3 Effective Group Leadership

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Before me is an opening in time

behind lies a lifetime of training,

- What your preferred style of leadership is
- How the personal and professional skills needed to run a successful group match with the skills you already have
- How comfortable or uncomfortable you would feel co-leading a group

personality. There are different types of leaders, just as there are distinct types of groups, and the appropriateness of an individual for a particular group depends on many complex and interrelated factors. The way a leader functions in one group may be very inappropriate in another (**Forsyth, 2019**; **Kottler & Englar-Carlson, 2014**). For example, a **transformational leader** (an individual who empowers group members and shares power with them in working toward the renewal of a group) may be needed when a group is floundering. However, a **traditional leader** (an individual who is controlling and exercises power from the top down as an expert) may be appropriate in running a hierarchical group that is diverse and whose members are physically separated.

In this chapter, multiple aspects of leadership are examined—for example, styles, personalities, and core and specific skills. Which behaviors and competencies work best in particular circumstances is also considered, along with other group leadership functions, co-leadership, training, and supervision. However, first we turn our attention to defining *leadership*.

transformational process in which individuals are permitted to influence and motivate others to promote the attaining of group and individual goals" (p. 343). This definition encompasses many of the most important factors of leadership (social, reciprocity, legitimate influence, motivation, and cooperation for the achievement of common goals) and distinguishes leadership from control (**Parsons & Shils, 1951**) and power (**French & Raven, 1960**). Forsyth's definition is the basis on which leadership is conceptualized in this chapter. It is assumed that a leader is an individual who implements a number of facilitative qualities in a group, such as envisioning goals, motivating people, and achieving a workable unity in an appropriate and timely way.

to explain group and individual behavior. These leaders interpret, give advice, and generally direct the movement of the group much as parents control the actions of a child. They demand obedience and expect conformity from their followers. Authoritarian leaders are often charismatic and manipulative (**McClure, 1994**). Frequently, they structure their groups using the wheel model (explained in **Chapter 2**), which results in an autocratic **leader-centered group** . All information is filtered through them, and they decide which information to share with the group (see **Figure 3.1**). Such leaders may coerce group members under their charge because they believe people are not ambitious and are somewhat lazy. This style of leadership is sometimes referred to as *guru oriented* (**Starak, 1988**). **McGregor (1960)** characterizes this type of leader as a so-called **Theory X leader** . Adolf Hitler, Fidel Castro, and Mao Zedong exemplified this type of leadership, although some charismatic political and corporate leaders may display characteristics of this style. Most leader-centered groups place a strong emphasis on the personality of one individual, giving that individual a great deal of power and trust. In these groups, chaos erupts when the recognized leader is absent.

Democratic group leaders are more group centered and less directive than authoritarian leaders. Individuals operating from this perspective, such as **Carl Rogers (1970)**, trust group participants to develop their own potential and that of other group members. These leaders serve as facilitators of the group process and not as directors of it. They cooperate, collaborate, and share responsibilities with the group. Individuals who embrace this perspective are more humanistically and phenomenologically oriented (see **Figure 3.2**). **McGregor (1960)** refers to group-centered leaders as **Theory Y leaders** . They think people are self-starters and will work hard if given freedom. Leaders who have exemplified this approach to a group facilitate conditions to "promote self-awareness and options to develop the guru within" (**Starak, 1988**, p. 104). Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. led using this style.

Laissez-faire leaders are leaders in name only. They do not provide any structure or direction for their groups, so members are left with the responsibility of leading. As a result, the group operates from a **group-centered perspective**, focusing on members and interpersonal processes. The disadvantage of this type of leadership is that the group as a whole may be slow to establish agendas and achieve goals. Some inexperienced group leaders choose this style in an attempt to be nonthreatening; others pick this style to avoid making any hard decisions, thereby increasing their popularity. (Being liked or popular is not a key characteristic of being an effective leader, by the way.) Still others believe this group style works best and that the group must take care of itself from the beginning. Unfortunately, many laissez-faire group leaders and their groups do not accomplish anything because no clear purpose and goals emerge. Interactions within a laissez-faire group are represented in **Figure 3.3**.

