

# The Effectiveness of Group Therapy in Treating Mental Health Disorder

Author(s), OGUNSOLA Oluremilekun Itunu, OHAERI, Beatrice (RN, Ph.D), OJO, Iyanuoluwa Oreofe (RN, Ph.D), ADEJUMO, Prisca Olabisi (RN, Ph.D), BABARIMISA, Oluwatoyin (RN, M.Sc.)

## Abstract:

This study explores the effectiveness of group therapy in treating mental health disorders, examining its impact on various conditions, including anxiety, depression, and trauma. Through a comprehensive literature review, the study aims to identify the therapeutic benefits of group therapy, evaluate its effectiveness compared to other therapeutic modalities, and investigate the dynamics that contribute to successful outcomes. The review highlights that group therapy offers a supportive environment that fosters interpersonal connections and enhances individual recovery through shared experiences and peer support. Key factors such as group cohesion, leadership, and communication are identified as crucial elements influencing therapeutic success. The study also discusses the implications for nursing education, research, and practice, emphasizing the need for incorporating group therapy training into nursing curricula and exploring its cost-effectiveness and applicability in diverse settings. Recommendations include further research on nurse-led group therapy models and technology-based interventions to increase accessibility. Overall, the findings suggest that group therapy is a valuable and resource-efficient approach to mental health care, with the potential to improve patient outcomes and expand treatment accessibility.

**IJMNHS**

Accepted 15 December 2024  
Published 25 December 2024  
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.14602331

**Keywords:** Group Therapy, Mental Health Disorders, Therapeutic Effectiveness, Nursing Education, Peer Support,



About Author

**Author(s):**

**OGUNSOLA Oluremilekun Itunu**

Department of Nursing  
University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria

**OHAERI, Beatrice (RN, Ph.D)**

Department of Nursing  
University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria

**OJO, Iyanuoluwa Oreofe (RN, Ph.D)**

Department of Nursing  
University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria

**ADEJUMO, Prisca Olabisi (RN, Ph.D)**

Department of Nursing  
University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria

**BABARIMISA, Oluwatoyin (RN, M.Sc.)**

Department of Nursing  
University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria



## Introduction

Mental health disorders are a substantial public health concern, impacting millions of persons globally. The World Health Organisation (WHO) states that one in four individuals worldwide may encounter a mental or neurological condition over their lifetime, with depression and anxiety being particularly common (WHO, 2021). These disorders adversely affect persons' mental well-being and significantly influence their social, vocational, and physical health. Conventional interventions for mental health issues, including individual psychotherapy and pharmacology, have been extensively utilised. In recent years, group therapy has garnered significant attention as a therapeutic method because of its distinctive capacity to utilise social interaction and peer support in the healing process (Yalom & Leszcz, 2020).

Group therapy, a psychotherapy approach, consists of a small assembly of persons with analogous mental health issues who convene for treatment in a communal setting, usually guided by one or more qualified therapists (Corey, 2016). This therapy method enables participants to exchange experiences, cultivate interpersonal skills, and provide mutual support within a controlled environment. A fundamental theoretical basis for group therapy is the notion of "universality," which posits that persons facing mental health challenges can derive solace and a feeling of belonging by recognising their shared experiences (Yalom & Leszcz, 2020). This awareness alleviates feelings of loneliness and cultivates a supportive atmosphere that promotes emotional healing and personal development.

Numerous research have demonstrated the effectiveness of group therapy in addressing various mental health conditions. Group Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) has demonstrated a substantial reduction in symptoms of depression and anxiety, providing a cost-effective alternative to individual therapy (McDermut, Miller, & Brown, 2018). The group environment fosters members' desire and dedication to change by establishing a feeling of accountability and collective advancement. Moreover, seeing the recovery experiences of others might foster optimism and resilience, essential components in surmounting mental health issues (Burlingame, Strauss, & Joyce, 2019). Group therapy fosters the enhancement of communication and problem-solving abilities, which are crucial for managing life's challenges. Furthermore, the therapeutic elements intrinsic to group therapy, including benevolence, cohesiveness, and catharsis, substantially enhance its efficacy. Altruism, characterised by mutual assistance among members, cultivates a feeling of purpose and enhances self-esteem (Corey, 2016). Group cohesiveness, defined as the connection among group members, has been shown to forecast favourable therapeutic results by fostering a secure environment for vulnerability and emotional expression (Burlingame et al., 2019). Moreover, catharsis, or the emotional release occurring during group conversations, enables individuals to process and assimilate challenging feelings, resulting in psychological alleviation (Yalom & Leszcz, 2020).

