of the group and to model this behavior as a way of setting a group norm (Corey & Corey, 2006). While confidentiality is noted as one of the keystones for effective group work, ACA's *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* (1995), Section B, states that group workers must inform group members that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. The group worker is also responsible for informing group members of the consequences of not maintaining confidentiality, that it is inappropriate, and that it is possibly hurtful to members.

5. *Inadequate leadership*: As noted by Corey and Corey (2006), the lack of adequate training is perhaps the greatest risk. Those who are not aware of their own biases and have little knowledge of themselves as racial and cultural beings are less prone to develop awareness and knowledge of others (McRae & Johnson, 1991). This lack of awareness and knowledge will make it more difficult to recognize the boundaries of one's own multicultural competence. The risk of inadequate training is the possibility of perpetuating and colluding in situations where racial and cultural microaggressions can do harm to group members. Although it is impossible to eliminate all possible risks in groups, it is essential that members be made aware of potential risks and that the group worker strive to create a group environment that does not promote risks (Corey & Corey, 2006).

Summary

In this chapter, we have discussed multicultural responsibility and ethics, as well as ethical behavior such as beneficence, nonmaleficence, autonomy, justice, fidelity, and ethical issues related to the training of mental health professionals. Role clarity and leader values as well as dual relationships and informed consent have been considered. Potential psychological risks, such as self-disclosure, scapegoating, and confrontation, that need to be considered in therapeutic groups were outlined. Ethical behavior has been examined as it relates to racial-cultural dynamics in groups, noting the importance of developing competencies that include awareness, knowledge, and skills in working across differences.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

1. Referring to the case vignette presented at the beginning of the chapter, discuss the options of the student and the professor. What options do you think would be most appropriate and why?
2. What are the five principles that serve as the foundation for the ethical codes, and how are they related to working with diverse groups?
3. What is multicultural responsibility? How does it relate to ethical behavior?
4. How do the AKRI competencies contribute to our understanding of ethical behavior?
5. What are some important ethical considerations when working with group members who come from different racial cultural backgrounds?

KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Autonomy	Multiculturalism and ethical guidelines
Beneficence	Nonmaleficence
Ethical issues in group work	Principles of ethical behavior
Fidelity	Psychological risks
Informed consent	Role clarity and leader values
Justice	Training
Multicultural responsibility	

WEB SITES

A. K. Rice Institute for the Study of Social Systems (AKRI): www.akriceinstitute.org

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT): www.aamft.org

American Counseling Association (ACA): www.counseling.org

American Psychological Association (APA): www.apa.org

Association for Specialists in Group Work (ASGW): www.asgw.org

National Association of Social Workers (NASW): www.socialworkers.org
