

PERSONAL GROWTH SELF-HELP GROUPS:
ORIGINS, FUNCTIONS, ISSUES AND
SELF-REPORTS OF PARTICIPANTS

by

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ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to gain an understanding of personal growth self-help groups by: (a) reviewing the literature, and (b) conducting a micro-study of local self-help groups. The aim of the research was to describe the personal growth self-help group in terms of: (a) its origins, (b) its role in mental health service delivery, and (c) the experience it provides participants as could be learned from the self-reports of local self-help group members.

The study was done in two parts. First, a review of the literature was undertaken to trace the evolution of factors leading to the emergence of the personal growth self-help group. These factors were: (a) social conditions creating the need for self-help groups, (b) developments in mental health intervention supporting the concept of self-help groups, and (c) developments in self-help groups. The Review of Literature also included a description of self-help groups today to gain an understanding of personal growth self-help groups in the context of the larger self-help group movement.

The second part of the study involved a survey of local, Canadian self-help groups. A survey questionnaire was used to collect data from participants. The data were then compared with findings in the literature to see if the characteristics of local groups supported the statements made in previous studies. Speculations were made on the differing characteristics and needs of local groups.

The results showed that most participants joined the groups for personal growth purposes, seeking satisfying relationships and raising cul-

tural consciousness. The major problems reported by the groups were lack of focused discussion and inconsistent attendance and membership. The literature emphasized self-help groups as an alternative to professional helping services. The participants in this study did not support this finding. Rather, the participants in this study felt that the self-help group was an experience in itself, not necessarily an alternative or supplement to professional help. The general attitude toward professional helping persons was neutral, neither strongly positive nor strongly negative. Many participants of the self-help groups indicated a desire for professional help as a result of their involvement in the self-help group. Most desired individual counseling or therapy for more intensive work on personal problems.

Self-help groups are a valuable addition to mental health delivery systems. They serve a primary preventive function in providing support networks for coping with daily stresses and potential crises. The literature indicates a desire for an integration between professional and self-help services.

Examiners:

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CHAPTER I

Self-help groups have existed throughout history in various forms. The twentieth century has seen the burgeoning of self-help groups which meet for the purpose of offering psychological help to their members. Until recently, these self-help groups functioned primarily outside of researchers and practitioners field of vision. The increasing popularity of these groups (Borman, 1976, Katz & Bender, 1976a) coupled with changing theories on mental health services have brought self-help groups into focus for social scientists. Evidence of this change is most apparent in the literature. Until 1976, literature on self-help groups was sparse. In 1976, two journals devoted entire issues to self-help groups (Social Policy, Sept/Oct, 1976, Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, Dec, 1976) and two comprehensive books on self-help groups were published (Katz & Bender, 1976a, Caplan & Killilea, 1976).

While much attention has been directed toward self-help groups, there remains a need for further research (Borman, 1976, Katz & Bender, 1976a, Lorion, 1976). Dumont (1976) points out that the self-help group as a grassroots phenomenon can inform professionals of needed changes lest professionals "become increasingly cloistered, self-serving and irrelevant" (p. 130). Lorion (1976) states that institutional changes tend to follow grassroots movements. Grassroots movements may assist professionals in identifying needs not satisfied by current social, and mental health, systems. By mental health systems, I am referring to the agencies, institutions, hospitals, and private practitioners offering psychological aid.

Most of the literature on self-help groups reviews groups which meet around a common problem (problem-specific groups) or those groups which meet for social change purposes (social advocacy groups). The newer type of self-help group meets for personal growth purposes and may be referred to as the personal growth self-help group (Katz & Bender, 1976a). Katz and Bender (1976a) predict that the personal growth type of self-help group will "evoke the intense scrutiny of research formerly reserved for better-known social movements" (p. 33). It is Lorion's (1976) opinion that professionals will be the first to benefit from research on self-help groups but the results of the research will ultimately benefit self-help groups.

Significance of the Study

This study differs from previous studies in three ways. One, the literature on self-help groups covers disparate aspects of self-help groups. This study integrates these separate veins to produce an historical overview and a description of self-help groups today.

Secondly, the self-help groups researched in the literature are predominantly located in the United States. This study is surveying local, Canadian self-help groups.

Thirdly, except for articles on Women's Consciousness Raising (CR) groups, most of the literature on self-help groups reviews groups which are either problem-specific or social advocacy groups. This study is focusing on the personal growth self-help group, which is a lesser known phenomenon.

Research on personal growth self-help groups provides information which can be used by both professionals and lay people. Lay people may gain a better understanding of self-help groups in the context of the

larger self-help movement. They may also have a better idea of what to expect from the self-help group experience.

Professionals may learn how they can aid self-help groups. Such interchange between self-help and professional help is needed if people's needs are to be better served. We need to know what both offer and how they can coordinate to create a more comprehensive mental health delivery system (Katz & Bender, 1976a, Levy, 1976, Lorion, 1976, Riessman, 1976a, Sidel & Sidel, 1976).

Delimitations

The second part of this study is limited to self-help groups in and around Victoria, B. C. The types of self-help groups being studied are those with a personal growth orientation. Consciousness Raising groups are considered a form of personal growth. The study does not include problem-specific groups, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS), or Parents Without Partners. Nor does it include groups which call themselves self-help but which have a designated leader or format, such as Growth Unlimited (GULL) or Bioenergetic Self-Help Groups led by Dr. Bennett Shapiro. Lastly, it does not include groups whose primary purpose is task oriented, such as the food, business or housing cooperatives.

No attempt is being made to evaluate the groups in terms of their effectiveness. The results of this survey may be expressive only of the groups surveyed. This study does not presume that the results may be generalized without further research being done in a variety of other Canadian locales.

Method

The first step in conducting this study was to review the literature in order to understand personal growth self-help groups in terms of their historical roots, and in the context of the larger self-help group movement. The second step was to conduct a survey of local self-help groups to see if they bear out the findings in the literature. This comparison provides a basis for speculation on needs and characteristics of local groups in relation to characteristics which have been reported in other studies.

The investigation of local self-help groups was done to address the following questions:

1. Why do people join self-help groups?
2. What problems do self-help groups experience?
3. What do participants gain from the experience in terms of personal growth? That is, what insights develop in terms of self, relationships and group functioning, and what changes are reported in terms of attitudes, awareness and behavior?
4. How do previous experiences influence participation in the group? For instance, does previous group experience serve as motivation to join, or does it enable participants to ^{then} better express feelings and ideas, ^{better?} etc.
5. What is the relationship between self-help and professional help?
 - a. Is there an overlap in helping services?
 - b. What attitudes do self-help members have toward professional help?
 - c. What needs are indicated for professional help?

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Personal growth self-help groups have evolved from various directions. In reading the literature, I found that the various directions could be grouped into three dominant categories: (a) social conditions creating the need for self-help groups, (b) theoretical and applied developments in mental health intervention relating to the personal growth self-help group, and (c) developments in self-help groups. I found that by following the evolutionary developments in each of these three categories, I could better illustrate how they influenced the emergence of the personal growth self-help group. The review of literature first covers the evolutionary developments in the three categories, and, secondly, describes self-help groups as they exist today.

Evolving Social Conditions

Katz and Bender (1976a) studied self-help groups as a social movement phenomenon due to their widespread popularity. According to Turner (1969), there have been three major categories of social movements which have evolved since the French Revolution. These categories have been defined as: (a) political-humanitarian, (b) material-economic, and (c) psychological-therapeutic (Turner, 1969). Katz and Bender (1976a) stated that the psychological-therapeutic social movement was more pervasive today than at any other time in history. It is characterized by demands for psychological meaning in life, recovery of personal dignity and identity, and self-actualization (Katz & Bender, 1976a). Personal growth self-help groups fall into the psychological-therapeutic category.

Cameron (1966) states that the "essence of a social movement is [to] change" the social structure, the culture, or the distribution of power (p. 8). Social movements develop in reaction to social conditions which in some way do not satisfy people's needs (Toch, 1965). Katz and Bender (1976a, pp. 29-30) have listed the minimal conditions necessary for a social movement to arise:

1. A source of dissatisfaction within the person's daily living patterns.
2. The discontentment is shared with others.
3. The dissatisfaction contains an element of deprivation.
4. The person feels that an attainable quality has been taken away or withheld.

The conditions which fostered the self-help movement have been attributed primarily to industrialization and its radiating effects on society. Katz and Bender (1976a) state that industrialization produced depersonalized institutions, feelings of powerlessness, alienation, loss of choices in and control over one's life, and loss of community and identity. In addition to these conditions identified by Katz and Bender (1976a), Back and Taylor (1976, p. 308) list other conditions in contemporary society to which self-help groups may be responding:

1. An unsupportive society which demands success and competence.
2. The death of the family.
3. The downgrading of religion.
4. "Lack of assurance of a secure occupational role" (Back & Taylor, 1976, p. 308).

Sidel and Sidel (1976) have identified further social problems prevalent in Western society today. These problems include "the tendency to blame the victim rather than changing the victimizing circumstance,

the advancing medicalization of all aspects of human life, and the increasing ascendancy of technology over caring within our professional human services" (p. 67).

People have reacted to these social conditions in various ways over the past century. In the 19th century, social reformers heralded the need for cooperative action on the part of the disadvantaged as a means to counteracting problems stemming from industrialization (Harrington, 1973). Unfortunately, the 19th century's applied and theoretical solutions lacked whatever strength was necessary to deter the self-interests of industry.

The early 20th century saw the formation of cooperative action in the form of unions. Workers joined together to pressure employers for more humane working conditions. As working conditions improved, other problems became apparent. Warmth and cooperation between people waned. Relationships became pragmatic and competitive. People were forced to take jobs which were dehumanizing. The sense of isolation and loneliness which ensued motivated many to join groups and search for answers to living (Kemp, 1971; Rosenbaum, 1976, p. 1). The move toward group affiliation was said to have begun in the 1940s (Kemp, 1971).

In the 1950s, people valued economic and political security following two world wars and a major economic depression. The general tenor of the fifties was caution. The sixties were explosive by comparison. Many social movements flourished in the sixties. People were flexing their collective muscle, fighting causes and challenging political and corporate powers. In addition to prolific social action, many people were dropping from society's mainstream to make up the population referred to as the counterculture. The counterculture formed in reaction to a technocratic society which valued things over people. The counter-

culture was expressed in nonconformist behavior, anti-consumerism, and a preference for meaningful work over job security (Musgrove, 1974, Westhues, 1972). People in the counterculture wanted to be recognized as individuals, not cogs in the production machine. The counterculture disturbed the status quo in the direction of humanizing society (Musgrove, 1974, p. 19).

The excitement of the sixties was lost to a sense of disillusionment in the 1970s.

The problem with the protest movement of the 60s was that when the smoke and commotion cleared and the TV cameras went away, people were left as anomic individuals. (Perlman, 1976, p. 6)

People realized the monolithic nature of political and corporate power (Riessman, 1976). Energies were pulled in. People changed their focus from large-scale change to personal and local change.

The thrust of the 70s is on local organizations and on issues which are more rooted in people's daily lives, have a longer-term perspective, and raise people's consciousness through involvement at a concrete level in their communities. (Perlman, 1976, pp. 6-7)

The self-help movement today is an example of this quieter action at the local and personal level. People are grouping together to share discontentments and aid one another in achieving more satisfying lives.

Developments in Mental Health Intervention

Contributions to the personal growth self-help movement coming from the mental health field include developments leading to the personal growth group, as well as various theoretical developments supporting the concept of the self-help group.

Personal growth groups have evolved from the intensive group experience. Experimentation with the intensive group experience for learning and growth began in the 1940s with the sensitivity training group founders in Bethel, Maine (Gottschalk & Pattison, 1969, Seashore, 1974).

The sensitivity training group (T-group) was designed to provide a social microcosm where participants could practice decision-making and learn skills for improved relating. The learning process was experiential. Participants of the groups interacted and then observed and analyzed the interaction that had taken place. Spontaneous interaction in the group served as data for cognitive analysis of interactional processes. The popularity of training groups led to widespread use in various settings.

A concurrent development in experiential learning groups began in Chicago in the 1940s. Carl Rogers and his associates were assigned the task of designing a brief but effective training program for persons designated to counsel returning war veterans. The design they developed was an intensive group experience. Members met for several hours each day in "an attempt to tie together experiential and cognitive learning in a process which had therapeutic value for the individual" (Rogers, 1970, p. 4).

The experiential groups initiated in the 1940s in Bethel, Maine and Chicago were the precursors of the encounter group movement popular in the 1950s and 1960s. Groups which utilized the encounter style functioned without an agenda or predetermined structure. Goldberg (1970)

felt that the strength of these groups in effecting improved interpersonal relating was in their very lack of structure or agenda. Without a structure or agenda, members were forced to confront their deeper personal reasons (needs) for entering the group. In this way, each person was responsible for bringing meaning and purpose to the group. Passivity and dependency in the groups led to boredom and dissatisfaction just as one's life would be unsatisfying if the purpose was defined by external sources or conditions (Goldberg, 1970).

The purposes of the encounter-style groups may be summarized in the following categories taken from Harrison (1967):

1. To develop socially appropriate behavior in terms of dominance, responsiveness, and expressiveness.
2. To moderate personality imbalances enabling participants to express fuller aspects of their personality.
3. To enhance adaptive capabilities through improved perceptual abilities, increased flexibility in behavior, and an ongoing awareness of interpersonal relationships and group phenomena (in Lakin, 1972, p. 199).

Encounter style groups have various labels. Lakin (1972) lumps them together under the label "training movement". Goldberg (1970) calls them process groups. The terms personal growth, encounter and sensitivity training are often used interchangeably in the literature. Whatever the label, these groups function as an expressive movement to counter the effects of an "overly rational society" (Lakin, 1972, p. 289). These groups also have a countercultural function in that they pose alternatives to traditional values and traditional ways of relating (Lakin, 1972).

Goldberg (1970) states that the newer style of leaderless, self-analytic groups "have attempted to enact the same kinds of objectives as

have the Encounter groups, but with no leader present" (p. 56). Thus, the personal growth self-help group is the more recent manifestation of the intensive group experience which began in the 1940s. Lay people are using the encounter group as a model for their own personal growth process.

While lay people have taken the initiative to manufacture their own personal growth experiences, they are not without the support of professionals who recognize the need for nonprofessional and alternative helping services. Nonprofessional and alternative helping methods are most utilized by primary prevention and community mental health practices.

reference
 Caplan is the foremost theoretician on primary prevention. Primary prevention has developed in the past three decades. It is a process of looking at various environmental influences on people to identify potentially stressful conditions. By intervening at the point of stress, primary prevention can precede potential problems and, theoretically, prevent the need for extensive intervention later. Jacobs (1974) states that, until recently, the major thrust of social intervention systems had been to overtrain a small number of professional mental health workers for the purpose of helping individuals rather than the more preventive approach of treating the larger systems. Self-help groups serve a primary preventive function by providing a reference group which is available for dealing with everyday stresses as well as providing support at times of crisis.

The community mental health movement was a move toward increasing service delivery by utilizing nonprofessional help and applying professional help where it was most strategically useful. Community mental health believed that social systems had natural caretaking capacities and that a limited number of professionals could not possibly fulfill everyone's ^{or needs for receive care} carereceiving needs. The alternative was to identify natural caretaking systems in the community to see what roles professionals could

take which would relieve and benefit the community most (Dumont, 1976, p. 125). The theoretical premise underlying the community mental health movement was that mental illness was due more to social disorganization than to intrapsychic conflicts (Dumont, 1976, p. 125). They were also influenced by findings that indicated the helping process was due more to personality variables than to professional training (Whitehorn & Betz, 1960). The community mental health movement applied its theories to the training and utilization of nonprofessional people--paraprofessionals--indigenous to the community being served. Indigenous help was found to be more trusted and better utilized by carereceivers (Caplan, 1976).

It was mentioned above that personality variables were found to be more important than professional training in the helping relationship. Carl Rogers was foremost in identifying what these variables were. Rogers' research revealed that conditions of openness, genuineness and unconditional positive regard were necessary for the helping process to occur (Hurvitz, 1976, p. 293). Other professionals (Carkhuff, 1969, Carkhuff & Berenson, 1967, Truax & Carkhuff, 1967) also believed that the helping relationship was based more on facilitative core conditions than on professional training. Further core conditions were identified as empathy, warmth and respect. In a study done by Levy, Knight, Padgett and Wollert (1977), it was found that empathy was the most frequently used help-giving activity in self-help groups.

Another move away from traditional helping methods was found in the development of alternative services which occurred in the 1960s. Alternative services were defined as those mental health systems with a personal touch (Glasscote, Raybin, Reifler & Kane, 1975). Alternative services offered respect and personalized treatment as a countertrend to the cold, institutionalized services of traditional agencies (Gordon, 1976).

Their goals were to relate to clients nonjudgmentally, reduce nonproductive and expensive bureaucratic formalities, reduce client-professional helper distance, and to have flexible working hours (Glasscote, et al, 1975). Their aim was to meet the needs of their clients rather than the needs of the bureaucracy. Gordon (1976) adds that alternative services also served the needs of their staff. For the volunteer nonprofessional, it was a place to be humanly useful to others. For the professional, it was a place to be free of role restrictions. For both, it offered a niche and a working community--"something to be part of" (Gordon, 1976, p. 48).

Alternative services made an attempt to improve service delivery by eliminating the problems inherent in traditional services. They were a type of self-help group which combined professionals and nonprofessionals in nonhierarchical working relationships. Self-help groups are another form of service delivery alternative to traditional helping methods. They differ from the alternative services of the sixties in that professionals are not involved.

Developments in Self-Help Groups

Kropotkin (1972) noted that throughout history, people have cooperated to meet food and defense needs. Societies are dependent upon cooperation for survival. Even animals are dependent on mutual aid for survival of their species (Katz & Bender, 1976a, p. 15). The breakdown of cooperative interaction in society threatens our continued existence. A look at the historical trends in Western society will show the influences toward and away from cooperative interaction.

Initially, settlers in America cooperated for production and protection in their communities. Cooperative communities were short-lived, though, due to the "fertility of the land and freedom from oppressive

state controls" (Katz & Bender, 1976a, p. 18). Cooperation was replaced by "marked individualism of production and ownership that has characterized American society ever since" (Katz & Bender, 1976a, p. 18).

While individualism was the predominant ethos, self-help groups did arise in various forms. In the mid-19th century, cooperative villages and utopian communities formed in order to achieve collective ownership of land and tools sufficient to support their members (Katz & Bender, 1976b, p. 273).

Trade unions, mentioned earlier, also began in the 19th and 20th centuries. Cooperative action on the part of union members gave workers some power in influencing their working conditions. Immigrants flooding to the United States and Canada in the early 20th century had to struggle for economic survival in a foreign land where language and cultural differences compounded survival difficulties. Ethnic communities formed for mutual aid and support. Later, as cultural assimilation took place, the majority of ethnic communities and their respective mutual aid programs gradually declined and disappeared (Katz & Bender, 1976b, p. 277).