Whether a group is leader or group centered depends on who set it up, under what circumstances, and for what purpose (**Gardner, 1990**). So-called **leaderless groups** rotate the leadership role among their members, and there is no designated leader/facilitator (**Brown, 2014**). In these groups, leaders emerge as the group develops. One type of leaderless group is the self-help group (e.g., Alcoholics Anonymous, Parents Anonymous). Another form is the mutual support group, exemplified by some women's groups that form around such concrete and specific purposes as the accomplishment of goals, babysitting cooperatives, political objectives, or a hobby or interest such as hiking or quilting (**Kees, 1999**). In many forms of these groups, peer leadership works well. In such cases, nonprofessional leaders develop as their group progresses. They usually end up creating a leadership style that feels comfortable for them, such as being confrontational or collaborative. Occasionally, they undergo brief leadership training by reading manuals or taking courses. Although some leaders of leaderless groups are effective, this approach is developed through trial and error. It has the potential to be destructive as well as constructive.

Brief Case

Omar's Emergence

When Jared joined the Gamblers Anonymous group, two aspects of the group struck him. First, he was one of the younger members. Second, a rather old, grizzly man by the name of Omar led the group. Jared was not sure if he could relate to anyone in the group that well, but Omar immediately made him feel welcomed and a part of the group by relating part of his life story. It seems that Omar had come into the group several decades ago at about the same age as Jared. An older member who was then the leader of the group had helped him understand both the nature of his problem and himself. Omar had been grateful and had vowed he would

Leadership Styles for Different Groups

"Expert leaders describe their effectiveness as perceiving, understanding, and formulating observed group experience into action" (**Ward & Ward, 2014**, p. 18). However, different types of groups demand specific styles of leadership. For example, in psychoeducational and task/work groups, leaders do best when they are direct and keep the group focused on the topic or job at hand. Psychotherapy and counseling groups, though, require that leaders provide support, caring, and sometimes confrontation and structure. They are more intrapersonal in nature. Regardless, the Association for Specialists in Group Work's (ASGW) Professional Standards for the Training of Group Workers (**Association for Specialists in Group Work, 2000**), "specifies a minimum level of 1 hour a week of planning time for group leaders (either individually or with a co-leader). According to these standards, leading effective groups demands constant assessment of leader skills and interventions, group development, and individual progress of group members" (**DeLucia-Waack & Fauth, 2004**, p. 137).

Luke (2014) states that according to **Group Systems Theory** (**Connors & Caple, 2005**), group leaders have the option to focus on one of three levels of the group as a system: the intrapersonal, the interpersonal, or the group as a whole. The **intrapersonal style of group leadership** stresses the inward reactions of individual group members, and the **interpersonal**

core mechanisms of group leadership are emotional stimulation, caring, meaning attribution, and executive function. **Lieberman et al. (1973)** first described these universal central factors and distinguished them from a group leader's orientation (theoretical approach).

In all types of groups, leaders must promote sharing on an affective as well as an intellectual level (**emotional stimulation**). Feelings, as well as thoughts, need to be expressed. For example, instead of asking Stephanie what she thought about Wanda's remarks, the group leader could ask her how she felt about them. Furthermore, group leaders must show **caring** (a genuine concern for others) through their openness and honesty with group members. Thus, Logan needs to let Dominic know he honestly wants to know what he is thinking and that he values their relationship whether they have the same ideas or not. **Meaning attribution** refers to the leader's ability to explain to group members in a cognitive way what is occurring in the group. For instance, the leader might say, "Members of the group seem reticent to talk today about themselves. It appears we are having a hard time trusting one another." To function optimally, group leaders need, "to learn how to attribute meaning to the events and experiences occurring during the life of a group" both for others and for themselves (**Conyne, 1998**, p. 255). Finally, in the **executive function** role, leaders manage the group as a social system that allows the group and its members to achieve specific goals (**Polcin, 1991**). In this role, leaders remind the group periodically what it has done and what it is doing about agreed-on goals formulated earlier. For instance, the leader may say, "We have formulated a plan. Our challenge now is to implement it."

Reflection

Personal Qualities of Effective Group Leaders

Every group leader brings his or her personal qualities to a group, including preferred ways of perceiving the world and experiences in relating to oneself and others. Group leaders must ask themselves such questions as "Who am I?" "Who am I with you?" and "Who are we together?" (**Hulse-Killacky, Schumacher, & Kraus, 1994**).

The way the questions are asked, as well as the answers that are derived, plays a strong part in determining how an individual's personal qualities translate into leadership. For example, if an individual does not have a strong sense of self, then it is doubtful he or she will be effective as a group leader. Similarly, if an individual cannot keep his or her identity while appreciating others, then it is unlikely this leader will exert a strong influence in the group. Personal qualities of effective leaders have traditionally been explained through examining their personality traits or learned skills. Effective group leaders probably use the strongest aspects of their personalities and knowledge and combine these with experiences in their leading of groups (**Johnson & Johnson, 2017**).

