

**Turkish Psychological Counseling and Guidance Association**

**Unit for Evaluation and Accreditation of Psychological Counseling and Guidance Programs**

**(PDR-EPDAB)**

**GROUP PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING PRACTICES**

**NATIONAL STANDARDS - VERSION 1.0**

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**UNIT FOR EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL  
COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE PROGRAMS (PDR-EPDAB)**

**GROUP PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING EXPERIENCE NATIONAL  
STANDARDS - VERSION 1.0**

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## **GROUP PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING EXPERIENCE**

In psychological counseling undergraduate education, it is important for psychological counselor candidates to experience the group psychological counseling process. According to the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), it is a necessity to ensure that psychological counselor candidates are equipped with theoretical and applied knowledge regarding the purposes of the group, group process, group dynamics, theories, intervention methods, and group work skills within the scope of competence to work with groups. According to these principles and standards, every psychological counselor candidate must undergo a group experience as a member of a group for at least 10 hours (CACREP, 2009).

Although different training models are used in group leadership training, it is emphasized that there are four main elements of basic training; (a) providing theoretical knowledge through didactic method, (b) observing a group process before leading a group, (c) experiencing group experience as a group member, and (d) performing group leadership or co-leadership under supervision (Stockton and Toth, 1996).

In our country, psychological counselor candidates are theoretically informed about group psychological counseling in the "Group Psychological Counseling" (theoretical) course taught in the 3rd year during their undergraduate education. Besides this, it is possible for psychological counselor candidates to undergo group psychological counseling experience and gain experience regarding group psychological counseling practices within the scope of the "Group Psychological Counseling Practices" course recommended to be conducted in the 8th semester in Psychological Counseling and Guidance undergraduate programs. Since the purpose of this commission is to determine the standards of group psychological counseling experience, standards regarding the conduct of this course have been determined in this commission work based on the definitions, learning outcomes, works performed, supervision opportunities provided, and assessment methods of this course.

First, definitions are included.

### **1. DEFINITIONS**

**Group Leader:** The person who is responsible for the planning and execution of group psychological counseling sessions (Jacobs et al., 2012) and who supports the development and interaction of members in the group by using psychological counseling skills in the sessions (MYK, 2017).

**Group Psychological Counseling:** Group psychological counseling refers to the professional and therapeutic helping process conducted by the psychological counselor, aimed at developing interpersonal relationships, emphasizing the emotions, values, and attitudes of members, and working towards the realization of each member's behavioral goal (MYK, 2017).

**Group Psychological Counseling Experience:** It is the realization of group psychological counseling sessions planned by the group leader together with group members (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005).

Group Member: Generally defines persons who come together with similar problems (Jacobs et al., 2012) and receive psychological help by sharing their individual anxieties, thoughts, and feelings within the group to make changes in their lives and cope with difficulties (MYK, 2017).

Leadership Skills: Leadership skills refer to the skills that the group leader and co-leader must possess for the effective conduct of the process in group psychological counseling, which help the development of the group and the interaction of group members with each other (MYK, 2017).

Psychological Counseling: It is a helping process involving a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals (ACA, 2014).

Psychological Counselor Candidate: Refers to the undergraduate student who performs psychological counseling and guidance practices and attends the psychological counseling and guidance undergraduate program.

Supervision: It is the process conducted by an experienced professional, which supports the development of the psychological counselor candidate, monitors the quality of receiving help and offering help within the group psychological counseling experience, and provides feedback to the psychological counselor candidate.

Co-Leader: It is the person who is frequently encountered especially in counselor education (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005), possesses the necessary psychological counseling skills for the effective conduct of the group psychological counseling process (MYK, 2017), contributes to group dynamics, and provides mutual support with the group leader (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005).

## **2. GROUP PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING PRACTICES COURSE**

**Course Name:** Group Psychological Counseling Practices (8th Semester) (1+2)

Course Description: This course is a course aiming for psychological counselor candidates to experience by living how a group psychological counseling group is formed, how group rules are determined, how behavioral goals are determined in the group, how exercises are used in the group process, how the process is conducted, what is experienced in the stages of the group process, how the group process is terminated, and how ethical elements are handled.

Psychological counselor candidates undergo a group experience as group members throughout a semester under the leadership of the faculty member conducting the course. Besides this, a different psychological counselor candidate from within the group performs leadership/co-leadership in the group each week.