Problem-specific self-help groups began in the 1930s with Recovery, Inc. and Alcoholics Anonymous. These were examples of stigmatized persons joining with like kind in a peer helping system. Alcoholics Anonymous was created by Dr. Bob and Bill W. These two men were alcoholics who had participated in another group called the Oxford Group. The Oxford Group was developed by Frank Buchman as a life-changing mechanism for college students (Hurvitz, 1976). The Oxford Group emphasized public confession, sharing struggles and answers, and helping others. They had a strong religious orientation. As a result of their experiences in the Oxford Group, Dr. Bob and Bill W. were inspired to utilize the same concepts in

developing peer self-help groups for alcoholics.

Recovery, Inc. also began in the 1930s. Recovery was developed by a psychiatrist, Dr. Abraham Low, as a form of group therapy based on concepts of self-reliance and the power of the will. Recovery and Alcoholics Anonymous may be considered the two founding traditions in 20th century self-help organizations, although they differed in their religious and secular emphases.

The religious tradition emphasized guilt, estrangement from the group, penance, and reunion with the group, while the secular tradition emphasized will and responsibility.

The groups associated with the religious tradition fostered confession, spiritual or inspirational activity, and a historical insight-oriented approach. The groups associated with the secular approach did not engage in confession, did not emphasize the inspirational or religious source of help, and had a learning theory, here-and-now approach. (Hurvitz, 1976, p. 292)

Included among groups which have since evolved from the secular approach of Recovery, Inc., are Synanon, Delancey Street Foundation for ex-incarcerated persons, Daytop Village and Integrity Groups (Hurvitz, 1976, p. 291).

Problem-specific self-help groups predominated until the 1960s. Liberation movements, political groups and the counterculture arose spontaneously in the 1960s in the form of local self-help organizations (Rossman, 1976, p. 88). People banded together to collectively induce social and political changes in a system which was basically non-responsive to individuals. Thus, the profile of self-help groups was altered by emerging needs in the population.

In the late 1960s, self-help groups formed to maintain discontinued government programs for the disadvantaged. Government programs initiated in the 1960s involved the training and employing of lay helping persons, usually indigenous to the population being served. As funding for these programs was discontinued, many participants were motivated to continue these programs on a self-help basis (Steinman & Traunstein, 1976).

A general move in society toward alleviating psychological stress and increasing life satisfaction has increased the demand for alternative helping systems (Goldberg, 1970, p. 27). The popularity of encounter groups, sensitivity groups and personal growth groups has been an impetus and a model for lay persons to establish self-help programs without professional leadership.

Thus, the newer type of self-help group, unlike ideologically based social movements, or problem-specific self-help groups, has a quasi-ideological aim of self-renewal or self-actualization through mutual aid (Katz & Bender, 1976a). Levy (1976) states that self-help groups with a personal growth emphasis function as a "third revolution" in mental health. They have major implications for the future of mental health delivery systems and they fulfill functions once served by family, church and communities (Levy, 1976).

Self-Help Groups Today

The personal growth self-help group is only one facet of the larger self-help group movement. In describing self-help groups today, all the literature on self-help groups with a psychological-therapeutic thrust was reviewed in order to give the reader an understanding of the movement as a whole.

Types of Self-Help Groups

Several typologies were cited in the literature. Levy's typology was chosen because it covered more specifically those self-help groups with a therapeutic function. Levy (1976) based his typology on the purpose and composition of the groups. The four types of self-help groups identified by Levy (1976) are described as follows:

Type I group meets around a common behavioral problem, such as alcohol, drugs or weight control. Examples of these groups are Alcoholics Anonymous, Synanon, Take Off Pounds Sensibly, and Parents Anonymous. These people are considered "deviant" by society. They join together out of a dissatisfaction with professional treatment in the interest of raising member's self-esteem and supporting members in changing undesired behavior. One aspect of raising self-esteem is changing public and personal image from "deviant" to "different".

Type II is composed of persons with a common status or stressful predicament. The group provides mutual support and members share coping strategies and advice. Examples of these groups are Make Today Count, Parents Without Partners and Recovery, Inc.

Type III is composed of persons who are generally discriminated against in the larger society. These groups may be termed survival oriented groups where members provide mutual support in counteracting the damaging effects of prejudice. Members work to remove the stigma attached to their way of life, sex, race, values, class, etc. Examples of these groups are Black Power Groups, Gay Liberation Groups and certain Women's Groups.

Type IV meets to assist members in their personal growth process. The members do not meet around a specific problem, but join together to aid one another in living a more satisfying life. Examples of these groups

are Consciousness Raising Groups (CR), Integrity Groups, Men's Groups, Women's Groups, Support Groups and Rap Groups.

Types I through III meet around a common problem (problem-specific groups). Type IV meets for the more ambiguous purpose of personal growth. In this sense, the personal growth self-help group becomes "part of the larger, vaguely parametered human potential movement" (Katz & Bender, 1976a, p. 30).

What Self-Help Groups Do

Self-help groups provide emotional sustenance "toward the resolution of personal problems, the establishment of identity, or the satisfaction of deep personal needs" (Katz & Bender, 1976a, p. 108). In addition, self-help groups help members make personal changes in the direction of: (a) self-validation, (b) obtaining direct services in the group, and (c) perceiving their own social reality more clearly in a relatively short time (Katz & Bender, 1976a, p. 114).

Katz and Bender (1976a) state that self-help groups help their members deal with personal problems and actualize positive changes by:

1. Developing and sustaining a realistic perspective of the world and the self in relation to the world.
2. Aiding the member in establishing new and more satisfying behaviors.
3. Aiding the member in uncovering underlying feelings.
4. Developing members' positive self-perception and pride.
5. Helping members discover and use personal competencies in the world and in the group.
6. Improving members' coping abilities by successful accomplishment of tasks in the group.

7. Progressing the member along a developmental continuum toward higher levels of self-esteem and the eventual transference or graduation to the outside world.

Not all groups provide all these helping functions. The type of group, its goals, functions and structure will determine the extent to which any of the above functions will be utilized. This is particularly true of the last function which indicates the self-help group as a means of rehabilitation toward more successful functioning, or adaptation, in the larger society.

Characteristics of Self-Help Groups

Self-help groups differ in their "patterns of origin, growth and development; their saliency for members; their internal organization, [and] their connectedness to the wider world" (Katz & Bender, 1976a, p. 105). In order to distinguish self-help groups from other social movements or from the counterculture which embodies self-help principles, Katz and Bender (1976a) proposed the following characteristics for identifying self-help groups:

1. The purpose of the group is predominantly personal change for its members.
2. Socialization and interpersonal interaction among members is stressed.
3. Relationships are face-to-face and egalitarian "with continuous participation in decision making" (Katz & Bender, 1976a, p. 31).
4. The group is not directed or influenced by professional persons.
5. Members join the self-help group for the purpose of resolving personal, pre-existing problems and the problems become the purpose of the group.

Levy (1976) also identified characteristics of self-help groups based on observations of groups which he studied. First, self-help groups have an "ephemeral existence". Their formation and dissolution are unpredictable. Secondly, groups differ in unique ways. That is, among nationally organized self-help groups, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, it was found that groups were often distinctly different in the way that they operated. Thirdly, "membership of most groups cut across various demographic dimensions along which social groups are usually divided" (Levy, 1976, p. 315). Within any particular group, membership was found to differ in areas of socio-economic status, education and type of occupation. Further, it was found that these differences did not interfere with persons interacting easily within the group. Fourthly, with the exception of Alcoholics Anonymous, most groups were composed primarily of women.

In terms of group process, self-help groups are characterized by a horizontal distribution of power. Leadership and status in the group are earned rather than ascribed, i.e., persons who help the group achieve its goals earn respect and status from other group members (Katz & Bender, 1976a). Lastly, the helping relationships are reciprocal. Each member gives, as well as receives, help in the group.

Functions of Self-Help Groups

A recurring theme in the literature is the empowering and dealienating functions of self-help groups (Marieskind, 1976; Riessman, 1976b).

Via the self-help movement in general people are attempting to achieve some measure of control, to reduce their alienation in areas closely affecting their lives, in their communities and neighborhoods rather than in the national arena where they feel powerless. They may become dealienated (even empowered)

through much of this local action and this may be the single most important feature of the self-help activities. (Riessman, 1976b, centerfold)

Marieskind (1976) feels that the empowering function of self-help groups occurs as a consequence of perceptual changes occurring in the group. Members discover autonomy and self-reliance in controlling their own lives which supplants a previous sense of powerlessness (Marieskind, 1976).

In addition, members discover the strength of collective efforts in effecting social change (Marieskind, 1976). Riessman (1976b) speculates that the dealienating function of self-help groups may serve to reduce political apathy and inactivity prevalent today. Marieskind (1976) believes that self-help groups are "tools for inducing collective thought and action from which radical social change can grow" (p. 66). Both Marieskind (1976) and Riessman (1976b) indicate that social change may occur as a result of the personal changes nurtured in the self-help group. Thus, while people have withdrawn their focus from large-scale social change to local and personal change (Perlman, 1976), the ultimate result may prove to be the same.

How Self-Help Groups Work

Several theorists (Antze, 1976; Katz & Bender, 1976a, Levy, 1976, Mowrer & Vattano, 1976, Riessman, 1976a) speculate on the processes and mechanisms which operate in self-help groups to make them helping agents.

The psychological processes operating in self-help groups fall into three categories: (a) social-psychological (Antze, 1976), (b) cognitive (Levy, 1976), and (c) behavioral (Levy, 1976). The social-psychological category is better described as certain kinds of social interactions which give rise to psychological feelings. The social interactions identified

by Antze (1976) include confession, and mutual sharing of experiences. Feelings that arise from the self-help group interactions include catharsis, mutual identification and the removal of stigmatized feelings (Antze, 1976, pp. 323-324). Confession relieves the members of conscience-laden secrets (Mowrer, 1968), catharsis provides emotional relief, and mutual identification enables members to feel less deviant and hold greater hope for change. (Sugalski '78)

Levy (1976) has identified several cognitive processes occurring in self-help groups. Cognitive processes are those which offer people relief by enabling them to think differently about their situations. For instance, Levy (1976) found that groups offered an articulated rationale for members' problems which served to counteract the previous sense of confusion and helplessness. The rationale provided an orderly explanation for the person's problem as well as offering a means for change. The members move from feeling trapped by their problems to feeling hope for change. The group provided a sense of normalcy for members behaviors so that members felt less socially deviant. They helped members view their problematic behaviors as normal--shared by others--which decreased the sense of isolation and deviance. The group members provided alternative ways of perceiving problematic situations so that members were able to perceive different coping strategies in response to their situations. The feedback from the group enabled members to perceive their situations from different angles, thereby increasing their coping response choices. In addition, members experienced increased analytic and discriminative abilities through sharing alternative ways of perceiving the situation. Lastly, members were helped to define new identities and new norms upon which they could base their self-esteem. Through the group's accep-

tance and support, members began to gain a sense of identity alternative to their previous deviant identity. As members gained success in behavioral changes, they felt better about themselves. Increased self-esteem also occurred as they discovered they could be of help to others in the group.

The behavioral processes operating in self-help groups include behavioral reinforcement (support and praise for desired behavior changes), training or indoctrination in self-control behaviors, modeling by senior members through sharing of success stories, and aiding members in finding new social environments which are more supportive and less likely to reinforce undesired behaviors or attitudes (Levy, 1976). The added benefit of sharing problems and coping strategies in the group is that a sense of community develops. The trust and caring in the ^{fellowship} community is further support for maintaining behavioral changes. ^{fellowship} (L. J. Guterman '78)

The processes identified above described actions occurring in the groups which explained how members were helped to make and sustain personal changes. The reasons why self-help groups are effective in helping their members are attributed, by Riessman (1976a), to certain mechanisms characteristic of self-help groups. These mechanisms are: (a) the helper/therapy principle, (b) consumer intensivity, and (c) the aprofessional dimension.

The helper/therapy principle asserts that in the process of helping, the helper is helped. This is particularly true when helper and helpee share a common problem. This principle is "a derivative of role theory, whereby a person playing a role tends to carry out the expectations and requirements of that role" (Riessman, 1976a, p. 41). In becoming the helping person, or role, the helper reinforces his/her own positive changes,

experiences increased self-esteem, competence, reduced dependency and a feeling of social usefulness. The helper moves from a victimized position to a helping position where mastery and increased self-esteem are experienced (Caplan, 1976, p. 131). In addition, the helper is able to observe his/her problem at a distance and gain insights and understanding.

Consumer intensivity is a term for active consumer involvement in service provisions. It has been found that the helping person is better able to match the needs of the consumer when the consumer is actively involved (Fuchs, 1968, Riessman, 1976a). The motivation and involvement of the consumer determine the quality of service received (Riessman, 1976a). Tyler (1976) states that active participation "is an essential element in all effective human services [and that] most commonly, the failure to benefit from professional services arises from the lack of active efforts by the individual and/or misdirected efforts" (p. 444). In addition, Steinman and Traunstein (1976) have found that hierarchical helping relationships produce passivity and dependency in clients since the helping person is both a prescriber for, and operator on, the helpee. Self-help groups are non-hierarchical, the helping relationships are reciprocal, and the groups are peer-centered rather than leader-centered. Each member is responsible for making his/her needs known in order to receive help from the group; and each member is responsible for helping others in the group. The self-help group represents the essence of consumer involvement (Riessman, 1976a).

The last mechanism identified by Riessman (1976a) was the aprofessional dimension. Riessman's (1976a) emphasis was on the benefits of aprofessional helping methods as a counterbalance to limitations found in professional helping services. The following statement indicates Riessman's

bias, but also clarifies some important issues.

The aprofessional approach [of self-help groups] is likely to be much more consumer centered, immediately relevant, demystified, not dispensed in a condescending manner, non-elite, more directly accountable to the consumer--at least in terms of direct satisfaction--and far less expensive. (Riessman, 1976a, p. 45)

Two other aspects of the aprofessional dimension were discussed by Riessman (1976a). One was the importance of a shared world view between the helper and helpee. The second was the importance of indigeneity in human service practice.

The concept of the shared world view comes from Torrey's (1972) theories on the four components of psychotherapy, the first being "a shared world view" between therapist and client. Torrey (1972) asserts that it is necessary for the therapist and client to share a common language and a common way of perceiving the world of cause and effect, particularly the cause and effect of emotional problems. For example,

A psychoanalyst trying to cure a patient who does not believe in oedipal conflicts and a witchdoctor trying to cure a patient who does not believe in spirit possession will be equally ineffective unless they can persuade the patient to accept their own theory of causation. (Torrey, 1972, p. 24)

The shared world view is more subtle between people who speak the same language but have different cultural backgrounds resulting in different value systems. An example of this is found in differing socio-economic classes. "In this case 'class' contains its own set of ideas, ideals, goals, values, etc., and so can be considered as a separate culture"

(Torrey, 1972, p. 31). Research shows that most psychotherapists are from the upper and upper-middle classes, and that people from the lower classes have negligible opportunities for receiving satisfying psychotherapy (Hollingshead & Redlich, 1958; Hunt, 1960; Prince, 1968; Riessman, Conen & Pearl, 1964; Sauna, 1966; Torrey, 1972, p. 31). For those people holding different world views from psychotherapists, the self-help group may be a valuable alternative. The quantity and variety of self-help groups affords a greater chance of matching persons with shared world views.

The main value of indigeneity in human service practice is in providing additional humanpower to compensate for the shortage of professionally-trained personnel. Indigeneity is the term for helping persons indigenous to the community being served. The rationale for using indigenous help is based on research indicating that helping capacities are related to variables separate from professional training (Torrey, 1969). These variables include the personal qualities of the helper (see p. 12), and the helpee's expectations.

The helpee's expectations have been found to influence both symptom relief and behavior change (Torrey, 1969, p. 366). The factors which influence the helpee's expectations include: (a) the helpee's perception of the helper's ability and willingness to help; (b) the helper's reputation as a helping person; (c) the degree to which the culture sanctions and gives status to the helping person; and (d) the ability of the helper to mobilize the helpee's hope of relief--the placebo effect (Frank, 1961, cited in Torrey, 1969, p. 366).

The self-help group is an example of indigenous help. The degree to which society supports and sanctions self-help groups may increase their

helping capacities thereby alleviating stress on professional helping services.

Relationship between Professional and Self-Help

The previous section illustrated benefits accrued from the professional dimension of self-help groups. This section will include criticisms of professional help, advantages and limitations of self-help groups, and implications for the future.

Criticisms of professional help.

Without our expertise or even our blessings people developed their own solutions to needs which were otherwise ignored or inadequately served [by professional mental health services]. (Lorion, 1976, p. 94)

Many persons turned to self-help because they felt that professional services had failed them (Lieberman & Bond, 1976, Tyler, 1976). The people most short-changed by professional services have been the so-called "deviants". They feel that professionals and their institutions have been unresponsive to, or incapable of meeting their needs (Lieberman & Borman, 1976, p. 456). In a similar note, Ralph Tyler (1976) states that:

Although some [self-help groups] are established because of the lack of local professional services, most of them are responses to what their members perceive as the ineffectiveness or the inadequacies of the available professional services. (p. 444)

Back and Taylor (1976) see the popularity of the self-help group movement as reflecting distrust of professional help. They describe professional help as representative of the modern rationalistic approach to knowledge and the solving of human problems. People are not satisfied with im-

personal, affectively neutral help, nor are they satisfied with hierarchical helping relationships. Marieskind and Ehrenreich (1975) see hierarchical helping relationships as "small-scale versions of the capitalist social relationships in general, in which knowledge is the private property of the provider and gives her or him the power to dominate the less privileged, propertvless patient" (p. 33). Professionals have a reputation for "elitism and support of the established order" (Steinman & Traunstein, 1976, p. 348) which may add to the feelings of distrust expressed mostly by less advantaged persons in the society.

Riessman (1976a), like Back and Taylor (1976) describes professional help as systematic and knowledge-based. Distance and objectivity between helper and helpee are emphasized and identification with the client is considered unorthodox (Riessman, 1976a). Riessman (1976a) describes these characteristics as intrinsic limitations of professional help related to their professional training. Extrinsic limitations of professional help stem from practices taken up by professionals. These extrinsic limitations include elitism, mystification of services, high costs of services, distance from low-income and rural areas, insufficient accountability and relevance to the client, and the frequent application of outmoded practices (Riessman, 1976a, p. 45).

Advantages of self-help groups. Self-help groups offer a different helping experience from that of professional help. The advantages of self-help are both independent of, and in contrast to, professional help. For instance, Caplan (1976) describes reasons people seek nonprofessional help instead of professional help. First, Caplan (1976) found that people tend to seek help from persons who have been through similar problematic situations. The helping persons in this situation are referred to as "informal

caregivers" (Caplan, 1976, p. 131). Caplan (1976) found that informal caregivers were sometimes more effective due to their amateur status. They maintained less distance and objectivity and they identified rather than empathized with the helpee. The relationship was voluntary on both sides and the absence of money made it seem a more sincere and personalized helping service (Caplan, 1976).

