

## Group Therapy Outline

A therapeutic group is a small face-to-face group designed to produce behavior change in its members. A therapy group is clearly different from an educational, social, or self-improvement group. A therapy group can function if the following characteristics are present (LOESER 1957):

1. There is a relationship and interaction among group members. If the verbal interaction occurs primarily between the leader and individual members, the group process is diminished. If all interaction is directed to the group leader, the result is a classroom or audience but not a true group therapy.
2. The group must have a stated common goal. The absence of a common goal is destructive to group functioning, loosely defined goals is threatening. Clearly established goals are facilitating.
3. There is a direct relationship in the group between the size and the function. Groups that are too large or too small cannot function efficiently (no less than 3 and no more than 12 members.)
4. Groups function well only if there is free consent of its members. Groups that are composed of involuntary members do not truly function in a group experience except that all group members have a common rebellion against authority.
5. All efficient groups function on a democratic basis. Under an authoritarian leader, the individuals become followers or subjects but not group members.

### Medicaid/Magellan Requirements

Medicaid/Magellan requires that, prior to participating in the group, the individual must have a Pre-Treatment Assessment (PTA). The biopsychosocial assessment may be completed by the therapist. The review of the biopsychosocial assessment and providing the initial diagnostic interview by the Supervising Practitioner completes the pre-treatment assessment. The therapist and Supervising Practitioner should specifically assess the individual to determine if their participation in group is appropriate. This assessment includes determining if the individual is stable enough to participate and if the individual will benefit from the group. Some considerations include the individual's developmental level, the stability of symptoms and functional impairments, and the current functional status. Following the assessment, the service must be identified in the individual's treatment plan. The individual must have an established treatment plan while participating in group and involves individual and/or family therapy.

### Group Therapy may be useful in the following situations:

1. Participants have interpersonal problems related to their diagnosis and functional impairments. Interaction with peers in a group setting will allow the individual to develop and practice new skills and focus on factors that impact the individuals's symptoms.
2. A professional has a number of individuals with the same type of problem that may gain insight be being in a group with others.
3. Individuals may benefit from interaction with others who may have a similar experience and all individuals demonstrate a level of competency to function in group therapy.
  - Universalization and reality testing related to an experience.
  - Support of appropriate defenses.
  - Challenge of unhealthy coping strategies.
4. Individuals who may benefit from confrontation by and accountability to a group of peers.
5. Individuals who can benefit from a treatment group that has some psychoeducational elements as a part of the group and this group is incorporated into the total treatment plan. Without the group experience, movement toward achievement of treatment goals for this individual may not progress. The group must be a part of an active treatment plan and may not be a randomly selected service by the clinician. The goals of group therapy must match the overall treatment plan for this individual member.

## Group Therapy Overview

Group psychotherapy is a covered service through the Nebraska Medical Assistance Program. Please see 471 NAC 32-001.15K; 471 NAC 32-001.06; 471 NAC 20-001.12 and 471 NAC 20-001.16 for specific regulations and Nebraska's Managed Care Regulations (<http://www.magellanprovider.com/>; Appendix B) . In order for the services to be considered, the Medicaid/Magellan provider must submit the following information regarding the group therapy service provided in the form of an overview.

1. Name of therapist providing group	Title
Name of Supervising practitioner of the group therapist	Title
Social Security Number of the group therapist	Medicaid Provider Number
2. Name of the psychotherapy group	
3. Please identify the type of group and the population that the group therapy serves. Please include the age, gender, diagnosis, symptoms, and problems that will be address in the group.	
4. How are individuals selected for group therapy? Please identify specific admission criteria.	
5. What population would not be appropriately served in this group? List exclusion criteria.	
6. Number of members that can be served in the group.	7. Length of the group therapy sessions.
8. Frequency of the group and the regular meeting date and time.	
9. Objectives and goals of the group. (How does this service meet active treatment?)	
10. How does the group therapist and supervising practitioner measure outcome? How does the group therapist and supervising practitioner know that group therapy is beneficial for particular member? Please be specific about how progress is measured.	
11. Criteria for termination of a member from this group psychotherapy services.	
12. Describe the therapist's training and experience in providing group therapy. The group therapist must be a fully licensed clinician (Managed Care requirement).	
Please submit above information to: Lori Lewis, Program Manager Department of Health and Human Services Division of Medicaid & Long Term Care	P.O. Box 95026 Lincoln, NE 68509-5026
(Any group overview not addressing all of the above elements will be considered incomplete and returned to the provider)	

### Group Therapy must not be used in the following situations:

1. The individual is grossly psychotic, a danger to themselves or others, or unable to tolerate the group process for any reason.
2. Group interaction may accelerate an acute condition.
3. The focus of the activity is exclusively educational or supportive in nature.

### The group therapist must:

1. consider the purpose of the group
2. have an established treatment plan for each individual participating and may involve individual and/or family to help process the group experience
3. schedule the group for a regular day and for a consistent amount of time
4. have group leadership skills for the population being served (for example, a group therapist must have training and experience in facilitating groups for the child or adolescent population when children or adolescents are the target population)
5. be fully licensed (Managed Care requirement) and have experience and training in providing group therapy
6. be able to consult their supervising practitioner to manage the group effectively
7. have completed the group therapy overview attached to this document and submitted it to Magellan and to Medicaid for review.