CASE STUDY EXPLORING SOCIAL GROUP WORK PRACTICE PRINCIPLES AND PROCESSES WITH ADOLESCENTS

Kristina Marie Lemmons
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A CASE STUDY EXPLORING SOCIAL GROUP WORK PRACTICE PRINCIPLES AND PROCESSES WITH ADOLESCENTS

A Project

by

Kristina Marie Lemmons

Approved by:

__________________________________, Committee Chair

Dr. Santos Torres, Jr.

Date

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Student:  Kristina Marie Lemmons

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Division of Social Work
Abstract

of

A CASE STUDY EXPLORING SOCIAL GROUP WORK PRACTICE PRINCIPLES AND PROCESSES WITH ADOLESCENTS

by

Kristina Marie Lemmons

Settlement houses practicing social group work have a long tradition within the social work field. Historical settlement houses have remained intact despite the transition of services, exemplified through the case study of Stanford Settlement. This study looks at the relevance of social group work as a separate practice approach within the greater social work profession. This project documents and discusses the use of traditional social group work with adolescents in a drop-in center environment. The study explores the agency Stanford Settlement, and looks at how they as an agency use the practice approach of social group work, specifically within their Teen Center. Despite being rooted within the historical settlement house tradition, social group work still has relevance today and remains in practice among many populations.

_______________________, Committee Chair
Dr. Santos Torres, Jr.

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Date

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Chapter 1
THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Within the United States, California, Sacramento, and more specifically North Sacramento neighborhoods consisting of youth deemed at risk exist. These youth come from disadvantaged backgrounds and broken families suffering from poverty, discrimination, segregation, and lack of opportunity. Substance abuse, domestic violence, child maltreatment, mental health issues, and incarceration plague many of these youth and their families as well. Youth who experience abuse face social problems such as poverty, and family violence as compared to youth who live outside disenfranchised neighborhoods (Ryan & Testa, 2004). Adolescents from these at risk neighborhoods often lack parental support and involvement both physically, mentally, and emotionally.

As youth battle their disadvantages, they become more susceptible and are at risk of participating in many forms of delinquent behaviors. Ryan and Testa (2004) study the presence of childhood abuse and placement instability within the Illinois Department of Child and Family Services (IDCFS) as it relates to the occurrence of juvenile delinquent behaviors. Results from the study indicate juvenile delinquency occurs forty-seven percent more often for youth from the ages of ten to sixteen within the IDCFS population compared to youth outside of this system (Ryan & Testa). Ryan and Testa also found that children removed from their homes and placed in foster care are more likely to become delinquent as compared to adolescents who remain in a home deemed safe. Negative delinquent behaviors range from substance use and abuse, gang involvement, school
suspension and expulsion, school drop out, and teenage pregnancy. A negative relationship between the risk youth face and their ability to maintain a healthy lifestyle exists. Social workers have an obligation to address the risks our youth face and give them the opportunity to participate in programs, which promote healthy growth and help prevent delinquent behaviors. One approach social workers use to assist youth includes the use of traditional social group work approach as a primary intervention. This project explores the application and use of the practice approach of social group work through a case study of a drop-in teen center program for at-risk adolescents, specifically the organization Stanford Settlement Neighborhood Center. The approach to this project includes providing a content analysis of the Teen Center program of Stanford Settlement in order to provide social workers with knowledge and understanding of the tradition of social group work as a practice approach.

Interest in this population stems from working with at risk youth within the agency of Stanford Settlement Neighborhood Center for the last two years. Within Stanford Settlement, the researcher works with adolescents from grades seventh through twelfth in a drop-in center. The Teen Center program opens after school and during the summer for youth in the North Sacramento, Natomas, and Gardenland area to attend. Stanford Settlement, also known as a settlement house, specializes and utilizes the social group work practice. The researcher has developed a passion for group work through working at Stanford Settlement Teen Center.

This project specifically looks at the utilization of social group work through a program analysis of Stanford Settlement Teen Center. Collins (2006) applies group work
principles and processes through its own case study of a camp program using social
group work. The researcher will also apply the social group work processes and
principles offered by Collins to Stanford Settlement Teen Center, which include self-
determination, problem solving, mutual aid, role of leaders, role of participants, role of
program, and use of activities. The project also uses the Boston Model of stage
development as it applies to Stanford Settlement Teen Center. Historically, social group
work has a long-standing tradition within the beginning of social work practice. Through
time, social group work practice and social work education has evolved into clinical
group work for many reasons. Despite this progression, social service agencies still
practice traditional social group work. This project explores the use of traditional social
group work within the organization of Stanford Settlement, and more specifically their
Teen Center program.

Background

Such women as Jane Adams and Ellen Gates Starr created the beginning of social
work in settlement houses in 1889 by founding Hull House in the Chicago (Sklar, 1985).
The settlement house movement provided services in response to growing immigrant
population, industrialization, and problems of urban slums (Koerin, 2003). Early
settlement houses offered many different programs including “day nurseries and
kindergartens, courses in child care and domestic science, recreational/educational
groups, lending libraries, and cultural activities [such as] art, music, theater, [and] folk
festivals” (p. 54). Settlement houses used social group work to address problems
neighborhood residents face individually, in a group, and in the community. Settlement house workers tried to improve the way clients lived through their processes.

In the 1920s, the settlement house movement declined. During this time, European immigration declined and there was an influx of African Americans moving to urban areas. Today settlement houses do exist in forms of neighborhood centers or community centers. Some maintain the traditional settlement and group work foundation and some have not. Many original settlement houses continue to survive by adapting or adjusting their programs to cover newly government-funded programs such as childcare and drug treatment services (Koerin, 2003). During economic hard times, agencies must adapt their programs in order to stay afloat. Despite the change in economics today and historically, Stanford Settlement has been able to remain true to its roots.

The Sisters of Social Service founded Stanford Settlement in 1936. The Stanford Mansion located in downtown Sacramento, housed Stanford Settlement. The Stanford Mansion offered group home services to children who were wards of the court. The Sisters of Social Service created Stanford Settlement as a branch of services for the Stanford Mansion. Stanford Settlement provided neighborhood services to families living around the mansion. In 1960, Stanford Settlement moved out of the Stanford Mansion and moved to the North Area neighborhood, which at the time was one of the poorest neighborhoods in Sacramento region. In 1975, Stanford Settlement moved to its current location within the Gardenland neighborhood, and became its own non-profit agency.

As reported by city-data.com (2009) the Gardenland Neighborhood of North Sacramento consists of a predominately Hispanic population. In 2007, the population
constituted around 2,447 residents. Most residents have an educational attainment level of less than high school diploma. Thirty-three percent of the Gardenland neighborhood population resides under the poverty level for the year 2007 as compared to twenty percent of the greater Sacramento population. (Advameg, Inc. 2009)

Between June 1, 2009 and August 31, 2009 there were seventy-two different crimes reported by City of Sacramento Police Department Crime Mapping. Of the seventy-two total, there were nine felony assaults; three misdemeanor assaults; ten auto thefts; eleven burglaries including one business, eight residences, and two vehicle; ten drugs or narcotics offensives; six DUIs; one graffiti; nine larceny thefts; two business robberies, and three other robberies; five acts of vandalism; and three weapon offenses. The Gardenland neighborhood represents a conundrum of needs requiring social work intervention. Stanford Settlement attempts to meet some of those neighborhood needs. It offers a wide variety of services to the surrounding neighborhood, including a Children’s Program, Teen Center, Senior Center, emergency assistance, neighborhood outreach, and Operation Cratchit Christmas basket program.

Within the Children’s Program social workers, provide services in the form of after school groups, summer day camp, supportive services to schools, and supportive services to families. The Children’s Program uses the social group work process in order to provide activities for children promoting healthy socialization. The program also offers group members the opportunity to participate in group decision making, while lastly providing group members positive use of their free time. Mainly, the Children’s Program helps underprivileged children not striving socially to gain self-confidence, leadership
potential, social skills, and positive social relationships through use of social group work practice and further supportive services. (Stanford Settlement, 2009)

The Teen Center program also focuses on socialization and relationships with others. Teen Center members voluntarily participate in the delinquency prevention program. The Teen Center program supports and encourages teens to complete an adequate education for themselves, make and work towards goals, and build healthy relationships with peers, parents, school, and the community. The Teen Center provides services through its drop-in center, socialization groups, and other supportive services as needed. (Stanford Settlement, 2009)

The Senior Center provides an array of services to its clients. The Senior Center program promotes healthy aging, builds self esteem & confidence in their clients, allows seniors to remain in their home for as long as possible with as much independence as possible. With the Brown Bag program, seniors are able to save money on food and bills. The center helps seniors stay informed on issues concerning them, provides a safe place to meet friends and to make new ones, and to gives them the opportunity to participate in meaningful activities. The center offers the seniors needed group involvement, counseling, and crisis intervention. It assists seniors with forms they are required to fill out, provides home visits, socialization activities, a payee program, a Senior Nutrition site providing daily lunch, door-to-door transportation for lunch and activities, and a Senior Companion Program. (Stanford Settlement, 2009)

Stanford Settlement provides emergency assistance for local residents who need help with food, crisis intervention counseling, and advocacy (Stanford Settlement, 2009).
Stanford Settlement uses neighborhood outreach purposefully to increase neighborhood residents’ participation and awareness for in community affairs ultimately gaining more knowledge regarding neighborhood resources and activities. By becoming more aware and participating in community affairs, neighborhood residents can advocate for their needs. Finally, neighborhood outreach allows for the recruitment and continued recognition of volunteers. Stanford Settlement lastly offers program the Operation Cratchit program. Operation Cratchit provides baskets full of food and toys for local families in need of some extra help during the Christmas Holidays. (Stanford Settlement, 2009) Stanford Settlement uses social group work as a backbone for all the services they provide.