An advantage of self-help groups in contrast to professional help is the fact that they provide help for persons "least likely to benefit from professional psychotherapy" (Antze, 1976, p. 323). It was mentioned earlier that people from lower classes have fewer opportunities for receiving satisfying psychotherapy (see p.). It has also been found that the people most likely to benefit from psychotherapy are those gifted with youth, attractiveness, verbal ability, intelligence or success--the YAVIS syndrome (Schofield, 1964, p. 133). Schofield's (1964) study of psychologists, psychiatrists and social workers showed that the preferred, or ideal, patient was the one holding these characteristics. The ideal patient was considered to be the most likely to respond well to psychotherapy (Schofield, 1964, p. 131). The premise underlying this assumption is that the therapist's preference for this type of patient increases compatibility "out of which effective therapeutic relationships could be expected to grow" (Schofield, 1964, p. 132). The implication of Schofield's study is that effective psychotherapy is restricted to only a margin of the total population of psychologically distressed persons.

In contrast to professional help, self-help groups offer a warm supportive environment alternative to the cold environment typical of mental health agencies. Through self-disclosure in the group, members discover that their problems are not unique. A sense of community develops from

sharing problems, coping strategies and successes. Members reinforce and support successes of other members in the group, which counteracts the external, environmental reinforcements of problematic behavior (Antze, 1976).

If they [peer therapy groups] have therapeutic value, it is because each manages to break some link in the chain of events maintaining a condition and to provide viable defenses against its renewal. (Antze, 1976, p. 329)

In relation to problem-specific self-help groups, part of the chain of events reinforcing the problem is the attitude in society which stigmatizes the individual. The success in blocking the relapse process may be attributed largely to the ideologies developed by the groups. The ideologies serve to counteract the attitudes and assumptions in society, redefine the problem, and give the member hope for change (Antze, 1976, Katz & Bender, 1976a, Levy, 1976).

Lastly, the self-help group provides aid to persons whose conflicts or concerns may not warrant professional help, yet attention to these needs may enrich the participant's life and/or possibly prevent a future crisis (primary preventive function of self-help groups).

Counterbalancing Function of Self-Help Groups

In describing self-help groups today, it becomes apparent that, overall, the self-help group serves to counterbalance certain characteristics of the larger social order. In this way, self-help groups serve a balancing function to counter the imbalances which have developed in Western society. The following table lists the counterbalancing functions discussed in this section on self-help groups today.

Table I
Counterbalancing Characteristics of
Self-Help Groups

Larger Social Order	Self-Help Groups
Competitive relationships	Cooperative relationships
Self-sufficiency	Interdependence
Rational thinking	Emotional expressiveness
Apathy	Responsiveness
Powerlessness	Self-responsibility
Alienation	Belonging
Isolation	Affiliation
Depersonalization	Recognition and identity
Individuality	Mutuality
Consumer passivity	Consumer intensivity
Dependency on professional help	Availability of support networks
Shortage of professional help	Expansion of available help
Hierarchical helping relationships	Peer, egalitarian helping relationships
One-way helping relationships	Reciprocal aid
Controlled therapist-patient relationship	Micro social system
Professionals represent the "establishment"	Self-help groups are counter-cultural: progressive, anti-bureaucratic, anticorporate force (Greer, 1976, p. 2)

Limitations of Self-Help Groups

The advantages of self-help groups tend to be overemphasized in the literature. Some professionals who acknowledge their advantages are now looking at their potential shortcomings. Greer (1976) and Sidel and Sidel (1976) postulate that one shortcoming of self-help groups is that in satisfying members' needs, the groups blind themselves to external conditions needing change. For instance, self-help groups may "simply replace the obligations of service agencies to serve where they now serve inadequately or not at all" (Greer, 1976, p. 3). It is suggested that

Self-help is politically risky because it hides inadequate investment in social services, distracts from systemic inequalities and shortcomings, and denies wide-scale exploitation and oppression. (Greer, 1976, p. 2)

Frequent criticisms of professional help state that it is cold, impersonal, detached and hierarchical (Riessman, 1976a). Self-help groups which form in reaction to unsatisfactory professional services may be promoting the problem by not demanding changes from professionals. Rather than rejecting professional services, people need to re-educate professionals (Sidel & Sidel, 1976).

Professionals should be required to learn from the non-hierarchical characteristics of the self-help movement new ways of relating to patients and to one another. Neither relieving them of responsibility for caring roles nor unnecessarily driving them away from self-help groups will help accomplish this goal. (Sidel & Sidel, 1976, p. 69)

Greer (1976) points out that deflecting the responsibility for change from professionals is another way that society maintains the status quo by placing the responsibility on the "victim" for his/her problems. This line of thought asserts that the victim has only him/herself to blame. The victim then changes him/herself rather than the victimizing conditions. Sidel and Sidel (1976) hope that self-help groups will expand their purposes to not only provide services but to attack the larger problems creating the need for self-help services.

CHAPTER III
SURVEY METHOD

Survey Questionnaire

Self-help groups are private enclaves which function for the benefit of their members. They function without professional leadership or outside help. In order to gain information about self-help groups without interfering with their natural processes, a survey questionnaire was developed to collect information, ideas, feelings, attitudes and insights of group members. The questionnaire was preferred to the interview because it required less time, gave the respondent a sense of privacy and lessened the interviewer's effect (Miller, 1970). The major disadvantages of the questionnaire were the problem of non-return and the possibility of misinterpretation of the question (Miller, 1970).

The questionnaire was designed to stimulate reflective thoughts, to allow participants an anonymous vent for feelings and insights that members may be hesitant to express in the group (this is to allow for the possibility that variations in trust levels may occur between groups and within groups), and to identify attitudes and connections between professional and self help. Most of the questions were open-ended to allow the respondent fuller expression. Dean, Eichhorn and Dean (1969) suggest that the field worker "make use of selected informants' skills and insights by giving these informants free rein to describe the situation as they see it" (p. 23). The open-ended question also reduced the likelihood of subjectivism influencing the direction of participants' responses.

The danger of the open-ended question was in not providing enough stimulus for the respondent. Questions which were not easily answerable may have decreased the motivation for completing and returning the questionnaires. To increase the likelihood of returns, I tried to communicate to the respondents that the questionnaire might be of value to them in looking at their own individual and group processes. Further, I suggested that they might be interested in using the questionnaire as a stimulus for group discussion. A copy of the survey questionnaire is provided in Appendix A.

Locating Groups

The paradox of self-help groups is that many people talk about them, yet they are very difficult to locate. A search was begun by phoning agencies in the community which are in contact with grassroots activities. These agencies included Community Action, the Women's Centre, James Bay Community Centre, Status of Women Action Group (SWAG), Victoria Volunteer Bureau, Everywoman's Books, Atman's Bookstore, Community Information Line, NEED Line, Citizen's Counseling Centre, and the Victoria Women's Transition House. All the agencies were friendly and receptive. Most everyone acknowledged that they knew self-help groups existed, but they did not know where. Often referrals were made back to other agencies until it became a circular referral with little information gained. Those agencies which did suggest groups usually referred to groups led by agencies or professional leaders, e.g., Growth Unlimited (GULL) and the Bioenergetic Self-Help Groups led by Dr. Bennett Shapiro.

It seemed that the only way to locate grassroots self-help groups was to talk with people informally, telling them of the study and asking if they knew of any self-help groups. I began by talking with friends.

They, in turn, referred me to other people who knew of self-help groups existing now or previously.

In addition to phoning agencies and making informal, personal contacts, I posted cards on various public bulletin boards, such as Atman's Books, the Women's Centre, and Swaan Health Food Store. After two months, only one person responded to the cards. The cards explained who I was, that I was doing a study of self-help groups, and that I was requesting responses from people involved in such groups. A copy of the card is found in Appendix B. The difficulty involved in locating self-help groups makes it impossible to say what percentage of local self-help groups was finally tapped.

Processing the Data

The eleven groups found and used in this study were delivered the questionnaire with stamped envelopes for return mail. A return due date was given to encourage returns within a given time period. Three weeks following the final due date, with no more questionnaires trickling in, I began my review of the data. The preliminary step involved transferring the responses for each question from the questionnaires to cards designated for each question. The open-ended questions required a lengthier process than the closed questions, which were simply tabulated. The written responses to the open-ended questions were paraphrased and listed. Responses which communicated the same thought as a response already listed received a check mark next to the earlier response. In this way, I was able to get the full breadth of responses at the same time reducing the list to make it easier to identify broader categories later. It also gave a preliminary sense of weightings.

The second step involved reading the list of paraphrased responses to identify themes which became the basis for the response categories used in reporting the results. The third step required going back to the questionnaires to fit the original responses into the response categories. Because each respondent varied in the number of responses given for each open-ended question, multiple responses applicable to any particular category were only counted once for each respondent. That is, responses which were worded differently, yet applying to one category within a given question, were grouped together and counted as one response for that particular category and that particular respondent. The responses for each category were then tabulated to assess weightings. These tabulations, along with the related paraphrased responses are reported in the tables which follow. Again, because respondents varied in the number of responses given for each open-ended question, percentages could not be assigned to the data received.

The responses to the questionnaire were often rich in their uniqueness, wording and insights. In order to enhance readability without losing the wealth of responses gained, the full responses are listed in Appendix C with their respective questions.

Narrative descriptions are given as a data summary for each statement of the problem. Any relationships between the data results and the review of related literature are also reported for each statement of the problem.

The information gained from the groups and the questionnaires was strictly confidential. No space for names was provided on the questionnaires. The instructions on the questionnaire stated that name was optional, allowing for persons who wanted to be identified or contacted

later. Names which were placed on the questionnaires were removed after the results were written and discussed.

Once all the questionnaires were returned and the data were tabulated, thank you letters were hand written on wine coloured construction paper. An attempt was made to show my appreciation in a way that was personal to each group. In this way, my contact with the groups had a sense of closure.

Contacting the Groups

Of the eleven groups located, four were found by word of mouth, six were listed with a local Women's Action Group, and one was found through a neighborhood community centre. After locating the groups, I made personal contact with at least one person in each group. With the contact person, I discussed my project and interests. I requested the opportunity to introduce myself and my questionnaire to the group. If this was not possible, I arranged to leave the questionnaires with the group contact person before the next session. Out of the eleven groups, I was able to meet with seven.

In talking with the seven groups, I tried to communicate my interests and reasons for doing the study; and I made every attempt to be personable and authentic. Miller (1970) states that the likelihood of questionnaire returns is increased when respondents know the research person. In this study, it seemed that other factors influenced the number of returns. Two groups which I visited gave a small percentage of returns while one group which I did not visit gave a high percentage of returns. While visiting the groups may not have influenced the percentage of returns, I did find that I could better understand the responses from groups with which I had met.

Describing the Groups

A brief description of the groups surveyed will be given to illustrate their uniqueness and to give the reader a better sense of the population surveyed.

Group B first originated under the direction of a Christian minister. When their minister moved away, they decided to continue as a leaderless religious group. Presently, it is composed of approximately 25 families who meet each week for interpersonal sharing and support. In addition, sub-groups have formed for community action purposes. Although this group is large enough to be considered a community, it has been included because it meets weekly in group interaction and provides an example of a self-help group in another modality, that of a leaderless, religious group.

Group C is a men's rap group. It is the only group specifically for men that I was able to locate. In talking with leads in the community, I was told of past and future men's groups, but none which existed at the time of this study.

The rap group meets twice weekly on a drop-in basis. Because it is a drop-in group, membership and attendance are not consistent. Two facilitators are present at each evening meeting though they are non-directive and interact as members of the group. The respondents from this group report that they value the group meetings for the opportunity to talk with men of like interests and concerns and to develop male friendships. One member reports that it is an opportunity to banish loneliness one night a week.

Group F is a mother's support group which meets weekly for mothers and children. It is an opportunity for mothers to get out of the house,

socialize with other mothers and provide a social learning experience for their children. They meet in a large room where the children play at one end and the mothers form a circle at the other end. The presence of the children makes focused group discussions difficult, yet the members indicate that it is a valuable time for them.

Group K is a dream analysis group. This group differs from the other groups in that members meet around the specific focus of dream analysis. The group is composed entirely of women. The women are well educated and most of the women are involved in other forms of personal growth activities. The group meets weekly in a fairly structured way. One member relates a dream she has written in her dream notebook, and the other members help her come to understand her dream. This group has been meeting for three years, though the membership has changed over time.

The seven remaining groups are Women's Consciousness Raising (CR) groups. They all vary in the length of time they have been together. The oldest group has been together for one year. The two youngest groups are two months old at the time of this study. All of the CR groups vary in size, type of interpersonal sharing and age range of members, the oldest member being in her mid-sixties.

The next section will show the results of the study. The results will be reported according to the related statement of the problem, as listed in Chapter I, Method. The actual study occurred between November, 1976 and January, 1977. In reporting the results, all references to the groups are made as they existed at that time. Thus, the reporting will be done in the present tense. If the reader has not yet read the questionnaire in Appendix A (pp.79 -87), it is suggested that s/he do so before continuing to the next section.

CHAPTER IV
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Why Do People Join Self-Help Groups?

The question posed in the questionnaire was worded: "What were your personal reasons for joining or starting this group?" The majority of respondents gave more than one reason which shed light on reasons for joining the groups. Table 2 shows the categories of reasons for joining the groups with the respective numbers of responses, and the paraphrased responses, falling into each category.

The literature indicates that people join self-help groups to satisfy needs not met in the society. These needs include a sense of identity, support, affiliation and community (Back & Taylor, 1976; Lieberman & Borman, 1976, Mowrer & Vattano, 1976). Bender (1971) and Mowrer (1971) feel that self-help groups provide surrogate family relationships or new primary groups for socially alienated persons. The results of this study show that many persons join the group to fulfill a need for meaningful social relationships, which supports the statements in the literature.

Both men and women indicate a need for increased awareness of social conditionings which limit expression of the full person. These respondents seek the group for support in making role changes to counteract social conditioning. The literature on CR groups does not mention men's groups but does state that women are attempting to connect personal problems with "social and political factors that govern behavior" (The Women

Table 2
Reasons for Joining the Group

Number of Responses	Category of Response	Paraphrased Response
30	Personal Growth and Mutual Aid	Crisis, help in dealing with personal problems, offering support & help to others, wanting support, desire for personal growth experience, help in understanding self & others better, wanting a supportive community, wanting mutual support, gaining a better understanding of self & life through open sharing of problems & hang-ups; wanting to learn from other's successes in dealing with specific problems
17	Seeking Relationships	New in town, wanting friendships of the same sex, wanting friendships with people who have had similar experiences as myself, wanting companionship, wanting female advocates, wanting meaningful relationships (open, honest relationships), banishes loneliness for one evening a week
15	Issues Related to Sexism	Support for personal changes & ideas in developing a feminist or non-sexist consciousness, overcoming cultural sex-role stereotyping, learning the rights of women
9	Curiosity and Satisfaction with Past Group Experiences	Wording was not significantly different from category to warrant reporting
3	Social Learning/Learning to Relate	Learning to relate better with others, learning to communicate better, learning to come out of my shell
3	Alternative to Professional Help	Dissatisfaction with individual therapy: "I didn't learn anything I didn't already know"; group is more stimulating and helps me to understand myself & others better--individual therapy did not do these things for me; alternative to professional doctor's group which I could not attend due to time conflict
n=48		

& Mental Health Project, 1976, p. 27).

The focus on liberation issues may also be viewed as a group ideology. The function of ideology in self-help groups was mentioned earlier. Ideology serves a persuasive force in molding members to a group identity based on values necessary for desired changes (Antze, 1976). Ideology also serves a cohesive function through binding the group to agreed upon values. The member's identity is defined by adherence to the group ideology. Antze (1976) feels that ideology is a major part of the therapeutic process in self-help groups.

Very few persons join the self-help group as an alternative to professional help. This differs from much of the literature which views self-help as a substitute for the shortcomings inherent in professional help. This difference may be representative of the type of self-help group being researched. Persons who are socially stigmatized for personal problems, conditions or values may indeed be rebuffed or inadequately served by professional help. These are the people who make up the problem-specific self-help groups. This study indicates that people who join for personal growth purposes view the group as an experience in itself, not necessarily alternative to professional help.

The most common reason reported for joining the self-help group was for support in making personal changes. This supports Katz and Bender's (1976a) statement that the newer style of self-help group has the quasi-ideological aim of self-renewal through mutual support. The tenor of the 1970's was said to be a retraction from national change efforts to local and personal change issues (Perlman, 1976). The results of this study support Perlman's (1976) theory.

What Problems Do Self-Help Groups Experience?

Question six in the questionnaire addresses this issue. It reads: "What are the major problems which your group is experiencing, or has experienced? Please describe." Table 3 shows the breakdown of responses to this question.

The major problem reported is lack of focused, meaningful discussion. Salzberg (1967) in studying group discussion with and without a therapist present concludes that "unless member's assume leadership positions, the group discussion deteriorates toward irrelevance" (p. 27). Similarly, Berzon, Solomon and Reisel (1972) report that members of leaderless groups, after being in the group for a while, discontinue taking responsibility for making the group a personally satisfying experience. Since I did not measure leadership functions nor do pre- and post-observations of group discussions, I cannot confirm or challenge these findings. I can only report that members are bothered by the lack of focused discussion.

Some members report that a lack of common interests or experiences with other members is a problem for them. Torrey (1972) states that helper and helpee must have a shared world view for a successful helping relationship to occur. Perhaps the lack of commonality is an example of Torrey's (1972) point. I can only speculate that lack of commonality makes it difficult for members to identify with others in the group and share their personal concerns. On the other hand, another group, which has a diverse membership, feels that it enhances their group. This supports Levy's (1976) observation that differences in demographic dimensions within the group do not interfere with persons interacting easily.

In addition to the problems listed in Table 3, two groups report problems with the size of their groups. One group suffers from too many

Table 3

Problems Experienced by the Groups

Number of Responses	Category of Response	Paraphrased Response
23	Unfocused, Scattered Discussion	Lacking direction, undefined goals, digressing to other topics, need for more structure, need for more preparation, lack of clear purpose, lack of organized approach, lack of meaningful discussion (too much chit chat), not staying on a chosen topic, difficulty in making decisions
11	Inconsistent Attendance & Membership	Unstable membership, difficulty in achieving depth because new members keep joining, problem of commitment, inconsistent attendance
8	Power Conflicts	Resentment toward people not accepting and using personal power, aggressive persons dominate quiet persons, problem in equal time for members, undistributed leadership functions (one person taking responsibility for entire group), resentment toward people taking on leadership roles
7	Lack of Leadership	
6	Difficulty Establishing Trust & Openness	Reticence on the part of some members
6	Lack of Common Interests &/ or Experiences	Schism in group's interests, members interests unrelated, schism in member's background experiences, differential growth needs, hard to relate to people with different problems, varying life situations, meetings not relevant to entire group
3	Lack of Authentic Expressiveness	Too chummy, not helpfully confrontive, resistance to taking risks

members; the other complains of too few members.