### **Course Learning Outcomes:**

In the group psychological counseling process conducted by the group leader within the framework of counseling theories applied in group psychological counseling, psychological counselor candidates;

1. Learn how a group psychological counseling group is formed.

2. Understand by living how group rules and norms are determined.
3. Learn how behavioral goals are determined in the group within the group experience.
4. Grasp how the agenda is determined in the group process within the experience.
5. Understand how the group process is terminated.
6. Learn by living how ethical elements are handled.
7. Learn to respect individual and cultural differences.

### **3. PRACTICE OPPORTUNITIES TO BE PROVIDED TO PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELOR CANDIDATES**

Opportunities for the Conduct of the Group Psychological Counseling Practices Course:

It is recommended to consider the following points in the conduct of the course.

At the beginning of the academic semester, groups consisting of 12-14 students and faculty members who will lead each group are determined.

The faculty member responsible for the course performs leadership in the group psychological counseling practice arranged as 90 minutes each week and/or provides supervision and surveillance to the student who will perform leadership.

Before starting the group psychological counseling practice, in the first week, reminder theoretical training about the group psychological counseling process and functioning is given to psychological counselor candidates by the faculty member responsible for the course.

In the group psychological counseling process, candidate psychological counselors experience by living;

How structuring is done,

How rules are determined,

How behavioral goals are created,

Self-disclosure as a client,

How exercises are applied,

How the stages of the group function,

How the group is terminated.

Each psychological counselor candidate performs leadership/co-leadership in one session during the group psychological counseling process.

Psychological counselor candidates make preparations for the session they will lead (evaluation of which stage the group is in, evaluation of group dynamics, planning of warm-up, trust-building exercises etc. for the session) and present it to the course instructor.

The course instructor responsible for the course holds a meeting with the psychological counselor candidate who will perform co-leadership before the group session. Thus, the psychological counselor candidate prepares for the session they will co-lead.

The psychological counselor candidate who receives supervision for the session they will co-lead performs group leadership/co-leadership in the next session.

Following the group experience, in the supervision process, the course instructor gives supervision to the psychological counselor candidate who performed leadership/co-leadership regarding counseling skills in the session.

### **Start and End Times of Practices**

The Group Psychological Counseling Practices course continues throughout the academic semester as 3 course hours per week, consisting of 90 minutes of experience group (practice) and 45 minutes of supervision each week. The group psychological counseling process can be conducted between 12-13 weeks.

### **Supervision Opportunities That Can Be Provided by Supervisor Faculty Members:**

The faculty member responsible for the course fulfills supervisor duties within the scope of the course.

The supervisor comes together every week with the psychological counselor candidate who will perform co-leadership that week and the psychological counselor candidate who performed co-leadership in that week's group session and conducts a supervision session.

Besides this, the faculty member responsible for the course can preferably come together with all group members after the group session and conduct information and awareness development work regarding the skills exhibited by the leader and co-leader in that group session and the process.

Since it is an experiential group for educational purposes, at the end of each session, the faculty member may provide feedback only regarding the process without disrupting group cohesion in order to increase the awareness of psychological counselor candidates regarding the group psychological counseling process.

### **Qualifications and Duties of the Supervisor Faculty Member**

Recommended qualifications and duties for supervisor faculty members are listed below.

#### **Qualifications:**

To have a bachelor's and/or master's and doctoral degree in the field of Guidance and Psychological Counseling.

Having experience in group psychological counseling leadership is considered important.

#### **Duties:**

Taking into account the planning, execution, and evaluation steps of the group process.

Encouraging candidates regarding the use of group psychological counseling skills handled within the scope of exploration, insight, and action stages in the group psychological counseling process.

Ensuring the environment for psychological counselor candidates to participate in the group psychological counseling experience and express themselves in the process.

Giving feedback by examining the observation and evaluation forms that psychological counselor candidates will fill out during the experience group and supervision process.

Evaluating and giving feedback to each psychological counselor candidate in terms of leadership skills, therapeutic communication, and being able to follow group dynamics during the co-leadership process.

Explaining the skill areas falling within the scope of co-leadership competence to group leader candidates and giving feedback on these areas.

Determining peer feedback principles for the psychological counselor candidate undertaking the co-leadership duty and ensuring that students behave in accordance with these principles.

Evaluating all works done by psychological counselor candidates at the end of the semester and giving written and oral feedback.

Evaluating psychological counselor candidates in line with the criteria in the "Supervisor Faculty Member Evaluation Form" by examining observations and impressions during supervision and reports prepared by students at the end of the semester.

Qualifications and Duties of Supervisors in Schools or Other Institutions: No off-campus practice will be conducted in undergraduate program applications of this course in Turkey.

Types of Supervision to be Utilized: Individual and/or group supervision can be used.