The Trait Approach

Leaders who have been well trained in personal counseling are often assumed able to transfer their relationship skills to conducting groups. However, such is not the case. The dynamics associated with working with individuals, as opposed to groups, differ considerably. Just wanting to be a good group leader is not enough; one must have experience. Indeed, "group leaders must experience the power of group dynamics both as a member and a leader to truly understand them" (**DeLucia-Waack, 2000b**, p. 325).

Consequently, would-be group leaders need to explore through both experience and reflection whether they are suited by temperament and skills to operate as the leader of a group. **Bates et al. (1982)** recommend that potential group leaders examine their own personalities by using Jungian-based instruments, such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, to understand how they might function in a group. Other group experts recommend different ways of self-assessment and receiving needed training. For instance, **Bohecker and Horn (2016)** found counselors in training (CIT) benefitted from a mindfulness experiential small group. At the completion of training, CIT had increased mindfulness skills, empathy, and counseling self-efficacy. On the other hand, **Bjornestad, Mims, and Mims (2016)** found service learning integrated into a group counseling course positively impacted student learning outcomes as well as self-efficacy in facilitating a group.

especially in group work. Among the advantages of theories is that they are practical. A good theory helps a practitioner understand and find meaning in experiences by providing a conceptual framework. "Like the scientist, a counselor [or a group worker] uses scientific theory to organize his or her knowledge of behavior" (**Claiborn, 1987**, p. 288). The lack of a theoretical framework can result in confusion.

A second advantage of theory is that it serves as a guide to expected behavior. In group counseling, for instance, a **settling-down period** usually occurs in which members test one another and the group before the group unifies. Group leaders guided by such theoretical knowledge are better prepared to respond appropriately to settling-down times than those who are unaware.

A third advantage of a theory is its **heuristic** (research) dimension. Theory is the foundation on which research is built. Research, in turn, strengthens the quality of theory. It is difficult, if not impossible, to have a theory without a research component. Another advantage of knowing and operating from a theoretical perspective is that the practitioner and group may make more progress than they would otherwise. Group leaders without any theory behind their interventions will probably find that their groups never reach a productive stage.

A further argument for the employment of theory in groups is that it helps practitioners formulate their own personalized approach to the groups in which they work. **Patterson (1985, 1986)** has made the point that some practitioners continue to repeat mistakes of the past or rediscover events of past decades because they are ignorant about how theories developed. Leaders who are most aware of the past will most likely be skilled innovators of new methods and more highly developed in their ability to integrate and personalize information and process.

who stick with one theory may be hard pressed to explain certain actions in their groups.

A second problem in selecting a theory is that theories may become political. Practitioners of specific approaches tend to reinforce one another and exclude others. This practice may produce theoretical enrichment, but it sets up a **we/they mentality** in which practitioners of other points of view are seen as "uninformed," "naive," or "heretical." In such cases, potential contributions to a theory from outside sources are never made, and questionable assumptions are not examined.

A third drawback of theories is that they have many overlapping dimensions. For example, terms originated by Alfred Adler and Carl Rogers, such as *empathy, acceptance,* and *inferiority complex,* have essentially been incorporated into major leadership theories. As a result, the meanings of these concepts can be quite different from their origins. Such imprecise usage can be confusing to novice practitioners and the public.

Another troublesome aspect about theories involves research. Some research (e.g., **Korchin, 1976**) supports the premise that theoretical orientation and outcome are unrelated. This research states that experienced therapists tend to be more effective and similar in what they do than inexperienced therapists. If research continues to uphold this finding, then group leaders, especially those with a counseling background, may pay less attention to theoretical orientations.

A further limitation of theories, and a potentially dangerous one, is that group leaders who use theory may notice only select details about their group members (**Kottler, 1994**). In such cases, both members and leaders are placed in potential jeopardy. For example, if Kathy ignores the more angry side of Brandon and other group members because her theory is

Knowledge and Skills of Effective Group Leaders

Group leader knowledge and skills are displayed in different ways at various stages during the life of a group. Therefore, to make appropriate leadership decisions, group leaders must be well educated and know what to do and how to do it. In addition, the leader must be timely and appropriate. A variety of group techniques are possible, but effective group leaders use themselves, other group members, and the group process in helping facilitate change. No "cookbook" is available detailing exactly when to use specific interventions. Responsibility ultimately falls on group leaders to determine what to do, when to do it, and how.

