

CONTENTS

Contributors	ix
Introduction: Groups as Vehicles for Change, Growth, and Productivity	3
Craig D. Parks and Giorgio A. Tasca	
<i>Definitions</i>	4
<i>Group Psychology Research Versus Group Psychotherapy Research</i>	5
<i>Intergroup Versus Intragroup Research</i>	6
<i>Research Versus Practice</i>	7
<i>Organization of the Book</i>	7
1. A Review of Research Synergies (and Lack Thereof) Between Group Psychology and Group Psychotherapy	11
Craig D. Parks	
<i>Experimental Group Research Versus Group Practice Research</i>	13
<i>Human Potential Movement</i>	16
<i>Group Practice Research Versus the Practice of Groups</i>	18
<i>Conclusion</i>	19
I. GROUP PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH: IMPLICATIONS FOR GROUP PSYCHOTHERAPY	29
2. Inclusion, Exclusion, and Group Psychotherapy: The Importance of a Trauma-Informed Approach	31
Eric D. Wessermann and Leandra Parris	
<i>A Brief Tour of Social Exclusion Research</i>	32
<i>Key Unresolved Questions in Social Exclusion Research</i>	35
<i>Treatment of Social Exclusion as a Form of Trauma</i>	36
<i>Trauma-Informed Group Psychotherapy</i>	37
<i>Conclusion</i>	43

3. Composition and Compilation: A Selective Review and Applications to Therapy Groups	51
Michael R. Baumann and James C. Deller	
<i>Overview of Composition and Compilation Processes</i>	52
<i>Group Therapy</i>	53
<i>Composition and Compilation in Information Sharing and Group Performance</i>	55
<i>Composition and Compilation in Cohesion and Intragroup Conflict</i>	59
<i>Empirical Gaps and Emerging Trends</i>	61
<i>Composition, Compilation, and Group Therapy</i>	62
<i>Conclusion</i>	64
4. Principles of Cooperation: Implications for Group Psychotherapy	69
Craig D. Parks	
<i>Norms of Cooperation</i>	70
<i>Group Identification</i>	72
<i>Morality</i>	74
<i>Personality and Individual Difference Traits</i>	75
<i>Extensions to Therapy Groups</i>	77
<i>Conclusion</i>	79
5. Social Influence Theory and Research: Implications for Group Psychotherapy	87
Donelson R. Forsyth	
<i>Social Influence in Groups</i>	88
<i>Implications for Practice</i>	92
<i>Implications for Research</i>	99
<i>Conclusion</i>	100
6. The New Psychology of Leadership: Informing Clinical Practice	105
Michael J. Platow, S. Alexander Haslam, Stephen D. Reicher, Diana M. Grace, and Tegan Cruwys	
<i>Traditional Understandings of Leadership</i>	105
<i>New Psychology of Leadership and the Psychology of Group Memberships</i>	108
<i>Clinical Practice and the New Psychology of Leadership</i>	113
<i>Three Factors Informing Future Research</i>	116
<i>Conclusion</i>	118
7. Group Influences in Sports and Exercise Settings: Applications to Therapy Groups	125
Kevin S. Spink	
<i>Unique Characteristics of the Sports and Exercise Setting</i>	126
<i>Group Composition</i>	127
<i>Group Structure</i>	133
<i>Conclusion</i>	140

II. GROUP PSYCHOTHERAPY RESEARCH: IMPLICATIONS FOR GROUP PSYCHOLOGY	147
8. Attachment and Group Psychotherapy: Applications to Work Groups and Teams	149
Giorgio A. Tasca and Hilary Maxwell	
<i>Overview of Attachment Theory</i>	150
<i>Reflective Functioning</i>	152
<i>Attachment Theory and Group Therapy Research</i>	153
<i>Attachment and Research on Work Groups and Teams</i>	157
<i>Recommendations for Practitioners in Nontherapy Contexts</i>	161
<i>Directions for Future Research</i>	161
<i>Conclusion</i>	162
9. Group Cohesion: Empirical Evidence From Group Psychotherapy for Those Studying Other Areas of Group Work	169
Cheri L. Marmarosh and Amy Sproul	
<i>Defining Cohesion</i>	169
<i>Empirically Identifying Factors Contributing to Cohesion</i>	171
<i>Group Cohesion: Treatment Process and Outcome</i>	172
<i>Immature and Mature Cohesion</i>	176
<i>Leader Factors That Lead to Mature Group Cohesion</i>	177
<i>Group Psychotherapy: Methods Used to Assess Cohesion</i>	179
<i>Applications to Other Areas of Group Work</i>	181
10. Mutual Influence in Group Psychotherapy: A Review and Application to Group Psychology	191
D. Martin Kivlighan, III, and Rayna C. Narvaez	
<i>Mutual Influence Defined</i>	192
<i>Actor–Partner Interdependence Model</i>	193
<i>Application of the APIM to Study Mutual Influence</i>	194
<i>Key Unresolved Questions and Future Directions</i>	197
<i>Implications for Group Psychology Research</i>	199
<i>Implications for Group Psychology Practice</i>	202
<i>Conclusion</i>	202
11. Forgiveness and Group Therapy: Current Research and Implications for Group Psychology Research and Practice	207
Nathaniel G. Wade and Meredith V. Tittler	
<i>Forgiveness Defined</i>	208
<i>The Reach of Forgiveness Research</i>	209
<i>Current Literature on Forgiveness in Group Therapy</i>	209
<i>Future Directions for Group Psychotherapy and Group Psychology</i>	217
<i>Considerations and Concerns for Group Psychology Research and Practice on Forgiveness</i>	221
<i>Conclusion</i>	226