## **WORKS EXPECTED FROM THE PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELOR CANDIDATE**

1. Psychological counselor candidates participate as group members in the group psychological counseling practice conducted by the course faculty member for 12-13 weeks within the scope of the Group Psychological Counseling Practices course. Besides this, they perform the leadership/co-leadership duty at least once in the group in the plan and manner directed by the course faculty member.
2. Participates in group psychological counseling sessions on time as a member.
3. Takes active responsibility in the formation and maintenance of group rules and norms.
4. Fulfils their responsibilities in ensuring confidentiality, which is one of the group rules and the most important one ethically.
5. While going through the group psychological counseling experience, helps the formation of group dynamics as a member by providing active participation in the group.

6. Tries to listen to, understand, and support the member speaking in the group. If they have similar experiences, they are willing to share them in the group.
7. While the psychological counselor candidate goes through the group psychological counseling experience, they are expected to try to use the following skills actively: Attending, active listening, supporting and encouraging, self-disclosure, giving feedback without making comments, obeying group rules, using here and now, asking appropriate questions, linking, etc.
8. Psychological counselor candidates fill out the "Self-Reflection Report" regarding the session they attended each week and present it to the course faculty member.
9. The psychological counselor candidate fills out the "Preparation for Group Session Form" before the session they will co-lead. Before the session, they meet with the course faculty member and receive supervision at the point of preparation for the session.
10. The psychological counselor candidate fills out the "Group Session Evaluation Form" after the session they co-led. They deliver it to the course faculty member and receive supervision from the course faculty member regarding the week they performed co-leadership.

### **Success Evaluation Criteria**

To evaluate success, studies gathered under two main headings below can be taken into consideration. It is recommended that points to be given to these studies be determined and weighted by taking into account the number of studies, time spent, labor put forth, and the degree of competencies developed.

#### **I. Works performed and reporting of works**

Preparation of self-reflection report for the session after each group session

Preparation of session preparation report for co-leadership

Preparation of session transcript and/or extended summary for co-leadership

Preparation of session evaluation report for co-leadership

Preparation of general self-reflection report

#### **II. Evaluation**

Evaluation of prepared reports by the supervisor faculty member

Preparation of General Self-Evaluation report

Determination of Assessment and Evaluation Tools of the Course for Learning Outcomes

Since group psychological counseling practices are carried out within the scope of the Group Psychological Counseling Practices course in the 8th Semester in PDR undergraduate programs, it is recommended to use the following assessment and evaluation tools to evaluate the learning outcomes of these courses here.

- a. Regular participation in the conducted group psychological counseling process
- a. Timely submission of self-reflection reports for each session
- b. Timely submission of the self-reflection report regarding the general group psychological counseling experience
- c. Reports regarding co-leadership (Session Preparation Form and Session Evaluation Form)
- d. Self-Evaluation Forms (Supervisor Faculty Member and Self-Evaluation Forms)

## **APPROPRIATE ETHICAL BEHAVIORS IN GROUP PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING**

Psychological counselor candidates are expected to perform group psychological counseling practices as leader / co-leader in accordance with professional ethical principles and standards, also benefiting from the "Psychological Counseling Code of Ethics" booklet published by the Turkish Psychological Counseling and Guidance Association (2021). The supervisor faculty member is responsible for psychological counselor candidates being knowledgeable about appropriate ethical behaviors and the ethical principles and standards mentioned above.

All psychological counselor candidates in the group psychological counseling practices group must comply with the rules determined by the group as well as professional ethical principles and standards. Appropriate ethical behaviors in group psychological counseling should be handled within the scope of the course under supervision control theoretically and practically in the group psychological counseling course.

Ethical principles that need to be considered in the group psychological counseling process are:

The psychological counselor;

Conducts group psychological counseling practice only within the boundaries of competence based on trainings and supervised practices related to group psychological counseling.

Acts according to the "First do no harm" principle.

Does not use their knowledge, status, or power to use clients' resources for their own benefit.

Is aware of how their own values, attitudes, and beliefs may affect the group process and avoids imposing these on clients.

Refrains from entering into or maintaining counseling relationships if they do not have the competence to help clients professionally.

Can refer clients to other psychological counselors.

Takes necessary precautions to protect each group member from physical or psychological injuries that another group member or group interaction may cause to each member.

Determines group participants in accordance with the purpose and structure of the group when they will provide group psychological counseling service.

Conducts preliminary interviews with potential group members at the beginning of the group psychological counseling process.

Tries to include members whose goals overlap with the group and who have a high probability of benefiting from the group.

Forms the group according to preliminary interviews and has the informed consent/approval form containing group psychological counseling process rules and mutual obligations signed by group members/parents/responsible persons.