Statement of the Problem

Settlement houses practicing social group work have a long tradition within the social work field. Presently, settlement houses today have transitioned into community centers more often offering individual services. Settlement houses saw a decline in the 1920s for many reasons. One reason includes settlement workers taking on the label of social workers rather than social reformers focusing on helping clients than neighbors or neighborhoods (Koerin, 2003). Another reason includes the decrease in European immigration, whom was the primary participants in the settlement movement (Koerin). The array of services provided has also transitioned. Historically, settlement houses have focused on social reform efforts, but have moved into providing an array of services that meet individual needs of clients (Koerin). Koerin identifies the array of services neighborhood centers provide including the most common recreational and socialization
services, which ninety-five percent of neighborhood centers provided. Other services offered as identified by Koerin’s study from most often to least often respectively include, information and referral, parenting education and support, child care, individual counseling, group work services, transportation, employment and training, and emergency financial aid. Historical settlement houses have remained intact despite the transition of services, exemplified through the case analysis of Stanford Settlement. One can also attribute the transition away from traditional settlement houses to social work education.

Similarly, social work education continues to progress into different forms of practice within California institutions. In 1969, the Council of Social Work Education began to integrate the use of social group work as seen in the early settlement movement along with casework and community organizing into a more generalist practice approach (Drumm, 2006). Without a strict social group work concentration utilizing the settlement approach, one can see the decline in the presence of traditional settlement houses. Today’s social work education programs do not have the presence of clearly identified traditional social group work practice concentrations, but rather traditional social group work can still be found in other areas of social work education. Eighteen different accredited Master of Social Work programs exist in California (Council of Social Work Education, 2009). Eight of those programs are within Northern California including; University of California, Berkley; San Jose State University; San Francisco State University; Humboldt State University; California State University, Stanislaus; California State University, Sacramento; California State University, East Bay; and California State
University, Chico. Each program shows some form of group work. One can only see education specific to social group work in practice classes or limited elective courses because of the move to a generalist practice approach in our education. San Francisco State University had a concentration of individuals, families, and groups. As compared to historical social work practice and education, social group work has transitioned into a different role instead of being at the forefront when the profession first began. Through the program analysis of Stanford Settlement Teen Center, social workers can see how traditional social group work and settlement houses convey relevance for practice today.

**Purpose of the Study**

This study answers the question regarding the relevance of social group work as a separate practice approach within the greater social work profession. This project purposefully documents and discusses the use of traditional social group work with adolescents in a drop-in center environment. The study explores the agency Stanford Settlement, and looks at how they as an agency use the practice approach of social group work, specifically in the Teen Center.

**Theoretical Framework**

Social group work represents the major theoretical framework for this study. Practitioners use social group work as an intervention approach. Social group work educates group workers and group members by providing a course of action to encourage individual development and social change through voluntary group participation (Malekoff, 2004). Social work began with social group work in settlement houses with such women as Jane Adams (Schwartz, 2005). Historically, social group workers
involved themselves in direct service to the poor, providing services through day-to-day contact (Schwartz). Social group workers also became witnesses first hand to the quality of life their clients endured (Schwartz). The social group worker gets a sense of the limitations client face because these types of social workers place themselves in the neighborhoods of their clients. By getting a closer look at the deficits, the social group worker can use the group process to meet those needs. Social workers of early settlements often lived at their settlements giving reason for the name. Today remaining settlement houses are located in the neighborhoods of disadvantaged populations, but workers more regularly come into the neighborhoods to help from other places. Stanford Settlement for example resides in the neighborhood of Gardenland of North Sacramento, and all the workers and employees reside in the greater Sacramento region.

Many abstract and concrete practice principles provide groundwork for social workers to fully understand social group work. Theoretically, strengths based relationships promoting positive interactions and mutual aid among group workers and group members frame social group work. Social group workers most importantly work with the strengths of their clients, instead of attempting to cure an illness as compared to other helping professions (Schwartz, 2005). The clients of settlement houses face great needs and stress of their environments. By focusing on strengths, we are able to instill in the clients an ability to make it through difficult times and remain resilient.

The strengths-based relationship between client and workers does not represent a hierarchal one, but rather worker and client are on equal standing. Workers do not make clients feel different. The helping process relies on a collaborative relationship
between helper and participant. Schwartz (2005) through his literary work has shown historically, traditional settlements saw their helping relationship between worker and client as collaboration where the group members and the workers discover change together. Each participant rather professional or not had a purpose in the process. Group workers and group members changed the lives of each other by supporting a common goal to promote healthy development in the course of group processes. In social group work, relationships are inherently important for the process. This includes relationships between worker and client, and between client and other participants. Through the social group work process, needs are met by creating an environment where participants can mutually support one another and grow from their experience.

Mutual support also known as mutual aid in the social group work field provides a foundation to social group work. Kurland states mutual aid represents “the heart of good group work practice” (as cited in Steinberg, 2004, p.3). As group members help one another process change, group workers can see evidence of mutual aid (Steinberg). Workers emphasize clients’ strengths further empowering clients. Clients bring their strengths to the helping process and utilize them to help others. Through the group process, workers are able to build mutual aid. Along with mutual aid, there are further concrete principles of practice for social group work to be illustrated.

Collins (2006) identifies some principles of group work practice including self-determination, problem solving, mutual aid, the role of the leader, roles of participants, and the use of activities. Within social work groups, members take ownership of the group and are encouraged to express their thoughts and feelings. Group members
become self-determined to create personal growth with group membership. Group members solve problems through group discussion and participation. Through social group work, each member as they become more self-determined begin to express their ideas about what the problem represents and propose solutions to rectify the situations. Mutual aid also represents a very important component for social group work process. One can see the actualization of mutual aid when group members accept each other for strengths and weaknesses, help one another through the creation of positive relationships, and help each other grow and participate in the group process. Group leaders are facilitators of growth for group members and put the practice principles into place in a safely created environment. Group leaders develop strong bonds with group members in a relaxed fashion promoting easier expression of feelings. Participants or group members also facilitate development and growth for themselves and other group members. Lastly, group activities serve as a catalyst for development. During activities, regardless of type, group members become accustomed to working together and begin to create alliances with one another. Activities give group members a sense of belonging and competence. The social group work principles as described by Collins make up one piece of social group work process. (Collins) Along with social group work process, there are stages of development stemming from social work group.

Social group work uses a popular stage of development model known as the Boston Model (Malekoff, 2004). The Boston model of group development has three stages including the beginning, middle, and ending phase. The beginning phase compromises the preaffiliation stage. During the preaffiliation stage, group workers
provide a structure as group members gain trust among each other and their worker. Group members begin to get to know each other and gain information regarding group processes. During the middle phase of development, a stage of power and control, an intimacy stage, and a differentiation stage shift group development. During the power and control stage, group members test limits with disruptive behavior. Many group members drop out during this time. Group members begin to feel closeness to other members and their worker, but at the same time are ambivalent to the process. During the intimacy stage testing behaviors persists. Closeness begins to represent a family like atmosphere where members strive for the most attention by group workers. In the differentiation stage, group members work together and support one another more frequently. Members feel freer to express ideas and feelings with fewer power struggles. Group members find it easier to solve problems, resolve conflicts, and make decisions. Groups have a clear group identity by this stage. The ending phase constitutes a separation stage. During this time, group members may be in denial of the impending end of the group. Negative behavior regression may be apparent once again. Group members are encouraged to focus and reminisce on how they have grown through group participation. Group members identify and express feelings of loss and grief. During the final stages of group development, group workers focus on transition and outside resources to further support clients. (Malekoff) Throughout the stages and processes of development of social group work, social group workers use a strengths based approach.
A strengths perspective represents a secondary complimentary theoretical framework for this project. Strengths are an important foundation for social group work. One finds strengths approaches throughout literature on social group work. Malekoff (2004) outlines the principles of a strengths-based group work. Group workers first form groups based on the felt needs and wants of group members, not any type of group members diagnoses. Secondly, group workers provide structure in order to welcome the whole person, not just the troubled parts of clients. Thirdly, strengths-based group work integrates verbal and nonverbal activities. Group workers fourthly form alliances with relevant people in the lives of its group members. Fifthly, workers decentralize authority and give power to group members. Sixthly, workers maintain a dual focus on individual change and social reform. Lastly, workers use a strengths-based approach to understand and respect the group’s development as key to promoting change within the group.