12. Group Therapy Development: Implications for Nontherapy Groups	231
John S. Ogrodniczuk, Joanna Cheek, and David Kealy	
<i>Group Development Models</i>	232
<i>Moving Through Stages of Group Development</i>	234
<i>Research Related to Group Development</i>	235
<i>Unresolved Issues in Group Development Research</i>	239
<i>Implications of Group Development for Nontherapy Groups</i>	241
<i>Conclusion</i>	244
13. Change Processes of Interpersonal Functioning in Group Therapy: Implications for Team Functioning	249
Martyn Whittingham	
<i>Psychotherapy and the Variance-Explained Model</i>	249
<i>Interpersonal Theory</i>	252
<i>Change and Interpersonal Theory</i>	254
<i>Interactions Between Group Therapy Factors</i>	255
<i>Interpersonal Change Processes</i>	256
<i>Theories of Change and Interpersonal Psychotherapies</i>	257
<i>Treatment Approaches</i>	258
<i>Applying Interpersonal Theory to Sports Teams</i>	259
<i>Interpersonal Theory and Military Settings</i>	260
<i>Interpersonal Theory and Educational Settings</i>	261
<i>Future Directions</i>	262
Afterword: Conclusions and Ways Forward for Group Psychology and Group Psychotherapy Research	267
Craig D. Parks and Giorgio A. Tasca	
<i>Cohesion Is Critical</i>	267
<i>Leaders Have Intricate Effects on the Group</i>	270
<i>Attachment Is Distinct From Cohesion</i>	270
<i>Conclusion</i>	271
Index	275
About the Editors	289

Introduction

Groups as Vehicles for Change, Growth, and Productivity

Craig D. Parks and Giorgio A. Tasca

It is indisputable that the group is the core of social existence. Other than the rare person who chooses to live off the grid and in isolation, all of us depend on collectives for almost everything. Fundamental needs like security, commerce, education, and infrastructure; psychological needs like support, well-being, self-understanding, and propriety; and social needs like collaboration, task execution, and communal thriving are satisfied by interactions with others. Philosophers have consistently recognized the central role of the group in life quality. To take just two examples: Aristotle, in his discussion of *eudaimonia*, or objective life happiness, argued that it is impossible to achieve this state without being surrounded by others toward whom one can be virtuous, helpful, and supportive, and from whom one can receive virtue, help, and support. Adam Smith in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759/2002) suggested that achievement of self-interest, as discussed in his *Wealth of Nations* (1776/2000), merely satisfies a base need, and that once it is met, the person can turn his or her attention to the higher needs (or, to use Smith's term, "noble virtues") of approval and expression of sympathy, both of which he argued are innate. To express sympathy and win approval, the person performs good works for others in the community, which strengthens the community, allowing others to pursue their needs for approval and sympathetic expression, and ultimately results in a strong, tight, and happy society. Aristotle and Smith both ultimately argued that true happiness is not possible absent positive engagement with others.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0000201-001>

The Psychology of Groups: The Intersection of Social Psychology and Psychotherapy Research,
C. D. Parks and G. A. Tasca (Editors)

Copyright © 2021 by the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved.