Includes information such as the purpose and goals of the group, functioning of the group, rights and responsibilities of group members, importance and limitations of the confidentiality principle in the group process, potential risks in the group process, roles and responsibilities of the group leader, competence level and theoretical approach of the group leader, storage of records, place, time, pricing of the group, and that they can leave the group when they want in the informed consent/approval form.

In group psychological counseling practices, in-class group psychosocial activities, it is necessary to inform members about the limits of confidentiality at the beginning of the process, explain situations where the group leader cannot guarantee confidentiality, explain conditions for removal from the group, create group rules, emphasize the importance of confidentiality and state this as a rule, and ensure participants approve it.

Confidentiality can be breached if group members pose a danger to themselves or others, if a situation of abuse towards children or the elderly is known, and if information is requested by a court order.

Informs the client about with whom the results obtained from measurement tools in the group psychological counseling process will be shared.

Data of measurement results performed in the group psychological counseling process can be discussed within the group if it has therapeutic value after permission is obtained from the client.

The psychological counselor can share information regarding the psychological counseling process with the person from whom they receive supervision, provided that they obtain the approval of the individual receiving help service or hide their personal information.

Obtains the written permission of the individual, or their parent if the individual is a student, before recording the voice or image of clients.

Informs group members about the importance of keeping what is shared in group psychological counseling within the group and encourages them to comply with confidentiality.

Encourages the client about the member who wants to leave the group notifying the group leader and other group members that they are thinking of leaving and explaining their reasons.

If a member leaves the group, the psychological counselor helps them reach different options where they can get help.

Need to inform the client about limits of confidentiality, situations requiring its breach, and referral to a hospital or another specialist for the client's health and safety when there is a serious risk, and appropriately turn the informed consent given by the client for the psychological counseling relationship into a written and signed document.

Shares confidential information in hand when they need to protect the client, when there is a legal obligation, or when they detect a possible danger to other persons or society (ending life, infectious disease, etc.).

The leader/co-leader makes necessary arrangements for the continuation of the psychological counseling service in situations where they will leave group leadership due to reasons such as illness, travel, and termination.

Cannot enter into a romantic or sexual relationship with their clients, former clients, and their relatives.

Does not engage in romantic or sexual verbal or non-verbal behaviors towards their clients and former clients.

Cannot enter into a counseling relationship with their friends or family members.

Avoids all kinds of dual relationships that may negatively affect their objectivity, competence, or performance and increase the risk of the client being harmed in this process during the helping relationship process with the client or group members, unless it is for the benefit of the client or group member.

Protects the confidentiality of information shared by the client and records containing this information.

Respects the client's identity, personality, views, and psychological counseling goal.

Respects the client's privacy and requests only information they think will contribute to the psychological counseling process.

Trusts the client's power to solve their own problems, believes in their freedom to make their own decisions.

Prepares an integrative psychological counseling plan by working together with their client. Gives clients a say regarding the continuity, applicability, and effectiveness of plans during psychological counseling.

### **Sample Forms That Can Be Used Within the Scope of the Course**

1. Informed Consent Form: Read and signed by psychological counselor candidates who will join the group before the group psychological counseling process begins. (APPENDIX-1)

2. Preparation for Group Session Form (For Co-Leadership Session): Filled out by the psychological counselor candidate before the session where co-leadership will be performed and presented to the course faculty member. (APPENDIX-2)
3. Group Session Evaluation Form (For Co-Leadership Session): Filled out by the psychological counselor candidate after the session where co-leadership was performed and presented to the course faculty member. (APPENDIX-3)
4. General Self-Reflection Report (End of Semester): Prepared by the psychological counselor candidate at the end of the semester regarding the entire group experience and co-leadership experience and presented to the faculty member. (APPENDIX-4)
5. General Self-Evaluation Report (End of Semester): Prepared by the psychological counselor candidate at the end of the semester and presented to the faculty member. (APPENDIX-5)

## **APPENDIX-1**

### **Informed Consent Form**

This form has been prepared to inform psychological counselor candidates about the process within the scope of the Group Psychological Counseling Practices course conducted in the .....University Faculty of Education PDR Department and to explain their responsibilities in the execution of the group practice process.

Details regarding group rules and the execution of the group are presented below. Please sign this form and send it to your group leader.