Definition of Terms

Adolescence: “Roughly the second decade of life…is well known as a period of accelerated physical, psychological, and social growth.” (Malekoff, 2004, p.4)

Youth: “The period between childhood and maturity… the early period of existence, growth, or development” (Webster’s Dictionary online, 2009)

Group process: Found within many levels of social group work. It constitutes the interactions between participants and workers, participation in activities, and discussion which promotes change for the group. It is not the product itself, but rather all the things one goes through to get to the end.
Drop-in center: “A community center where area youth can drop-in and get help with homework, receive supportive services such as counseling, or get involved in recreational activities.” (Price, 1997, p.5)

Settlement House: Hirota, Brown, & Martin (1996) state the settlement tradition represents a comprehensive approach, which “strengthens individual and neighborhood assets, and builds collective capacity to address community problems.” (As cited in Koerin, 2003, p. 53)

Social Work Groups: “Are complex systems with multi-dimensional tasks…group members assume different roles that generate varied interfacing and interactions…the group itself is an entity with its own lifecycle” (Drumm, 2006, p. 22). Social work groups utilize different principles including inclusion and respect; mutual aid; stage management; use of conflict; conscious development, use, and implications of purpose; breaking taboos; value of activity; and problem-solving (Drumm).

**Assumptions**

There are basic assumptions for this project. First, traditionally settlement houses used the approach of social group work. Secondly, Settlement houses have evolved into neighborhood centers. Thirdly, social work education has also evolved their social group work approach into a more generalist approach offering social work students experience with groups in limited form. Fourthly, the use of social group work practice still exists through the organizational assessment of Stanford Settlement Neighborhood Center.

**Justification**
It has been the mission of social work to enhance the lives of vulnerable and oppressed populations. Social work as a profession lives by values of service, social justice, dignity, and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. Social group work as a facet of the greater social work profession too wants to instill healthy development for the people they work with. Through the evolution of the social work profession and social work education, this project importantly provides an instructive gap regarding traditional social group work practice. The researcher provides a case study of social group work practice through Stanford Settlement Teen Center. Practitioners and the social work community will benefit from this project by being able to read about the practice first hand and to get a better understanding about how practitioners carry out social group work and how these types of programs can help promote change for clients.

Limitations

This project is limited to one specific program analysis in Sacramento, California, limiting the ability for the researcher to generalize findings to other geographical areas. The researcher will not be looking at the use of social group work with populations beyond grades seventh through twelfth participating in the Stanford Settlement Teen Center program. The use of social group work with children must account for their different levels of development as compared to Teen Center. The group processes with children, despite maintaining the same principles will look different. Lastly, the project looks at a voluntary program not comparable to mandated programs. Teen Center participants, within Stanford Settlement voluntarily commit to participate in the program.
For this reason, the use of social group work will look different from mandated clients who most likely do not want to participate in such programs.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This project provides a case study of the use of traditional social group work practice at the Stanford Settlement Teen Center. The researcher first presents an organizational analysis of Stanford Settlement. The researcher then describes the social group work process including practice principles, strengths-based social group work, and the Boston Model of stage development as it applies to the Teen Center program. In this chapter, the researcher reviews and explores literature regarding areas relevant to this study including the conceptualization of social group work and social group work versus clinical group work.

Social Group Work

Social work professionals traditionally used social group work as a primary intervention. Historically, one finds social group work in settlement houses, but today modern day settlements continue to use the approach. During this section, the researcher explores supportive literary material to conceptualize what all makes up social group work. The researcher does this by exploring the history of the settlement house movement and social group work, present day settlements and social group work, the theoretical framework of social group work, and finally case examples of the use of social group work with adolescents.
History of Settlement Houses and Social Group Work

If one looks at the settlement house movement of the early twentieth century, imported from the United Kingdom, one can see the beginning of our profession and the use of social group work (Holosko, 2003). Settlement houses took on the task of providing immediate services to those in need while at the same time advocating for social reform (Koerin, 2003). Early settlement workers wanted to learn about and from disadvantaged populations they worked with and believed program participants must create their own change (Breton, 2005). Social group workers facilitated change through working collaboratively with their clients (Breton). Early social group workers used mutual aid, a foundation of social group work, to help immigrants become accustomed to a new way of life including new challenges and expectations (Steinberg, 2004). The Hull House located in Chicago, Illinois founded by Jane Adams represents one of the first settlement houses most social work students hear about (Haslett, 1997). Rachelle Yarros, another woman contributing to the movement and living within the Hull House, used her experience at Hull House to focus her work on reproductive health within the realm of social group work.

Rachelle Yarros, a Ukrainian immigrant with progressive political views became involved in the Hull House inner circle through relationships she formed while working at the New England Hospital for Women and Children. Yarros’s focus was on community education regarding birth control and social hygiene. Yarros had a hand in opening up one of the first birth control clinics in Chicago. This exemplifies the use of social group work and settlement houses as an avenue for social reform. Yarros was
living in the neighborhood of lower socioeconomic populations and teaching professionals about what it was like for these women in these areas. Yarros also took her group work skills to facilitate and participate in youth groups surrounding sex education and premarital counseling. Yarros mediated many different system levels through her use of different groups. From youth groups at Hull House to creating social action groups at regional and national levels, Yarros really utilized her position in the settlement house movement in a pivotal way (Haslett, 1997). Yarros illustrates the use of social group work practice in settlement houses historically, but the practice approach has relevance in present day.

*Present Day Settlements and Social Group Work*

Contemporary settlement houses have shifted from historical places such as Hull House into more commonly seen neighborhood and community centers (Koerin, 2003). Koerin studied the historical settlement house movement and provided evidence of current trends in the settlement movement. Around seventy-four percent of the present day centers maintain roots to the early settlement house movement. Concretely speaking, Koerin found four percent of the present day centers began between the years of 1850 and 1875. About twenty-five percent of the centers started between the years of 1876 and 1900. During 1901 and 1925, thirty-one percent were established. During 1926 through 1950, about fourteen percent of the centers were established. Lastly, between the years of 1951 and present time five percent of the centers were established. Most community centers presented here began around the big settlement movement of the early twentieth century. Today’s neighborhood centers continue to serve low-income ethnic populations
and incoming immigrant populations much like historical settlement houses. Contemporary neighborhood centers also have expanded their programs in order to serve more than one neighborhood. Koerin reports within her study about fifty-seven percent of centers stated they served many neighborhoods compared to around seventeen percent of centers reporting they served only one neighborhood. Many programs have shifted or reorganized their services due to societal changes including welfare reform, community needs, and funding availability (Koerin). In order to stay up with the times historical settlement houses have had to reorganize, change, and expand their program efforts. The societal climate contributes to this reality for present day settlements and social group work. While a little more than half of the study’s present-day neighborhood centers opened during the peak of the settlement movement of the early twentieth century, roughly ninety-four percent reported their missions are consistent with the settlement house tradition. (Koerin) Koerin’s study reveals that present-day settlements utilize social group work principles as their theoretical framework.

Theoretical Framework

For a traditional practice approach, social group work may be at times hard to conceptualize. There are many different aspects to explore in order to understand the theoretical framework of social group work. These avenues include practice principles and processes, strengths-based social group work, and the Boston model of stage development as it applies to groups.

*Practice principles and processes.* The late Roselle Kurland, a great teacher of social group work saw group work as an art, and a science where group workers practice
with heart and maintained social work ethics (Steinberg, 2006). Steinberg describes Kurland’s approach to social group work as an art, science, heart, and ethics. The art of social group work represents the relationship between what is and what can be. Social group workers can construct a group in any environment including hostile environments. Social group workers see problems as an opportunity for change. The science of social group work represents the skills group workers use to get the job done. Social group workers use many different areas of knowledge at the same time including many different theory bases including stage theory, planning model of group development, strength-centered problem-solving models, and psychosocial models skills to name a few. The heart of social group work resides in the capacity of social group workers to understand everyone creates change for himself or herself and to have faith in the group. Workers use member’s strengths, honesty, and empathy in order to facilitate change. Workers and group members are mutually responsible for change and development. Social group work holds itself to the greater social work professional ethics and values. Ethically, social group workers allow members to decide for themselves how they want to change. Social group workers create space where people can change while mediating between individual change and change within systems. Collins further demonstrates the art, science, heart, and ethics of this practice approach through the principles of social group work. Collins (2006) presents principles of practice of social group work based on his work with camps including self-determination, problem solving, mutual aid, role of leaders, roles of members, and use of activities.
Collins (2006) presents self-determination as the process where group members feel they own the group. Group members have the freedom and independence to make decisions. In order for group members to feel self-determined, group workers must provide guidance, structure, and reveal the purpose of the group so members are inclined to know what the leader expects of them. Steinberg (2004) describes self-determination as the process where the group has a real say in what they do and group members take responsibility in shaping the group process. Group members discuss group events and process. Group members make decisions about what they want to happen and what they do not want to happen within the group through looking at all possibilities presented by group leaders and group members. The principle of self-determination directly relates to use of problem solving in social group work.

A specific process of problem solving exists within groups as outlined by Collins (2006). As related to self-determination, group leaders do not complete problem solving solely, but rather garner collaborative opinions from group members. Through this process, members also have a say, furthering their independence. First group members and leaders must recognize or sense a problem exists. Secondly, a clear statement and identification of the problem must take place. The group members must next explore the problem and identify possible solutions to rectify the situation. The group must next select a solution to use, try out the solution, and evaluate its appropriateness. Malekoff (2004) points out rehearsing problem solving techniques of social group work are essential. As group members continually combat problems through this process, the more
easily the process will become. Problem solving embodies a supportive process and facilitates mutual aid.

Collins (2006) describes mutual aid as the process where group members accept everyone for their strengths and weaknesses. Group members support one another, and develop helpful relationships. Group members feel a sense of community and bonding. Steinberg (2004) adds the mutual aid approach embodies a process and a result. It represents a process of problem solving, sharing information, and mutually supporting one another. Some examples of mutual aid include group members offering a simple touch or nod of understanding, when the group talks about taboo issues, when the group comes together for change, and when the group provides a safe haven for members to explore different ways of thinking, being, or doing. Gitterman (2005) provides a foundation for group leaders in order to build mutual support for groups.

