

*Form of psychotherapy, body of ideas
and way of thinking,
embracing concepts
from psychoanalysis,
social psychology,
sociology and
anthropology.*

Group Analysis

Group Analysis

briefly...



Group Analysis is a method of group psychotherapy originated by S.H. Foulkes in the 1940s'. It combines psychoanalytic insights with an understanding of social and interpersonal functioning. There is an

interest, in group psychotherapy, on the relationship between the individual group member and the rest of the group resulting in a strengthening of both, and a better integration of the individual with his or her community, family and social network. Deriving from psychoanalysis, Group Analysis also draws on a range of other psychotherapeutic traditions and approaches: systems theory psychotherapies, developmental psychology and social psychology. From this emerges a powerful psychotherapeutic technique. Group Analysis also has applications in organisational consultancy, and in teaching and training. Group Analysts work in a wide range of contexts with a wide range of difficulties and problems. Group Analysis explores the theory, practice and experience of analytical group psychotherapy, embracing concepts derived from psychoanalytic psychology, social psychology, group dynamics, sociology and anthropology.

At the heart of Group Analysis....

At the heart of Group Analysis is the idea that human beings are fundamentally social beings, whose lives are inextricably linked with other people in manifold ways. The source of personal puzzles that are difficult or impossible to resolve, or behaviours or motives that are difficult to understand, which individuals may encounter in their personal lives and at work, are

to be found not only in the dynamics of the groupings that they inhabit in the present, but also in the groups in which all of us are rooted, across time and throughout our development. These groupings include the family, friendship groups, schools and so on. On the basis of this S.H Foulkes, the founder of group analysis, reasoned that as one's difficulties arise in groups, then these difficulties are best explored, understood and changed specifically in a group context. Foulkes, in the 1950s, proposed that there is no such thing as an individual that exists apart from and outside the social (Foulkes, 1948; Foulkes & Anthony, 1957).

The Group Analytic Model

Group Analysis (or group analytic psychotherapy) is based on the view that deep lasting change can occur within a carefully formed group whose combined membership reflects the wider norms of society. It is rooted in psychoanalysis and the social sciences.

Groups begin with a relatively high level of leadership activity, referred to as dynamic administration. This approach integrates important aspects of group as a whole and individually-oriented models. The conductor (therapist) is encouraged to address individuals as well as the whole group. This concept is

developed by an integrated set of concepts of structure, process and outcome.

In a typical group analytic group, a process evolves from which everyone gains at the same time. A stimulating interaction between group members becomes the focus of treatment and therapeutic work so that understanding group interactions, conversations and events becomes a powerful way of learning about the self. Any fears that it will be too difficult to talk about your problems in the group soon disappear in the animated and helping atmosphere of the group. Sharing feelings and experiences in an intense, lively and supportive group creates an atmosphere in which mutual confidence and support can develop. Past patterns of attitudes, feelings and behaviour then appear in the group and analysis and thought about these patterns opens the path of growth and development. Group members see themselves through the eyes of others. They gain new insights about themselves and learn about themselves and others through the work others do in the group to gain insight about their behaviour and relationships. Deep and lasting change can thus occur and the effects of traumatic life experiences can be resolved. Personal issues are explored in an atmosphere of trust and confidentiality. Through the relationships that develop within the group a living demonstration is

provided of how past patterns of behaviour can reproduce themselves in the present and block growth and creativity. Analysis of this process opens the way for change

A typical group...

A typical group consists of up to eight people, meeting for 90 minutes per session, once or twice weekly with a conductor. Most groups are of mixed gender although some single sex groups are available. The therapeutic group also provides a nurturing environment within which it becomes possible to recover from traumatic life experiences such as loss. Other therapeutic experiences arise from the opportunity to see oneself through the eyes of others and to participate in the therapy of other group members. Everyone uses the group differently, and at his or her own pace. It is not uncommon for people to feel some reluctance to join a group. Experience has shown, however, that group members do make dramatic changes in their life and relationships in a group, partly through the therapeutic effects that result from seeing themselves in the eyes of others, and partly through the opportunity to participate in the therapy of other group members. Group analysis is applied to a variety of problems and life situations. Anxiety, depression, interpersonal difficulties and low self-esteem are typical problems for which a

group might be recommended. It may also be helpful to those who suffer from the effects of loss, or from psychosomatic conditions. However, group analytic psychotherapy does not only address traumatic life experiences but is also concerned with uncovering the undeveloped aspirations and creativity of group members. Group Analysts can offer individual treatment with a view to preparing the patient for entry to the group so that they are ready for the experience.

Starting in Group Analysis...

Groups have a slowly changing membership. As a prospective new group member you are asked to come for an assessment. This is to determine whether group analysis is a suitable type of therapy for your needs. There may then be a period of waiting until a suitable vacancy becomes available. If this is the case you can choose to have some individual sessions until you join the group. Group Analysis, affecting as it does the deepest levels of the personality is not a rapid therapy, and you can expect to be in the group upwards of a year. Group meetings are confidential and members are asked not to meet each other outside of the group.