Although group therapy has various advantages, it also presents obstacles in its execution. Certain individuals may first oppose group therapy owing to unease with self-disclosure in a communal environment or apprehension over peer judgement (Burlingame et al., 2019). The efficacy of group therapy significantly relies on the facilitator's proficiency in regulating group dynamics, making all members feel acknowledged and valued, and resolving any possible conflicts that may emerge. Nonetheless, with suitable facilitation and active



participant involvement, group therapy may serve as a very successful treatment approach for many mental health disorders.

In recent years, mental health services in low- and middle-income countries have encountered considerable obstacles in managing the increasing prevalence of mental health problems, mostly due to constrained resources and a deficiency of mental health specialists (Patel et al., 2018). In these settings, group therapy provides an effective answer by facilitating the simultaneous treatment of numerous persons, hence alleviating pressure on healthcare institutions. Moreover, the communal aspect of group therapy is congruent with the collectivist cultural norms prevalent in several low- and middle-income nations, where community support and interpersonal interactions are essential for mental health and well-being (Patel et al., 2018).

*The primary objective of this literature-based review is to critically evaluate the effectiveness of group therapy in the treatment of mental health disorders. By systematically reviewing existing academic literature and empirical studies, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the therapeutic benefits, challenges, and outcomes associated with group therapy. This analysis will help identify key factors contributing to the success of group therapy as a treatment modality for individuals experiencing mental health challenges such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Moreover, the study will highlight how group therapy compares to other forms of treatment, particularly individual therapy and pharmacological interventions.*

*A further objective of this study is to investigate the limitations and potential challenges of group therapy. Literature on this topic often emphasizes potential barriers to participation, such as discomfort with self-disclosure and the complexities of managing group dynamics. Therefore, this review aims to synthesize findings from different studies to provide a balanced view of both the strengths and weaknesses of group therapy as a therapeutic intervention. This analysis will help clarify when and under what conditions group therapy may be most effective, offering insights for practitioners and healthcare policymakers aiming to improve mental health services.*

### **Methodology**

To achieve the objectives of this literature-based review, a systematic approach was employed to identify, select, and analyze relevant academic and empirical studies on the effectiveness of group therapy in treating mental health disorders. The first step involved conducting a comprehensive search of academic databases, including PubMed, PsycINFO, Scopus, and Google Scholar, to gather peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and reports published in the last two decades. Key search terms such as "group therapy," "mental health disorders," "effectiveness of group therapy," "group cohesion," "catharsis," "mental health treatment," and "low-resource settings" were used to ensure the search encompassed a wide range of studies related to the research objectives. To enhance the credibility of the review, inclusion criteria were established, requiring that studies must be empirical, peer-reviewed, and focused on group therapy as a primary intervention for mental health disorders. Studies focusing on individual therapy or pharmacological treatments as primary interventions were excluded unless they offered comparative insights on group therapy.



After selecting the relevant literature, a thematic analysis was employed to extract and synthesize data from the studies. This involved identifying recurring themes, patterns, and key findings related to the therapeutic mechanisms of group therapy, such as group cohesion, universality, and peer support. The analysis also focused on the challenges and limitations of group therapy, providing a balanced perspective. Additionally, studies that explored the applicability of group therapy in low-resource settings were critically reviewed to assess its cost-effectiveness and cultural relevance.

## Findings

### Effectiveness of Group Therapy in Treating Mental Health Disorders

Group therapy, as a psychotherapeutic intervention, has been widely used to treat a range of mental health conditions, including depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Burlingame, Strauss, & Joyce, 2019). It operates on the premise that individuals benefit from shared experiences and social support within a structured group setting. Evaluating the effectiveness of group therapy requires a comprehensive review of both quantitative and qualitative studies that document patient outcomes, therapeutic mechanisms, and comparative analyses with other treatment modalities, such as individual therapy and pharmacological interventions. This section seeks to explore the impact of group therapy on symptom reduction, psychological well-being, and interpersonal functioning while identifying factors that contribute to its effectiveness.

