

Lisa S Powell PhD, CGP, EMDRIA Certified  
Licensed Psychologist, PSY 22286

**GROUP THERAPY:  
WHY GROUP & WHAT TO EXPECT**

## Why Consider Group Therapy:

---

Group therapy is easily one of the most effective and impactful forms of therapy available. Group therapy has been a standard treatment option for over 50 years. For anyone seeking meaningful change in their relationships, including their relationship with themselves, group therapy is one of the best options available. Because group therapy is experiential, progress typically occurs on a much deeper level than in individual therapy.

Group therapy helps people learn about themselves, improve their interpersonal relationships and expand their capacity for intimacy. It addresses feelings of isolation, depression or anxiety. And it helps people make significant changes so they feel better about the quality of their lives.

### **What others have said about group:**

"I like that I'm feeling more comfortable with emotional circumstances that have always been really scary to me since I was a kid. I like that being angry, disgusted, scared, whatever—being any of these negative emotions—feels less frightening and more kind of okay and organic. There's comfort in that."

"I was super hesitant to do group therapy; it ended up being the most helpful thing for me. It's been far more powerful for me than individual therapy. I think I have a lot of anxieties around social situations and being around people. [Group] allows you to experience those firsthand, and deal with them in that moment. You get to understand how people see you. In that room, they'll tell you."

## What to Expect:

---

The groups I lead are not support groups. In psychodynamic group therapy, there is no single person engaged in a monologue about his or her problems, or interacting 'one to one' with the therapist. Group therapy is interactive and dynamic, with members of the group communicating openly with one another in a 'safe-ish' space. We call it safe-ish because if we experienced a complete sense of safety, it would imply we are not being vulnerable or taking risks.

In this safe-ish space, group members explore the dynamics happening in the room, in that moment. Group therapy aims to 'stay in the room' and relate to the people in the group in real time. We focus on something called Progressive Emotional Communication. Progressive Emotional Communication happens when, despite challenging emotions, we do not lose connection with the other. Whether its conflict or an expression of love, we are learning to stay present and engaged. When you're scared, you put words to your fear. When you're angry or jealous, you learn to find the words to describe those challenging feelings. You don't shut down or push your emotions away; you acknowledge, feel, and explore them, no matter how irrational they may seem; and ultimately you learn from them.

In the room, you learn to air your thoughts and grievances and express your emotions, ultimately realizing there aren't catastrophic consequences to getting angry. You come to understand expression of anger and other more challenging emotions aren't shameful; that conflict doesn't have to be dangerous. When you're learning on this kind of experiential level, your body (autonomic nervous system) reprograms itself, realizing that it doesn't need go into fight/flight or freeze mode during moments of conflict.

The group is like a microcosm for the real world; the dynamics we create within the group often represent the dynamics in your real-life relationships. Your dysfunctional patterns repeat themselves inside the room; but there, you're in a better position to be curious, explore, learn and understand your feelings and behavior. With this insight and understanding we can make new choices for interaction, leading to change both in group and in your life.

There's no better way to increase your capacity for intimacy and your ability to connect with other people. And in the process of increasing that capacity, you end up facing yourself. For this reason, group therapy is intimidating to many; but it's also extraordinarily impactful—like a fast lane for growth.

**For more information contact  
me at 424-262-3936 or [drlspowell@me.com](mailto:drlspowell@me.com)**