Core Group Knowledge and Skills

Regardless of the type of group, some critical knowledge and core skills must be exercised if the group is to be successful. The **ASGW's (2000)** Professional Standards for the Training of Group Workers lists knowledge and skills needed for groups that include:

- Course work (at least one course in group work) and experiential requirements (at least 10 clock hours of direct observation and participation in a group experience as a member or leader)

and reflective. At the same time, a number of special skills are unique to group leaders and to the groups they are leading. Group work is an interactive system in which attention to one group member or topic will have an impact on all group members and the group process. Thus, group leaders must be engaged in:

- Opening and closing group meetings in ways that keep the group moving, focused, and on task and respectful of individual members; and
- Ensuring that all members have the opportunity to express themselves.

Corey (2016) has formulated a chart based on **Nolan's (1978)** ideas about group leadership. It points out essential skills that group leaders must have at their command (see **Table 3.1**).

Table 3.1 Overview of Group Leadership Skills.

Skills	Description	Aims and Desired Outcomes
Active Listening	Attending to verbal and nonverbal aspects of communication without judging or evaluating.	To encourage trust and client self-disclosure and exploration.
Restating	Saying in slightly different words what a participant has said to clarify its meaning.	To determine whether the leader has understood correctly the client's statement; to provide support and clarification.
Clarifying	Grasping the essence of a message at both the feeling and	To help clients sort out conflicting and confused

Reflecting Feelings	Communicating understanding of the content of feelings.	To let members know that they are heard and understood beyond the level of words.
Supporting	Providing encouragement and reinforcement.	To create an atmosphere that encourages members to continue desired behaviors; to provide help when clients are facing difficult struggles; to create trust.
Empathizing	Identifying with clients by assuming their frames of references.	To foster trust in the therapeutic relationship; to communicate understanding; to encourage deeper levels of self-exploration.
Facilitating	Opening up clear and direct communication within the group; helping members assume increasing responsibility for the group's direction.	To promote effective communication among members; to help members reach their own goals in the group.
Initiating	Taking action to bring about group participation and to introduce new directions in the group.	To prevent needless group floundering; to increase the pace of group process.

		inspire members to fully develop their potential.
Dealing with Silence	Refraining from verbal and nonverbal communication.	To allow for reflection and assimilation; to sharpen focus; to integrate emotionally intense material; to help the group use its own resources.
Blocking	Intervening to stop counterproductive behavior in the group.	To protect members; to enhance the flow of group process.
Terminating	Preparing the group to end a session or finalize its history.	To prepare members to assimilate, integrate, and apply in-group learning to everyday life.

Note: The format of this chart is based on Edwin J. Nolan's article "Leadership Interventions for Promoting Personal Mastery," *Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 1978, 3(3), 132–138.

Among the specific skills that differ significantly between group and individual work are:

- **Facilitating**—In groups, the leader facilitates by helping open up communication among group members (e.g., "Ryan, how do you want to respond to Kyle?"). In individual counseling, facilitation involves a

interaction among members is encouraged within the group. Linking also promotes the development of facilitative relationships that have been found to be essential for effective group functioning (p. 96).

- **Diagnosing**—In this activity, the leader identifies certain behaviors and categories into which an individual or group fits. Diagnosing in groups does not usually include psychological instruments but is based more on leader observations. For instance, in a task/work group, a leader may notice the group has a tendency to blame rather than to develop constructive ideas for different ways to do things. To help the group grow, the leader must be a good observer who knows how to overcome distractive or disruptive behavior.
- **Reality testing**—This skill is used when a group member makes an important decision, such as changing jobs or taking a risk. At such moments, the leader will have other group members give feedback to the one who is contemplating a change on how realistic they consider the decision to be. For instance, members might tell Jack they think he has the skills to be successful in sales as well as in public relations. Through this process, the individual is able to evaluate more thoroughly his or her decision.
- **Modification**—Modification is a skill "designed to elicit potentially productive feedback from a group member" (**Clark, 1995**, p. 14). It is primarily employed when one group member gives another group member negative feedback that the second group member either cannot accept or becomes defensive about. Its purpose is to safeguard members and create a constructive atmosphere in the group. For instance, if Jayne tells Dylan, "You are selfish and never share your thoughts with the group," she could be asked to restate her thoughts and end up saying, "I think you have something to offer the group, and I'd like to hear more from you." In modification, the group leader must use a logical sequence by first "acknowledging the emotional reaction of a member" receiving negative feedback and then affirming the "potentially constructive intent" of the sender (**Clark, 1995**, p. 16).

what she sees happening. In that way, he can logically ask Ruth Ann to help him understand what is upsetting her.

