

4. "I HAVE SO MUCH TROUBLE TALKING TO PEOPLE; I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO SHARE IN A GROUP."

**Most people are anxious about being able to talk in group.** Almost without exception, within a few sessions people find that they do begin to talk in the group. The other group members understand what it is like to be new to the group, so you will most likely get a lot of support for beginning to talk in the group.

5. "I AM AFRAID I WILL BE VERBALLY ATTACKED BY THE LEADERS AND BY OTHER GROUP MEMBERS."

**It is very important that group members feel safe. Group leaders are there to help develop a safe environment.** As group members come to trust and accept one another, they generally experience feedback as positive, as if it were coming from their best friend. It is rare to find friends who will gently point out how you might be behaving in ways that hurt yourself or others, but this is precisely what group can offer. This will be done in a respectful, gentle way, so that you can hear it and make use of it.

### GROUP EXPECTATIONS

**Regular attendance and active participation is essential** – both for the development of cohesion and trust within the group and for your own individual benefit.

- If you must miss a meeting, please let one of the group leaders know in advance.
- The work of the group needs to be done in the group during group time. Therefore, we ask that you not socialize with other members of your group during the time when you are a member of that group.
- The group sessions are confidential. You, other members, and the group leaders are bound ethically not to disclose the contents of the group sessions.
- If you decide that you have gained as much as possible from the group or that you cannot continue for some reason, we ask that you come to the group for a final session in order to provide closure for yourself and other group members.

### AN EXCEPTIONAL RESOURCE FOR GROWTH!

**In summary, joining and committing to group therapy can be an exceptional resource for your growth.** Group provides personal and interpersonal challenges but it can also be fun and full of laughter. The knowledge and positive support gained through a group experience can provide the means for a substantially enriched university life.

# UCR | Counseling and Psychological Services

## HOURS

Monday through Friday • 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

## FOR AN APPOINTMENT

Call the UCR's Counseling and Psychological Services during regular office hours

(951) UCR-TALK • (951) 827-8255  
Or (951) 827-5531  
On Campus: 2-TALK (2-8255)

## COUNSELORS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE BY PHONE

### 24-hours Daily

(951) UCR-TALK • (951) 827-8255  
Or 951-827-5531  
On Campus: 2-TALK (2-8255)

## ADDRESS

UC Riverside Counseling and Psychological Services  
Veitch Student Center, North Wing  
Riverside, CA 92521  
counseling.ucr.edu

*Made available by UCR's Counseling and Psychological Services*

counseling.ucr.edu  
counseling.ucr.edu

## CRITICAL RESOURCES

### RIVERSIDE HELPLINE 1-800-686-HELP

1-(800) 686-4357 • (24 Hours)

### NATIONAL SUICIDE HOTLINE 1-800-SUICIDE

1-(800) 784-2433 • (24 Hours)

### STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES (951) 827-3031

# Group Therapy



CALL 24-HOURS A DAY:  
**(951) UCR-TALK**  
(951) 827-8255

# UCR | Counseling and Psychological Services

*You're not alone!*

*Group therapy can provide challenges, but it can also be fun and supportive!*

be well | STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES

Accredited by  
The International Association of Counseling Services, Inc.

BE MENTALLY HEALTHY

BE LESS STRESSED

BE WELL

## WHAT IS GROUP THERAPY?

In group therapy, 6 to 12 people meet face-to-face with one or more trained group therapists to address a general or specific problem. UCR's Counseling and Psychological Services offers both general and specialized groups in order to address the wide range of concerns.

In general groups, such as an unstructured interpersonal process group, the members give feedback to each other by expressing their own feelings about what someone says or does. This interaction, which is facilitated by group therapists, gives group members an opportunity to try out new behaviors and to learn more about the way they interact with others in a safe environment. These types of groups are helpful for people who have difficulties establishing relationships or have had difficulties in past or present relationships. Through receiving and giving feedback in a process group one might learn how to communicate, discover healthier ways of taking care of oneself, or problem-solve more effectively.



**Specialized groups have a slightly different emphasis.** For example, support or psycho-educational groups assist group members in addressing and resolving a specific issue with support from other members and guidance from the group therapist. In these types of groups, members may learn valuable skills that they can apply to problems in their lives. These groups might utilize structured exercises or homework in helping members resolve their problems. These groups might also provide an environment where members give each other support as they work through a difficult life issue.

**Confidentiality.** It is important to keep in mind that the content of group sessions is confidential. What members talk about or say in group is not discussed outside of group. A goal of our groups is to provide a safe and confidential place for members to work with each other in addressing their problems and concerns.

**Examples of groups that are frequently offered include:** Dissertation Support Group, Transitions Group, Self-Esteem Group, Grief/Loss Support Group, Assertiveness Group, Women's and Men's Support Groups, Meditation Group, LGBT Support Group, Eating Disorder Group, Substance Use/Abuse Group, and Stress Management Group.

## WHY DOES GROUP THERAPY WORK?

When people come into a group and interact freely with other group members, they usually recreate those difficulties that brought them to group therapy in the first place. Interpersonal patterns learned from an early age may not have provided models for effective communication with others, for problem solving strategies, or for skills in self-acceptance and self-support. Under the skilled direction of a group therapist, the group is able to give support, offer alternatives, and point out troublesome patterns. In this way alternative behaviors are learned, and the person can develop new ways of relating to people. During group therapy, people begin to see that they are not alone, and it is encouraging to hear that other people have similar difficulties. In the climate of trust provided by the group, people feel free to care about and help each other. Group members gain as much from each other as from the therapists.

## WHAT DO I TALK ABOUT WHEN I AM IN GROUP THERAPY?

Talk about what brought you to the counseling center in the first place. Tell the group members what is bothering you. If you need support, let the group know. If you think you need confrontation, let them know this also. It is important to tell people what you expect of them. Revealing your feelings in a safe and supportive environment is an important part of group and affects how much you will be helped.



## COMMON MISPERCEPTIONS

1. "I WILL BE FORCED TO TELL ALL OF MY DEEPEST THOUGHTS, FEELINGS AND SECRETS TO THE GROUP."

**You control what, how much, and when you share with the group.** Most people find that when they feel safe enough to share what is troubling them, a group can be very helpful and affirming. We encourage you not to share what you are not ready to disclose. However, you can also be helped by listening to others and thinking about how their concerns might apply to you.

2. "GROUP THERAPY WILL TAKE LONGER THAN INDIVIDUAL THERAPY BECAUSE I WILL HAVE TO SHARE THE TIME WITH OTHERS."

**Actually, group therapy is often more efficient than individual therapy for two reasons.** First, you can benefit from the group even during sessions when you say little but listen carefully to others. You will find that you have much in common with other group members, and as they work on a concern, you can learn more about yourself. Second, group members will often bring up issues that strike a chord with you, but that you might not have been aware of or brought up yourself.

3. "GROUP THERAPY IS SECOND-BEST TO INDIVIDUAL THERAPY."

**Group therapy is being recommended to you because your counselor believes that it is the most effective way to address your concerns.** Group therapy offers many benefits that are not as available with individual therapy. In everyday life, people seldom take the time to carefully observe others, and the social constraints against giving others honest feedback inhibits the sharing of observations that could be helpful and instructive. By contrast, group members do take the time to observe and share impressions in honest and caring ways.

**Another asset of group therapy is provided by the variety of personalities, experiences, and coping strategies that are natural to the members of any group.** The strengths of each individual group member can serve as a model for other group members who are still learning about those skills and strengths.

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