Support signifies the basis of social work groups. Mutual support groups must have a clear purpose having both a diverse and homogeneous group composition. In the beginning of groups, leaders must once again present the group’s purpose in concrete terms and identifying what group members’ perceive as of their needs, problems, or interests in the group. Group leaders must identify their professional role and boundaries. In order to build mutual support within the group leaders must facilitate interactions between members, clarify roles and responsibilities for members, promote group decision making, and promote group problem solving techniques as described previously. (Gitterman, 2005) The group leader uses their role to facilitate the progress of mutual aid within the group, but have other supporting roles.
Collins (2006) states leaders must apply social group work principles within and for the group. This includes self-determination, mutual aid, and problem solving. Social group workers form casual relationships with group members further modeling this level of bonding for everyone else. Leaders form casual relationships by using play, humor, and honesty. Leaders talk, listen, and notice when something looks wrong with group members. Social group workers decentralize authority within the group by giving members the ability to exert their own authority (Steinberg, 2004). To better acclimate individual group members to the group work process, group leaders also need to work with members individually (Malekoff, 2004). The next principle of social group work process includes the role of participants. Overall, social group workers see group members as helpers and work collaboratively with them throughout the duration of the group (Malekoff, 2004).

The final aspect of social group work, as presented by Collins (2006), includes the use of activities. Activities come in all forms. Activities are a time for growth enhancing play. Through activities, group members gain the ability to be creative and play, to develop relationships among other group members, to communicate feelings, to develop skills and increase self-esteem, and to understand oneself and others. Within every aspect of social group work, group leaders take a strengths-based approach.

*Strengths-based social group work.* One does not only see the use of a strengths approach in social group work, but in many facets of social work. Malekoff (2004) has developed a strengths approach particular to social group work with children and adolescents consisting of seven principles.
The first principle of strengths-based social group work attributes the formation of groups based on members’ felt needs and wants, not diagnoses. Needs and wants include desires or areas of concern specific to members. Diagnoses label youth, and follow them wherever they go. By forming groups based on needs and wants, youth get to exist separately from those conditions. An example of this type of group formation includes forming a boxing group for youth offenders who have gone through the juvenile justice system. Despite having the label of youth offenders, their desires to box give enough reason to form the group.

The second principle of strengths-based social group work as described by Malekoff (2004) regards structuring groups to welcome the whole person, not just the troubled parts. Workers focus on everything group members bring to the group including strengths or determination, and resiliency along with negatives such as the presence of delinquent behavior. Group workers welcome members and provide them with the opportunity to become helpers within their group experience.

Thirdly, Malekoff (2004) believes activities within the group should be verbal and non-verbal. During the process of the group, there will be times where group members can verbally express their feelings garnering support and insight from other group members. There are other times where group members can show their support without directly saying it. For example, Malekoff describes this occurrence during a camp group for emotionally disturbed adolescents. During the group, one member, Ivan, did not want to wear his glasses, which were broken and taped together in fear of having other group members tease him. Ivan expressed his reasoning for choosing not to wear his glasses.
The other group members agreed not to make fun of him. This represents an example of a verbal activity and action. The next day in group, all the group members who wore glasses wore them in support of Ivan. As the other group members wore their own glasses, they supported Ivan, showing him he was no different from other group members. This represents an example of a non-verbal action within the group.

The fourth principle of strengths-based social group work includes making alliances with people of relevance in group members’ lives. While working with adolescents group workers must be aware of the many other people involved in his or her life. These relevant people include parents, guardians, and teachers. Building alliances and working collaboratively with other adults within the lives of group members’ remains essential in order to serve the youth. Group workers do not have to be the sole recipient of responsibility of facilitating change for group members.

Fifthly, authority within the group should remain decentralized by giving authority to group members. Group workers lead the group, but should allow group members to come together to make decisions. Allowing group members to make decisions together facilitates mutual support between group members. It also allows group members to feel the importance of what they bring to the table. Group members feel heard and appreciated.

The sixth principle of strengths-based social group work encourages group workers to focus of individual change and social reform at the same time. The group becomes a platform for social change. One example of a group working together for social change includes the Nike give back campaign. This campaign consists of youth
interested in the exploitation of Nike workers in Asia and the high price of sneakers in the United States. The youth fought against poverty by dumping their Nike shoes in support of the exploited workers in Asia. This consists of one example where adolescents can use their group for social change.

The seventh principle presented by Malekoff regards understanding and respecting group development as a key to promoting change. As groups continue, they move through different stages of development. More specifically the stages of change utilized by social group workers include the Boston Model of stage development.

**Boston model of stage development.** The Boston Model represents a model of group development stemming from social group work. Malekoff (2004) describes the different stages as they apply to a social work group. Within the model, there are five different stages of group development including the preaffiliation stage, power and control stage, intimacy stage, differentiation stage and finally separation stage. Progression through each stage represents a different process for each group.

During the first stage of development, the preaffiliation stage, group members begin to acquaint themselves with one another. Members do not hold a strong commitment to the group. Group members seek out trust from other group members and group leaders. Group members remain ambivalent of the group process and often experience the group from a distance. During the first stage of development, workers provide members with structure in order to secure the feeling of safety. As members begin to feel safer, they begin to trust more easily. Group workers associated group members’ ability to trust with the consistency and inflexibility used by group leaders.
With some level of trust and comfortableness established, the group moves into the power and control stage of development. (Malekoff, 2004)

During the second stage of development, the power and control stage, group members are more familiar with the group process. They have developed a level of trust for other members and group leaders. They feel safer within the group at this point, however the ambivalence present in the first stage also rolls over to the second stage. Group members have not engaged or accepted the group one hundred percent yet. Group members often test the limits of the group through experimenting with risky behaviors. Many group members’ dropout of the group during this stage of development. Group members who have not experienced closeness of a group before still remain ambivalent about the reality of intimacy. Adolescent groups made up of disenfranchised youth labeled bad experience this ambivalence and acting out behavior frequently. They have not had many adults accept their behavior and show that they want to put in the time to help them change the behavior. The group experience becomes very different as compared to the experience youth have in school or in their home. After youth have been able to test the limits of the group, they move into the next stage of development. (Malekoff, 2004)

The intimacy stage represents the third stage of development of the Boston Model. The level of closeness and trust continues to rise throughout this stage. The group begins to resemble a family like atmosphere. For adolescent groups, group members begin to treat each other like siblings both in a positive and negative way. Group members positively accept one another and support growth for one another. On the other
hand, group members begin to fight for the group leader’s attention. Group members establish their commitment to the group process and begin to feel ownership for their group. Groups then move into the fourth stage of development. (Malekoff, 2004)

The differentiation stage represents the fourth stage of group development. Group members are able to work together more easily. The bond created within the previous three stages in more evident. Power problems continue to diminish, while group members are able to express their feelings. Within the group, the ability to solve problems, resolve conflicts, and make decisions becomes easier. The groups remain united within this stage of development. As groups members work together more, they then move into ending phase of development.

The last stage of the Boston model includes the separation stage. Group members are in denial about the end of their groups, and often regress back into old negative behaviors. Youth within groups often want to take the control back and begin to exhibit negative behaviors proving they are making the choice to leave the group rather than having the group leader ends the group. They are leaving the group before other group members and group leaders leave. Group workers confront resistance to end the group for by showing group members all they have experienced within the group including how they have grown within the process. Group leaders often connect members with outside resources before termination to provide group members with help during their transition. Through every stage of development, group workers use a strengths-based approach. (Malekoff, 2004)
As evidenced through the previous literary publications, social group work represents a very in depth practice approach. There are many different principles, processes, and stages of development for the group. The researcher further explores these aspects by looking at specific examples of social group work with children and adolescents.

Case Studies of the use of Social Group Work

As stated previously, social group work traces it roots back to settlement houses. The literature shows there has been a push to move to individual casework rather than group work. Despite this push, one can still see the prevalence of social group within community based organizations across the United States. For example, social group workers practice their craft in different forms such as a boxing group, theater group, camp programs, and a rap therapy group.

Wright (2006) explores the use of boxing and social group work with high-risk youth offenders in order to reduce the amount of violence in the lives of participants and in their communities. The community in question includes Hunters Point, within the San Francisco Bay Area. Wright looks at how boxing can address violence perpetuated by youth, while still using a social group work approach. The boxing group provides boxing combined with group counseling (Wright, 2006). Social group work provides a positive atmosphere for change for participants where they can both learn to box, but process the experience with fellow boxing trainees. The researcher identifies positive attributes of boxing groups such as providing group members with a new identity, promoting and offering safety, providing discipline, using defense as a metaphor, improving impulse
control and patience, developing the ability to focus, teaching commitment and offering meaning, teaching and providing respect, relieving stress, and fostering mutual aid or community support. The attributes presented by Wright associated with this project include providing group members with a new identity, promoting and offering safety, improving impulse control and patience, teaching commitment and offering meaning, teaching and providing respect, and fostering mutual aid or community support.