In order to capitalize on members' insights for solving group problems, question seven asks: "How would the group need to change for it to be a more satisfying experience for you? Or, how has it changed to become a more satisfying experience (if your group has already worked through problems)?" While the answers reflect the stated problems in the group, it is interesting to see what members feel their groups need. Table 4 reveals the categories of responses, the numbers of responses and the paraphrased responses for each category.

Most respondents indicate a need for commitment to the group. Equally important are needs for leadership, focused discussion and distributed participation. Further research is needed in the area of how self-help groups solve their problems.

Personal Growth Occurring in Self-Help Groups

The literature on self-help groups shows how self-help groups help their members, yet it does not show how members report their personal changes. The questionnaire used in this study asked respondents if the group was a personal growth experience, and how the members had changed from the group experience. Question nine reads: "Would you say that the group experience is, or has been, a personal growth experience? If so, in what way have you grown personally (e.g., increased awareness, learning to relate better, etc.)?" Table 5 shows the tabulation of responses from question nine. The written answers from question nine have been transferred to the appropriate factors in question eight, for each respondent, if they have not already been stated by that respondent.

Table 5 shows that the majority of respondents feel the self-help group is a personal growth experience. Question eight, which addresses

Table 4

Suggested Changes for Improving the Groups

Number of Responses	Category of Response	Paraphrased Responses
16	Need for Commitment to the Group	Need for consistent membership or consistent attendance, need for commitment to group and commitment to follow through on activities or decisions, stabilizing group size
12	Need for Leadership	Need for more leadership, more clearly defined leadership, need for specific leader, alternating each week, need to share facilitating
12	Need for Focused Discussions	Need for more organization and order, more definite topics, continuity of topics, getting down to business, continuity of activities, establishing a "program", setting goals, need to be more specific, developing a more structured format, deciding on specific discussion topic each week
11	Need for Distributed Participation	Need for members to take more responsibility for making the group work, need for more active involvement, setting aside time for every person to talk, more equalized participation, need to make decisions by consensus, need to share responsibilities for the group
7	Need for More Confrontive Interaction	More honest feedback, members need to be less fearful of expressing negative feelings and thoughts, need for more risk-taking situations, e g , expressing anger and sexual feelings in the group
1	Need for Common Interests in the Group	Need for continuity of interests in the group

Table 5
Was the Group a Personal Growth Experience?

Yes	No	Neither Yes nor No
43	1	4
n=48		

how members have changed, reads:

What major insights have you gained from being in the group so far? (a) regarding yourself (What kinds of changes in feelings, attitudes, and behaviors do you recognize in yourself as stemming from the group experience?), (b) regarding relationships, and (c) regarding how a group functions, or how to create an effective group experience?

Question eight involves the separate factors of insights and changes in relation to self, relationships and groups. Separate tables are given for each of these factors, with the exception of changes in groups. All of the responses to the question of group functioning represent insights, thus no table is given for changes in group functioning.

Table 6 shows insights in terms of self. The majority of respondents indicate new awarenesses of themselves involving changes in self-perception, awareness of needs and behaviors, and new perspectives on life. Some people report a recognition of similarities with others. This indicates that the personal growth self-help group can reduce alienation by enabling people to discover similarities with others. Nine people identify awareness of directions in which they wish to move. In this way, the group experience helps members to reexamine their lives and clarify goals to meet their needs.

Table 7 shows changes which people have made as a result of the group experience. The major change reported is change in attitudes. Most of the changes in attitude indicate an increased acceptance of self and a life-affirming attitude. Respondants showing changes in feelings refer mostly to a lessening of fears. All of the changes in behavior relate to increased expression of self with others.

Table 6
Insights in Terms of Self

Number of Responses	Category of Response	Paraphrased Responses
28	Increased Awareness of Self	I am unique and relate to life in a unique way; I understand what it means to be a woman, realized I was chauvinistic in many ways; recognizing that I can express myself clearly; learning how hard it is to be honest with others; recognition of disowning feelings; increased understanding of what is normal; increased understanding of life through sharing; awareness of need to be cared for and to care for others; I believe in myself more now, more aware of how I affect others; realization that I tend to stay away from too close relationships with others; my goals seem clearer; gaining a feminist perspective on the world--how being brought up female stunted my psychological growth; realization that awareness (growth) is central to my life; I am flexible and able to fit in with others comfortably
13	Recognition of Similarities with Others	Younger women share same sensitivities as older women, while our experiences are superficially diverse, contain commonalities; I am amazed at how different we are and yet can share our feelings; recognizing that I am like others; the feeling that my experiences can help others through similar situations
9	Clarification of Directions in which to Move	Discovering the direction I want to grow in; recognizing behaviors I don't like and want to change; aware of things that need to be worked on--the growth directions I want to go

Table 7
Changes Made in Self

Number of Responses	Category of Response	Paraphrased Responses
18	Changes in Attitudes	I want to live, overcoming role orientation, more open to change, increased self-acceptance, less demanding attitude toward self, I believe in myself more now, allowing myself to reach out in time of need
9	Changes in Feelings	Changing superficial support to gut level support, trusting others more, feeling more open, less shy, feeling more self-confident, less fear, less anxious about expressing feelings, overcoming fear of rejection, becoming less dependent on my main man
7	Changes in Behaviors	Expressing self more, more assertive, more honest, more able to self-disclose on sensitive subjects and be honest, less hesitant to talk on a gut level with people I know, easier to be outgoing

Table 8 shows insights in terms of relationships. Eighteen respondents report increased awareness of interpersonal dynamics. Through experience in the group, members report an increased awareness of how attitudes and behaviors influence responses from others and how important trust is in relationships. Nine people describe discoveries about themselves and others in relationships ranging from the uniquenesses of people to an awareness that others can be accepting and caring. Eight people report a new awareness of the importance of relationships and how relationships can become more meaningful.

Table 9 shows changes occurring in relationships. Changes in attitudes reflect a greater flexibility in relating. Some people report a relinquishing of conditioned ways of relating (role restrictions), others indicate greater acceptance of, and empathy toward, others. Changes in behaviors center around improved communication between people. People are learning to share feelings, receive feedback and become better listeners. Changes in feelings show greater appreciation of others and increased sensitivity toward others.

Table 10 shows insights in terms of groups. The number of insights into group functioning shows that participants reflect on the factors which help or hinder the group process. It may be that without a leader to facilitate group process, members in leaderless groups gain more insights into the needs and dynamics operating in groups. A comparison of leaderless and leader-led groups would be necessary to test this hypothetical difference between leaderless and leader-led groups.

Table 8
Insights in Terms of Relationships

Number of Responses	Category of Response	Paraphrased Responses
18	Awareness of Interpersonal Dynamics	Increased awareness of self and others (interpersonal dynamics); learning that open sharing of feelings leads people to respond in the same way, learning how slowly <u>trust</u> grows and how necessary it is to take risks and be open, accepting others, thereby being accepted by others, increased acceptance because not being judgmental, feeling good about myself, others feel good about me, learning that people are generally supportive when people are showing real feelings, more aware of how I affect others, understanding others leads to improved relationships, underlying feelings interfere with relating honestly, through honest feedback, I understand myself and others better, increased understanding of male-female relationships due to honest feedback from the group
9	Discoveries Regarding Self and Others in Relationships	Increased awareness of diversity, everyone is unique and we all see life differently and I can learn from others, increased understanding of others, experiencing other's unconditional positive regard, learning that others can accept me when I'm wrong; learning that women do want to be honest with each other, awareness of comparing myself with others, though I feel less jealous, recognition that I regard female competition as threatening; people have a basic desire to be loved and understood by people they have relationships with
8	Discovering the Value of Relationships	Relating to people has a "purgation" effect on me, relationships are more meaningful with increased awareness, learning to communicate has made all relationships more meaningful, it is more meaningful to have a few <u>deep</u> relationships than many superficial relationships

Table 9
Changes Occurring in Relationships

Number of Responses	Category of Response	Paraphrased Responses
19	Changes in Attitudes	Seeing the inner person more, looking below the surface, taking a critical look at my different roles in relationships, learning to relate to people of the same sex, more patience with women's problems, more understanding of others, role freedom, more open to relating in non-conventional ways, letting go of conditioning, more tolerant of people professionally and socially, more accepting of people's ideas and philosophies, learning to accept their's and my faults, valuing women, even if they are different from me, changed attitudes toward women via feminism and relationships in the group, I am developing non-competitive relationships with women
13	Changes in Behaviors	Ability to be physically touched by persons of the same sex, now, as I like myself more, I need to impress others less, able to help others express themselves, learning communication skills, learning to share more feelings and learning to listen, learning to take in feedback without being triggered, moving away from superficial relationships, especially with persons of the opposite sex
9	Changes in Feelings	Learning to relate and enjoying it, learning to care about others, I value relationships I have with the group members, I feel less need to convince others I'm right, I feel more sensitive to other's needs (men and women), feel great compassion toward all women, feeling cared about and caring for others in the group

Table 10
Insights into Group Functioning

Number of Responses	Categories of Response	Paraphrased Responses
25	Awareness of Group Needs	An effective group is dependent on empathic and accurate feedback between members and genuine respect and caring, the need to be challenged as well as supported--the importance of honest, caring feedback, importance of openly discussing problems and interpersonal feelings in the group in the here-and-now, groups should have guidelines and structure, communication is essential, good listening is important, group needs leadership and planning, interpersonal trust and understanding are essential for communication, importance of unconditional positive regard for open sharing and group strength, importance of owning feelings rather than telling group or others what they "should" do, importance of sticking to the topic rather than digressing to irrelevancies
8	Awareness of How Participation Influences the Group Process	Importance of distributed, equalized and active participation, learning to state what I feel without apologizing for it, stronger personalities can dominate the group, I have to overcome passivity and force myself to participate, everyone is responsible for how the group goes, it's hard to risk giving honest feedback, especially when I feel protective of the other person, at times I don't want to be a leader and I'm dissatisfied when I let things go
7	Recognition of Group Dynamics	Increased understanding and awareness of group dynamics, an understanding of how people's energy affects me and the energy flow in the group, there is a power structure in leaderless groups where passive members are dominated by more aggressive members, people in control play "therapist", it's difficult to define goals and make decisions, seeing how people assume things based on non-verbal behavior without checking it out
5	Discovering Resources in the Group	Learned that members and myself are able to facilitate group and individual growth, learned that members are usually sensitive and empathic, sensitivity to others is increased by having experienced the same feelings or problems, group can function without specific guidelines, becoming sensitive to others
4	Discovering the Need for Balance in the Group	Recognizing individual and group needs, importance of balance between group "togetherness" and individual autonomy, balance between trust and risk-taking, importance of allotting time for creating a balance of functions and activities
4	Awareness of Need for Common Ground	Members should have a likeness or a general goal, common ground or shared experiences, a homogenous blend of people is important, without a common ground between members, differences are harder to overcome and problems are harder to resolve
3	Discovering the Importance of Pace	Pace of group is important, moving too fast hinders trust, moving too slowly means low energy and too little risk-taking, let the group unfold at its own pace (patience)--don't make rules or expectations, one must take a slow yet positive approach to the group to create the correct atmosphere, interpersonal trust and understanding takes time
2	Awareness of the Stages of Group Development	Groups go through changes, they don't always function well or poorly, difficulty in establishing trust initially

The Influence of Previous Experiences on Group Participation

The fourth problem, which addresses the relationship between previous experiences and participation in the group, is covered by questions 12, 13 and 14 in the questionnaire. These questions read as follows:

12. Have you had any previous training or experiences which have either helped you or led you to participate in this group (e.g., courses in communication skills, training in lay counseling, training as a therapist, etc.)? Please describe.

13. Did you have therapeutic experiences (therapy or personal growth) prior to this group? If yes, please describe.

14. Did the previous therapeutic experiences help you to participate in this group? Please describe how they may or may not have helped you.

The interest in the relationship between previous therapeutic and related experiences to group participation stems from studies done by Solomon, Berzon and others at the Western Behavioral Sciences Institute in La Jolla, California. Berzon, Solomon and Reisel (1972) found that people with previous therapeutic experiences tend to (a) take more responsibility for the development of the group, (b) to be more expressive of feelings in the group, and (c) to keep the discussion focused. In other words, people with previous therapeutic experiences help the group achieve a deeper level of focused sharing which enables the group to become more cohesive.

Correlating previous experiences with behavior in the group requires observation of the groups, with consequent evaluation of members'

participation. As I did not want to evaluate the groups, nor interfere with their natural processes, observational measurements were not taken. In lieu of observational measures, a modified approach was taken. The intention was twofold: one, to elicit self-reports of members on the influence of previous experience, and, secondly, to compare within groups, previous experiences with stage of group development as reported in question five, which reads: "At what stage of development would you say your group is?" Various theoreticians (Johnson & Johnson, 1975, Lifton, 1972, Schmuck & Schmuck, 1971) have outlined stages of group development. The primary interest in this study was the degree of personal growth occurring in the groups. Gibb and Gibb (1968) state that personal growth occurs in leaderless groups where trust and openness are established. Schmuck and Schmuck (1971) state that groups move from an intellectual (ideographic) to a feeling (nomothetic) level of interaction. Lifton (1972) states that a mature group is self-directed, able to resolve conflicts, cohesive, and attendance and membership are consistent.

In question 5, members are asked to check the box which most closely describes the developmental stage of their group. The developmental stages are stated in simplified wording, yet the responses within each group are not consistent. Perhaps the choices do not adequately distinguish developmental stages, or the responses reflect feelings and expectations respondents held for the group rather than an objective assessment of development. Whatever the reason, this question did not produce consistent responses between members within the same group, thus level of group development could not be adequately assessed. Instead, some simple observations were made and are discussed as follows.

In reviewing the questionnaires, the most notable difference between

persons with previous related experiences and those without was in the increased verbal responses to all the questions. People with previous training, group experience, personal growth or therapy experiences were more specific in identifying and articulating feelings, ideas and areas of personal growth.

In comparing groups on level of members' previous experiences, it appears that groups whose members report little, if any, previous experiences tend to focus their responses on an idea rather than a feeling level. From the questionnaire responses, it seems that these groups also focus their group discussions on ideas rather than intrapersonal or interpersonal feelings typical of expressive, personal growth groups. For example, some of the Consciousness Raising Groups focus strongly on issues related to sexism, while others focus more on interpersonal feelings. Conclusive statements cannot be made from these observations as other factors may contribute to these results. For instance, this contrast between affective and intellectual responses may be a result of the age of the group as well as the setting. Two of the three groups which gave a predominance of intellectual responses have been meeting for two months, the third group has been meeting for four months, yet in a university setting which lends to an academic or intellectual focus.

Tables showing the types of previous experiences are found in Appendix D. Also included with these tables is a table showing the ratio of previous to no previous experience within each group. Table 11, which follows, shows the results of members self-reports on the helpfulness of previous experience to participation in the present self-help group.

Table 11
Report on Previous Experiences
as Helpful to Participation in this Group

Previous Experiences Helpful	19
Previous Experiences not Helpful	6
No Report Given	4

The results indicate that most members with previous related or therapeutic experiences feel that previous experience was, in fact, helpful to participation in their current group. The responses which indicate how the previous experiences are helpful are included in the questionnaire responses listed in Appendix C.

The Relationship between Professional and Self Help

The fifth problem focuses on the relationship between self-help and professional help. The three focal areas are: (a) overlap in helping services, (b) attitudes self-help members have toward professional help, and (c) what needs are indicated for professional help? The results will be reported according to the respective focal area.

Is there an overlap in helping services? The responses to questions 12, 13 and 14 (listed in the previous section) show that many respondents report involvements past and present with professional helping services. The full responses can be found in Appendix C. Out of the total 48 respondents, six spontaneously report that they are currently involved in private therapy. Of the 33 persons reporting previous personal growth and/or therapy experiences (see tables in Appendix D), 17 feel that the previous experiences help them to participate in their current self-help groups. Thus, there is indication of overlap between professional help and self-help.

Question 10 in the questionnaire addresses the direction of movement from self-help to professional help. Would members seek professional help as a result of their experience in the self-help group? Table 12 shows the results of this question.

Table 12
Seeking Professional Help

			Yes	No	No Response
Self	Group	Not Specified			
15	12	3	18	4	

Thirty respondents report a desire for professional help in some form while 18 report no desire. The general tenor of those interested in professional help is a desire for more intensive work with a trained person. One person reports that her experience in the self-help group has led her to an awareness of problems for which she is seeking professional help as a supplement to the self-help group. Another member reports that analysis helps her deal with her past problems while the self-help group helps her deal with her present life problems. Levy (1976, p. 321) states that the self-help group offers a social learning environment where members can learn to relate better, rebuild personal identities and improve self-esteem while professional dyadic therapy may be more effective in improving discriminative abilities. One helps the person know "why", the other helps the person learn "how".

Another contrast between professional and self-help is the level of reality orientation. Therapists and professional helpers aim for establishing trust as the fulcrum of their helping power. Their behavior is geared toward the maintenance of trust in the relationship, yet the therapist does not accompany the client into the real world. In the self-help group, the members are themselves; they represent a microcosm of the larger, real world. Successful functioning in the self-help group may be more easily generalized to the real world than the protective helping relationship created by the professional helper.

Attitudes self-help members have toward professionals. Attitudes toward professional help can be found in the responses to questions 3, 4, 11 and 15. Question 3 implicates attitudes toward professional help in asking whether the group was chosen as an alternative or supplement to professional help. Question 4 asks why people chose self-help as

an alternative to professional help, for those who indicated such a choice in their response to question 3. Question 11 asks respondents what type of professional help they would choose as a result of their involvement in the self-help group. Question 15 asks respondents for any additional information they would consider important to be known or included in this study.

The written responses from questions 3, 4, 11 and 15, revealing attitudes toward professional help, are grouped into positive and negative categories and numbers of responses in each category are tabulated in Table 13.

Tables 14 and 15 report the results of questions 3 and 4 in the questionnaire. The numbers of responses, categories of responses and the related written responses are shown in both tables.

The results indicate that few people choose self-help as an alternative to professional help. For those people who do choose self-help as an alternative, the most frequent reason is attributed to philosophical differences. Overall, this problem does not produce anticipated results. Unlike the literature which is full of articulated criticisms of professional help, the responses to this survey show a more neutral attitude toward professionals--neither strongly negative nor strongly positive. Again, this may be the difference between problem-specific group participants and personal growth self-help group participants.

What needs are indicated for professional help? The needs or desires for professional help are revealed in the responses to question 11 and are listed in Table 16. Question 11 reads: "If yes [you would solicit professional help], please indicate your choice(s) below and state your reasons for this choice."