Overall, more than two dozen leadership skills can be used in various types of groups. Initial research by **Toth and Stockton (1996)** suggests that general group skills, such as here-and-now interventions (immediacy) as well as specific skills (e.g., blocking), can be taught using a systematic, microskills format as first devised by **Ivey (1971)**. The implementation of this research is yet to come, but the identification and mastery of leadership skills are important. By being familiar with the skills and how they are employed, group leaders increase the range of alternative actions (**Ivey, Ivey, & Zalaquett, 2014**) they can use at appropriate times in the life of the group.

Each of these roles takes specific skills. In the **traffic director** role, for instance, leaders "help members become aware of behaviors that open communication channels and those that inhibit communication" (**Bates et al., 1982**, p. 96). The role is both proactive and reactive in the prevention of certain behaviors (e.g., blocking "why" questions, focusing on the past, gossiping) and the promotion of others (e.g., actively listening, responding in a nonjudgmental way). In a similar manner, in the role of **modeler of appropriate behavior**, leaders must consciously pick actions they think group members need to learn through passive and active demonstrations. These ways of modeling can include deliberate use of self-disclosure, role-plays, speech patterns, and acts of creativity. For example, when group leaders employ voice tones that signify happiness or sadness, they are helping their group members learn directly and indirectly ways to express their feelings.

The **interactional catalyst** role requires that leaders promote interaction between group members without calling attention to themselves. One way to do this is to look at various members when it might be appropriate for them to respond. Being an interactional catalyst is a functional process that continues throughout the group and can take various forms, such as questioning whether two or more group members have something to say to each other and then being silent to see what happens.

Brief Case

Nolan Gets a Nod

Nolan characterized himself as a "shy guy" who was "willing to try almost anything once." Therefore, when he joined a singles group, he thought he would have plenty of opportunities to try many things. Instead, a few individuals dominated the group, and Nolan had a hard time getting a word in edgewise, until one day when the group leader looked around the group

Five specific techniques for managing conflict in groups have been proposed by **Simpson (1977)** and elaborated on by **Kormanski (1982)**: withdrawal from the conflict, suppressing the conflict, integrating conflicting ideas to form new solutions, working out a compromise, and using power to resolve the conflict.

- **Withdrawal from the conflict**—This strategy involves leaders distancing themselves from conflict and postponing interventions. It has the advantage of letting leaders gather more data and observe longer without becoming excessively involved. It also allows leaders to consult and use resolution strategies later if issues are not settled. The disadvantages of this approach are that conflict may escalate, and withdrawal is completely ineffective in dealing with a crisis.
- **Suppressing conflict**—As a strategy, suppression consists of playing down conflict. It is often used when issues are minor. It keeps emotions under control and helps group leaders build a supportive climate. Suppression is most effective when conflict issues are unimportant or when focusing on a relationship is more important than concentrating on an issue. The disadvantages of suppression are that it fails to resolve conflict and allows feelings to smolder and possibly erupt later. In addition, leaders may be perceived as weak or insensitive when they use this strategy.
- **Integrating conflicting ideas to form new solutions**—Consensus is the idea behind integration. In using this strategy, group leaders try to get all parties to reexamine a situation and identify points of agreement. The goals are to develop new alternatives, learn how to open up lines of communication better, and build cohesive unity and commitment. One example of integration is **mediation** : having a third party hear arguments about a situation and then render a decision. The disadvantages of the integrative approach include the large amount of time it takes to implement and the unwillingness of some individuals to set aside their own goals and work for the good of the group.

Overall, a prerequisite to becoming an effective leader is learning which strategies and roles to employ in conflict situations and when. **Kraus et al. (2001)** encourage leaders to approach such situations first by attending to and valuing them. Leaders must, "internally process challenges in part by asking themselves supervision-like questions before effective interventions can follow" (p. 32). Kraus et al. suggest a "menu" of six non-exhaustive and non-exclusive questions that cover such important topics as member selection, systems theory, group dynamics and stages, individual members' group issues, emerging themes, and leader introspection. "By leaders carefully considering which perspective—which cuisine—may offer the best opportunity to harness the positive energy present in the group at that moment, an appropriate approach will follow" (p. 44). Other experiences, such as observing or co-leading groups, can also be enlightening in learning how to handle conflict and not become defensive when challenges occur.