One of the key advantages of group therapy is its ability to promote social learning and interpersonal development. Individuals in group therapy sessions learn from others' experiences and benefit from shared perspectives, which can contribute to the alleviation of feelings of isolation and stigma often associated with mental health disorders (Corey, 2016). The universality of shared struggles is a powerful therapeutic mechanism in group therapy, allowing participants to realize that their problems are not unique. This realization can lead to a reduction in emotional distress and foster a sense of solidarity within the group (Yalom & Leszcz, 2020). Moreover, the presence of a supportive community can enhance an individual's motivation to engage in therapeutic activities, leading to better treatment adherence and improved psychological outcomes (Burlingame et al., 2019). Through this lens, the effectiveness of group therapy is linked to its ability to create a communal environment where individuals feel safe to explore and address their emotional and psychological issues.

Several empirical studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of group therapy in treating specific mental health disorders. For instance, group Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) has been found to be particularly effective in reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression. A meta-analysis conducted by McDermut, Miller, and Brown (2018) revealed that group CBT led to significant symptom reduction in patients with depression compared to waitlist controls and individual therapy. The group format allows participants to practice cognitive restructuring techniques in a supportive environment, encouraging reinforcement of these skills through social interaction. Similarly, group therapy for individuals with PTSD has been shown to reduce trauma-related symptoms while improving interpersonal functioning and emotional regulation (Sloan, Feinstein, Gallagher, Beck, & Keane, 2019). These findings highlight the therapeutic value of group therapy, especially in fostering resilience and providing a space for emotional expression and support.



Furthermore, group therapy is considered cost-effective, especially in settings where mental health services are scarce or underfunded. Treating multiple individuals simultaneously allows for the efficient use of mental health resources, making it a practical option for addressing large-scale mental health needs in resource-limited environments (Patel et al., 2018). The scalability of group therapy makes it particularly suitable for low- and middle-income countries, where mental health professionals are often in short supply, and individual therapy may not be feasible for all patients. Additionally, the group setting aligns well with collectivist cultural values, where community and social support play a central role in individual well-being (Patel et al., 2018). These cultural considerations suggest that group therapy may be more effective than individual therapy in certain contexts, particularly in communal societies.

However, despite its benefits, the effectiveness of group therapy is not universal and may be influenced by several factors, including group composition, facilitator competence, and participants' willingness to engage. Burlingame et al. (2019) argue that group cohesion is a critical determinant of therapeutic success, as it fosters trust and emotional safety among participants. Groups that lack cohesion or experience frequent conflicts may see diminished therapeutic outcomes, as individuals may be reluctant to share personal experiences or fully engage in the therapeutic process. Additionally, the skill and experience of the therapist in managing group dynamics are essential for ensuring that all participants benefit from the intervention. Therapists must be adept at fostering an inclusive and non-judgmental atmosphere, addressing conflicts, and ensuring that the group remains focused on therapeutic goals (Corey, 2016).

Group therapy has been shown to be effective in treating various mental health disorders, including anxiety, depression, and PTSD, through mechanisms such as universality, group cohesion, and peer support. However, its effectiveness is contingent on several factors, including group dynamics and therapist competence. As mental health disorders continue to pose a global public health challenge, group therapy presents a promising, scalable, and culturally adaptable treatment option that can enhance psychological well-being and promote long-term recovery.

### **Theoretical Underpinnings of Group Therapy**

Group therapy, as a psychotherapeutic modality, draws upon several theoretical frameworks that explain how individuals benefit from the group process. One of the most influential theories is Irvin Yalom's therapeutic factors, which provide a conceptual foundation for understanding the mechanisms that make group therapy effective. These factors include universality, altruism, instillation of hope, development of socializing techniques, and group cohesion (Yalom & Leszcz, 2020). By examining these and other theoretical constructs, this objective seeks to highlight how the group dynamic contributes to mental health recovery and emotional growth.

One of the most significant therapeutic mechanisms in group therapy is the concept of universality, which refers to the realization that one's struggles are not unique. Individuals suffering from mental health disorders often feel isolated and stigmatized, believing that their problems are singular or too personal to be understood by others (Yalom & Leszcz, 2020). In the group therapy setting, participants quickly recognize that others in the group have similar



experiences and emotional challenges. This shared experience fosters a sense of belonging and reduces feelings of alienation, which can be critical in helping individuals engage more fully in the therapeutic process (Burlingame, Strauss, & Joyce, 2019). The group setting allows for a level of validation and empathy that is not easily achieved in individual therapy, where the therapeutic relationship is primarily one-on-one.