Table 13
Attitudes Toward Professional Help

Positive Attitudes	Negative Attitudes
12	4

Table 14

Self-Help as an Alternative or Supplement to Professional Help

Number of Responses	Category of Response	Written Responses
8	Alternative	Not ready to risk exposing myself in a professionally-led group, cannot afford professional services
18	Supplement	Need for longer term involvement, support and recharge as a feminist, professionally-led experiences served as a model for what I can get from this group
24	Other	New to town--way of meeting people of similar kind, experiment--no expectations or goals--hope for sistership, need for a group to share feelings and concerns about a similar problem related to male-female relationships; therapy was sought as a supplement to the group--growth in the group led to seeking personal therapy as awareness of problems surfaced

Table 15

Reasons for Self-Help as an Alternative to Professional Help

Number of Responses	Category of Response	Written Responses
8	Philosophical or Political Reasons	We shouldn't place responsibility for ourselves in the hands of others, being more self-reliant in the community; support the idea of self-help, one-to-one counseling not helpful to me--my problems were more philosophical than illness, to belong to a group where being myself is accepted as normal
5	Cost of Professional Services	Reason for not getting into a professionally-led group upon arriving in town, have had good experiences with professionals but cannot afford them as a student
0	Unavailability of Professional Services	
1	Unawareness of Available Services	
1	Stigma Attached to Mental Health Services	
2	Other	I thought about professionally-led groups and felt it was unnecessary because of benefits I had gained from previous leaderless group, dissatisfaction with previous psychiatrist--was uncomfortable and non-trusting whole time and felt we were strangers all the time that I saw him

Table 16
Professional Help Desired

Type	Numbers
Group Observation and Feedback	7
Individual Counseling or Therapy	13
Long-Term Intensive Therapy	3
Other	9

The results show that, of those people wanting professional help, most want individual counseling or therapy. These results give professionals some indication of the directions in which people are moving. Knowing these directions can help professionals prepare to meet these needs and further facilitate the self-help movement.

Discussion and Conclusions

The Review of Literature traces the roots of personal growth self-help groups along a developmental path leading to a description of the self-help movement today. The literature indicates that the self-help movement will continue to grow, that it has potential for effecting social change, and that professional and self-help may combine forces toward the development of a comprehensive mental health delivery system.

Katz and Bender (1976a) and Perlman (1976) state that self-help groups have grown rapidly over the past two decades with relatively low participant turnover. This indicates that self-help groups do, in some way, satisfy members needs. Katz and Bender (1976a) feel that the self-help movement will continue to grow as long as they are flexible in redefining their purposes to match the changing needs of their constituents.

Borman (1976) feels that the popularity of self-help groups may be due to the fact that they reach persons who are "untouched, rebuffed, or little affected by current delivery systems" (p. 46). The literature supports this viewpoint with the fact that self-help groups have flourished in countries where human services are well provided for (Katz & Bender, 1976a). The results of this study indicate that the reasons for joining self-help groups have little to do with "current delivery systems". Most members feel that it is an experience in itself, unrelated to professional helping services. The self-help group provides for social and

growth needs--needs which do not necessarily require professional helping services.

More specifically, the results of this study show that most participants join the self-help group for personal growth purposes, seeking satisfying relationships and raising cultural consciousness. People are admitting their need for meaningful social relationships which supports Back and Taylor's (1976) statement that people are searching for communitas, and Katz and Bender's (1976a) statement that the self-help group is an antidote to the anomic and isolating tendencies in society. The interest in consciousness raising and the relinquishing of sex-role behaviors indicates an interest in personal change related to social change. This is in line with Marieskind's (1976) assertion that radical social change can evolve from the "collective thought and action" possible in self-help groups (p. 66).

The politicizing function of the self-help movement occurs frequently in the literature. Several theorists (Greer, 1976; Katz & Bender, 1976a; Marieskind, 1976; Perlman, 1976; Riessman, 1976b; Sidel & Sidel, 1976) refer to the potential of self-help groups for effecting needed social and political changes. Greer (1976, p. 2) sees self-help as a resource for "progressive, anticorporate, antibureaucratic" functions. In the same vein, Levin (1976, p. 71) views the self-help movement as a consumer movement toward "deprofessionalization, demystification and dependency control." Others (Riessman, 1976b, Sidel & Sidel, 1976) see social change functions as a responsibility of self-help groups. Rather than relieving the socio-political and mental health systems of responsibility for functions and services lacking, self-help groups should direct their efforts toward effecting necessary changes in the system as well as pro-

viding services for their members (Sidel & Sidel, 1976).

In this study, it was found that the major thrust of the groups was personal change rather than political change or social action. Perhaps as personal needs are satisfied in the groups, groups may redefine their purposes to include social and political action.

In terms of mental health services, Lorion (1976) sees the self-help group as a logical extension of the community mental health movement which stresses primary prevention and nonprofessional help. The self-help group serves a primary preventive function in providing for social-emotional needs in an otherwise alienating environment. The group also serves to help people through times of crisis or transition.

Nonprofessional help is valuable in compensating for the shortage of professionally trained helping persons. Professional manpower is insufficient to meet the wide range of human service needs and the increasing demand for services (Lorion, 1976, Riessman, 1976a). Lorion (1976) states that "except in the presence of clear pathology, there seems to be little justification for the assumption that direct professional involvement is a necessary component of human service delivery systems" (p. 94). A more efficient system would be to integrate professional and nonprofessional services (Riessman, 1976a). The self-help group "with its aprofessional, human emphasis can play a vital role, giving people the opportunity to exercise some control over their lives and the services they use" (Riessman, 1976a, p. 45).

The integration of professional and self-help is, in fact, the most recurring theme in the literature. One possible form of integration might be an educational interchange. For example, people need to be educated in how they can help themselves so that the professional is reserved for

truly specialized functions. Conversely, professionals need to be informed of advisory functions they could provide which would aid lay persons in self-care practices (Levin, 1976). Some of the problems reported by the groups in this study may have been mitigated by consultation with a professional helping person. The fact that one of the major problems reported by the groups was inconsistent attendance and membership indicates that the groups may have had problems with which they were not equipped to deal. In this respect, it seems that professionals could provide advisory services to assist self-help groups in identifying and resolving group process problems, thereby facilitating the ongoing growth of the group.

An integrated service system would expand and redistribute services as well as influence "many previously unchallenged definitions of what is normal, tolerable, preventable, curable, and ethical" (Levin, 1976, p. 72). Greer (1976) states that "at root, self-help challenges, and considerably modifies, the traditional professional role" (p. 2). Further research is needed on the influence self-help groups have on the quality of professional helping services. The results of this study indicate that members use both helping services for different purposes. Their interests are in receiving services to match their needs (e.g., support group vs. more intensive explorations with professional help) rather than challenging or modifying the "traditional professional role".

In terms of attitudes toward professional help, most respondents were neutral. Two criticisms of professional help which appeared in the survey supported criticisms of professional help found in the literature. One person felt that the therapist she had visited was insensitive to her needs and did not listen to her. Another person felt that professional

services were valuable but that the costs were prohibitive. She was primarily referring to personal growth experiences offered by professionals. These criticisms were not representative of the general attitude toward professional helping persons. This may indicate a difference between local, Canadian self-help groups and the groups surveyed in the literature. It may also indicate that self-help groups and social scientists promoting them no longer need to attack professionals to defend the self-help process. The merits of self-help groups are being recognized and an integration of services may be close by.

The results of this study coupled with speculations in the literature indicate that professional help may be utilized for more intensive psychological explorations, while the self-help group may provide support networks of primary groups. Further study is needed for specific indications of professional help desired by self-help groups. An educational interchange between self-help and professional help could help both sides. This study was an attempt to collect views from both camps as could be found in the literature and in the open-ended responses to the questionnaire. The open-ended questions elicited a broad description of personal growth self-help groups. The results may provide the basis for more directive research in the future.

Further study is also needed in the area of attrition in self-help groups. Reasons why people drop-out of self-help groups may provide valuable information on what type of person, if any, is unsuited for the self-help group experience; or it may provide information on the types of problems which self-help groups are not equipped to handle.

Lastly, this study was disadvantaged by the difficulty in locating self-help groups. The ideal population would have consisted of groups

which had been together for one year or more. Such groups would likely provide more information on the problems encountered in self-help groups, and how the problems are resolved. Further, this study would have been enhanced by a follow-up questionnaire to see the developments in the groups over time. Time and resources did not permit such a post-survey.

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APPENDIX A

November 25, 1976

Dear Group Member,

I am currently working on a thesis for an M. A. in Counseling Psychology at the University of Victoria. I would appreciate your assistance in helping me collect information on self-help groups by completing the enclosed questionnaire.

From my own experience in self-help groups, I have developed an interest in how others experience such groups and how other groups function. To gain insights, I have decided to do a study of leaderless groups which may or may not focus on self-development, but where personal growth may occur. These are the basic questions I would like answered:

1. What sorts of problems do self-help groups experience?
2. What insights are gained from the experience?
3. Why do people choose to be in self-help groups?

Self-help is a popular word right now. What does it mean for you? I hope that you will take the time to answer the questionnaire and return it to me in the enclosed, stamped envelope. I want to collect as much information as possible, so it is important to me that I get the questionnaires back. If, for any reason, you choose not to answer the questionnaire, please return it to me, as is, so I will not be waiting for possible returns. While I do not want to pressure you, I would appreciate it if you could return these to me by December 15, 1976, or as near to that date as possible.

If you prefer talking to writing, please phone me. I would be happy to talk with anyone interested in sharing ideas, feelings or experiences stemming from the self-help group experience. I can be reached at 384 1552, or 477 6911, local 6687. I hope that the questionnaire will be of value to you, as well, in looking at your own experience in the group. Thank you for your time. I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Siegal

Marilyn Siegal
Graduate Student
University of Victoria

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SELF-HELP GROUPS

DIRECTIONS: Please check appropriate boxes and/or write in answers, as indicated. Feel free to use the back sides of these sheets if you need more space, or to elaborate where no lines have been provided. The information on these questionnaires will be kept confidential. Name is optional.

1. What is the purpose of your group? If more than one purpose, please list.

2. What were your personal reasons for joining or starting this group?

3. In deciding to join this group, did you consider the group to be
- an alternative to a professionally-led personal growth or therapeutic experience.

- a supplement to other therapeutic or personal growth involvements, current or past. Please explain.

- an experience in itself. I didn't think of it as a personal growth experience or an alternative to professionally-led experiences.

- Other (please elaborate). _____

4. If you chose this group as an alternative to therapy or personal growth experiences led by a professional leader, please indicate your reasons below.

- philosophical or political reasons (e.g., demystifying professionalism, being more self-reliant, using your own resources, etc.), please explain _____

- cost of professional services
- unavailability of professional services
- unawareness of available professional services
- stigma attached to professional mental health services
- other (please elaborate) _____

5. At what stage of development would you say your group is?

- Just getting started.
- In flux--membership is unpredictable and/or the purpose of the group is unclear or changing.
- Experiencing problems in getting the group solidified.
- We have passed through problems and we are now functioning well together, e.g., there is support and caring and our time together is meaningful.
- We never experienced any problems. The group functions well together.
- Other (Please describe on back) _____

6. What are the major problems which your group is experiencing, or has experienced? Please describe.

7. How would the group need to change for it to be a more satisfying experience for you? Or, how has it changed to become a more satisfying experience (if your group has already worked through problems)?

8. What major insights have you gained from being in the group so far?
a) Regarding yourself (What kinds of changes in feelings, attitudes, and behaviors do you recognize in yourself as stemming from the group experience?) _____

- b) Regarding relationships _____

- c) Regarding how a group functions, or how to create an effective group experience _____

9. Would you say that the group experience is, or has been, a personal growth experience? If so, in what way have you grown personally (e.g., increased awareness, learning to relate better, etc)?

yes

no

10. From your involvement in this group, would you solicit any type of professional help, either for the group or for yourself?

yes

no

11. If yes, please indicate your choice(s) below and state your reasons for this choice.

counselor or therapist's observation & feedback on your group process because _____

individual counseling or therapy for an immediate problem _____

long-term, intensive therapy _____

other (please elaborate) _____

12. Have you had any previous training or experiences which have either helped you or led you to participate in this group (e.g., courses in communication skills, training in lay counseling, training as a therapist, etc)? Please describe.

13. Did you have therapeutic experiences (therapy or personal growth) prior to this group? If yes, please describe.

yes no

14. Did the previous therapeutic experiences help you to participate in this group? Please describe how they may or may not have helped you.

15. If you were doing this study, what other information would you consider important to be known or included?

Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions. If you are interested in the results of this study, please contact me by phone, or indicate your wishes on this questionnaire. Best wishes to you and your group.

I have included, on the following pages, two copies of a questionnaire to help you evaluate your own group and your participation in the group. Please fill out the 1st copy for me and detach the 2nd copy for yourself. Again, thank you.

1. How clear are the group goals?

1	2	3	4	5
No apparent goals	Goal confusion, uncertainty, or conflict	Average goal clarity	Goals mostly clear	Goals very clear

2. How much trust and openness in the group?

1	2	3	4	5
Distrust, a closed group	Little trust, defensiveness	Average trust and openness	Considerable trust and openness	Remarkable trust and openness

3. How sensitive and perceptive are group members?

1	2	3	4	5
No awareness or listening in the group	Most members self-absorbed	Average sensitivity and listening	Better than usual listening	Outstanding sensitivity to others

4. How much attention was paid to process? (The way the group was working)

1	2	3	4	5
No attention to process	Little attention to process	Some concern with group process	A fair balance between content and process	Very concerned with process

5. How were group leadership needs met?

1	2	3	4	5
Not met, drifting	Leadership concentrated in one person	Some leadership sharing	Leadership functions distributed	Leadership needs met creatively and flexibly

6. How were group decisions made?

1	2	3	4	5
No decisions could be reached	Made by a few	Majority vote	Attempts at integrating minority vote	Full participation and tested consensus

7. How well were group resources used?

1	2	3	4	5
One or two contributed, but deviants	Several tried to contribute, but were discouraged	Average use of group resources	Group resources well used and encouraged	Group resources fully and effectively used

8. How much loyalty and sense of belonging in the group?

1	2	3	4	5
Members had no group loyalty or sense of belonging	Members not close, but some friendly relations	About average sense of belonging	Some warm sense of belonging	Strong sense of belonging among members

1. When my group is making a decision I
- _____ Passively defer to others
 - _____ Try to get a decision that satisfies everyone without worrying about how good it is
 - _____ Look entirely at the merits of a decision without thinking about how the members of the group feel or how satisfied they are
 - _____ Look for decisions that work, though I might not personally think they are the best
 - _____ Try to get strong, creative decisions with a common basis of understanding among group members
2. When my group is facing a decision I
- _____ Show little interest in the decision or the other group members
 - _____ Think mostly about how people in the group get along, without worrying about what the decision will be
 - _____ Push for a really good decision, and view the other members as only providing resources for helping make a better decision
 - _____ Try to get good relations among the members and a good solution, though willing to sacrifice a little of both to get the job done
 - _____ Avoid compromise and work for everyone to agree to and be satisfied with a decision that is based upon looking at the situation in a realistic way
3. When my group is making a decision I
- _____ Wait for the group to tell me what to do and accept what they recommend for me
 - _____ Help others participate by giving moral support to members and by testing to see if members can agree
 - _____ Give information, evaluate how well the group is working toward the task, set ground rules for behavior, and see that everyone stays at the task
 - _____ Summarize periodically what has been discussed, call for things to be made clearer, and encourage people to compromise
 - _____ Help the group think of alternatives, discuss how practical they are, and work out ways by which the group can come to an agreement

1. How understood and listened to ^{do} ~~did~~ you feel in the group?
Not at all 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : 8 : 9 Completely
2. How much influence ^{do} ~~did~~ you feel you ^{have} ~~had~~ on the group's discussion or decisions?
None 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : 8 : 9 A great deal
3. How committed do you feel to the group?
Very uncommitted : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : 8 : 9 Very Committed
4. How much responsibility do you feel for making decisions work in the group?
None 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : 8 : 9 A great deal
5. How satisfied do you feel with the amount and quality of your participation in the group?
Very dissatisfied: 3 : 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 : 8 : 9 Very satisfied
6. Write one adjective that describes the group's general atmosphere or climate. _____

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX C

Responses to Questionnaire

1. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR GROUP? IF MORE THAN ONE PURPOSE, PLEASE LIST

- Group A I still feel the purpose is vague. It is called a CR group. It has mainly been supportive in the past & consequently only reinforcing & may be a little too "chummy". This is changing, though.
- It seems to me, as the group stands we haven't collectively discussed a purpose. Self-awareness/growth has been stated.
- This is definitely a personal growth group--though originally it was more feminist oriented.
- Self-awareness, awareness/openness to feelings of others.
- Personal growth, mutual support, working towards better understanding of feelings, discussion of relevant personal + women's issues.
- Group B To help us be in contact with our feelings. To explore our emotional blocks and learn ways to help ourselves.
- Worship & interpersonal care.
- To provide an experience of worship that is personally meaningful to all.
- Support community with a spiritual and social emphasis.
- Basically a religious community.
- Religious and emotional support.
- Group C No response given.
- No response given.
- To assist in aiding each individual in finding out who they are, where they are at and to avoid sexism in thinking about each person.
- To openly discuss our various problems, hang ups & by so doing gain a better understanding of ourselves & in so doing hope to benefit by it in the lives we lead.
- Group D Sharing, mutual support, providing a place to expand and explore consciousness, feelings & self-awareness.
- Exploration of my self in a group setting, using the various talents of the individuals to move in different directions, e.g., yoga, hypnosis, also, & acting for me as a very important factor, is the fact that the group is an ongoing one & I have an investment in the friendship of these people. I am having some interesting insights into my behavior--my caution & my unwillingness to take risks--when this friendship is involved.
- Increased self-awareness, personal support, social contact.
- No main specific purpose other than to help each other get more in touch with our bodies & our selves.
- Group E To give support to each other, listen, respond, to care about each others' individuality.
- For support & trust while growing & looking inside, to develop & change patterns as a person.
- Consciousness raising women's group.
- To share feelings & experiences in order to help each other gain strength & courage in our own individual situations.

- Group F For mothers with young children to get together for a chat & the youngsters learn to play with other children there.
- Group play for children, general 'bull-shit' session for moms.
- Unite mothers with children, provide area for children to interact, if possible, talk to one another.
- A chance for mothers of small children to get together as a group.
- Group G Womens consciousness raising group--to share experiences, feelings, to validate & support each other; personally to somehow politicize women into action.
- Raise consciousness on sexism; offer support to members in times of crisis.
- It is a women's conscious raising group. We discuss topics relevant to women's (our own) liberation.
- Develop warmth toward each other--support one another.
- Group H A supportive group, a womens conscious raising group, a group that will help make each other stronger & help one another become more aware of their full potential as females & people.
- Consciousness raising, a healthy outlet, personal growth.
- Consciousness-raising, supportive problem sharing group, positive outlet for frustrations, increased acceptance of different viewpoints, different lifestyles, realization of potential.
- Consciousness raising, support.
- Consciousness Raising (female).
- Sharing, consciousness raising, support.
- Female consciousness-raising.
- Support group of women for women, self-awareness & growth.
- Group I We are a new group, feeling our way along. I think we are trying to see & understand ourselves in relation to our lives & environment.
- To raise the level of consciousness of its members--i e , their self worth & to expand this throughout everyday living & communications.
- Mostly to be able to talk with others on more than a social level.
- Group J To give women a chance to talk this over with each other---to communicate--to get out of the house. Social & therapeutic.
- To learn more about your self & rights of women.
- Group K A personal growth experience through group growth working to explore the meanings of our dreams.
- Discussion & analysis of individual dreams.
- To understand and learn from our dreams.
- To learn from our dreams.