The advantages associated with co-leading a group, according to **Carroll, Bates, and Johnson (2004)**, **Corey et al. (2014)**, and **Jacobs, Schimmel, Masson, and Harvill (2016)**, include the following:

- **Ease of handling the group in difficult situations**—When two leaders are present, they may help each other facilitate the movement of the group. For example, one leader can shift the topic or the focus of the group if the other leader becomes bogged down. Before and after group sessions, co-leaders can plan strategies and discuss problems that they, members, or the group as a whole is experiencing.
- **Uses of modeling**—With co-leaders, group members are exposed to two models of human interaction. They see how individuals can relate to each other in positive ways and how they can disagree and still cooperate. When co-leaders are of the opposite gender, members may grow by more fully realizing and reliving earlier family dynamics and working on any unresolved issues that are brought up.
- **Feedback**—Regardless of the issues members discuss, they usually receive twice the leader feedback when the group is co-led. This input helps members realize more fully how others perceive them and gives them a different perspective than they would receive otherwise. For example, one co-leader may comment on intrapersonal aspects of a group member's behavior, whereas the other focuses on interpersonal relationships. In such situations, leaders may also stimulate each other more and take corrective measures to avoid **burnout** (becoming physically and emotionally exhausted). Leaders, like members of the group, may grow more than they would if they were leading the group alone.
- **Shared specialized knowledge**—In groups with co-leaders, there is a primary advantage for all concerned when the leaders share specialized training with each other and the group. This type of sharing can come in response to a situation in the group, such as dealing with anger, and can be done privately or publicly. In these cases, everyone benefits because

goals of members. In such cases, the impact of both group leaders is eventually diminished.

- **Competition** ***(Okech, 2008; Trotzer, 2007)***—Competition between group leaders is often the result of a lack of *reflect practice,* where leaders do not reflect individually and together on their experiences about helping people. This lack of insight and awareness may be manifest in several ways—for example, through trying to gain the attention of the group or through using opposing theories. The point is that competition between group leaders will cost the group part of its efficiency and productivity. Leaders may lose respect for each other in such an atmosphere.
- **Collusion**—In the collusion process, a co-leader forms an informal alliance with a group member to address disliked qualities of the other co-leader. The result is an unloading of unexpected emotion onto the nonaligned leader and a splitting of the group into factions.

Overall, when leaders decide to lead a group jointly, they must work as a team. Such an approach takes considerable preparation. The process develops over time and goes through stages (**Fall & Wejnert, 2005**; **Okech & Kline, 2006**). For example, in the initial forming stage of a group, co-leaders "are uncertain about the expectations of the group and of one another" (**Fall & Wejnert, 2005**, p. 315). Likewise, co-leader relationships develop over time, and co-leaders experience storming, norming, performing, and adjourning in a parallel manner to that of group members. **Okech and Kline (2005)** found that co-leaders believe their effectiveness as co-leaders depends on the quality of their relationships. Thus, co-leading is a double-edged sword in that it can both relieve and promote stress depending on how well the leaders relate to each other. **Gazda (1989)** states that, "supportive feedback, mutual trust and respect, and a liking for each other appear to be at least minimal requirements" for co-leaders to work well together and be of benefit to the group (p. 64).

an existentialist, and Casey was a reality therapist (choice theory). They were operating from two different theoretical viewpoints.

Questions

How do you think Casey could have avoided the difficulty she experienced as a co-leader of the grief group? What could Jenny have done to help? Do you think it is essential for co-leaders to have the same philosophical viewpoints? Why or why not?

apprenticeship with a more experienced clinician. **Jacobs et al. (2016)** also point out the importance of being in groups to fine-tune skills. The idea behind this approach when used as a model for training group leaders is that people must experience the power of the group as followers before they can become group leaders. Indeed, many self-help group leaders hone their skills in this way. However, just being in a group is inadequate for becoming a group leader. Likewise, a sole emphasis on simple didactic instruction or observation of a group at work is deficient as the major way to train group leaders.

In addition to an experiential base, group leaders must have specialized knowledge in the theories, dynamics, and interpersonal, ethical, research, and stage components of group work (**ASGW, 2000**). Leadership skills for conducting groups require input and cultivation of many sources. Effective group leaders must be able to perceive what is occurring in the group, select appropriate interventions, and risk implementing the interventions they have chosen (**Stockton, McDonnell, & Aldarondo, 1997**). In addition, basic group competencies include confidence in your ability to be an effective group leader and the ability to lead groups that include culturally diverse members (**Midgett, Hausheer, & Doumas, 2016**). Only the well-trained professional can make therapeutic moves in a group on a consistent basis (**Vriend, 1985**).