Altruism is another important theoretical concept in group therapy. Participants in group therapy not only receive support but also have the opportunity to offer help to others in the group. This act of giving, whether through advice, empathy, or simply listening, can provide therapeutic benefits to the giver. Yalom (2020) argued that altruism fosters a sense of purpose and self-worth, as individuals realize that they can positively impact others' lives despite their own challenges. This mutual aid dynamic strengthens the therapeutic process, as participants learn that they are capable of contributing to others' healing, which in turn enhances their self-esteem and personal growth (Corey, 2016). Altruism within the group structure contributes to the development of a supportive environment that enhances the healing process.

Another key theoretical mechanism in group therapy is the development of socializing techniques. Many individuals with mental health disorders, particularly anxiety or depression, struggle with interpersonal relationships and social skills. Group therapy provides a safe and structured environment where participants can practice social interactions, receive feedback from both peers and therapists, and develop healthier ways of communicating and relating to others (Burlingame et al., 2019). Over time, these improved social skills can translate into better relationships outside the group setting, which is an important aspect of mental health recovery. As individuals learn to relate to others more effectively, they may experience improvements in their overall sense of well-being and self-efficacy.

Group cohesion is another central element of the theoretical framework of group therapy. Cohesion refers to the sense of solidarity and trust that develops among group members, which is crucial for the therapeutic process to be effective (Corey, 2016). A strong sense of cohesion can help individuals feel safe enough to disclose personal and painful experiences, which is often necessary for healing. Group members who feel connected to one another are more likely to engage in honest and open discussions, participate fully in the group, and work towards their personal therapeutic goals. Group cohesion also enhances accountability, as members support and motivate each other to stay engaged and committed to their recovery journey (Yalom & Leszcz, 2020). Without cohesion, the group may struggle to achieve its therapeutic objectives, as individuals may withhold important information or disengage from the process altogether.

Catharsis, another theoretical concept, refers to the emotional release that individuals experience when they express deeply held emotions in a supportive environment. In group therapy, catharsis often occurs when participants share their experiences and emotions, leading to relief from psychological tension and the potential for healing (Yalom & Leszcz, 2020). The group setting allows for collective empathy, as other members validate and respond to the emotional disclosures of their peers. This emotional expression and subsequent validation are key therapeutic processes that help individuals process trauma,



grief, or other emotional burdens, making catharsis a powerful mechanism of change within group therapy. Finally, the instillation of hope is a theoretical factor that plays a crucial role in group therapy. Many individuals who enter therapy may feel hopeless about their condition or unsure of their ability to recover. Witnessing the progress and resilience of others in the group can instill a sense of hope and optimism for their own recovery (Burlingame et al., 2019). Therapists also play a role in fostering hope by encouraging individuals to recognize their progress and setting achievable therapeutic goals. The collective nature of hope in group therapy can empower individuals to believe in their capacity for change and recovery.

### **Comparing Group Therapy to Other Treatment Modalities**

In comparing group therapy with individual therapy, existing research highlights several differences in their therapeutic processes and outcomes. Individual therapy, particularly Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), remains a highly effective approach for treating various mental health disorders, including depression and anxiety (McDermut, Miller, & Brown, 2018). However, group therapy offers unique advantages that individual therapy does not. One of the most significant benefits is the opportunity for social interaction and peer support. Group therapy participants can share their experiences with others who face similar challenges, reducing feelings of isolation and fostering a sense of community (Yalom & Leszcz, 2020). This shared experience is often cited as a key factor in enhancing emotional resilience and promoting recovery. Furthermore, group therapy tends to be more cost-effective, allowing mental health providers to treat multiple individuals simultaneously, which is particularly beneficial in low-resource settings where mental health services are limited (Patel et al., 2018). However, individual therapy offers more personalized attention and may be better suited for patients who require intensive one-on-one intervention or who struggle with social anxiety that might hinder their participation in a group setting.