During adolescence, youth are struggling to find a sense of identity. Within their environment, youth often must prove their toughness, but by participating in a boxing group, the youth gain status within their communities and no longer have to prove their toughness (Wright, 2006). Toughness becomes inherent by being a boxer. Some statements made by boxing group participants regarding their new identity include, “I get hella props for boxing…Boxing is hella tight…Yeah we’re playas…My older cousin tells everyone that I’m a boxer…I’m something now…I wasn’t anything before” (p.157). The positive self-regard the participants and community members feel regarding boxer status is evident through their statements. Participants have something positive to call themselves, boxers not delinquents.

Boxing groups offer and promote physical safety for youth participants by allowing them to have a place to go after school when delinquent behaviors are more likely to occur (Wright, 2006). The boxing group gives youth emotional safety to express their thoughts, feelings, and experiences within the group. Boxing members did not want violence in their lives and were able to express this preference through the social group work atmosphere provided to them. Through this acknowledgement and continued
participation in the boxing groups, members were less likely to participate in violent behaviors. Group members also were able to control impulses and gain patience as they continued their participation.

Adolescents naturally want immediate gratification and continue to use spontaneous thinking patterns (Wright, 2006). Lack of impulse control and patience may be a root cause of why these youth found themselves in violent situations rather than wanting to take time to resolve conflicts. Fighting may seem the only option they have. In order to become an effective boxer, group members must learn patience. Training does not embody an overnight phenomenon. It takes lots of practice. While in the ring, group members must learn how to be strategic with their moves in order for each move to be effective. The boxing group tests group members’ desires to fight and gain instant satisfaction as continued participation forces group members to wait to spar while continuing to practice regularly. It remains ironic to believe a boxing group would teach youth to be patient and not rush their thinking. As their training continues, their commitment to the sport becomes more evident as they attribute meaning to the experience.

Most adolescents involved in the boxing group have experienced loss within their family. The loss they have experienced creates ambivalence for group members. Group members are ambivalent about continuing to participate in the group. Wright states group members are able to feel support from their worker when they see the worker remaining consistent within the process. Group members become more comfortable participating in the group. They become more committed to the process and experience. This
commitment gives new meaning to their lives by providing them goals and purpose.

Some youth participants express their commitment to the boxing group by stating, “I want to keep boxing forever…I want to be really good at it. I’ve never really cared that much about other things…I can always do it…Maybe someday I can be a trainer like you” (Wright, 2006, p. 164). These youth have really connected to group and see boxing as something they can always be apart of. Another reason for continued commitment by group members includes the respect they get and feel from participating in the group.

Most people have felt disrespected and can relate to this aggravated feeling rupturing inside. Boxing teaches youth to respect their opponent and his or her training staff. In the beginning and end of each match, boxers acknowledge respect in different ways, such as touching gloves or hugging. Through this earned respect, group members are able to foster positive relationships with other group members. This level of connection provided by the group process allows group members to support one another mutually.

Group members support each other during discussion time and help each other train. Friendships form also foster outside the group. At the end of the boxing group, as a termination activity members wrote messages to fellow group members on their hand wraps. Members expressed their gratitude for one another, and celebrated one another’s skills and abilities. Wright offers one example of the use of social group work with adolescents. Throughout the social group work literature, there are countless examples of different ways social workers can use social group work while working with adolescents. Another example includes the use of a Broadway style theatre group for adolescents.
Dutton (2001) presents the use of social group work while working within a theatre art program promoting healthy youth development for urban youth. The use of art in social service programs dates back to the first settlements (Delgado, 2000 as presented in Dutton, 2001). Dutton began a theatre program for youth attending local community centers. The goals of the group were to create a drama group, to provide youth the opportunity to work together gaining a sense of group identity and pride, and to provide a space where youth could formulate their decision-making skills. Dutton formed the group around the desire to perform as compared to forming the group on the similar disparities felt by the group members. This type of group formation is representative of the practice principles presented by Malekoff. This group aimed at providing services to pre-teens, recruiting participants ranging in age ten to thirteen. One of the main goals of the group was to foster mutual aid, and support participants in decision-making. In order to foster these opportunities, group leaders created a relaxed atmosphere in the beginning through games and skits. During this time, group members have to know about the group and one another. Through the skits and games, opportunities to make decisions were very prevalent. Group facilitators respected the opinions of group members fostering their feelings of competence and support. The biggest decision the group made was to perform Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet for friends and family. Group members also came up with group rules such as no one could join the group after the third week. This exemplifies decentralized authority within groups when everyone has an equal part in coming up with consequences of presenting situations. As the group progressed, group members also began to foster support for one another. As participants continued to work
on their play, they helped each other learn lines and offered suggestions for what group members should do in certain situations. This exemplifies the use of mutual aid within social work groups. The group members through their activities and interactions become more helpful and supportive of one another. This art program represents a second example of the effectiveness of applying social group work to work with youth. A more traditional example of social group work includes the use of traditional therapeutic camp programs with youth.

As evidenced through the previous examples, social group work uses many different recreational approaches with youth. A traditional approach closely related to social group work includes therapeutic camp programs. Social group workers aim to foster social skills and higher self-esteem for group participants. Camp programs also attempt to instill these attributes in their campers along with using fun and relaxation time (Mishna, Michalski, and Cummings, 2001). Mishna, Michalski, and Cummings present an example of a therapeutic camp program for adolescents with learning disabilities, and psychosocial problems. The camp program includes a three-week residential therapeutic program, with two sessions. The camp program is located on a lake in a resort community considerable distance from the city. Some goals of the group include working on campers’ social skills, self-confidence, and self-esteem. Some of the group activities at camp include swimming, canoeing, arts and crafts, sports, adventure based learning such as rope courses, and climbing walls. An important part of the camps includes inviting adolescents often labeled with bad behavior problems to join the camp. This remains consistent with the approach developed by Malekoff including creating groups
based on wants and needs and not labels. Within each group activity at camp, such as arts and crafts or canoeing, social group workers apply all principles of practice. Camp in the social group work field represents an extensive and long-term group for adolescents. Despite including more activities and experiences for change than typical social work groups, camps help to instill social group work principles and processes. Another example of the use of social group work includes a RAP therapy group.

Through further exploration of the literature, a third example of social group work with adolescents presents itself. The third program presented consists of RAP therapy with urban youth. Society often associates RAP music with urban youth, especially African American males (DeCarlo and Hockman, 2003). The use of RAP therapy presented in this study attempts to promote positive social skills for group members. The group consists of African American males ranging from grades eighth through tenth grade. Some group members were previously involved with the criminal justice system or previously incarcerated. During the rap therapy sessions, group members analyzed RAP songs based on topics such as female abuse, anger management, and or impulse control. Group members were to analyze the RAP songs, but also process irrational thoughts and beliefs of the songs. Group members suggested replacements for irrational thoughts and beliefs with more pro-social skills. When group members could not elaborate on how a certain song related to a certain topic group leaders elicited help from other group members. Through the activities of analyzing RAP song lyrics, group members became more competent on appropriate ways to handle situations. This further shows how social group work uses the principle regarding the way groups come up with
their own solutions to problems. The participants of the RAP therapy group felt supported and competent because they came up with solutions. The mutual aid between group members is evident through the ability of group members to offer help to each other when group members were stuck. This example of social group work is activity driven by the use of analyzing rap songs, but may be seen more connected to clinical group work.

**Social Group Work versus Clinical Casework in a Group**

As discussed previously, social group work moves away from a clinical approach with groups. The formation of groups does not surround clinical diagnoses, but rather a common purpose. Differences exist between social group work and clinical casework within a group. Most obviously, casework applies theories of individual development to the group. Social group work uses the Boston Model of stage development, which shows how groups move through phases of development. Caseworkers do not take into consideration group size, roles, norms, communication patterns, member interaction and influence, and group stages (Kurland & Salmon, 2005). Social group workers think of the group as a whole first and then focus on individual members next (Middlemen & Wood, as cited in Kurland & Salmon). Within in social work groups, when group members bring up individual issues, social group workers use the opportunity to allow all members to reflect on similar situations and feelings. On the other hand, in casework groups when group members bring up particular issues, members all offer advice. In this situation, they are trying to solve the problem for the individual rather than taking the opportunity to all grow from the situation. Kurland and Salmon believe the biggest difference between social group work and casework within a group has to due with the process of mutual aid.
The basis of mutual aid believes everyone has strengths and can help one another. The process of facilitating mutual aid within the group requires the group leader to pay attention to the group as a whole. It also depends on the interactions between each group member and the interactions with group leaders.

Conclusion

Social group work began around the time of the settlement movement during the early twentieth century. This also represents the time of the beginning of the greater social work field. Settlement houses specialized in group work. As time passed, settlement houses transitioned into community or neighborhood centers. Present day neighborhood centers attribute their history to the early settlement movement and maintain some of the same values of social group work. Stanford Settlement represents a present day neighborhood center that still holds true to historical settlements and still uses social group work as a primary intervention with their client population. An important piece of this type of the intervention includes the belief that the group worker and the group members begin at the same level. Another foundation of group work includes providing an environment where group members can grow and group workers can facilitate mutual aid within the group. Mutual aid embodies support and connection between group members. For example, in the theatre group the members encouraged each other’s progress and helped each other learn their lines for the play. There is much more which makes up the process of social group work; however, it also remains important to acknowledge the stages, which groups go through. Social work groups go through cycles of development and the social group worker applies the principles of practice during each
stage. Social group workers can create groups within any environment and with any activity focus as evidenced through the case examples. Social group work represents a complex system of ideas, principles, and processes. Through this project, the researcher will break down the complex intervention approach of social group work by looking at a case example of Stanford Settlement. Within the next chapter, the researcher presents an outline regarding how to provide a case study of Stanford Settlement in hopes of better understanding the primary intervention of social group work.