Among the methods that have been established to train group leaders are the following:

- Group-based training (**Pearson, 1985**)
- The group generalist model (**Anderson, 1982**)
- The educational and developmental procedure (**Tollerud, Holling, & Dustin, 1992**)
- Systematic group leadership training (**Harvill, Masson, & Jacobs, 1983**; **Harvill, West, Jacobs, & Masson, 1985**)

supervisor, "whose role is to make timely decisions as to how and when these components are implemented into the training" (p. 97). The focus of content is on information. Decision-making involves choosing what to do and how to do it based on an understanding of group dynamics and self-knowledge. Leadership style deals with the complex set of expectations and tasks that face new group leaders. Finally, dual process is the idea that group leaders-in-training are members of two groups at once. The first group is composed of individuals whom trainees are leading; the second is composed of peers. The experiences from each group can be used in the other.

Systematic group leadership training is a fourth way of teaching basic skills to beginning group leaders. It is a six-step method that includes the video recording of trainees as they lead a group before they are introduced to the skill to be learned (steps 1 and 2). Then trainees read about and see a new skill demonstrated (steps 3 and 4). Finally, trainees analyze their original videos and then make new videos demonstrating the skill they have just been taught (steps 5 and 6) (**Harvill et al., 1983**). As first proposed, systematic group leadership training focused on six group leadership skills:

- **Cutting off**—This skill is used to stop group members who continue to speak in an unfocused way and help them concentrate on a point. For example, the leader might say, "Sharon, you seem to be repeating yourself. See if you can make your point in a sentence. Then let's hear from someone else."
- **Drawing out**—Drawing out occurs when the leader "directly invites comments or involvement from one of more group members. It is often used to encourage participation from members who find it hard to share with others or with those who share on a surface level but avoid deeper issues" (**Morran et al., 2004**, p. 95). For example, as the leader, Rudy

following systematic group leadership training? Do you think the lack of supportive research for these two skills means they are of lesser value than the skills that do have empirical support: cutting off, drawing out, holding the focus, and shifting the focus?

The **critical-incident model** and **intervention cube** concept make up a fifth way of training group leaders. This approach, as first set forth by **Cohen and Smith (1976)** and later expanded on by **Donigian and Hulse-Killacky (1999)**, focuses on a number of critical incidents in the life of a group. The trainee, after studying group dynamics, watches a video of his or her instructor handling a number of different situations in a group. Then the trainee co-leads a group under the instructor's supervision, during which he or she makes strategic interventions geared to the incidents in the particular group (**Childers, 1986**). Trainees are taught self-management skills and ways to deal with specific group situations. They learn on both a personal and a professional level. This type of training, when combined in an integrative way with the type of nonperfectionistic thinking pattern proposed by **Miller (1986)**, can help beginning group leaders be less rigid and more sensitive, caring, and helpful to others.

Skills-based training models for group workers have also become more prevalent and popular, and a number of instruments have been developed to assess group leadership skills (**DeLucia-Waack, 2001**). A particularly strong model, the **Skilled Group Counseling Training Model** , has been proven to be effective through research (**Smaby, Maddux, Torres-Rivera, & Zimmick, 1999**). It is especially helpful in assisting beginning group workers to "learn and transfer group counseling skills to actual group counseling sessions" (**Downing, Smaby, & Maddux, 2001**, p. 158). This model, which can be tested through use of the **Skilled Group Counseling Scale** , "includes 18 skills organized into three stages of counseling: exploration, understanding, and acting" (p. 158). An equally important instrument for measuring skills is the **Group Leader Self-Efficacy**

Group Supervision

"Supervised experiential training is a key component of group leader instruction" (**Stockton & Toth, 1996**, p. 280). Supervision increases supervisees' independence and self-confidence (**Linton, 2003**). It helps supervisees broaden their understanding from a focus on individual issues to interpersonal and group-as-a-system issues (**Rubel & Okech, 2006**). Therefore, group supervision is an essential and complementary activity for becoming competent at group leadership (**DeLucia-Waack, 2002**). It may be done in conjunction with the other three components of group leadership training.

Supervision for group workers is also essential after formal training. Without ongoing supervision and evaluation, original errors made by a group leader may be reinforced by simple repetition (**Yalom & Leszcz, 2005**). For example, Isabel may continue to gloss over feelings in group members unless she is confronted about both what she is doing and why. Furthermore, supervision enables group leaders repeatedly to address problematic thoughts and issues they may have, such as those involved in eating disorders (e.g., perfection, independence), so that they do not become troublesome and intrusive (**DeLucia-Waack, 1999b**). Group workers without supervision "get stuck in patterns of dysfunctional behavior and do not know how to get out" DeLucia-Waack, 1999a, p. 132).

