

Group Supervision: Process Description

Group supervision is the fuel that keeps Strengths Model practice alive and strong on a team level. The structure is designed to keep the team focused on generating creative strategies, rather than digressing into venting or rehashing of problems. For each client discussed, the process consists of six steps; each is distinct and critical to the success of the process.

Step 1: Hand out Strengths Assessments - The presenting staff person makes copies of a Strengths Assessment for every team member and hands them out. The process will NOT work unless each team member has his or her own copy of the Strengths Assessment for the person being presented. If Personal Recovery Plans have been started, these should be distributed as well.

Step 2: What is the client goal(s) and what help do I specifically need from the group? – For example, “Joe has a goal to go back to work. I would like some ideas on jobs that might match his interests,” “Mary wants more friends in her life. I would like some ideas on where she might go to meet more people.” The client’s goal(s) takes center stage in this process. If the client does not have a specific goal, then the question to the group should revolve around how to engage with the person to find a goal that is passionate and meaningful to them. Being specific at this point in the process keeps the team focused on what is to be accomplished.

Step 3: What is the current situation and what has been already tried? - The presenting staff person gives a quick one to two-minute description of the current situation and what strategies have already been tried.

Step 4: What does the team need clarified from the Strengths Assessment? - At this point it might be good for the team to take a few minutes to look over the Strengths Assessment. Then, for five to ten minutes the team asks questions of the presenting staff person to further clarify anything that is written down or areas that have not been fully explored. For example, “It says here that the grandmother is supportive. Tell us more about her role in the person’s life.” No advice can be given in this section. The intent here is to understand as much about the person as possible so that creative and specific suggestions can be offered in the next step to help the person achieve their goal.

Step 5: Brainstorming - For ten to fifteen minutes the team brainstorms ideas. It is important that these ideas are related to the person’s goal(s). The presenting staff person MUST write down every idea without speaking (i.e., no evaluation of the ideas or “yes, buts”). The intent here is to allow the team to get creative and solution focused. Often some of the best ideas come toward the end of brainstorming as the ideas begin to build. A good brainstorming will generate between 20 to 40 ideas.

Step 6: What will be my plan based upon the suggestions made? - The presenting staff person reviews the ideas and then states clearly what next steps they will take. For example, “I meet with Jean this Thursday. I will take this list with me and see if she wants to pursue any of these suggestions to help her get more involved in the community,” “I like the idea of taking Jim out to the zoo since he loves animals. While we are there, I will use some of the motivational interviewing techniques to gauge where he is at in his goal of sobriety. I will also build on the strengths assessment to see what supports have been helpful to him in the past when he has been sober.”