Chapter 3

METHODS

Introduction

The premise of this project includes providing a case study of the organization Stanford Settlement, and specially their Teen Center Program. The case study includes examining the primary intervention of social group work with adolescents. Within this chapter, the researcher further explores and provides the project design. Components of the project design include sampling procedures, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures. The researcher also provides attention to the protection of human subjects including risk, voluntary participation, and confidentiality.

Project Design

This project consists of a qualitative design presenting a case study. Qualitative research methods provide in-depth understanding and meaning to concrete ideas or concerns through observations and descriptions (Rubin and Babbie, 2008). Qualitative researchers usually describe their research with words rather than applying numerical value to data as quantitative research does. This project uses a qualitative approach in order to advance the conceptualization of the social group work process as a practice approach of the greater social work profession. Through using a qualitative research design, the researcher presents a case study. A case study includes a concrete “examination, of a single individual, family, group, organization, community, or society” (p. 422). The case within this project consists of Stanford Settlement Teen Center, and
more specifically their specialized groups. Social group work with adolescents represents the concrete idea explored through the case study.

*Sampling procedures.* The sample for this project includes a single case study of Stanford Settlement Teen Center. This project does not consist of a random sample, but rather a deliberate sample for the reason that there is only one teen center program within the organization of Stanford Settlement. The researcher chooses to only examine and analyze one specific program utilizing the social group work methods as a primary intervention. Within the case study of Stanford Settlement Teen Center, group workers utilize specialized groups, which remain the focus of the study. The researcher looks at three groups within the Teen Center completed within the last two years. Each group consists of about eight Teen Center participants, which we call group members. Teen Center group members range in age from twelve years through seventeen years of age. They range in grade from seventh through twelfth grade. All group members attend school inside the North Sacramento Area, and come from the same neighborhood. The researcher also conducts specific data collection procedures for this project.

*Data collection procedures.* The data collected for this project includes all relevant information pertaining to the conceptualization of social group work. The data source includes previous group record sheets describing the process of using social group work with specific Teen Center groups (Appendix A). The researcher uses group records sheets from three Teen Center groups to support literature regarding the process and practice of social group work with adolescents. The researcher uses group records sheets to show real life examples of group leaders using the techniques of social group work.
The group records sheet specifically looks at what activities are completed and how they went, what the level of relationships were visible during the group, analysis of the group process and procedures, and other important information regarding the week’s group meeting. Group leaders complete record sheets weekly following each group session. In total, there are three separate groups including one girls group, and two boys group. There are twenty Teen Center participants included within the three previous groups. The second level of data collection consists of reviewing existing agency documents. The documents include existing mission statement and vision statement. Once the researcher collects data, the researcher analyzes the data.

_Data analysis approaches._ The researcher bases data analysis on practice principles and processes of social group work including strengths based social group work, and the Boston model of stage development. The researcher utilizes a qualitative approach to describe Stanford Settlement and their Teen Center program as it applies and connects to intervention of social group work. Through describing the use of social group work, readers will get a better understanding of the use of social group work as a primary intervention.

_Protection of Human Subjects_

The human subjects review board has reviewed this study and has awarded it exempt from risk status because the researcher uses secondary data as the based of the project. This study analyzes and describes the process of social group work within the Teen Center program through looking at previous group record sheets of specialized groups within Teen Center. The researcher completed the groups within the last two years
before taking on this project allowing for no risk at this time. The researcher uses previous groups within the Teen Center to supplement literature regarding practice principles and processes of social group work with adolescents. None of the group members includes current Teen Center members allowing for no risk. Subjects’ identity will remain confidential throughout the study. All names and identifying information of Teen Center members will remain private in order to insure confidentiality and anonymity. Privacy includes locking confidential documents up and destroying confidential documents after the researcher completes the study. The researcher will keep documents containing private information of group members at the agency Stanford Settlement, and will remove any documentation from a personal computer once the study has been completed, submitted, and approved. There are not physical procedures within this study, eliminating physical harm for study subjects. The researcher uses no equipment or instruments within this study as well. Lastly, the researcher uses no drugs or pharmaceuticals in this study. The researcher anticipates no psychological harm within this study because the researcher completed the groups prior to this project. The researcher also provides an agency support letter giving consent for the researcher to use Teen Center program as the focus of this project (Appendix B). Maintaining no risk, voluntary participation, and confidentiality within the study insures the protection of study subjects.

Conclusion

This project uses a qualitative research design to describe the use of social group work as a primary intervention. The deliberate sample includes the agency of Stanford
Settlement and their Teen Center Program. The researcher uses written notes summarizing group process of three previous Teen Center groups, and reviews existing agency documents in order to complete this project. The researcher uses the collected data to analyze and describe how the Teen Center program uses the approach of social group work. The researcher offers a better conceptualization of social group work through this study. The next chapter provides the case study of Stanford Settlement Teen Center.
Chapter 4

CASE STUDY RESULTS

Introduction

At this point in the project, the researcher presents a case study of Stanford Settlement Teen Center. The researcher looks at three different groups completed within the program. The researcher looks at practice principles and processes of social group work including self-determination, problem solving, mutual aid, role of leaders, role of participants, and use of activities as it applies to the groups. The researcher also applies strengths-based social group work principles and the Boston model of stage development to the Teen Center groups.

Stanford Settlement and the Teen Center Program

Stanford Settlement began during the traditional settlement movement around 1936. The agency vision includes hoping and believing they “will achieve recognitions as a prominent provider of neighborhood based social services that empower individuals to become fully functioning and contributing members of the community” (Stanford Settlement, 2009). Their mission includes helping “build healthy communities through individual, family, and neighborhood services” (Stanford Settlement). The agency still maintains its approach of social group work within its many programs including the Teen Center.

The Teen Center represents one of many programs offered at Stanford Settlement. The Teen Center represents a juvenile delinquency prevention program for neighborhood
youth. Program staff specializes in group work and offer different support services to participants individually, through the drop-in center, and groups.

Teen Center Groups

Each Teen Center group consists of eight members from the Teen Center program. Staff constructs the groups based on age, gender, and social development. Groups exist within the Teen Center so youth can get the opportunity to relate and connect to each other and staff in a smaller structured environment. This represents the foundation of group work. For this project, the researcher uses three Teen Center groups to show the process of using social group work. The three groups include one girls group, and two boys groups. The girls group was done in 2008 and for this study, the researcher will reference this group as group 1. Group 2 consists of a boys group completed in 2008. Lastly, group 3 consists of a second boys group completed in 2009. The researcher changed the names of all group members in order to maintain confidentiality.

Table 1

Demographics of Teen Center Groups

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<th>Gender</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Group 1 consists of seven adolescent female participants. Within the group, there are two seventh graders, one eighth grader, and four ninth graders. All the members have appropriate social development skills. However, one seventh grader Jessica shows less connection with the group of girls within the Teen Center. It seems especially important for her to get an opportunity to relate to the other girls in a safe environment. Within the greater Teen Center drop-in, the girls get along with one another on a week-to-week basis. During the group, the members can have a safe place to address their differences.

Group 2 consists of nine adolescent males in high school. There are three boys in the tenth grade and six boys in the ninth grade. All the boys within this group are developmentally appropriate for their age; however, one group member exhibits behavior issues within the greater drop-in environment. This member, ninth grader Joel, has a hard time following tasks and staying focused. He often gets angry easily and exhibits more energy as compared with other group members. Within the group, it remains important for Joel to be able to relate to his peers in a positive way, and it remains important for other group members to make Joel accountable for his behavior. Another member of this group, Christopher also has a hard time relating to the other group members. Christopher is a recent immigrant from Ukraine and lacks some conversational skills. Most of the group member do not talk with him, or do activities with him, which remains important for the group process. For Christopher, being in a safe environment gives him the opportunity to work with the other Teen Center members and build stronger connections.

Group 3 consists of eight boys. Five of the group members are in tenth grade. Two members are in ninth grade, and one is in seventh grade. The seventh grader, despite
being much younger, has status within the Teen Center due to older siblings and relates to the older members easily. All three groups use the group work approach.

*Social Group Work*

*Figure 1. Conceptualization of Social Group Work*

As exhibited in the previous chapters, social group work represents a complex system of ideas. For this project, the author uses practice principles and processes of social group work, strengths-based social group work, and the Boston Model of stage development.
development in order to conceptualize fully the purpose of social group work as a primary intervention approach. Each facet of social group work used in this project further breaks down. Within the next section, the researcher discusses social group work principles and processes as they relate to the three Teen Center groups. The researcher provides specific examples from the groups of each principle and process.

*Social Group Work Practice Principles and Processes*

*Figure 2. Principles and Processes of Social Group Work*
Collins (2006) presents different practice principles and processes particular to the approach of social group work in describing his work with adolescent camps. Some of the principles he describes includes self-determination, problem solving, mutual aid, role of leaders, role of participants, and use of activities. Within this section, the researcher uses examples from group 1, 2, and or 3 in order to describe these practice principles and processes.