2. WHAT WERE YOUR PERSONAL REASONS FOR JOINING OR STARTING THIS GROUP?

- Group A I was having personal problems then (over a year ago) & went to a counsellor by myself. I felt that I was doing all the talking & was not learning anything about myself that I didn't already know & thought a broader group experience would stimulate me more, help me to understand myself & other people.
- I wanted originally to be more 'informed'. I had spoken to women in groups & had seen & heard of changes for the better. I was 'expecting' changes for me.
- When my first group split up, I very strongly felt the need for continued group experience. It has been the most important thing in my adult life.
- My personal growth was getting stunted for lack of someone to talk to about how to be aware.
- Wanted to meet some women, make friends, practice counselling skills. I was having a personal crisis at the time & needed support.
- Group B I have severe body constrictions & problems which are caused by psychological blocks. I don't want them.
- The (my) initial experience of the group was life affirming.
- I wanted to be part of a worshipping group that I could have real input into.
- It evolved. I didn't look for it.
- We went to church. It had a leader at the beginning.
- Needed a change from previous church & knew the priest--once there I enjoyed the sharing attitudes of the community.
- Group C No response given.
- I enjoy the companionship of the people who go. Some really have learned the secrets of successful living, & I want to learn them too. It's something constructive to do which banishes loneliness for one evening a week. Then there's the freedom of being in a game-free environment, which I don't feel when I'm in a group where women are present. The big reason I go is companionship, I guess.
- Knowing few people on my arrival I felt it would be a good contact group since I liked their outlook.
- Same as above (answer to question 1) & also to gain some fellowship thereby.
- Group D For the mutual support, together with having an area where I was not someone else's appendage--i.e., somebody's wife or mother.
- I wanted to establish relationships with people where sharing & exploration was the keynote. Also, I want feedback & help with my own self-exploration.
- Same as above (answer to question 1). Also encouraged by friends.
- Mainly to learn to communicate better with others, to come out of my shell, so to speak.
- Group E I had been in a "women's support group" before & found it helpful. I was new in town, living alone with a man & needed some female advocates. I also wanted to create a "real" relationship with other women.
- For personal growth, to change patterns of women's role in supportive atmosphere.
- The need to talk to other women who perhaps had experienced the initial frustrations of feminism & had been successful in coping with them.
- I was at a crisis time. I was unable to attend my Dr.'s group as it conflicted with my working hours.

- Group F To enable my child to meet other people & especially other children.
Main purpose playtime for my son--keep going as enjoyed watching kids & rapping--now hopes for more activities.
Meeting my friends for talk & letting my child play with other kids & toys
Joining--just somewhere to go instead of staying home
- Group G I was in the process of fighting out of a common-law relationship that left me lacking self-confidence. I was looking for support & strokes to rebuild confidence, a sympathetic arena to express & work out feminist ideas.
See above (answer to question 1)
To be part of a supportive community
I needed close contact with a group of women--fairly new arrival in Victoria & most time spent at work
- Group H I wished to become more aware & wished it to be a growing experience. I hope it will help me to relate with others.
Personal growth, meeting people & getting to know them.
Getting to know other students on campus & particularly those who shared the same viewpoints with regard to male-female roles in our society.
Curiosity, wish to grow, have females to talk to, support.
To communicate with people who were interested, concerned, etc., with women's liberation, support, acceptance, friendship.
Wanted to tune into more diverse avenues towards fuller life!
Wished to have a female support group to discuss with and relate to on various issues concerning being female and the women's movement in general.
I wanted an open, honest dialogue with other women, people whom I could trust & care for, people with common experiences
- Group I I feel a group like this needs support in order to develop a sound foundation. It might help me understand myself a little better or perhaps I can help someone else come to a better understanding of herself.
Started group--felt there was a need in this area of the city.
First, curiosity about CR & second, to see if it would be any help to me
- Group J To talk to women. I needed to get in touch with--to get to know other women in my neighborhood. I knew almost no other women here & had problems meeting them.
To learn the rights of women and to try & solve some problems.
- Group K I wanted to understand my many dreams.
Answered in question 1.
I knew nothing about dreams, was interested in some of my dreams & wanted to learn more & a friend of mine belonged to the group & invited me.
To explore my unconscious life & bring the information into my conscious activity--to clarify.

3. IN DECIDING TO JOIN THIS GROUP, DID YOU CONSIDER THE GROUP TO BE

- Group A An alternative to a professionally-led personal growth or therapeutic experience.
- An experience in itself I thought of it as personal growth.
- I saw it as a continuance of my previous personal growth experiences. I have never considered "therapy", though I thought about professionally-led groups, & have participated in some.
- An alternative & a supplement to professionally-led p. g. experiences. I've been in 2 T. A. groups & felt unready for them, & uncomfortable risking any personal views with "strangers". I've never felt as though anyone in my current group is a stranger. They are so supportive, so open that each member is made to feel a part of something very special & personal.
- Supplement to current psychiatric care. The group deals with my present problems, psychoanalysis deals with my PAST.
- Group B Supplement: I have attended workshops at the Cold Mountain Institute & I felt a need for a longer term involvement.
- An experience in itself.
- An alternative to a "system".
- Breaking from structured religion. Later, inspired by sensitivity movement from California--weekend marathons in past working on increased awareness, stopped workshops on awareness & developed social work concerns & spiritual development. The emphasis has always been on the spiritual.
- An alternative to church.
- A supplement to other therapeutic or personal growth involvements, current or past.
- Group C No response to question.
- An experience in itself.
- An experience in itself. A personal growth experience.
- An experience in itself.
- Group D An experience in itself.
- Supplement: I have had a long term involvement with Cold Mt. Institute & done numerous groups. Want to continue group exploration in an at-home setting with friends in a continuing relationship.
- Supplement: I have attended professionally led groups.
- An alternative.
- Group E An alternative at first, mostly due to money. I know now I need & want both. Also, a Supplement: Before I moved to B. C. I was involved in both a T. A. group & a women's self-help group & found they mostly fulfilled separate needs while interlapping in terms of giving me a very "real", non-superficial experience with other human beings & aiding my personal emotional growth. Now I also need both. The women's group gives me general support & helps me identify problems plus I get a welcome "group feeling." With T. A. I hope to work on specific problems with professional help. I feel a group leader/therapist has talents and knowledge that I haven't as yet realized within myself & can be of great help to me in working through complicated &/or intensely emotional problems. Also, I want to learn more about T. A. as a set of principles for helping deal with everyday & deep rooted problems.
- As an experience during personal growth & pattern changing.

Initially, the group was an experience in itself. However, as I became aware of my own growth within the group, I sought the additional personal therapy I felt was necessary.

A supplement: I believe fully in my doctor & what he has taught me to do, but I need this group for added strength and real friendship.

- Group F An experience in itself.
An experience in itself.
An experience in itself.
An experience in itself. Original intention was to have speakers, but with small kids running, crying, whining, this was hopeless. Now we just sit & talk, it works out ok.
- Group G A supplement: Was & still am seeing a psychiatrist. Have been in & will soon re-enter growth group situation.
An experience in itself. New to town. It was a means of introduction to others who think as I do.
A supplement: I am seeing a psychiatrist bi-weekly.
An experience in itself.
- Group H A supplement: want it to be a growing experience.
An alternative.
An experience in itself.
An experience in itself.
A supplement: a step farther than just attending films or speeches sponsored by the Women's Action Group.
An experience in itself.
An alternative & an experience in itself.
An experience in itself.
- Group I When I came into the group, we had no real set goals other than to give it a try & wait to see what happens. I think a real feeling of "sisterhood" can come out of a group like ours.
A supplement: As a feminist, I felt interchange was necessary to help me "recharge".
An experience in itself.
- Group J A supplement: in a sense, I realized a need--it is because of a change in myself & lifestyle--result of a physical change in relationship with boyfriend. Also, I felt there must be other women in this town that needed something similar.
An experience in itself.
- Group K A supplement: into yoga & one course at the Ashram, seemed a good way to look at my subconscious & keep up work began at Ashram.
A supplement.
A supplement: I am involved in a local counseling centre & in some groups in connection with that.
An experience in itself.

4. IF YOU CHOSE THIS GROUP AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THERAPY OR PERSONAL GROWTH EXPERIENCES LED BY A PROFESSIONAL LEADER, PLEASE INDICATE YOUR REASONS BELOW

- Group A Philosophical or political reasons.
- No response.
- Other: I thought about a professionally-led group, but felt it was unnecessary, because of the benefits I had seen in my previous (leaderless) group. I felt I had gained so much from my previous group that I now had more to offer.
- Other: I've been to a psychiatrist & was very uncomfortable & non-trusting. We were strangers all the time I went to him.
- No response.
- Group B Cost of professional services.
- No response.
- Philosophical or political reasons.
- Other: Chose it as an alternative to structured religion.
- No response.
- No response.
- Group C No response.
- No response.
- No response.
- No response.
- Group D No response.
- No response.
- No response.
- Philosophical or political: I don't think we should place responsibility for our selves, bodies, etc., in the hands of others.
- Group E Cost of professional services: original reason for not getting into a T. A. group immediately upon moving here.
- Other: to belong to a group where being myself is accepted as normal.
- No response.
- No response.
- Group F Philosophical or political: being more self-reliant in the community.
- No response.
- No response.
- No response.
- Group C Other: have had good experiences working with private therapists in group situations, but as a student, I can't afford them very often so must work through the health scheme.
- No response.

No response.

No response.

Group H No response.

Stigma attached to professional mental health services.

No response.

No response.

Unawareness of available professional services.

No response.

Philosophical or political: further support to the idea of self-help; also, cost of professional services & even weekend retreat-type growth workshops.

No response.

Group I No response.

No response.

No response.

Group J No response.

No response.

Group K Cost of professional services.

No response.

No response.

No response.

6. WHAT ARE THE MAJOR PROBLEMS WHICH YOUR GROUP IS EXPERIENCING, OR HAS EXPERIENCED? PLEASE DESCRIBE

- Group A (1) Purpose whether to be supportive only or to "rock the boat" a bit,
(2) membership is not consistent
- Approximately half the group is at school. There's a common bond there, it (related discussions) sometimes takes the groups time. I guess right now, getting to know new members.
- Originally--establishing trust and defining our goals. Now, I think we tend to be too supportive, perhaps not confrontive enough. Also, decision-making.
- Our major problem is lack of a leader. We tend to be distracted from our main topics easily. There are also times when no one has suggested a topic for discussion & the meeting turns into a social evening. We are all becoming conscious of this, however, & attempt to turn back to a more beneficial, if uncozy, train of thought.
- I can only speak for the 3 month period since I joined--but the main problem I can see is being "scattered"--frittering away time on irrelevant tangents, not deciding on a topic at the beginning, etc.
- Group B Sometimes it has been very slow starting. Difficult in establishing encountering in members of group. Felt 'bored' many times due to lack of energy-flow.
- Accepting our own power--to worship, to heal.
- Trying to make the experience meaningful for all--to exist comfortably outside the traditional format.
- Occasional crises are growth steps which get sorted out & growth occurs. Leadership is a problem. People taking on leadership functions are resented & criticized by others.
- Lack of a leader.
- Most of the problems have been growing pains. In the growth there have been changes which some members could not accept. If these people left, the whole community suffered the pain from their loss.
- Group C Tendency to intellectualize (the intellectual discussions are meaningful & worthwhile, but become a substitute for real personal involvement).
Uncertain membership, sometimes very low attendance.
- No response.
- Do draw a facilitator each week from the group and a topic.
- Continuity of topics.
- Group D Major problem for us has been membership--several people have 'visited' and backed off--we would like more members. One problem is now the 'core' membership has worked together so that the introduction of new members may not be easy (for them) at first.
- Focusing on direction of energy, i.e., should massage, encounter, hypnosis or what be our main approach to interacting? Difference in experience with encountering--some very new to it & some quite experienced. Membership is too small--5.
- Diffused focus. Reticence of group members to push into "edges", lack of expertise.
- Nothing that I would really call a problem while I have been a member.

- Group E At one time we had trouble giving equal time to all members of the group. Now we each have a time at the beginning & end of each session. We still haven't solidified our membership & have difficulty staying with and having some conclusion with one topic at a time. We skip around.
- Equal time for the quiet people to participate--equal importance, regular attendance to maintain trust
- Fluctuating attendance.
- "Time" that each member talks to feel a meeting was worthwhile to her, some members feeling unsure if they should continue attending the meetings, commitment--limiting group to those who really want to and need to attend.
- Group F Finding a place to meet that was suitable & one in which we could return to each week, i e , it has moved 3 times since initiation
- New problem--donations from other sources, major problem before was the space we were meeting in--too many no-nos for kids
- Not being really sure what the mums want from the group--do they want structure or a free for all.
- Finding space. Not able to have a specific "agenda" because of the children. But that doesn't bother me.
- Group G Varying life situations & experiences, i e , hard to relate to problems encountered by others in their life.
- Programs--lack of continuity, not enough meaningful involvement, one member meaninglessly "chit chats", holding the floor.
- We do not have any stated goals. The meetings are quite uneven--ranging from some very meaningful ones to some which are only relevant to a few members.
- Basic format of contribution needs to be formed. At present the dominant contribute, the passive sit. Would prefer alternate turns so each member speaks up!
- Group H We had trouble with size, has been hard to get everyone to facilitate a topic, basically just organizing more group structure.
- Structural problems, i e , size, facilitators, topics
- The group was too large at the beginning for us all to be able to feel at ease & willing to share personal experiences. We have also had structural problems--keeping people on the topic we have chosen to discuss.
- Leadership--not depending on one person, keeping on subject.
- Number of members--too large at first, trying to get away from one person taking all responsibility & trying to have group take more active part.
- Centering in on key topics--lack of facilitator
- Unpredictable membership, initial membership too large, developing trust & openness, keeping the dialogue going & pertinent.
- Size of group--too large at first, then fluctuating for awhile--has now stabilized, reticence on the part of some members, lack of organized approach
- Group I Actually, I feel we are starting off quite well. We had our second meeting last night with a meeting planned for every second week. We haven't had time to really experience any major problems
- Initiation & orientation. Feel some members do not yet know where they're at--but that is the object of the exercise!

Too new to say yet.

Group J Most discussions on "jealousy." Also, lack of culture, associating with other people, communicating, boyfriends having affairs. Goal!! or lack of. What can you do in this community?

Personal problems selves.

Group K An unwillingness to do homework during the week's interval, to write down dreams & do work on them as prescribed by older members--perhaps only a 'young member' problem

Keeping the main purpose of the group in mind and not digressing on other topics.

Flux in membership or non-regular attendance by some members. Also, at times--lack of knowledge & direction of where to go with our dreams, although that is being worked out well, now, I think.

Our group fluctuates in size & we usually have new people so there is some difficulty getting into more depth.

7. HOW WOULD THE GROUP NEED TO CHANGE FOR IT TO BE A MORE SATISFYING EXPERIENCE FOR YOU? OR, HOW HAS IT CHANGED TO BECOME A MORE SATISFYING EXPERIENCE (IF YOUR GROUP HAS ALREADY WORKED THROUGH PROBLEMS)?

- Group A I would like a little more confrontation, not like an encounter group but a little more questioning (can't think of the right word).
- Group has become more satisfying for me than anytime since its beginning. We seem more open to feedback & are starting to act on that (thanks to a new member) In the past we had a very angry member who none of us (I feel) were equipped to deal with that. It clogged up the group I would say constantly, though not always subtly.
- I think it would have to become more confrontive I would like to receive more honest feedback & feel freer to give honest feedback. We do too much "stroking". I see my needs changing, & this has nothing to do with any deficiency in the group. I have felt for some time at a plateau, that I need something more intense than this group is able to provide.
- I am a relatively new member. I find the meetings satisfying--if exhausting at times, & the only change I would like to see is more leadership.
- I like group best when we do get down to business & do not allow ourselves to wander--however, I do feel that occasional "light" sessions are an inevitable thing in groups.
- Group B Situations or exercises that would involve more risk, e g , sexual feelings within group, anger towards group members, massage &/or some body-work.
- We have reached decisions via consensus--& have acted on these decisions.
- I would need to become more personally involved & attend more consistently.
- Need to assign a leader & to designate responsibilities.
- No response.
- The fact that we have become a leaderless community & survived & that during this process we still remain creative.
- Group C More daring & experimental, different types of meetings, different places, some contact with women &/or women's groups.
- No response.
- Each individual should try an evening to facilitate so to gain self-confidence & at the same time learn to accept constructive criticism.
- No response.
- Group D No response.
- I need to take more risks & open up more. More trust necessary & more encountering.
- More energy needed from current members & new members. Commitment to follow-through specific activities.
- Members need to be a little less fearful of expressing "negative" thoughts & feelings.
- Group E I would get more out of our sessions if I felt we were more solid as to who was in the group. Also, I would like it if we didn't skip around so much & started doing some things together as we've been talking about, i.e., doing yoga together or spending a whole night together. THIS WILL COME.
- Time is set aside for each person to talk, a commitment to the group to attend regularly seems necessary.

Consistent attendance.

We are working out our problems & becoming closer & finding communication easier (as a smaller group, than we started as).

- Group F More communication between members instead of just a couple talking with each other.
- New meeting space needs organization--perhaps a speaker once a month with a babysitter for the kids.
- We've changed buildings so that helped the noise level. We need to have everyone more involved in talking & cleaning up.
- It's ok now. Can't think of any changes.
- Group G More radical, more supportive of women in alternative life styles--on welfare, single parent, experiencing mental/emotional difficulties of housekeeper/helpmate/mother role.
- Programming, more universal involvement.
- No response.
- More definite topics. Leader chosen to encourage participation by all--preferably alternate leader each week.
- Group H I think if each week we have a facilitator, that we know what topic is going to be discussed beforehand & think about it.
- More specific, i.e., some sort of conclusion reached.
- We discussed the problem of the group being too large & considered the possibility of separating into two smaller groups. I would like to see the introduction of resource people into our group meetings to provide us with information on a relevant topic.
- More order.
- Sharing emotions--more personal level--can see that going through a transition now. More unity in discussions--hopefully will be solved by facilitator.
- Small group size (8 or less), resource people.
- The decision to appoint a facilitator for each week & to decide on a specific topic for discussion has made the meetings more constructive. Also, decision to close membership to anyone further.
- Changes already made: (1) the group size is now ideal, (2) people are opening up more, (3) we're attempting a more structured format.
- Group I No response.
- Probably too early to say. I will be satisfied in seeing a growing awareness of self-worth in members.
- Too new to say yet.
- Group J We are now in association with a local co-op & being able to get in touch with more women more easily.
- To have more people turn out & try & solve more problems.
- Group K No response.
- More clearly defined leadership or other input from an 'expert' on the subject of dreams.