One way to minimize problems and processes in group supervision is to make them developmental, comprehensive, and diverse. "At any particular

a friend, "I am sure both my supervisor and I can find better things to do this week."

Questions

What was wrong with what Sally did? What was right about it? What do you think would have been the best course of action for Sally to take in this situation?

Peer group supervision is another way of providing group leaders with supervision. "The support for peer group supervision is based on the belief that it offers opportunities for vicarious learning in a supportive group environment. It is argued that once established, this environment contributes to decreased supervisee anxiety, increased self-efficacy and confidence, and enhanced learning opportunities" (**Christensen & Kline, 2001**, pp. 81–82). This type of supervision may reduce hierarchy and dependency needs found within individual supervision. Furthermore, it may make the most of supervisory time and expertise, although in the beginning it requires an investment in structuring the group. Research by **Christensen and Kline (2001)** using a process-sensitive peer group found peer group supervision to be an effective way of helping supervisees learn essential skills "that enable them to supervise each other in a peer supervision environment" (p. 97). There are essentially five aspects of peer group supervision, as **Figure 3.4** shows.

may predominate across all stages" of its development (**Werstlein & Borders, 1997**, p. 132).

The supervision of group work (SGW) model developed by **Okech and Rubel (2007)** is a final way of providing supervision. The SGW model is adapted from the discrimination model of supervision (**Bernard & Goodyear, 2013**). "The model highlights conceptualization, personalization, and intervention skills, which parallel the domains of awareness, knowledge, and skills necessary for diversity competence. In addition, the model brings focus to the group interaction levels (individual, interpersonal/subgroup, and group-as-a-system)." Overall, it illustrates "the need for supervisor and supervisee diversity competence and group work-relevant awareness, knowledge, and skills at each level" (**Okech & Rubel, 2007**, p. 264).

Reflection

Which of the ways of acquiring group supervision appeals most to you? Why do you think you prefer it to other models? What does this tell you about yourself?

If supervision is successful, then group leader trainees will grow in four areas (**Bernard, 1979**; **Freeman & McHenry, 1996**; **Lanning, 1986**). First, they will improve their **process skills** —that is, observable behaviors used to run groups, such as summarization, immediacy, and confrontation. **DeLucia-Waack (2002)** recommends that a Group Processing Sheet be used in the process skills area. This sheet is made up of two parts: Group Process Notes to record "the events of the group session as part of the official notes for the group and/or individual client files" and a Processing of the Group Session section, "to help group leaders analyze what

Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the complex nature of group leadership. The concept of leadership is often misunderstood, but some of its common factors include multiple relationships in which there are reciprocity, legitimate influence, motivation, and cooperation for the achievement of beneficial goals. To be an effective group leader, an individual must show some versatility and realize that different styles of leadership are appropriate in certain situations. Leaders who are too rigid and use one style (e.g., authoritarian, democratic, laissez-faire) may be less helpful than those who are flexible and developmental.

The personal qualities of group leaders are also important. No one trait is essential for leaders to possess. However, the display of some personal qualities (e.g., support, warmth) in certain quantities will facilitate the movement of the group and the growth of members. Which qualities and quantities are vital depends on the dynamics of a particular group. The way theories and theoretical skills are employed is also linked to the nature of the group being led. Some theories are helpful and advantageous to the leader and members; others are not.

Some skills are unique to certain groups, whereas others are universal to all areas of human relations. As group work has grown, it has become increasingly important for group workers to become skilled in core competencies appropriate for running any type of group as well as for them to master specific group competencies targeted for specialty groups.

Classroom Exercises

1. Why do you think the terms *leader* and *leadership* are so misunderstood? What qualities do you consider essential for a group leader? If possible, tell about a leader who has personally influenced you and how you were affected. What did that individual do with the group you were in that you admired most?
2. List personal and professional qualities and skills you possess that would help you lead a group of your choosing. Which qualities and skills do you think you need to cultivate more? Discuss your self-assessment with two other class members. Notice how your ideas and theirs change or remain the same in this process.
3. Find an article on the supervision or training of group leaders (consult the *Journal for Specialists in Group Work, Small Group Behavior,* or *Counselor Education and Supervision*). Share the content with the class and your instructor; other class members will do the same. From the ideas presented, discuss what the process of supervision entails in group work.
4. Discuss how you feel about conflict in a group with another class member. After you have identified your feelings, look at the five ways of managing conflict suggested in this chapter. Which ones are you most uncomfortable with? Why? Describe a specific way you can work to improve your management of group conflict.