

## **Group Psychotherapy Policies at The Coché Center Revised Fall 2003**

**Introduction :** The following policies have been adopted from those suggested by the American Group Psychotherapy Association and provide a foundation by which group psychotherapy at The Coché Center can function with maximum power. All are accepted and effective methods in handling psychotherapy in groups. We thank you in advance for honoring and respecting the points discussed below.

**Written Confidentiality Agreement Within the Group :** All information discussed in group psychotherapy meetings is to remain in the room. Names of other group members are not to be brought home to family or friends, and issues involving the lives of other group members are to be held in the strictest of confidence. In order to discuss one's own psychotherapy work, the best method is to relate the situation germane to yourself, pulling in other members anonymously and only as auxiliaries.

**Confidentiality Between Members of a Family:** Members of the same family who are concomitantly in group psychotherapy and other forms (couples or family therapy) are not to discuss the happenings of the group in the other form of psychotherapy. Confidentiality between family members is left to the discretion of the psychotherapist. Confidentiality about the families of the group members which is gained through prior or simultaneous psychotherapy will be handled on a case by case basis.

**Goal Assessments:** Each member is requested to write what his/her goals are during the course of the upcoming clinical year. Reports on the progress of the client become part of the group work, and are used in planning for the potential leave-taking or continuation of the member the following year.

**Group Absences:** The group takes place unless there is a holiday, or both psychotherapists are out of the city. An attempt to reschedule the group for that week will be made. We assume that members will be absent from the group between two and four times in an eleven month period due to illness, vacation, or business conflicts. Lateness and superficial absences are dealt with by the working group.

**Socializing:** We request that during your membership in a group, you limit your social contact with other members. Please do not invite others for coffee, social gatherings, or to celebratory events. The group can plan ways to celebrate the accomplishments of its members as part of the group experience. We expect that after group sessions members may engage in social conversation on their way out of the building. We ask that the discussion remain on the level of social conversation. Thus group psychotherapy issues are restricted to the time and location of the group meeting.

**Special Workshop:** A special workshop may be held as part of the on-going group experience. The topic is chosen at the request of the group members.

**Adjunctive Individual, Couples, and Family Therapy:** Although there may be very infrequent meetings with the therapist outside of the group times, it is necessary to have another form of therapy (couple, family, individual) available as a foundation. Group psychotherapy is a very lively opportunity to raise a number of issues, but time limitations may prevent dealing with issues in depth. Individual sessions are scheduled as decided by the outside therapist and the group member.

**Fees:** The monthly charge is payable on the first day of the month, for the month to come. Invoices are sent to each member at the end of the month for insurance and tax purposes. Because financial management is important in psychotherapy, tardiness in payment will be discussed within the group as needed.

**The Group Therapy Contract:** Group psychotherapy in a group in which members begin and end together, is based on member's trust in one another, that each will honor the full time and financial commitment. A breach of this contract against professional advice releases The Coché Center from further responsibility to the client.

**How to Work in a Group:** Because of the richness of the experience, members will benefit from the group whether they sit back and listen, or actively pursue issues of importance. It is our experience that the greatest benefit can be obtained by being as honest as possible as quickly as possible, and by talking up. Group therapists assist in forming a cohesive and trusting atmosphere so that maximum benefit can be obtained.

**Alumni Contacts:** A natural outgrowth of membership in a Coché Center group can be to develop an interest in outside friendships once previous members are no longer active group participants. We ask that confidentiality be maintained about current group members, and that "alumni" activities be reported to the Group Psychotherapy director. Current group members must limit social activity to one alum at a time, in order to avoid problems for other group members who also want to participate in alumni group activities. If a member is "taking time off", and may choose to return to a group at a later time, minimal socializing with members ensures the likelihood of a successful re-entry into a current psychotherapy group.

**Training Function:** Co-therapy is provided by trained professionals at a post-graduate level. Co-therapists are clinical associates, clinical consultants, or post-graduate interns doing advanced training in group psychotherapy. Each group has a consistent team of the same two professionals for each clinical year.

We thank you for your cooperation with these policies, and encourage you to discuss any questions or disagreements with the psychotherapists who are heading your group.

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