*Self-determination.* Self-determination represents the ability for an individual or a group to have ownership. Individuals or groups all have the ability to make decisions also resides within the idea of self-determination. Within social group work, group members begin to feel as if they own the group, and it remains “their group”. Group members take the responsibility to make decisions within the group and make change for the group. The group worker guides all these processes of self-determination through the structure he or she provides. Within the Teen Center, groups become self-determined when they take leadership roles and begin to replicate activities on their own.

During the first session of group 3, it became apparent of some group members independence and leadership skills. During this first session, the activity included making tacos as a group, which would also serve as the group’s snack. One group member, Luis, took control of the first activity. Many of the group members were apprehensive about cooking and did not want to participate in the activity. Luis volunteered and began to cook the meat. Luis was self-determined to make the meal and took pride in leading the activity. As Luis began browning the meat for the activity, the other group members took notice and began to participate in the activity as well. During the group session, Luis was
self-determined directly inspiring others to do the same. Luis took pride in leading the cooking and he felt comfortable doing this activity, which led the others to take leadership in making the meal as well. Self-determination also relates to the way social work groups solve problems.

Problem solving. The ability to solve problems remains especially important during social group work. Within the practice of group work, group leaders use a collaborative process having group members working together to solve problems. Group members come up with consequences and solutions to certain situations with the help of each other and the group leader. Through the group problem solving, participants can learn how to become more self-determined. Teen Center members solve problems through group discussions. Staff members lead the group discussion by providing the background of the situation after which group members take turns speaking their opinions regarding the current situation. After everyone who wants to speak has a turn, group members offer solutions to rectify the situation. During one of Group 3’s sessions, a serious problem came about requiring group cooperation and discussion.

During one of the group sessions of group 3, everyone was participating in the activity. Towards the end of the group, one member Rueben noticed someone took his necklace during the activity. It was evident one of the group members was responsible for taking the necklace, because it went missing during group time. During the group discussion, Rueben stated he did not care about the necklace. Despite his denial of the importance of having his necklace stolen, the other group members felt the incident was wrong. One group member Adam stated it was wrong for someone to steal Rueben’s
necklace because Rueben’s considers everyone in group his friend and you should not steal from your friends. This was a very insightful and empathetic response by Adam. It is important for everyone in the group to hear the disapproval of this type of behavior. It is also important to hear Adam tell the group members how they really consider each other close friends and how they count on their friends not to do them wrong. Since Teen Center members frown upon snitching, the solution the group members came up with was to have anyone with any information about the whereabouts of the necklace to speak with the group leader privately. In the end another group member, admitted he knew who had the necklace. The group member returned the necklace soon after the group discussion. There were no other consequences given. The process provided a life lesson for its members on how to trust others and what it feels like when one breaks trust. Through the group problem solving technique, the group was able to rectify their situation in their own way without snitching or any further problems. All the group members worked together to help a fellow member Rueben get his necklace back. The incident of the necklace shows how social work groups solve problems cooperatively. It also exemplifies the group working together for one purpose learning from one another and creating mutual assistance between all of the group members.

Mutual aid. Most believe mutual aid represents the foundation of social group work. As described previously, mutual aid is visible when group members accept each other for all they have to offer including strengths and weaknesses. It also represents group members working together for a common goal. For the most part, the purpose of having groups within the Teen Center includes being able to allow the youth to develop
mutually supportive relationships with their peers. Youth begin to develop a support system by participating in the groups. At times mutual aid can appear overtly or also covertly. One can also see mutual aid at every stage of groups.

Within Group 1, one of the first group sessions required all the group members to work together mutually to complete an activity. The activity for this particular session included making homemade lip gloss. The girls were excited about the activity. However, the process of making the lip gloss included many steps and assistance from everyone. Before this week’s session, many of the girls were not getting along and did not want to talk to each other. However in order to get the activity completed all group members had to work together. Each group member had one ingredient for the lip gloss and each had to make sure everyone in group got their ingredient. After everyone received all the ingredients, they could finish their lip gloss. This signifies an example of a group working together for a common goal. Despite their differences, the girls were able to interact positively and finish their task. One important facet of creating mutual aid within groups includes providing a shared memory the girls. Group workers and leaders become very important in regards to facilitating mutual aid within their group among other duties.

*Role of leaders.* The role of leaders includes applying the structure of social group work for the group and its members. This includes, but is not limited to self-determination, mutual aid, problem solving, and activities. Another important aspect of being a leader in social work groups includes forming relationships with group members and helping them form relationships with other. Leaders in social work groups
decentralize their authority to show their belief they are on the same level as group members. Group leaders exhibit their decentralized role during the first session of group.

Before beginning a group, it remains necessary to set group rules. Due to the fact social work groups represent a collaborative relationship rather than a hierarchal one, group members contribute to coming up with the rules. In the first session of group 2, the members came up with the rules they wanted to initiate along with consequences for each rule. While the group ate their snack, the leader started the conversation about what rules the youth had in mind for their group. One of the rules they came up with was using profanity. One group member, Carlos came up with the rule regarding the use of profanity in group including if someone uses profanity many times in a row, than they should have a consequence. The consequence they as a group came up with was to do ten push ups for cussing obsessively. The way the rules were constructed in group 2 exhibits the magnitude of importance of the group members. In social group work, leaders play an important role by facilitating conversations such as rules; however; the role of participants holds greater importance in getting the tasks completed.

Role of participants. Social group workers institute groups to help members in many different ways. The foundation of social group work is to create change and growth for group members. The members of groups create change for themselves within the structure of social group work. In designing the group rules, the members group 2 picked what they wanted to have as a rule and what they wanted their consequence to be. In the situation of the stolen necklace during group 3, the group members held each other accountable for stealing a fellow group member’s necklace. Adolescents hold their peers
opinions to a higher degree as compared to the opinion of their leader representing why group participants are very important for the process of group work. The last principle of social group work includes the use of activities.

_Use of activities._ The Teen Center program uses social group work as a primary intervention within their drop-in center and specialized groups. Within both facets of the Teen Center, activities become a way to engage the members. Some activities within the Teen Center include recreational activities such as dodge ball, soccer, crafts, cooking activities, games such as Pictionary or Jeopardy. Despite being simplistic activities, group workers use the activities for a certain reason or goal of the particular moment.

After the stolen necklace incident during group 3, it was important to address the issue of trust for the group members. Social group workers structure groups in a way where group members do activities to facilitate topics rather than sitting around and talking about the issue. Adolescents in Teen Center seem to find it more comfortable doing than talking. To address trust for group 3, the activity planned included making caramel apples. The activity was set up in stages and different tables. The first stage and table included the apples and the Popsicle sticks for the apples. The next stage and table included bowls of hot caramel. The third and final stage included toppings for the apples. In order to facilitate trust the group members got into partners. Each set of partners picked one person to remain blindfolded while the other partner walked him around to each stage of the caramel apples helping the blindfolded partner make the caramel apple. The activity ended when each partner made a caramel apple.
Each group member was dependent on their partner to walk them around the room to each table. They had to trust their partner to lead them. When the group leader first explained the activity, Rueben who had his necklace stolen the week before, chose to be partners with the leader as compared to one of his peers. After the activity, the leader asked the group members to describe how much they trusted their partner and what it felt like to do the activity blindfolded. Ruben stated he did not trust anyone in the room to walk him around the room without doing something inappropriate and this was why he chose to be partners with the group leader. Two other group members, Luis and Jesus trusted each other pretty well. Gabriel, who was partners with Miguel, said he trusted Miguel with his life. None of the group members reacted verbally to what Rueben had to say regarding his trust level for his group members. However, it was crucial for him to be able to express his feelings for his group members, because when one of his group members stole his necklace he acted as if it did not bother him. This group experience shows how group workers can manipulate activities to serve a certain purpose for the group. For group 3, more trust building activities are important to bridge the relationship groups members have with one another. Social group workers use a strengths-based approach in order to apply all practice principles, and processes.
Strengths-Based Social Group Work Principles

Figure 3. Strengths-Based Social Group Work

- Group Development is Important for Change
- Welcome The Whole Person
- Implement Verbal and Non-Verbal Activities
- Bridge Relationships with Important People
- Form Groups Based on Wants and Needs not Diagnoses
- Decentralize Authority

Strengths-Based Social Group Work
The first principle of strengths-based social group work is to form groups based on members’ felt needs and wants, not diagnoses. Some of the group members have mental health diagnoses, but within the Teen Center, this does not represent a reason for their participation in groups. Teen Center groups focus on relationships and giving group members constructive activities rather than working from a diagnosis.

The second principle of strengths-based social group work regards structuring groups to welcome the whole person, not just the troubled parts. Within the Teen Center, staff invites all Teen Center members to participate in a group despite the type of behavior they have. In group 2, Joel and Christopher exhibit attention seeking behavior and have a hard time keeping their attention on certain activities. Their behavior at times frustrates their fellow Teen Center members. Despite their frustration, other group members accept Joel and Christopher into the group and interact with them positively.

The third principle of social group work includes having activities within the group as both verbal and non-verbal. For example, the making of caramel apples within group 3, non-verbally addressed the issue of trusting others by allowing a person to walk his partner around the room blindfolded. The verbal part of the activity includes talking about the experience at the end of the activity while the group members ate.

The fourth principle includes bridging relationships with people of relevance in group members’ lives. The youth who participate in the Teen Center lack significant relationships within their lives and often turn to negative influences in order to gain connection. The Teen Center helps adolescents develop positive relationships with their peers and adults within the program turning them away from delinquent opportunities.
Since the youth within the three groups do not often have significant relationships with their parents, it can at times be difficult to connect with caretakers. Some important relationships Teen Center staff make in order to serve the group members, includes school personnel. The school personnel interact with the youth on a daily basis and offer insights on the youth’s situation and behavior.