The group, then, can be a vehicle for personal flourishing. Indeed, Aristotle, Smith, and a host of other philosophers argued that the group is required for one to flourish. Generosity is a useless trait if there is no one to be generous toward. How to use groups to promote flourishing is a topic of considerable interest within psychology. Indeed, it is one of the oldest topics in the discipline with research stretching back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries (e.g., Triplett's, 1898, studies of physical performance alone versus in the presence of other actors; Pratt's, 1907, use of patient groups to provide support to tuberculosis sufferers). Researchers study groups as facilitators of workplace productivity, enhancers of health and mental health treatment, and promoters of (positive and negative) social experiences. They try to isolate the factors that distinguish a successful group from a dysfunctional group. They examine how the group experience impacts the individual members and how group dynamics change as a result of the particular combination of individual characteristics that the members bring to the group.

Clearly, group research spans a variety of types of groups and situations. The questions that arise are: To what extent are phenomena general across groups and situations? Does a factor that impacts the efficacy of a psychotherapy group also play a role in the performance of sport teams? Can a technique that encourages diligence among members of an exercise group produce similar results within a work group? One would expect to find hundreds of studies in the literature that test such questions and regular collaboration among experts who focus on different types of groups. Unfortunately, this is not so. Although in the early years of group research, this kind of collaborative cross-disciplinary research did happen to some degree, over at least the past 50 years, group research has largely been siloed. The primary goal of this book is to promote a reversal of this trend.

DEFINITIONS

What exactly do researchers mean by *group*? At first glance, this is an unusual question, not unlike asking what is meant by *tree* or *dog*. But, just as trees and dogs have scientifically determined definitional boundaries—a true tree, for example, has a trunk that thickens each year, which means that a palm “tree” is not a tree but a monocotyledon, which is in the same family as sugar cane and wheat—so does a “group” have a specific set of features that distinguishes it from a mere collection of people who happen to occupy the same physical space. For our purposes, a *group* is a set of people who have assembled for a common reason, whose activities are somehow combined into a single output, and who engage in some form of sustained interpersonal interaction. This definition distinguishes the group from other collections of people, such as audiences, crowds, queues, and coacting individuals. For example, people who are all in the same public park on a sunny Saturday afternoon are not a group because their actions are independent and directed toward different goals; any effect of one person's behavior on another person's outcomes is

likely coincidental. From this, it follows that *group members* are those individuals who have a common interest, are engaged in interactions, and are contributing to the output. Groups are often characterized by fuzzy definitional boundaries that can make it hard to determine who belongs and who does not (Lamont & Molnár, 2002), so clarifying what we consider to be a group member is crucial. Some of the groups that our authors discuss have clear boundaries—there should be no confusion over whether someone is a member of a therapy group, for example—but others do not. Should we consider someone to be a member of a volunteer group if they regularly attend meetings but do not contribute effort toward projects? What are we to make of someone who signs up for a physical rehabilitation group but rarely comes to workout sessions? Should a worker from one department who consults for another department be considered a member of that second department? How these questions are answered affect the analyses of these groups.

A similar fuzzy concept is that of *group leader*. Once again, for certain groups, the leader is easily identified, but for many other groups, including some for which a person has been formally appointed as leader, it is not so clear. Leaderless groups rarely operate as a true democracy; one or a few members typically emerge as dominant forces in the group (e.g., Waldman, Atwater, & Davidson, 2004). Furthermore, if a group has an appointed leader who is weak or unsupported, members may look to a subordinate colleague to informally manage aspects of the group's daily functioning (e.g., Wickham & Walther, 2007). In their chapter on leadership in this volume (Chapter 6), Platow, Haslam, Reicher, Grace, and Cruwys carefully walk us through what a leader is and is not, and their framework is applicable to all discussions of group leadership in this book.

GROUP PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH VERSUS GROUP PSYCHOTHERAPY RESEARCH

In 1980, Morton Deutsch, a social psychologist who was also a licensed therapist, suggested that the enterprise of studying groups had gone in two directions: (a) a theory-driven approach mostly interested in deriving broadly applicable models to explain one cause while ignoring the contributions of other causes and the question of why the model does not work in certain situations; and (b) a problem-driven approach that sought to identify the strongest solution for one specific situation, pulling in multiple causes but without regard for trying to understand why that particular combination of causes worked or how the approach might be modified to be of use in other situations. (See Chapter 1 in this volume for a detailed review of Deutsch's argument.) Deutsch felt that experimental group researchers were largely following the first path, and group psychotherapy researchers, the second. He was not saying that psychotherapy researchers were ignoring theory or that group psychologists were uninterested in solving real-world problems; rather, his argument was that each set of researchers had coalesced around one

approach to research and were only rarely engaging in the other. Group psychologists suggested that their theories might be of value for real groups but never actually tested this hypothesis. Group psychotherapists noted consistent findings across studies and commented that the consistency might indicate the existence of a general theoretical principle; however, they often did not take the time to develop those principles.