Faculty Member Name-Surname:

Email Address:

### **Basic Information Regarding the Execution of the Group**

Group day and time:

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Venue where the group will be conducted:

### **Group Rules**

1. As long as the group continues, you are expected to participate in the group regularly and on time on relevant days and hours. If you cannot attend the session that day due to an important problem (such as severe illness), you must call the group leader at least one day in advance and explain the reason for your inability to come.
2. You must not share what other members tell in the group with anyone outside the group. Do not talk about what is spoken in the group with another member from the group outside the group session. Violation of confidentiality (even if not with bad intention, even if inadvertently) means you will be considered unsuccessful in the course. Details of confidentiality will be shared in the 1st Session of the group.
3. You are expected to try to listen to, understand, and support the person speaking in the group. Sharing if you have similar experiences, and making an effort to understand the experiences

of the sharing member even if you have not experienced similar things are important for contributing to the group and benefiting from the group.

4. If there is something that bothers you in the group, it is recommended that you share this.
5. You are expected to present your feedback by paying attention to the issues we determined together with the group.
6. Do not eat or drink anything other than water-tea-coffee during the session.
7. Keep your mobile phone and notification sounds on the computer turned off during the group.
8. Other rules we will determine together with the group will be added.

Rules to be Followed in the Online Group Psychological Counseling Process Are Stated Below

1. In online parts of the group, you need to participate in the group from an environment where the camera is on, you are alone, and no one can hear you and other members. (It is expected that there are no distracting elements etc. in the background, not being constantly in motion when connected via mobile phone, not walking around rooms, participating in a sitting position where your face is fully visible, choosing clothing that will make it felt that you are participating in the group with care.) Arranging these conditions is the responsibility of group members and the group leader.
2. Group members cannot take audio or video recordings in sessions.
3. In online sessions, group members and the leader must participate in zoom meetings with real name-surname information.
4. If a photo is desired to be taken at any moment, group members and the leader will ask for permission from everyone.

Skills expected to be used in the group are: Attending, active listening, supporting and encouraging, self-disclosure, giving feedback without making comments, benefiting from the group, supporting the development of other members, enjoying the group experience, obeying group rules, focusing on here and now, asking appropriate questions.

[ ] I have been informed about group psychological counseling sessions. I agree to obey group rules.

Name Surname:

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## APPENDIX-2

Preparation for Group Session Form (For Co-Leadership Session)

Name Surname:

Session Date:

Supervisor Faculty Member:

- A. Summarize the content of the previous group session.

B. What were the most important events occurring in the group session? Explain what therapeutic factors were involved in each event/situation and how they played a role.

C. Write your observations that you consider important regarding group members as a group leader candidate in previous group sessions.

D. State your goals in the group session you will co-lead.

E. Write interventions and exercises you plan to do in the session, if any, in accordance with the stage the group is in.

F. What are your questions you want to dwell on in the supervision process?

G. State if there are other things you want to add.

### **APPENDIX-3**

#### **Group Session Evaluation Form (For Co-Leadership Session)**

Name Surname:

Session Date:

Supervisor Faculty Member:

A. Write the summary of the group session:

B. What were the most important events occurring in the group session? Explain what therapeutic factors were involved in each event/situation and how they played a role.

C. State your observations regarding group members that you evaluate as important.

D. Were you able to reach your goals in the group session? Explain.

E. How do you evaluate your skills exhibited in the session?

F. State if there are other things you want to add.

### **APPENDIX-4**

#### **General Self-Reflection Report (End of Semester)**

Name Surname:

Supervisor Faculty Member:

How do you evaluate the group psychological counseling experience process in general?  
What did you gain, what did you learn in the process?

What did you experience regarding self-disclosure in the experience group? What were your awarenesses regarding yourself in the process?

What do you think about the experience and contributions of being in the client seat?

What are your experiences in the process carried out as an assistant psychological counselor?  
What are the difficulties you encountered and your strengths in this process?

What kind of contributions did the experience of going through this life have on you regarding managing a psychological counseling group? How? Can you give examples?

Which of the teaching methods used were effective in terms of enabling you to learn group psychological counseling skills? What kind of effect did it have? Which ones were ineffective? Why?

State if there are other things you want to add.

## **APPENDIX-5**

General Self-Evaluation Report (End of Semester)

Name Surname:

Supervisor Faculty Member:

Write your self-evaluations regarding each item below. Give yourself a score between 1-10.

Regular participation in the group: ( )

Preparing session self-reflection reports and submitting on time: ( )

Preparing group session preparation report and submitting on time: ( )

Preparing group evaluation report and submitting on time: ( )

Behaving in accordance with ethical rules during the group: ( )

Contributing to the formation of group norms during the group: ( )

Achieving individual behavioral goals and behaving encouragingly and supportively regarding group members achieving their goals during the group: ( )

Using psychological counseling skills during the group: ( )

State if there are other things you want to add.

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