Secure Connections LLC
A PSYCHOTHERAPY PRACTICE

UNDERSTANDING GROUP THERAPY

What Is Group Therapy?

Group therapy brings together a small number of people who meet with a trained mental health professional to explore shared concerns, develop skills, build connections, and learn from one another.

Unlike individual therapy, where the primary relationship is between you and your therapist, group therapy allows you to learn through interactions with several people.

You might discover that someone else has struggled with something you believed was uniquely yours. You might notice patterns in how you relate to others, practice communicating a difficult feeling, or learn from an experience very different from your own.

Group therapy is not simply individual therapy with an audience. The relationships, conversations, and experiences between members are part of what makes group therapy meaningful.

Different Types of Groups

Not every group has the same purpose or structure. Groups may combine elements of several approaches.

Process-Oriented Therapy Groups

These groups focus on emotional experiences, relationships, and interpersonal patterns as they emerge between members. The interactions within the group become opportunities for greater self-understanding and meaningful change.

Support Groups

Support groups bring together people with similar experiences or concerns, such as grief, family estrangement, identity-related stress, or major life transitions. The emphasis is often on connection, mutual understanding, and reducing isolation.

Psychoeducational Groups

These groups focus on learning about specific topics, such as attachment, trauma, relationships, emotional regulation, or mental health. They generally include structured discussions, information, and opportunities for reflection.

Skills-Based Therapy Groups

Members learn and practice specific skills, such as setting boundaries, communicating needs, managing emotions, or navigating conflict. These groups often involve exercises and practice between sessions.

Open Groups vs. Closed Groups

Open Groups: New members may join periodically, and existing members may leave at different times. These groups offer greater flexibility, although changes in membership may affect trust and group dynamics.

Closed Groups: Members typically begin and end together, with no new participants joining after the group starts. This can support continuity and deeper connections, although attendance commitments are generally more structured.

What Are the Benefits of Group Therapy?



Feeling Less Alone

Hearing others share similar experiences can reduce shame, isolation, and the belief that nobody else could understand what you're going through.



Learning Through Different Perspectives

Other members may offer insights or experiences you have not considered. You may discover new ways to understand yourself and others.



Exploring Relationship Patterns

How we connect, withdraw, protect ourselves, handle disagreements, or seek acceptance often becomes visible in relationships with others. Group provides an opportunity to explore these patterns as they happen.



Practicing New Ways of Relating

Group can offer opportunities to practice setting boundaries, expressing feelings, giving and receiving feedback, and navigating disagreement with professionals support.



Giving and Receiving Support

Helping someone else feel understood can be just as meaningful as receiving support yourself. Members are contributors to the group, not simply recipients of treatment.



Greater Accessibility

Group therapy may cost less than individual therapy and offer access to therapeutic support that might otherwise be financially difficult to obtain.

What Are the Challenges or Limitations?



Less Individual Attention
The facilitator's time is shared among members. You may not have the opportunity to discuss everything you want during each meeting.



Confidentiality Cannot Be Guaranteed
Although members agree to maintain confidentiality, the therapist cannot guarantee that every participant will honor that agreement.



Difficult Feelings May Arise
Hearing others' experiences or participating in group discussions may bring up painful memories, shame, anxiety, grief, or interpersonal discomfort.



Interpersonal Conflict Can Occur
Misunderstandings, disagreements, exclusions, and hurt feelings can occur. Although these experiences may offer opportunities for growth, they can also be distressing or harmful.



Group May Not Meet Every Need
Some concerns may benefit from more individualized attention, additional support, or a different level of care. Group therapy is not a substitute for emergency or crisis services.



Changes in Membership May Be Difficult
In open groups, members may join or leave over time. This can affect relationships, continuity, and feelings of trust or belonging.

What If I'm Nervous about Participating?

You would not be alone in that.

Many people enter group therapy worrying that they will be judged, pressured to share, misunderstood, or unable to connect with others.

You do not need to arrive confident, articulate, or ready to share your most vulnerable experiences.

Participation can begin with listening, reflecting, and gradually deciding what feels appropriate to share.

You always have the right to pass on a question or decline an exercise. At the same time, group therapy often involves gently exploring the fears or patterns that make connection difficult.

How Is Group Therapy Different from Individual Therapy?

Neither approach is inherently better. Some people prefer one over the other, while others benefit from participating in both.

Individual Therapy	Group Therapy
Focuses primarily on your experiences and goals	Explores your experiences alongside those of other members
Provides more individualized attention	Shares time and attention among members
Offers greater privacy	Requires trust in members' commitment to confidentiality
Explores relationships through discussion and the therapeutic relationship	Allows relationship patterns to emerge through interactions with members
Sessions are centered on your treatment needs	Sessions consider your needs and the needs of the group

Is Group Therapy Right for Me?

Group therapy may be a good fit if you want to build connections, learn from others, explore interpersonal patterns, or receive support around experiences you share with other members.

It may be less appropriate as your primary treatment if you need intensive individualized care, immediate crisis support, or a level of privacy that group therapy cannot provide.

Before joining, we may discuss your goals, current circumstances, expectations, and any concerns about participating. This helps us decide together whether the particular group is likely to meet your needs.

What Can I Expect from the Facilitator?

My responsibility is to guide the group, support meaningful participation, establish boundaries, respond to safety concerns, and help members navigate difficult moments.

I may ask questions, offer observations, introduce exercises, or gently interrupt conversations when necessary.

I cannot guarantee that members will agree, form friendships, maintain confidentiality, or never hurt one another.

I can commit to approaching the work with care, transparency, accountability, a nd respect for each person's dignity and autonomy.