Fifthly, group members and leaders share authority. In almost every facet of the groups, its’ members have a say in how the process goes. For example, in group 2, the members came up with the rules of the group and the consequences for each rule.

The last principle presented regards understanding and respecting group development as a key to promoting change. Not one individual creates change for the group, but rather the whole group creates change for everyone. The many interactions group members have with one another during session impact their development. When working with groups it remains important to understand each stage of development.
Each group goes through stages of development. Social group work utilizes the Boston model of development to understand this process better. The model includes five different stages of group development including the preaffiliation stage, the power and control stage, the intimacy stage, the differentiation stage and finally the separation stage.
During the first stage of development, the preaffiliation stage, group members are beginning to familiarize themselves with the group process and remain ambivalent to the group. In group 1, 2, and 3 it was important to start the group with structure in order to familiarize the group with what type of process was expected. In group 3, one group member was more introverted and sat in the background of the group. He remained physically present, but did not know if he could trust his group members yet causing him to remain more quiet and reserved. This group member exemplifies ambivalence present among the beginning of the group work process. As groups continue, they move into the next stage of development.

During the second stage of development, the power and control stage, group members are more familiar with the group process. They have developed a level of trust for other members and group leaders. They feel safer within the group at this point, however the ambivalence present in the first stage also rolls over to the second stage. For example, during the middle sessions of group 2, the group was doing a collaborative art poster. All the group members participated; however, some remained ambivalent. At the end of the art project one member, Francisco left group while the other three members of the session stayed behind and participated more. Francisco still did not seem interested in connecting with his fellow group members. He happily did the activity. However, there was no effort beyond the activity. As the stages continue, the ambivalence seems to diminish.

The third stage of development of the Boston Model is the intimacy stage. The group begins to resemble a family like atmosphere. Group members positively accept one
another and support growth for one another. Group members begin to feel ownership for the group. During session five of group 3, the group members seemed very connected. The two activities of the session included making monkey bread and plaster masks. The first activity was to make monkey bread. While the monkey bread was cooking, the group began to make plaster masks. Not everyone wanted to make the masks, but everyone was engaged in the activity. As one member, Jesus made his mask two other members were cutting strips of plaster and helping Jesus put them on his face. While most of the members were working on the masks, another group member, Andrew was watching the monkey bread in the oven. The group was really working together on their common goal. There was no present animosity, but rather a family like atmosphere and closeness among the members. This represents the beginning of mutual assistance among group members, which one can see as the group moves further through the stages of development.

The differentiation stage represents the fourth stage of group development. Group members are able to work together more easily. The groups remain united within this stage of development. The previous example also exemplifies the closeness of group development. During this session, the group members were asking each other for assistance in creating masks. The openly wanted to help one another furthering their connection. As the groups get very close, impending group termination begins to affect the way the group members interact.

The last stage of the Boston model includes the separation stage. During the last stage, it is important to address what they have experienced within the group including how they have grown within the process. During this stage, many group members resort
back to negative attention seeking behavior causing disruption among the group. Within the Teen Center, the end of groups is celebrated. Groups often do special activities or go on special outings to celebrate the end of group. For group 3, the end of group included going to a local pizza place. At the pizza place, the group has to sit around and talk about what they liked about the group. Group members also offered advice for future groups including what activities to do. All the group members agreed to participate in a group again. The Teen Center uses this type of approach to finalize their group so the all around experience is eventful for group members. The stages of development presented here represent an outline of how groups progress and change. However, group development is different for each group. The Boston Model represents a starting point of development for groups.

Conclusion

Social group work includes a complex approach with many facets. Stanford Settlement Teen Center represents one program utilizing the traditional approach of social group work. Through the case study of the Teen Center program of the agency Stanford Settlement, one can see the significance of social group work. As one observes the process within the Teen Center, it may seem as if staff are playing with the youth present or simply offering them a place to be, however there is more to the program. There is meaning behind all, which the staff does at the program as seen through this case study.
Chapter 5

SUMMARY

Introduction

This chapter provides the reader with more information regarding the appropriateness of this case study. The author discusses findings as presented in Chapter 4, looking at how they relate to the literature regarding social group work. The author then provides some thought to how this study implicates the greater social work arena and what the next might be in regards to furthering the research of social group work.

Discussion of Findings

In the course of Chapter 2, the author provides substantial background of the primary approach of social group work. The researcher includes three different arenas in order to explain the process of social group work including practice principles and processes, strengths-based social group work, and lastly the Boston Model of stage development. Social group work represents a complex set of ideas and an intricate primary intervention approach. Within Chapter 4, the author provides a case study of Stanford Settlement Teen Center specially looking at their use of social group work.

The approach of social group work as presented in Chapter 2, directly correlates with the approach utilized in the drop-in Teen Center program described in Chapter 4. The use of social group work remains the same within both the literature and the application of the approach within the Teen Center program. Within the Teen Center, there is strong emphasis on the use of activities with the groups and the relationships group members form within the program. The types of activities social group workers use
to reach their youth differ as seen in the literature. For example, some of the activities used include a boxing group, a dramatic art program, and a RAP therapy group for adolescents. The specific activity remains unimportant as compared to the reasoning behind why the group is doing the activity. For example, at Stanford Settlement Teen Center, during Group 3 making caramel apples represents what the group was physically doing, but the group was actually learning how to trust their peers in a vulnerable situation. As seen in Group 3, anyone can cook with adolescents, but it takes a skilled group worker to turn a cooking activity into a trust building activity for the youth whom feel disrupt in trust by theft among fellow group members. What Chapter 2 and 4 provide the reader include the understanding of how complicated group work can be, but also how effective it can be. This research project provides the greater social work arena with the opportunity to get a look into how agencies use traditional social group work and how they as clinicians may approach a group in the future.

Implications for Practice

The purpose of the research is to provide a broader understanding of the primary intervention approach of social group work. The project also purposefully shows the relevance of social group work as a separate practice approach within the greater social work profession. As seen in our social work education, the use and discussion of group work is limited. Most experiences with groups include working in groups with other students during class time. Some schools however do offer electives in group work, but not every student by graduation can take these elective courses. The changes in the way school of social work approach education of group work relates to the move into a more
generalist approach to practice. There is a push to have social work students introduced to every aspect of social work, giving them a holistic approach to their work. As students graduate and become professionals within the field they will highly likely be part of a group including running groups with their clients. Groups can range from support groups at mental health facilities or substance abuse treatment facilities, working with youth in a group home setting, working with offenders in a prison setting, working with returning vets, or working within a school setting. Since social work professionals will have a connection to a group somewhere in their career, it remains important to offer students the opportunity to sustain and practice their skills in group work. This study also offers implications for Stanford Settlement in regards to the way they evaluate their use of group work.

Stanford Settlement has a long standing relationship within their community. They also have been around since 1936. They represent at agency with a strong history in the settlement movement and the use of social group work. For their reason, their history of specializing in social group work remains extensive, directly proves the importance of providing a case study of their program in order to understand the approach of group work better. As seen in the research findings, the way Stanford Settlement Teen Center practices social group work is in line with how others in the profession practice this approach, and their use of group work holds a strong connection to social group work presented in the literature. Stanford Settlement represents a good agency to explore the use of social group work; however, some ideas present themselves regarding the replication of this project.
Within Teen Center groups, group leaders complete group records sheets as described in Chapter 3 (Appendix B). Despite being a part of the work with groups, program staffs do not have formal record keeping statutes to maintain the group record sheets in the Teen Center. The group records sheets represent a good way to process group sessions and explore how to approach the group for group leaders. However, in doing this research, the author had a hard time finding complete sets of records. Only one group had a complete set of record sheets for each group session. It remains important for agencies to evaluate their approach, including using a format similar to Stanford Settlement’s group records sheets. Having a formal operation where staff keeps the groups record sheets where they can look upon will provide the agency with better documentation of how they do social group work with their populations. It will also allow future agency workers to get a sense of how their groups would run in their specific programs. This will only strengthen future research in social group work and allow the agency Stanford Settlement to evaluate their programs better.

Conclusion

Social group work represents an historical practice approach beginning during the settlement movement. Many master level social workers in the field do not get the opportunity to obtain appropriate social group work skills before leaving school. Groups represent a big part of social work and found in many different settings. Group work represents a complicated yet subtle process. There are many different practice principles and processes with social group work. Within each process, social group workers use a strengths-based approach with their clients. Stages of group development also represent
an important piece of social group work. Groups move through stages of development and it remains essential for the group worker to address those stages and facilitate change for the group within each stage. By understanding where the group is at in their development allows group workers to accept certain types of behaviors and allows group workers to figure out where to go next with the group. Through the case study of Stanford Settlement Teen Center, social work students and professionals get a glimpse regarding how to apply social group work to an adolescent population. Social group work remains alive in agencies and remains an important approach in working with any client populations.
APPENDIX A

Agency Letter of Support
### APPENDIX B

#### Teen Center Group Records Sheet

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Session:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planned Activities</td>
<td>Supplies/Preparation</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group members present:</th>
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</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group members absent &amp; why:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Group Records Sheet

Date:

Activities & how they went:

Relationships:

Analysis:

Other Stuff:
REFERENCES