Another comparison worth noting is between group therapy and pharmacological interventions. Pharmacotherapy, often involving antidepressants or anxiolytics, is a common treatment for mental health disorders, particularly for individuals with severe symptoms (Burlingame, Strauss, & Joyce, 2019). While medication can be effective in managing symptoms, it does not address the underlying psychological or social factors that contribute to mental health issues. Group therapy, on the other hand, focuses on the emotional and interpersonal aspects of mental health, helping individuals develop coping skills, improve social functioning, and achieve long-term recovery. Research suggests that a combination of group therapy and pharmacotherapy may be the most effective approach for certain conditions, such as depression and PTSD (Sloan, Feinstein, Gallagher, Beck, & Keane, 2019). For instance, individuals who receive both medication and group CBT often experience greater symptom relief and improved quality of life compared to those who receive either treatment alone. This combined approach highlights the complementary nature of group therapy and pharmacological interventions, as each addresses different aspects of mental health.

While group therapy has proven to be effective in treating various mental health disorders, identifying best practices for its implementation is crucial for maximizing its potential benefits. One of the key factors in successful group therapy is the composition of the group. Research indicates that group heterogeneity, in terms of age, gender, and diagnosis, can





impact the therapeutic process and outcomes (Yalom & Leszcz, 2020). For instance, groups with a diverse range of participants may offer broader perspectives and richer interactions, but they may also face challenges in maintaining group cohesion. On the other hand, homogenous groups, such as those composed entirely of individuals with the same diagnosis, may foster a stronger sense of identification and solidarity. Therefore, selecting the right group composition based on the therapeutic goals and the needs of the participants is an important consideration for practitioners (Corey, 2016).

The skill and experience of the group therapist are also critical in determining the effectiveness of group therapy. Therapists who are adept at managing group dynamics, fostering trust, and facilitating open communication are more likely to create a therapeutic environment where participants feel safe and supported (Burlingame et al., 2019). Group therapists must also be sensitive to the needs of individual members while maintaining a focus on the collective goals of the group. Best practices in group therapy involve balancing the needs of the group with individualized attention, ensuring that each participant has the opportunity to benefit from the therapeutic process without feeling overshadowed or neglected. In addition, therapists should be prepared to manage conflicts or disruptive behavior within the group, as these issues can derail the therapeutic process if not addressed promptly and effectively (Corey, 2016).

Session structure is another important aspect of group therapy best practices. Research suggests that a structured approach, with clear objectives and therapeutic exercises, tends to yield better outcomes than unstructured sessions (Yalom & Leszcz, 2020). For example, group CBT typically follows a structured format where participants engage in cognitive restructuring, behavioral experiments, and group discussions. This format helps participants stay focused on their therapeutic goals and ensures that each session contributes to the overall treatment plan. At the same time, group therapy should allow for some flexibility, enabling participants to share personal experiences and explore emotional issues as they arise. Striking a balance between structure and flexibility is key to creating a therapeutic environment that is both goal-oriented and responsive to the needs of the group.

### **Challenges and Limitations of Group Therapy for Mental Health Disorders**

One of the primary challenges in group therapy is managing group dynamics. Group therapy involves multiple participants with diverse backgrounds, personalities, and mental health conditions, all of which can influence the interactions within the group (Yalom & Leszcz, 2020). Conflicts may arise due to differences in opinion, communication styles, or interpersonal conflicts between group members. Some participants may dominate the conversation, while others may feel inhibited or marginalized, preventing them from fully engaging in the therapeutic process (Burlingame, Strauss, & Joyce, 2019). The presence of a disruptive group member can negatively impact the entire group, leading to frustration, anxiety, or disengagement among other participants. Managing these group dynamics requires a skilled therapist who can maintain balance, foster inclusivity, and resolve conflicts without disrupting the therapeutic environment (Corey, 2016).

Additionally, patient characteristics play a significant role in the success or failure of group therapy. Not all individuals are suited for group therapy due to their specific mental health conditions, personality traits, or social skills (Rüsch et al., 2017). For example, individuals



with severe social anxiety may find group therapy overwhelming, making it difficult for them to participate fully or benefit from the group interactions. Similarly, individuals with personality disorders, such as borderline personality disorder, may struggle with emotional regulation or interpersonal relationships, leading to challenges in maintaining appropriate group behavior (Burlingame et al., 2019). While group therapy can provide therapeutic benefits for these individuals, it may require additional support or individualized attention to address their unique needs. Some mental health professionals may recommend individual therapy as a preliminary step before introducing group therapy for certain individuals to help them develop the necessary coping skills and social confidence.