Deutsch (1980) felt that the strongest approach to understanding groups was to unite the two perspectives specifically to identify variables that are influential across many types of groups and situations, to know the limitations of those variables by identifying groups and situations in which their influence is diminished, to know how the variables combine to impact groups and why those combinations are impactful, and ultimately to be able to enter into any group situation with a solid understanding of what variables to bring to bear so as to produce maximum benefit within the group. This idea is the guiding principle behind this book. We recruited as authors experts on some aspect of experimental groups or psychotherapeutic groups and asked them to think broadly about their topic and to discuss how the major findings in their area are pertinent and important for other forms of groups. We were especially interested in identifying and revealing common themes across the two domains of experimental group psychology and of group psychotherapy. A key goal was to reveal that considerable overlap exists between group psychology and group psychotherapy research, and that collaboration across the domains is not difficult.

INTERGROUP VERSUS INTRAGROUP RESEARCH

Floating underneath Deutsch's (1980) distinction between theory-driven and problem-driven research is the distinction between *intergroup research*, which examines how groups compare with each other on various dynamics, and *intragroup research*, which focuses on how individual members impact, and are impacted by, the group environment. Although it is not difficult to find examples of both types of studies in the group psychology and group psychotherapy literatures, it has generally been the case that laboratory-based researchers have focused on intergroup dynamics and field-based researchers, on intragroup dynamics. At one level, this is not surprising. Intragroup phenomena typically develop over time and cannot be simulated in ad hoc groups that exist for a single experimental session, and intergroup analyses generally require an ability to control confounding variables to make the groups as comparable as possible. However, it is these very limitations that underscore the need for collaboration. Research that focuses only on within-group phenomena ignores the possibility that those phenomena may ultimately have little bearing on group performance, and strictly intergroup comparisons provides no insight into how group members generated their final product. The literature offers excellent examples of what can be learned when intergroup and intragroup

approaches are combined—for example, the research on how group member conflict impacts the quality of group decisions (de Wit, Greer, & Jehn, 2012)—but such work is the exception rather than the rule.

RESEARCH VERSUS PRACTICE

A primary focus of Parks's historical review in Chapter 1 of how the groups field got to where it is today is the drifting apart of researchers and practitioners: why it happened, how it happened, why it persists today. Key to the review is that the separation did not always exist. Indeed, for the first few decades of inquiry into group dynamics, researchers and practitioners worked regularly together and often wore both hats. Recall that Morton Deutsch was both an academic researcher and a practicing group psychotherapist. There was widespread recognition that research on groups needed to be (in modern terms) translational, and there was no reason to believe that findings generated from study of a decision-making group would by definition be irrelevant for understanding the dynamics of a T-group, or a workplace assembly line, or an athletic team. Indeed, early writers often emphasized that their results needed to be tested on intact groups whose procedures had real consequences for its members. Practitioners in turn were hungry for tools and knowledge that would help them more effectively manage the groups that they oversaw, and organizations often asked university-based researchers to conduct research on-site. Practitioners and researchers have thus historically worked side by side toward the goal of better understanding how groups operate and how to use them.

We use the term *practitioner* in the broad sense to mean anyone who works with any type of real group on a regular basis. Thus, group psychotherapists are practitioners but so are athletic coaches, work shift supervisors, youth group counselors, and military unit officers. In this book, we focus primarily on practitioner psychotherapists, but we believe that all of the chapters are of value and potential interest to anyone who works with real groups or who hopes to someday work with such groups. Indeed, we would be pleased to receive feedback that topics discussed by our authors are applicable to groups that the authors did not mention. Our primary goal is to stimulate this kind of thinking.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

The book opens with a review by Parks (Chapter 1) of the original collaborative efforts between group psychologists and group psychotherapists, and a discussion of how and why those groups diverged over time. We then have six chapters on aspects of group psychology, reviews of relevant research findings, and discussion of how those findings can inform the practice of group psychotherapy. First, Wesselmann and Parris (Chapter 2) discuss the negative experiences of ostracism and exclusion, and propose a group trauma therapy approach to