I think we need a more serious committment for attendance & also to work on our dreams to be more prepared when we present them. (This applies to me as well as others')

No response.

8. WHAT MAJOR INSIGHTS HAVE YOU GAINED FROM BEING IN THE GROUP SO FAR?
 a) REGARDING YOURSELF (WHAT KINDS OF CHANGES IN FEELINGS, ATTITUDES, AND BEHAVIORS DO YOU RECOGNIZE IN YOURSELF AS RESULTING FROM THE GROUP EXPERIENCE?)

- Group A I have realized how hard it is for me to be honest with people, whether in a negative or positive way & am trying to learn how to be without being destructive. I have discovered that my nervousness & insecurities are not just mine, & now feel less isolated. Just learning to be friendly & open has made this group important to me. Also, learning more about being a woman, how to be stronger, not so role-oriented.
- A more liberated view of women. Security. I seem more aware of me. Insights into relationships. More serious. A general calm strength in myself.
- I gradually came to realize I was gaining confidence. I had greater feelings of self-worth. I left my previous group with the realization that I wanted more than anything to continue my struggle for awareness. I learned to recognize & understand my feelings, to accept them. I began to like myself. I began to see myself as strong, for the first time in my life. I learned communication skills, & I learned to empathize. There was also a lot of knowledge gained from the shared experiences. I learned a great deal about assertiveness & became gradually a more assertive woman, basically, I would have to say that insights and growth gained from the first group were intensified & refined for me in the new group. I haven't even mentioned the fantastic love & warmth & caring that develops, or the mutual support. It has helped me through many crises.
- I'm much more accepting of myself now--more aware that I am a good human being. I allow myself to like me, despite the things I would like to change. The changes I would like in myself are not so impossible now that I like myself. The group has helped me focus on my good points.
- I have recognized that many of my feelings & past experiences are similar to those of other members. I have realized I am capable of expressing myself clearly & empathetically & of facilitating (helping) others in the group.
- Group B Learning how my body constriction is a way of closing off high risk feelings emanating from my 'gut'. Also, that I can be regarded as somebody with special qualities.
- My need to be cared for & to care for others.
- I feel more secure about having another place--group where I belong & am accepted.
- More caring about others. Increased awareness.
- More understanding of other people.
- More open to change, put less effort in trying to convince others that my way is right.
- Group C No response.
- No response.
- Realized I was chauvinistic in many ways. Have now become somewhat comfortable with most men & don't cringe at touching or being touched by men in our group. Have yet to learn to carry out this in general circle.
- A basic desire to understand myself and my motives.
- Group D Recognition of a tendency to disown feelings, chance to practice honesty of feelings.
- My caution & desire for someone else (i.e., a trained leader) to point the way have surfaced in a most obvious manner.

- I trust my own feelings more.
- I have become more open, less shy, more aware of how I affect others.
- Group E I am becoming aware--again--of the need for me to allow others more space, not to try to finish sentences for them or butt in. I already had a strong sense of women being true friends & people I could get close to and this has been reaffirmed.
- Confidence in myself as a woman & person, people like me when I'm myself--not playing a "role"; I try changes, take risks knowing I have a place I will still be accepted no matter what the outcome.
- Gained confidence in expressing my true feelings (especially within my family group) without guilt.
- People accept me as I am, because I accept them & their feelings & do not judge them. I had considered quitting & said so but for me, stayed.
- Group F That I am not the only parent with problems raising a child, alone.
- Major feelings regarding how my son relates to other children, i.e., interfering in their hassles only if there are tears or physical "abuse".
- I talk too much--try to lead discussion even though not leader--don't like to see someone not happy.
- I'm more aware & caring for other people's children. My own children have learned to play with others (rather than bugging me).
- Group G I am stronger, more independent, more radical than I had thought. I have a better understanding of the oppressed role of women than any of the others in the group.
- Experience in guiding the group to an awareness of its problems (if the consensus agrees with my analysis).
- I have developed more self-confidence & find it easier to be outgoing now. I am also more aware of how being brought up in the traditional way as a female has stunted my psychological growth.
- Feel great compassion toward all women--their roles in life--their problems.
- Group H I've begun to respect myself more & I have a new confidence that makes me believe in myself. I want to live.
- Self-expression improved--relating to other people has almost a purgation effect.
- Growing self-acceptance. On one occasion we discussed developmental changes & I was relieved to discover that others shared my feelings.
- Knowing I'm not alone in thinking some things.
- More sensitive to female friends needs--changing superficial support to gut-level support--more confident & positive to myself as "female".
- Recognizing certain habits or patterns I use which I don't like.
- The idea of others sharing feelings & experiences that I previously felt were only mine--the feeling that my experiences can help others through similar situations.
- That younger women often share the same sensitivities & that our experiences, while superficially diverse, contain commonalities. Thus I feel more open to people several years younger.

- Group I No response.
- Not too much yet because group is still new.
- It has made me realize I tend to stay away from too close relationships with others.
- Group J I am not much different from other women in spite of the fact that my mother always said I was "different."
- Get more independent, more confident.
- Group K I have a good feeling about my subconscious--less fear, I am not so anxious as I was about talking of my feelings, attitude towards myself is less demanding more loving, I have more patience with women's problems, more understanding
- Clarification of dreams & application in understanding myself.
- I am more open to many mystical & symbolic aspects of not only dreams but of life generally.
- I am unique and relate to life in a unique way. My goals seem clearer.

8. WHAT MAJOR INSIGHTS HAVE YOU GAINED FROM BEING IN THE GROUP SO FAR?
b) REGARDING RELATIONSHIPS

- Group A Answered in above question (8a)
- Opened my mind up from the directions of the conventional male-female relationship. Also, the female-female relationship. Generally been enlightened about 'friend' relationships. In many ways I have to let go of my conditioning. A process I'm in the midst (& seems I'll always be in the midst) of.
- Just becoming more aware has made all my relationships, within & outside group, far more meaningful. I think I have a better understanding of people, & tend to be less judgmental than before. Basically, learning to really communicate has made all my relationships more meaningful. Because of the honest feedback I've received, I've learned a lot about how I interact in a male-female relationship, & ways to make this interaction more positive. I have really examined role-playing & game-playing, & I feel a lot clearer on this now. I still tend to compare myself with people-- & probably always will--but I think the criteria are healthier. I have re-examined & changed many of my values concerning relationships, with other women, family, men, everyone, & this is directly due to group.
- I am far more tolerant of people professionally & socially. I've learned to listen & be more aware of others.
- I now feel confident of my ability to join into activities & make my presence comfortable to others--I am flexible enough to "fit in".
- Group B Still uncertain.
- That others can accept me when I am wrong. Experiencing others unconditional positive regard.
- Shared experience is important to maintain relationships--some minimal contact.
- More meaningful to have few deep relationships than many superficial relationships.
- Improved relationships.
- More acceptance of other people's positions or philosophies.
- Group C No response.
- No response.
- Friendlier to all in the group & learning to accept their (& mine) faults & looks in preference for the inner person. This is now easier at work & in social contact. I'm now looking below the surface.
- The members all have a basic desire to be loved, understood by others who they have relationships with.
- Group D No response.
- How slowly trust grows & how necessary it is in order for people to take risks & open up to each other in their vulnerable areas.
- I trust others more.
- More aware of how I affect others.
- Group E I am learning to trust again & allowing myself to reach out in time of need--overcoming fear of rejection.
- People are really complex--the more I get through the superficial skin, the more I like each individual. I'm amazed at how different we all are & yet we can share our feelings.

Specific change in attitude towards women--initially via feminism & intensified via relationships developed within our group

I feel that I can call any member in between groups & feel caring for each one as a person & that they care for me more each time we meet.

- Group F I've met other mother's at the group & continue a casual friendship.
- Relationships with several other mothers have been kept up by visiting at their homes--as communication is too difficult with the scattered energies at Mom's morning
- The group tends to be slightly cliquy--those who were outsiders before still are
- Have gotten to know several other young mothers We share know-how
- Group G I get really high being around women. Discover my own strength as I see the strength and compassion of women. When I get around men, I get hung up on will he approve, will he like me--even if "he" is a schmuck.
- I like some of the women very much
- Changes only as noted above--more outgoing
- More able to "open up" to others on sensitive subjects. Able to help them express themselves. Definitely closer.
- Group H I'm becoming more honest & starting to open up in my relationships. I notice & am more aware of sexist happenings.
- No response
- Recognition that I regard female competition as threatening
- Greater tolerance & understanding of others.
- Going away from putting time into superficial surface relationships for socialization's sake (especially with the opposite sex). Taking a critical look at my different "roles" in relationships
- No response
- A better attitude toward the development of non-competitive female relationships. A less dependent attitude on my main man
- It seems people are generally supportive, if given the opportunity, & if one is able to be open & talk of real things. I feel a bit less hesitant to talk on a gut level with people I already know
- Group I No response
- Feel a sisterhood is developing
- Women do want to be able to be honest with each other
- Group J I have gained some friends.
- Not changed
- Group K No response
- Whatever the main objective of a group is, many members have differing expectations from the group experience.
- I value the relationships I have with group members--but I have had this experience before in groups--that wasn't new--expect new people.
- Everyone is unique & we all see life differently & I can learn from others

8. WHAT MAJOR INSIGHTS HAVE YOU GAINED FROM BEING IN THE GROUP SO FAR?
 c) REGARDING HOW A GROUP FUNCTIONS, OR HOW TO CREATE AN EFFECTIVE
GROUP EXPERIENCE

- Group A Realizing how stronger personalities can dominate the group, how I tend toward passivity. Forcing myself to participate with the group.
- I was always a talker in group, now the group is fairly stable that way. It seems for my expectations from the group the members should have a general goal or a likeness in some way. But that's from my limited experience. I've become less 'strict' about the guidelines of the group meetings. But, I feel there should still be guidelines. Sometimes it's comfortable (better) without but the group seems to know when it's ready for some these days.
- Generally, I feel very positive about the experiences I have had with groups, but I do realize that the group experience is not perfect nor without problems, especially without a leader. I have seen difficulty in establishing trust (initially), difficulty in defining goals, making decisions. Those are probably the most serious drawbacks. I have seen a "power structure" happen in groups, where the more quiet, passive members find themselves dominated by the more aggressive. Occasionally, you may find one person taking it upon herself to play "therapist", or dispense advice. I imagine these are problems peculiar to leaderless groups.
- I really feel, though, that these difficulties can be overcome, without having to have a leader, through sensitivity & empathy on the part of the more dominant toward the quieter members, & how they may be feeling. And openly discussing the problem--making your frustrations known to the others--taking responsibility for yourself, for speaking up or being silent. I was able to empathize with other members who were afraid to speak because I'd been there.
- I've learned a lot about group dynamics. How other people's energy affects me. The energy flow within the group, the balance between passive & aggressive. I've begun to think that a homogenous blend of people is important, otherwise differences can be hard to overcome. The dynamics of the two groups I have been in are incredibly different, & I think I learned more from moving from one situation into the other, than from either alone.
- I'm learning not to cloud an issue with irrelevancies--how to state what I feel without feeling the need to apologize for my opinions.
- I have realized that the members of our group are unusually sensitive & empathic, & that I, too can facilitate group & individual growth. I now know that an effective group is dependent on empathic & accurate feedback between members, and genuine respect & caring between members.
- Group B No response.
- Importance of time--crises--play time--relaxation time.
- Communication is essential. Also balance between "togetherness" & individual autonomy.
- The group needs a designated leader.
- Importance of some structure.
- A lot of planning or forewarning of the objectives of a specific group function so that those attending may prepare themselves in advance.
- Group C No response.
- No response.
- One must take a slow yet positive approach--not being too pushy to create the correct atmosphere for the group experience.
- It takes time for people to understand & trust one another in order to communicate.

Group D No response.

It is necessary to find & create the optimum situation of trusting & risk taking. To move too fast hinders the trust & to move too slowly means low energy & too little risk-taking.

I enjoy a leaderless group.

Not much new here except that a group can function well without specific guidelines.

Group E I don't have an answer yet as to how to allow enough time & space for each of us to have a good, real experience each night--especially when we have a large (10) group occasionally. We seem to have a need to socialize and that cuts down the time for sharing deeper feelings. BALANCE.

1. Developing trust is the difficult hurdle, 2. maintaining open, honest feelings & working out problems as they arise--dealing here & now is important, 3. being able to say whatever is on my mind & have it accepted.

This is my first experience within a self-help group & at this point I do not feel I can comment on this point one way or the other.

Each member must be honest & open & say her true feelings--or the group will have no strength, & when problems occur they must be faced & resolved.

Group F No response.

The group seems to be only interested in just sitting & watching the kids--with the exception of several moms.

I realized one really needs a more defined guideline to make results, but then we aren't necessarily looking for guidelines.

We don't really function--we arrive, sit & yak, & leave. It's very open.

Group G If you give women permission to share rather than compete they will be honest & open. Suggest alternatives rather than tell people what they should do. Get away from "my way is the best" to "this works for me" & allowing "something else works for you."

Experience in small group interaction.

It is important that everyone participate. A few people who are natural leaders take the leading roles, but the role is open to everyone. No one seems to dominate. (We did have a dominating member for a while but she quit after about 4 meetings so we didn't have to deal with that.)

Had previous experience in this capacity--no change.

Group H I'm learning to be sensitive to my sisters & am finding a supportiveness.

No response.

Need to have a leader--yet one that is not dominating.

No response.

Facilitator needed in this situation to guide discussion so as to get more unity.

Active participation.

Realize the need for some formal structuring & the importance of recognizing the individual needs as well as those of the group.

I'm still unsure of my feelings concerning groups. In the past I was often frustrated with certain common patterns in groups, such as one or two people being the most vocal & yet sensing disagreement of dissatisfaction on the part of more quiet members. Since our group seems less susceptible to these pitfalls, maybe because we're all wary of them & are trying to be good listeners, I find my usual reactions to groups invalid.

- Group I No response
- Finding common ground, sharing experiences
- We all want someone to really listen to what we are saying.
- Group J As a leader I found we had to spend more time reading, organizing,
 leading. It has been a great learning experience & given me more con-
 fidence in leading.
- I cannot answer as I don't know.
- Group K I have learnt & am learning how to communicate in an affirmative way
 Very much aware of the old negative encouraged woman to woman relationships.
- Some form of designated leadership is necessary if only to keep discussion
 on the track.
- I have become more aware that in a self-help group (leaderless) that it
 is difficult at times to keep on the track & at times I don't want to be
 the leader & I let things go & become dissatisfied. Other times, I'm
 willing (or someone else is) to take on the leadership role. That is,
 we are each very much responsible for how the group goes.
- Let this type of group have its head--don't make rules or expectations--
 let the group unfold at its own pace--patience

9. WOULD YOU SAY THAT THE GROUP EXPERIENCE IS, OR HAS BEEN, A PERSONAL GROWTH EXPERIENCE? IF SO, IN WHAT WAY HAVE YOU GROWN PERSONALLY (E.G., INCREASED AWARENESS, LEARNING TO RELATE BETTER, ETC.)?

- Group A Yes. Learning to relate better, forcing myself to participate, get involved, when it is always easier for me & safer to stay in the background.
- Yes. Increased self, & human awareness. Stability & control, going in the direction I want. Relating better.
- Yes. I've covered this in 8a. I've changed a great deal, completely due to my experiences in groups.
- Yes. See 8 a,b, & c.
- Yes. I have increased awareness of the similarities & differences between group members--an increased awareness of the way I come across to others, & am affected by others--& I can now verbalize these awarenesses.
- Group B Yes. Increased awareness of suppressed sensual feelings & a lack of initiative in establishing new relationships.
- Yes. Has helped me relate better to a group--i.e., confidence.
- Yes. Listen better, more aware of diversity, more willing to communicate.
- Yes.
- Yes.
- Yes. Increased awareness--openness, acceptance.
- Group C Yes.
- No response.
- Yes. Tremendously increased awareness. Definitely learning (slowly) a better means to relate. Learning to speak out on my own feeling & belief rather than "back seat" or go along.
- Yes. I find I am at peace with myself more.
- Group D Yes. As above & increasing confidence.
- Yes. This group is closer to day-to-day reality than a professional group because it does not have a leader, nor is it held at a special institution, therefore I have become more aware of my style of interacting in the day-to-day world.
- Yes. Answered in 3.
- Yes. Learning to relate better, increased awareness, plus I've learned to relax more with people.
- Group E Yes. Learning to trust. Valuing each woman though she may be very different from me. Caring, nurturing.
- Yes. The group has helped me maintain stability while I change old patterns & become more aware of myself as a person rather than a "role".
- Yes. Detailed on previous page.
- Yes.
- Group F Yes. Increased awareness.
- I've no definite yes or no answer--a little of everything I guess.
- Yes. We have all made a new friend or two--and have learned (most of us) to reprimand another's child without fear of retribution.

- Yes. Both increased awareness & learning to relate better--for me and the children.
- Group G Yes. I have grown personally & learned to relate better to others.
Not really. Appreciate the support offered by the group though.
Yes. See #8.
Yes. Very, very appreciative of women's efforts, problems & feelings
- Group H Yes. Same as #8.
Yes. Increased awareness, stimulating, opens other doors, encourages action to obtain results, can relate to women better.
Yes. Same as #8a
Yes. Increasing awareness
Yes. Increased awareness, learned to relate in honest open manner, losing inhibitions about talking about certain things
Yes. I feel stronger as a person--freer to act in my beliefs.
Yes. Especially good for my assertion hang-up--tend to be too passive and in this group situation I have been put in the position of asserting myself.
Yes. I have been able to talk with the group about very personal matters. The members have always been responsive in a positive way, thus increasing my self-confidence & my desire to reciprocate & reach out to them. I feel less inhibited since the atmosphere's not a judgmental one.
- Group I No response.
I want to work towards relating better & look to the group for help in this
Yes. I will definitely be more aware of others feelings.
- Group J Yes. I have gained goals, friends, increased awareness, I have made decisions, I have gained confidence again & "raised" self-esteem. I communicate.
Yes. Increased awareness
- Group K Triple yes. Learning through dreams the subconscious of another person provides a great depth & insight into their personalities
Yes. Some growth in understanding of myself.
Yes. Increased awareness of my dreams & those of others, increased awareness of others in general.
Yes. Increased awareness of the interaction & interrelatedness of unconscious & conscious experiences & importance of learning from both--putting faith into my own ability to lead my own life

10. FROM YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THIS GROUP, WOULD YOU SOLICIT ANY TYPE OF PROFESSIONAL HELP, EITHER FOR THE GROUP OR FOR YOURSELF?

