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INTERPERSONAL PROCESS GROUP THERAPY FAQs

1. What are the logistics of the group?

- **Frequency:** Weekly
- **Duration:** 75 minutes (1h 15m)
- **Where:** In-person at 6525 N. Charles Street, Gibson Building, Towson, MD
- **Who:** Mixed gender and age (but must be 18+)
- **Cost:** \$75 (sliding scale slots available based on financial need)
- **Day/time:** Based on member availability
- **Number of Participants:** 5-8
- **Start:** September 2026
- **Type:** Closed group, ongoing/long-term
- **Commitment:** at least 8 consecutive weeks

2. What does a “closed” group mean?

It means that the group consists of the same members each week; it is not a drop-in group. The group will “open” when there is a minimum threshold of 5-6 members and it will “close” when it reaches a maximum of 8 members.

3. Who is the facilitator?

Dr. Kate Berger will be the facilitator. She is a group therapy expert who has completed a two-year post-doctoral fellowship in group therapy through the National Group Psychotherapy Institute (NGPI). She also serves on the board of the Mid-Atlantic Group Psychotherapy Society, is a member of the American Group Psychotherapy Society, and teaches a graduate course on Interpersonal Process Group Therapy at Loyola University Maryland. She is also in her own training group with other group therapists and receives ongoing consultation by senior experts in the field.

4. What does an interpersonal process (IP) therapy group focus on?

An IP group is distinct from a psychoeducational/skills-based group or an advice-giving support group. When people join an IP therapy group, they tend to recreate the social dynamics in the therapy room that show up “in the real world.” In other words, IP groups are thought to serve as a close approximation of someone’s typical relational self. This is great news, because IP groups can therefore provide the opportunity to practice new ways of relating to others. So, the focus of an IP group is on the here-and-now interactions between group members. It prioritizes the group process, or emerging

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dynamics between members (stuff “in here”), rather than any one specific content area or topic (stuff “out there”). In short, IP groups focus on:

- Increasing awareness of interpersonal patterns as they’re unfolding in the here-and-now within group interactions
- Helping members understand their impact on others
- Experimenting with more direct, flexible, and authentic ways of relating
- Building tolerance for closeness, conflict, and feedback
- Expanding emotional expression

5. What can IP therapy groups help me with?

IP groups offer the chance to:

- Build hope and a sense of community
- Receive and offer support and critical interpersonal feedback
- Learn how to rupture AND repair in long-term relationships
- Experiment with new interpersonal behaviors, including talking honestly and directly about feelings
- Gain insight into relationship patterns
- Improve self-confidence
- Develop new socializing techniques (e.g., through imitation and practice), including mentalization
- Practice setting boundaries and asserting autonomy while belonging to a group

6. Who would benefit most from IP group therapy?

People who struggle with...

- Social anxiety
- Sensitivity to judgment, rejection, or disapproval
- Inhibiting their speech and making space for others to contribute
- Difficulty expressing needs, boundaries, and anger
- Negative self-esteem
- People-pleasing or overaccommodation
- Withdrawing or shutting down when feeling exposed
- Chronic Isolation or feeling misunderstood
- Being consistent/reliable in relationships
- Emotional identification, expression, and regulation
- Initiating and maintaining deep, authentic connections (including managing conflict)
- A history of developmental relational trauma (e.g., abuse or neglect)

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7. Will what I share be kept confidential?

Before joining a group, each member must agree to keep confidential any identifying information about other members. In other words, it is an expectation that “what happens in group, stays in group.”

8. What if I know someone else in the group?

I will do my best to limit the possibility that you would know another member. In the first group, we always ask if members have any prior relationships with others in the group (beyond just acquaintances). Although rare, we would make alternate arrangements if this becomes an issue.

9. Isn't group therapy not as effective as individual therapy?

Research has shown that group therapy is as effective, and sometimes more effective, than individual therapy across a variety of concerns, particularly those related to how we view ourselves and others in relationships.

10. Can I be in concurrent individual and group therapy?

Yes! In fact, this is very common, especially for people who have more complex presenting issues and need additional individualized support. I also provide individual consultation with group therapy clients if needed.

11. It's hard for me to open up. Will I be forced to speak?

You are in control of what and how quickly you disclose. That being said, it's important to remember that the more of yourself you share, the more you stand to benefit from the group experience.

12. Won't group therapy take longer because everyone has to take turns? What if I don't have time to share?

Group therapy can be quite efficient because you can also gain a lot from observing and listening to others and applying the group's feedback to your own concerns. For example, it is common for other members to explore issues that are relevant to you but were not previously on your radar. Group also provides a chance to work on self-advocacy and assertiveness skills if you find it hard to speak up in group settings.

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13. What are some ways I can work on my interpersonal skills in group?

If You Relate to People By:	You Might Experiment With:
1. Complying, giving in, being self-effacing.	Saying no.
2. Resisting suggestions; holding back.	Taking a risk; trying something new.
3. Always talking; filling any silence with words because you feel uncomfortable.	Being silent for a minute; getting in touch with uncomfortable feelings; talking about those feelings.
4. Waiting for someone to say something, then reacting.	Initiating something yourself, for someone else to react to.
5. Always smiling, even when annoyed or angry.	Talking without smiling when feeling sad or angry.
6. Explaining.	Simply responding with what you feel (e.g., "I have an impulse to explain")
7. Trying to get people to stop feeling a certain way.	Simply accepting the way they feel; at the same time exploring your impulses and feelings.
8. Being polite, not showing anger or judgment.	Saying and/or showing your feelings.
9. Expressing anger easily.	Checking to see what feelings are underneath the anger.
10. Deflecting praise.	Accepting praise and trying to take it in.
11. Feeling bored but being too polite to say anything about it.	Talking about your feelings of boredom.
12. When challenged, defending yourself.	Not saying anything in rebuttal – but exploring the feelings you have.
13. Being afraid – and hiding your fear.	Being openly afraid, letting everyone know it.
14. Always complimenting others.	Telling others how you really feel about them.
15. Trying to get everybody to approve of you.	Being what you are and accepting that some people may not approve.
16. Giving advice.	Reporting "I feel like giving you advice" – but not doing it.
17. Always helping other people.	Asking for help, letting yourself be helped.
18. Always asking for help.	Helping someone else.
19. Controlling your feelings and suppressing them.	Experiencing your feelings and exploring them.
20. Keeping things secret.	Disclosing something about yourself that is hard to say.
21. Playing it safe.	Taking a few risks.

In trying these experiments, the important thing is to do something that feels difficult. Old, familiar ways of behaving will probably not result in productive experiments. Moreover, a new behavior may seem difficult at first, but with practice, it gets easier. Then the new behavior may be added to your repertoire – your range of options – and it's available whenever you need it.