help people deal with and overcome those experiences. Next, Baumann and Deller (Chapter 3) take up the issue of group composition, in particular, how compositional variables (positively and negatively) impact group performance. They note that group composition is an understudied aspect of group psychotherapy and that such research could not only help refine aspects of the provision of therapy but would also fill critical gaps in our understanding of composition and group performance. Parks (Chapter 4) follows this discussion with a chapter on the dynamics of cooperation among group members, focusing on how cooperation is impacted by norms, group identification, morality, and individual traits, and then showing how these variables can be fruitfully used to improve participation among members of psychotherapy groups. Next, Forsyth (Chapter 5) discusses how group members are impacted (again, positively and negatively) by various forms of social influence and how these influence strategies can be used to promote success in psychotherapy groups. Platow, Haslam, Reicher, Grace, and Cruwys (Chapter 6) then present a new model of leadership and show how it can inform and expand our understanding of the therapeutic alliance between the therapist and his or her clients. The section closes with Spink (Chapter 7), who reviews research on sport and exercise groups, and demonstrates a close connection between the aims and principles underlying physical activity groups and those associated with psychotherapy groups.

The next part of the book features six chapters written by researchers of group psychotherapy who discuss key findings in their topic areas and how those findings can help us better understand the dynamics of group psychology. Tasca and Maxwell (Chapter 8) open with a review of attachment theory as a key influence on the efficacy of group psychotherapy and then connect this research to work and organizational group performance. Marmarosh and Sproul (Chapter 9) discuss at length the central role of cohesion in the success of group psychotherapy. Because cohesion is a concept that is much discussed but poorly understood in group psychology, the authors are able to draw numerous connections between the group psychotherapy research and questions of interest for group psychology researchers. Next, Kivlighan and Narvaez (Chapter 10) review the research on mutual influence in group psychotherapy under which the group and the individual produce change in each other; they then show how this research can help us better understand dynamics of long-term performance groups like military teams, work groups, and sport teams. Wade and Tittler (Chapter 11) follow with a discussion of group psychotherapy interventions to promote forgiveness and suggest that this research can inform strategies to address intergroup conflict, especially among individuals and groups with different social identities. Ogrodniczuk, Cheek, and Kealy (Chapter 12) discuss processes of development within psychotherapy groups, showing how this research can be used to better understand the evolution of intact or long-term performance and social groups. Closing out this section is Whittingham (Chapter 13) with a presentation on how the individual who is struggling with interpersonal problems undergoes

positive change as a result of the group psychotherapy experience. He argues that these principles can help us understand how members of task and performance groups in which improvement is desired (e.g., sport teams, military groups) might benefit from the experience of being a group member and how the group can assist the person with such improvement.

A number of themes emerge across these chapters, including the importance of leadership; the central role of a sense of connectedness to the group and its members; the ability of a group to promote harmony; the need to study groups as dynamic entities that evolve over time and impact their members through this evolution; and the large impact of background variables like demographics, norms, and the age and stage of development of the group. Indeed, the consistency of these themes across the chapters provides excellent evidence of our thesis that the various types of groups are more similar than they are different.

Aristotle and Smith emphasized the centrality of the group for personal well-being and life quality, and we all may benefit from our membership in social and spiritual communities, sports teams, work units, and therapy groups. Our intent is for the chapters in this book to inspire the reader to begin studying the similarities across these varying group contexts, to promote synergies across areas of group, and to guide the field of group research and practice back to its roots of collaborative cross-disciplinary scholarship.

REFERENCES

- Deutsch, M. (1980). Socially relevant research: Comments on “applied” versus “basic” research. In R. F. Kidd & M. J. Saks (Eds.), *Advances in applied social psychology* (Vol. 1, pp. 97–112). New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.
- de Wit, F. R. C., Greer, L. L., & Jehn, K. A. (2012). The paradox of intragroup conflict: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 97, 360–390. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0024844>
- Lamont, M., & Molnár, V. (2002). The study of boundaries in the social sciences. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 28, 167–195. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.28.110601.141107>
- Pratt, J. H. (1907). The class method of treating consumption in the homes of the poor. *JAMA*, 49, 755–759.
- Smith, A. (2000). *An inquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations*. New York, NY: The Modern Library. (Original work published 1776)
- Smith, A. (2002). *The theory of moral sentiments* (K. Haakonssen, Ed.). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1759)
- Triplett, N. E. (1898). The dynamogenic factors in pacemaking and competition. *American Journal of Psychology*, 9, 507–533. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1412188>
- Waldman, D. A., Atwater, L. E., & Davidson, R. A. (2004). The role of individualism and the five-factor model in the prediction of performance in a leaderless group discussion. *Journal of Personality*, 72, 1–28. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.0022-3506.2004.00254.x>
- Wickham, K. R., & Walther, J. B. (2007). Perceived behaviors of emergent and assigned leaders in virtual groups. *International Journal of e-Collaboration*, 3, 1–17. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4018/jec.2007010101>