11. IF YES, PLEASE INDICATE YOUR CHOICE(S) BELOW AND STATE YOUR REASONS FOR THIS CHOICE
COUNSELOR OR THERAPIST'S OBSERVATION & FEEDBACK ON YOUR GROUP PROCESS,
INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING OR THERAPY FOR AN IMMEDIATE PROBLEM,
LONG-TERM, INTENSIVE THERAPY,
OTHER (PLEASE ELABORATE).

- Group A No
- Yes (Feedback on group process) for interest & growth. Though I'm hesitant now, I do feel I'm open to it at sometime. (Other) possible 'awareness' groups led by counselors/psychologists.
- Yes (Other) I have just joined a "professionally-led" group, because I felt the need for more intensive work.
- No
- Yes (Individual counseling or therapy for immediate problem) I am already receiving therapy, but group has made me feel even more positive about--instead of embarrassed and secretive.
- Group B Yes (Long-term, intensive therapy) I feel it takes a great deal of time to explore problems that touch upon 'meaning' and spiritual emptiness
- No
- No
- No I would take leadership from within my community
- No
- Yes (Feedback on group process) I would be interested as to how an objective observer would view us & our processes--help us see ourselves in other ways. (Long-term, intensive therapy) for myself because I feel most people need some help in freeing themselves for growth--including me.
- Group C No
- No response
- No
- No
- Group D Yes (Other) We do seek out people who can help increase our awareness, one person has introduced us to massage, for example. Also, members of the group have since participated in professional groups, mainly those offered by the Cold Mountain Institute.
- No response
- Yes (Feedback on group process) I wish to learn to monitor my own "encounters"
- No
- Group E Yes (Individual counseling or therapy for immediate problem) showing anger--I need to learn to do this. I also want to become "recentered" within myself. This I can get better fulfilled from a therapist.
- Yes (Feedback on group process) We have a trust formed--we could have an ongoing growing process.

Yes (Individual counseling or therapy for immediate problem) feminism has caused an underlying marital problem to surface--which, at this point I wish to discuss on a one-to-one basis with a professional therapist.

Yes (Individual counseling or therapy for an immediate problem) if any individual feels she needs additional help besides this group

Group F Yes (Individual counseling or therapy for an immediate problem)

Yes, if the group wanted it (Feedback on group process) (Other) nutrition, physical well-being

No

No. Might be helpful, but impossible with so many small children

Group G Yes. My attitude is that professional help is a tool to be utilized I'm open about my own use of it & would suggest it to others. (Individual counseling or therapy for a immediate problem) (Other) workshops, e g , T A , assertiveness, decision-making, sexuality, couples enrichment

No

Yes. (Other) individual counseling for specific but not necessarily immediate problems because it would not be right to spend so much group time on one person

Yes. (Individual counseling or therapy for an immediate problem)

Group H Yes. (Individual counseling or therapy for immediate problem) we wish to bring in more knowledgeable people for different topics that are of our interest.

Yes. (Other) speakers for group.

Yes. (Individual counseling or therapy for immediate problem) which I have suddenly recognized as being a concern of some importance to myself from our group discussion of the topic (Other) Resource people to provide us with information on relevant topics, e g , a female doctor to explain the latest birth control techniques

No response

Yes. (Other) people experienced in certain areas--guest speakers, i.e., belly dancing, doctor (female)

No

Yes. (Other) resource people experienced or professionally trained in certain topics, e g., woman & law, birth control.

Yes (Individual counseling or therapy for immediate problem) I realize talking with someone who is objective yet interested provides me a vital outlet, but sometimes I feel a need for some concrete advice or alternatives which a counsellor could possibly provide. I would like to work through certain problems with a professional but I can't afford counseling

Group I No response

Yes (Feedback on group process) I am anxious that it not fail. (Other) guest speakers

No

Group J Yes. (Individual counseling or therapy for immediate problem) atleast one ex-member needs professional counselling. (Long-term, intensive therapy) I don't think necessary here. (Other) for many women it is just a social meeting--we sometimes have a lot of fun. I personally get a real lift even if I don't solve a problem.

No.

Group K No.

No.

Yes. (Individual counseling or therapy for immediate problem) I would certainly seek this if I felt I needed it--but I would try groups or listening friends first.

Yes. (Individual counseling or therapy for immediate problem)
(Long-term, intensive therapy) with a Jungian dream analyst. (Other)
Ashram & yoga.

12. HAVE YOU HAD ANY PREVIOUS TRAINING OR EXPERIENCES WHICH HAVE EITHER HELPED YOU OR LED YOU TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS GROUP (E.G., COURSES IN COMMUNICATION SKILLS, TRAINING IN LAY COUNSELING, TRAINING AS A THERAPIST, ETC.)? PLEASE DESCRIBE.

- Group A No
- Yes I'm involved in an organization which trained me in basic listening skills & am involved in on-going training.
- Yes My previous group, as well as several weekend workshops & one on-going personal growth group.
- No
- Ed. 417, have read books on active listening, have been in a counsellor-training group (Ed. 417), psychiatric help has given me a greater understanding of myself, which I can apply to others.
- Group B I have attended 3 5-day workshops at Cold Mountain with Bennet Wong, Jock McKeen, Ellen Tallman, & Wendy Barrett.
- Experience as leader in various high school situations.
- Experience in counselling & communication courses & workshops in communication skills & listening skills.
- Life skills trainer.
- No.
- Ed 197 course at U. Vic ; PET training, working as a therapeutic foster parent.
- Group C I attended a weekend session in Transactional Analysis at Naramata, run by Muriel James. I took a five month course at Sorrento. "Living and Growing in Community."
- No response.
- None.
- None.
- Group D None.
- Workshops with Vance Peavy, Bennet Wong, Sterling Stott, Jock McKeen, Richard Weaver, Wendy Barrett, Lee Pulos (hypnosis), Joel Kraemer (Yoga) all at Cold Mountain. In addition, training group for counsellors in Surrey with Jung Lee, have co-led two groups with my husband, taught beginner's yoga.
- Only "on-the-job" communications requirements which require development of skills for "survival purposes".
- Not really.
- Group E Studies in psychology & group process in university. Participation in several groups both self-help & therapeutic. I have learned the group experience can be very meaningful & beneficial to me.
- 1 courses in communication skills, 2 participation in previous groups of similar nature.
- Yes (but not as listed) my lengthy experience as a single parent has enabled me to contribute.
- No, but I find it very easy to communicate & can empathize & relate to people's needs, & am planning to train & volunteer to help in therapy with adults in the future.

- Group F No
No
I like to talk--am a good listener (also a good organizer even though I'm not doing it).
Experience as a mother, if that counts. There are no non-mothers in our group.
- Group G A couple of courses in communications skills, participation in several growth groups & weekend workshops.
Courses in communication skills (TENT Enterprises), membership in a communication skills "sharing group" for five years. Extensive reading in lay counseling. B A in psychology.
No special training.
Several years as chairwoman of a municipal council so able to guide a group and see everyone is heard.
- Group H Yes, I've once too often been the victim of sex stereotyping
No response
I took an assertion training course offered by the Counselling Centre in the first term & it helped me to speak up at this group.
No response.
Have always been interested in reading books on communication and women's liberation--am taking a course on verbal communication now.
No
Have studied astrology quite deeply & it overlaps into all my inter-personal relations.
No.
- Group I No response.
No previous training--only my belief that there is a desperate need for such groups.
None.
- Group J Almost none. I was at one CR group in Victoria & went to CR class at recent seminar. I have read a lot in last couple months. No information on CR!
None.
- Group K No response.
Various workshops in communication skills, presently in helping relationships course, yoga training.
Training in lay counselling, group leadership training in connection with this, counselling.
Training as a yoga teacher at Yasodhara Ashram & the experience of other yoga teachers & friends.

13 DID YOU HAVE THERAPEUTIC EXPERIENCES (THERAPY OR PERSONAL GROWTH) PRIOR TO THIS GROUP? IS YES, PLEASE DESCRIBE.

14 DID THE PREVIOUS THERAPEUTIC EXPERIENCES HELP YOU TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS GROUP? PLEASE DESCRIBE HOW THEY MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE HELPED YOU

Group A Yes. I went to another group led by lay-counsellors which was not satisfying to me as the people involved had more serious personal problems, or emotional problems which I was not able to understand & hence felt very helpless & frustrated // In comparison to the other group, I felt much more relaxed & able to participate.

Yes. Slightly. Through the organization we worked in groups & pairs. There is a lot of support & openness there & is a good 'testing ground' for me. // It helped differently in the beginning as far as others were concerned but also made me a 'listener'. A lot of it is part of me now & I can sometimes sound like I am role-playing, though I don't feel I role-play like I did (& didn't recognize completely) before.

Yes. Previous personal growth experiences which I have already explained // Also described already in great detail.

Yes. T A therapy (one-to-one) with psychiatrist. T A group led by 2 doctors in a weight-control program. // The psychiatrist was a very poor choice for me --I was not able to trust him & reacted poorly to his methods. After about 6 months I began to wonder if I should take a risk & tell him why I felt I needed counselling. At my next session, he told me as far as he was concerned, I was "cured" & didn't need to see him again, so I didn't tell him I needed help. I just didn't know how to contradict him.

This experience made me aware more than ever that I needed help, but not necessarily professional help. More important to me was to find people I could be comfortable with. Also important to me is the fact that my group is all women. To me, risk-taking is easier with women.

Yes. Psychiatric help--psychoanalytically-oriented. // Very much so--they built up my self-esteem & confidence enough to risk group exposure--risk new relationships.

Group B Yes. Just did. Well, I experienced body-work, acupuncture therapy, gestalt, psychosynthesis, massage, encounter, bioenergetics, etc. // Yes, I found it easier to express my emotions demonstratively rather than talking 'about' them.

No.

Yes. Informal growth groups & participation in groups with experienced leader. // Yes--more open & less fearful.

Yes. My husband wanted me to come to his personal growth group. I didn't like what I saw. I felt the group was a money-making business. // It was not helpful. It turned me off to the leader & gestalt or personal growth groups.

No.

No.

Group C Yes. // No response.

No response.

No.

No.

- Group D No.
- Yes. Groups mentioned in #12. // Each group provides new insights into myself & my style of inter-relating with others.
- Yes. Three group workshops. // Yes. The process is important. Also the focus on feelings & putting trust in them. Both learned in previous group experiences.
- No.
- Group E Yes. I learned much from my former women's group, particularly when we dealt with real life issues. I also gained much from taking part in Gestalt & T. A. groups. I learned from learning meditation too. // Yes because I already knew about many of the problems & rewards to be had in groups.
- Yes. A couple of sessions to develop new communication patterns with my mate & family. // Yes, the skills & tools to change patterns & ways of communicating help.
- No.
- Yes. I was in a mental hospital for 6 weeks & was on a feeling release program there & have also attended my doctor's group therapy for many months. // Yes, but I feel that at times I tend to analyze & must remember that just because I have changed & improved a great deal, each person can only help herself, & must really want to do that to succeed.
- Group F Yes. Personal counselling for own problems. // No--it was much different & more personal.
- No.
- No.
- No.
- Group G Yes. Specifically, emotional self-defense for women, 2 sessions assertiveness training, female sexuality, empathy training, one-term awareness & 2 growth weekends. // Yes. Willing to be open & as straight & clear as I could be. O.K. to share emotions.
- Yes. T. A. Workshops. // Not really.
- Yes. 1½ years intensive therapy, 5 weeks at day hospital group therapy, 1½ years less intensive therapy. // Yes. More insight & more honesty.
- No.
- Group H No.
- No.
- No.
- No response.
- Yes. Films & speeches concerning women's liberation. All women's work program. // Made me more aware of certain issues which opened discussions on them.
- Yes. A sensitivity group (bit of gestalt), trust exercises, sharing, trying to tell truth. // Yes, I'm not afraid to express opinion.
- Yes, of a type. Regression workshop--returning to former lives, also astrological workshops--Transcendental Meditation, Yoga workshops, & have just begun assertiveness training course. // No direct correlation--an ongoing personal experience. Another step.
- No.

- Group I No
- Yes. Member of SWAG. Observations in daily living // Yes, I feel I am a little further ahead than some of the other members & can be of help to them.
- No
- Group J Yes. Personal experiences only--depression, abortion, breakup with boy friend--and mending of breakup // The breakup changed both our relationships--I got out of the house & gained independence & in a sense so did he.
- No.
- Group K Yes. One week at the Ashram.
- Yes. Personal growth workshops through church // May have hindered somewhat as I have high expectations from present group. Feel able to communicate feelings freely because of past experiences
- Yes. Personal growth group experiences which at times have been what I would call therapy // Yes. I am more open to new experiences because of my past group experiences. Also, I am a better listener than I used to be.
- Yes. Experimental group therapy in college. A women's consciousness raising group (also self-help) // Yoga experience helped me more than therapy--learned importance of letting the group take its own course after CR group

15. IF YOU WERE DOING THIS STUDY, WHAT OTHER INFORMATION WOULD YOU CONSIDER IMPORTANT TO BE KNOWN OR INCLUDED?

- Group A No response.
- I really don't know
- I might ask what was the nature of the discussions &/or activities, because self-help does have many meanings to many people. For instance, although personal problems come first, our group has had many discussion subjects, such as roles, sexuality, sexism, etc. We have, though, gone more from this toward personal growth--more activity-oriented now than before.
- No response.
- We are not purely a Personal Growth group, a woman's group, or a CR group. We seem to be a combination of the three, not by any decision, but because this is the direction the group has "grown" in.
- Group B I would feel that your study should include at first hand experience at the Cold Mountain Institute at Cortez Island. I also feel angered by the high cost of therapy. I have 6 children & I find it extremely difficult to finance any group involvement. Can't the price be lowered so that it is available to most people?
- The ratio of men-women-children. Any strong cultural bias. Length of existence of groups. Length of personal membership in group. Under what conditions would you leave the group.
- How long group has been going. Change in membership.
- No response.
- No response.
- That our group does have religious affiliation.
- Group C No response.
- No response.
- Size of group involved, mixed or otherwise, age coverage, mainly to see if any pattern is set up due to sex or age or otherwise.
- No response.
- Group D No response.
- No response.
- How group members were selected, balance male-female, topics--samples, duration of group.
- Can't think of much else, but would suggest that you might want to pay more attention to wording of questions & response alternatives--the latter especially, as many of your listings are neither mutually exclusive or exhaustive. You'll have to pardon me as I've had some training in this area.
- Group E How does each person feel about personal growth & therapy. I feel I could be involved in T.A. indefinitely, that it is an ongoing learning process & part of a program for mental & emotional HEALTH--not disease. I will always be growing & changing & needing to understand what is happening within & without me. And being together in a women's self-help group will probably be a rewarding experience for some time to come. I can't see ever "outgrowing" my need for group feeling or understanding my feelings & reaching out for others.

Well covered.

Specifics as to numbers of participants--perhaps ages &/or occupations.

Whether it is "good" to have a group where some members also have professional help, & some do not."

Group F What one hoped to gain by this experience.

No response.

I would consider it important to discover whether a person continues in the group because of satisfaction or merely because of embarrassment of withdrawal.

This requires thought, I haven't time to sit & think & want to get this off.

Group G Ages, personal situation: married, divorced, single, children or no, any sort of crisis or transition period, living with situation--response of people close, e.g., husband, lover.

Size of group (ours is 10-12); age of group participants (ours is 27 to 63 with average age about 35).

No response.

Unable to express on paper the closeness I feel for the other members of the "group". I look forward eagerly to each evening together & have appreciated their advice.

Group H No response.

No response.

Do you think self-help groups are a fad? Why or why not? And, Why do you think that so many personal growth groups have sprung up at this particular point in time?

No response.

No response.

No response.

No response.

No response.

Group I No response.

Bear in mind we have had only 2 meetings to date, but we're very hopeful! I feel I may be more informative in 6 months' time.

No response.

Group J No response.

I don't know.

Group K I find this self-help to be less demanding on my energy--no one has to solve any one else's problems. More relaxed (with no money involved) therefore more insight. Reaches more women since few women lay out cash for personal growth needs.

No response.

One other problem has been one person becoming very dominant in the group. But this seems to work itself out. With all the problems I've experienced with these kind of groups, I choose to be involved because what goes on is real, a relating at a deeper, more satisfying level than most other get-togethers I experience generally with people.

No response.

APPENDIX D

Categories of Previous Experiences

Number of Responses	Category of Experience
8	Related Academic Courses at University
8	Workshops and Programs in Skill Training
6	Leadership Training and Experiences
6	Spontaneous Skills
4	Personal Development through Skill Training
4	Readings

Personal Growth Workshops or Groups

Number of Responses	Category of Experience
12	Intensive Workshops (2 Days or Longer)
8	Previous Leaderless Groups
7	Leader-led Personal Growth Groups
3	Previous Group Experiences Other Than Personal Growth Type Groups

Previous Therapeutic Experiences

Number of Responses	Type of Therapeutic Experience	How it did, or did not, contribute to participating in the self-help group
7	One-to-One Therapy or Counseling	<p>+Psychiatric help has given me a greater understanding of myself which I can apply to others, built up self-esteem and confidence enough to risk group exposure and new relationships, I have a better understanding of self and relationships with others, I am more honest and I have more insight, I learned skills and tools to change patterns and ways of communicating--this has helped me in my current group</p> <p>-Bad experience with a psychiatrist where trust was never established and he was never sensitive to my needs--I learned that I need help from people I am comfortable with, not necessarily professional help--being in a group with all women makes it easier to take risks, yoga helped me more than therapy, personal counseling did not help me to participate in this group because it was much different and more personal, previous therapist did not help me as much as the group has, but I got in touch with some feelings and needs</p>
6	Group Therapy	I have learned that group experiences can be very meaningful and beneficial to me
1	Psychiatric Hospitalization	I learned that each person can <u>only</u> help herself, and must <u>really want</u> to do that to succeed

Ratio of Previous Experience to
No Previous Experience within Groups

Group	Previous Experience		Previous Therapeutic Experience		Experience/ Therapy No Report	Total
	Yes	No	Yes	No		
1	3	2	5	0		5
2	6	1	4	3		7
3	1	2	1	2	1 / 1	4
4	2	2	2	2		4
5	3	1	3	1		4
6	0	4	1	3		4
7	3	1	3	1		4
8	4	2	1	6	2 / 1	8
9	1	1	0	3	1 / 0	3
10	1	1	1	1		2
11	3	0	4	0	1 / 0	4

VITA

Surname: SIEGAL Given names: MARILYN GAY

Place of Birth: Seattle, Wash. USA Date of Birth: May 24, 1948

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University of Denver 1966 to 1969

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Title of Thesis

PERSONAL GROWTH SELF-HELP GROUPS:
ORIGINS, FUNCTIONS, ISSUES AND
SELF-REPORTS OF PARTICIPANTS

Author


Marilyn Siegal

January , 1978
