

Serving the community

- Definition of community:

This meaning has many definitions that differ according to trends and schools, including:

Kurt Levine takes the interaction between individuals as the basis of the group. He believes that the similarity between members may be a valid basis if what is meant is the similarity of attitudes, goals or loyalty, and of course this similarity may be related to the mutual interaction between the persons involved or may be a cause of it.

- Cooley defined the meaning of the first group as that same group characterised by close, direct (face-to-face) contact between individuals, merging the sum of these individualities into a common whole. The life of the group becomes the individual's self or being. The characteristics of the group can be identified in the following points:

- * Face-to-face communication.
- *Non-personalisation of the type of communication.
- *Relative permanence.
- * Small number of people.
- *Relative familiarity between them.

- Types of Group Problems:

They can be divided into 3 sections:

- Behavioural and interpersonal issues related to group members:

There may be individuals who try to use the group to solve their problems or satisfy their personal desires that annoy the group and its members, and thus they become factors of destruction and disintegration instead of cohesion and unity, such as those who complain of poor morale, who do not take responsibility and who are selfish. The role of the counsellor is to help them adapt to the group.

- Functional issues are related to the group: They are subdivided into:

- Lack of understanding of the goals and objectives of the group because of the inability to develop a comprehensive programme that meets the needs and desires

of the members. Therefore, the specialist had to work on training the members to take responsibility and rotate the various tasks as much as possible.

- The presence of clans in the group and this occurs in large groups where a clan works to achieve its goals and interests regardless of the other members, which causes issues that hinder the growth and progress of the groups.
- The presence of conflicts in the group and usually leads to the disintegration of the group into conflicting parties and fronts, so it must be addressed in its early stages because in these stages it does not need long time and effort.
- Problems of organisation and red tape, as excessive organisation may lead to wasting time in multiple meetings and committees to take decisions at the expense of implementing plans and programmes related to the group.

- Problems between groups and each other:

It is represented by groups that compete with each other to achieve personal and social goals and is often the cause of the emergence of issues that work to dismantle them, because each group tries to get ahead of the other and this may sometimes lead to the contempt of other groups.(7)

- The definition of working with a group:

There are many definitions in this field and we mention the most important ones:

- Tricker's definition: Group service is a method by which a group specialist helps individuals in a social organisation by directing their interaction around aspects of activity to increase their contact with each other and provide opportunities for growth in accordance with their needs and abilities so that the individual, the group and the local community can grow.
- Gisela Konpka sees group work as a social work method that works to help individuals increase their social functioning through intentional group experiences, so that they can address their personal, group, or community issues more effectively.

*The parameters of services with the community can be outlined in the following points:

- It is one of the methods of the social work profession that must have knowledge, understanding, principles and skills.

- It is a dynamic process in which growth is achieved for both the individual and the group.
- It is practised by a specialised professional with practical, theoretical and scientific preparation.
- It is practised within primary and secondary social service institutions, with the aim of achieving the goals of change in the personalities of individuals and increasing their effectiveness and abilities to produce.
- It includes several processes that are sequential steps that lead to tangible or desired results, namely the growth of the individual and the growth of groups through directed group interaction in order to achieve the social growth of society.
- The group is a means and tool to bring about the desired change by directing the dynamic group interaction, and directing the actions and reactions that occur between members during the practice of various programmes within the organisation.
- The group specialist is the professional responsible for directing the interaction through his/her intervention and use of various means of influence in the life of the group.
- It is an educational process of training and developing members' abilities and acquiring society's values, culture and norms.
- Group service increases the social performance of individuals.

- Objectives of the group service method:

The group service method seeks to achieve multiple goals for the member, the group and society, as the group must achieve basic goals or aspects for individuals, which affects them and has reactions on society. Among the most important goals of group service:

- 1- A set of goals specific to the member of the group.
- 2- Purposes that group service can achieve for the group as a whole.
- 3- Objectives of group service for the organisation.
- 4- Objectives of community service for society.

1- A set of goals specific to the member of the group:

Group service achieves goals that the group member seeks and seeks, such as:

- Satisfying psychological and social needs, the need for love, the need for security, the need for appreciation, the need for encouragement.
- Forming relationships with other people whom he trusts, learns from and interacts with.
- Acquiring values and experiences that help the individual to deal and interact with others.
- Training on leadership and subordination in social life, and providing appropriate opportunities to express opinions and feelings.
- Developing the member's sense of self, abilities and potential, training him to develop and use them whenever possible, and acquiring productive skills that can contribute to supporting the developmental aspects of the members.
- Training on how to speak and listen to others during different group situations.

2- A set of goals specific to the group:

- It seeks to make the group feel its unity and that it is a distinct entity from other groups.
- Developing groups' attitudes towards participation in society, such as: Environmental services, volunteering, and comprehensive awareness.
- Seeking to identify, uncover and use the group's latent potential for the benefit of the group, the organisation and society.
- It seeks to use the group as an appropriate tool to prevent deviance and dangerous behaviours, whether psychological, economic, health or social, such as: Smoking, addiction, crime and delinquency.
- It seeks to provide appropriate opportunities to assume social responsibility with the community in various fields, by contacting community institutions and undertaking projects, as environmental service is one of the models that illustrate the role of groups in assuming responsibility.

3- Objectives specific to the organisation:

- Group service seeks to use groups to achieve the function and goals of the organisation to which they belong.
- Achieving a social status for the organisation in society in terms of the roles played by the group and the activities it engages in.
- The practice of group service with groups may lead to motivation for membership, which affects the building of membership in the organisation and thus materially and morally affects the organisation.
- The formation of leaders that can be trained within the groups and thus the institution can use them in its programmes.

4- Community-specific goals:

One of the most important goals that the community service seeks to achieve is:

- Strengthening belonging towards the community in which the organisation is located.
- Directing groups to follow up on the economic or social changes in society.
- Using groups in important community projects that achieve growth or development, such as: Small projects, voluntary projects, environmental service projects, etc.
- Society requires from time to time to reinforce the rules and laws issued by the economic and social variables, and thus the group service method can achieve this through groups.(9)

Therefore, the objectives of group service can be defined as follows:

- Developing the ability to think realistically and objectively and getting rid of the dependency tendency that prevails in the behaviour of individuals.
- Developing the ability to participate, and this tendency develops through belonging to groups that have common public goals, in which each individual works to participate and contribute to achieving them.
- Developing the ability to cooperate with others, which the individual acquires through continuous training within group life and practice.

- Control the behaviour of members through general systems, rules, laws and norms that define relationships, which leads to ensuring the safety, security, rights and duties of individuals in their social relations.

- Developing the ability to lead and follow. The individual is a leader of others in certain situations when he has the ability and skill to do so, and may go through other situations in which he must follow others because of his need to gain experience, and without this, balance cannot occur in society or human groups.

- Developing and supporting the value and respect for work so that it becomes an inherent behaviour of the members in their community life.

- The role of the specialist in his work with the group:

- Helps the group to understand the purposes and objectives of the organisation, as well as drawing and defining its purposes and objectives within the limits of the organisation's work and nature.

- Helps the group to grow and increase its cohesion and loyalty of individuals to it, and helps it to recognise its capabilities and potentials and to be active and work within the limits of these capabilities and potentials.

- It helps the group to understand its internal issues that hinder its progress and growth and to use the resources and possibilities that can be obtained to solve them.

- Helps the group to organise itself and its members to perform their functions and duties.

- Helps the group to develop its capabilities and raise the level of its activities.

- It helps the group to understand and appreciate other groups that may differ from it and helps to form positive relationships between them and these groups.

- It helps group members to grow and form positive relationships between them that increase their cohesion and help them achieve their goals.

- Helps the group to identify resources that can be used both inside and outside the organisation.

- Professional Preparation of the Community Specialist

The success of the specialist's role depends mainly on the characteristics of his professional behaviour, which can be summarised as follows:

- The ability to form a relationship and persuade.
- Emotional calmness, honesty, sincerity and objectivity.
- Familiarity with community issues and problems.

- Conditions for success in dealing with group issues:

Problems are manifestations that alert the specialist to the need for research into group life and professional intervention at certain stages of group life and to recognise the variables facing the group, what are the effects of those variables and how to overcome them.

There are basic considerations that must be taken into account when confronting the issue:

When dealing with issues, the social worker must consider the following:

- Define the issue clearly in front of the members and the group.
- Listen to all opinions that express this issue.
- Encourage members to research the issue and participate in its treatment.
- The need to be realistic in all aspects of the issue.
- Taking into account the specificity of the issues, as each group has its own issues.
- Collective participation by the specialist and the members in confronting them with the possible means and methods.

Tricker's Group Study Guide:

1- History of the group:

- 1- When did the group's formation begin?
- 2- How was the group formed, who were the members who formed the group, and the reasons that led to the formation of the group?
- 3- What organisations have worked with this group in the past?
- 4- What kind of groups? A professional group, a class, a hobby group, etc.
- 5- Are some of the founding members still in the group?

2- Characteristics of the group:

- 1- What are the age groups among the members of the group?

- 2- What is the gender of the group members, male, female or mixed?
- 3- What are the origins of the daily culture that the group represents?
- 4- What are the ways and methods by which members of the congregation spend most of their time at school? At work? Or other ways?
- 5- What is the form of organisation in the group at present?
- 6- What kind of relationships between members?
- 7- Do any subgroups emerge in the group?
- 8- Do you observe evidence of patterns of social control operating in the group?

3- Members of the group:

- 1- What is the individual's age, gender, location, occupation and educational level?
- 2- What is the individual's position in the group, in the organisation and in society?
- 3- How does the individual relate to other members of the group? Who are his friends? With whom does he work and co-operate easily?
- 4- What are the individual's inclinations and abilities?
- 5- What are the individual's previous experiences in groups?
- 6- What kind of families and environments does the individual come from?
- 7- How innovative is the individual in the group and what responsibilities does he/she assume in the group's work?
- 8- To what extent does the member participate in the group's activity?
- 9- Does the member currently hold a particular position? Presidency or other leadership responsibilities?
- 10- What groups does the individual grow up in in the organisation or community?

4- The social worker's relationship with the group:

- 1- Who were the social workers who dealt with the groups and what kind of relationships did they have? How do the members talk about them?
- 2- What is the current social worker's relationship with the group and what does the group expect from him/her?

3- What kind of relationship does the current counsellor have with individual members?

4- How does the current counsellor define his/her role with the group?

5- In what ways does the group use other specialists to get their help as individuals or help in some special programmes?

5- Programmes:

1- What has the congregation done in terms of programmes and its current tendencies and interests?

2- What was the way in which programmes were planned and implemented in the past and what is the way in which the programme is currently carried out?

3- To what degree does the programme satisfy the needs of the congregation?

4- To what extent has the programme evolved from simple to more complex activities?

5- Are the resources and possibilities sufficient to satisfy the needs and inclinations of the congregation?

6- Is the programme aligned with the members of the parent organisation?

6- Individual and group goals:

1- What are the needs of the individuals and how much effort can the group make to fulfil these needs?

2- What are the immediate and long-term goals of the group?

3- Who are the individuals who need special help from the specialist and the group?

7- Growth of the group:

1- What stage of growth is the group currently in?

2- What is the counsellor's plan to help the group develop its growth?