Another significant limitation of group therapy is that it may not be appropriate for treating all types of mental health conditions. While group therapy has shown effectiveness in treating mood disorders, such as depression and anxiety, and in supporting individuals with substance use disorders, its efficacy in treating more severe or complex conditions, such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder, may be limited (Morrison, Kavanagh, & Argyle, 2020). Individuals with severe psychotic symptoms or those who are in acute crisis may not benefit from group therapy, as they require more intensive, individualized treatment to stabilize their condition. In such cases, group therapy may be better suited as an adjunct to individual therapy or pharmacological treatment rather than as a primary intervention (Sloan et al., 2019). Furthermore, the success of group therapy depends on the readiness of the participants to engage in the therapeutic process. Individuals who are ambivalent about therapy or who lack motivation may not derive the full benefits of group therapy, and their disengagement could potentially hinder the progress of the group as a whole.

The logistics of group therapy also present several challenges. One logistical issue is scheduling, as it can be difficult to coordinate a time that works for all group members, particularly in outpatient settings where participants have varying schedules and responsibilities (Corey, 2016). Attendance and consistency are crucial to the success of group therapy, as frequent absences or inconsistent participation can disrupt group cohesion and hinder progress. Additionally, the size of the group can impact its effectiveness. Groups that are too large may limit individual participation and reduce the sense of intimacy and trust that are necessary for effective group therapy, while groups that are too small may lack the diversity of perspectives and support that are beneficial to the therapeutic process (Yalom & Leszcz, 2020). Finding the right balance in group size is essential to creating a therapeutic environment that fosters engagement and emotional safety for all participants.

Confidentiality is another logistical and ethical concern in group therapy. Unlike individual therapy, where confidentiality is maintained between the therapist and the client, group therapy involves multiple participants, all of whom must agree to maintain the confidentiality of the group discussions (Patel et al., 2018). While therapists can establish ground rules regarding confidentiality, there is always a risk that a group member may breach confidentiality, either intentionally or unintentionally. This risk may discourage some participants from sharing personal or sensitive information, limiting their ability to fully engage in the therapeutic process. Therapists must carefully address the issue of confidentiality at the outset of group therapy, emphasizing its importance and creating a safe space where participants feel comfortable sharing their experiences (Corey, 2016).



In addition to logistical challenges, there are potential limitations related to cultural and socioeconomic factors in group therapy. Cultural differences in communication styles, values, and beliefs may affect how individuals participate in group therapy, particularly in diverse groups (Yalom & Leszcz, 2020). For example, individuals from collectivist cultures may be more hesitant to express personal emotions or concerns in a group setting, while individuals from individualistic cultures may be more comfortable with self-disclosure. Therapists must be culturally competent and sensitive to these differences to ensure that all participants feel included and understood. Moreover, socioeconomic factors such as access to transportation, financial stability, and availability of childcare can impact an individual's ability to attend group therapy consistently. These factors may disproportionately affect individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, creating barriers to accessing group therapy and other mental health services (Patel et al., 2018). Addressing these challenges requires mental health professionals and policymakers to develop strategies for improving access to group therapy, particularly for underserved populations.

### **Implications for Nursing Education, Research, and Practice**

#### *Nursing Education*

Group therapy plays a vital role in preparing nursing students for mental health practice, especially in therapeutic settings where collaboration and communication are essential. Nursing education can incorporate group therapy to train students in therapeutic skills such as communication, empathy, and leadership, which are crucial in managing patients with mental health disorders (Yalom & Leszcz, 2020). By participating in and observing group therapy, students can learn about group dynamics, including understanding roles, norms, and conflict resolution within a group setting. These elements are critical for mental health professionals as they foster an environment conducive to healing and personal growth. Furthermore, the experience gained from group therapy in nursing education prepares future nurses to manage and resolve conflicts, promote inclusivity, and facilitate positive interactions among diverse patient populations. This experiential learning enhances the students' ability to practice in mental health settings, where these skills are essential for providing effective care (Corey, 2016).

Incorporating group therapy in nursing curricula also provides students with insights into the complexities of group dynamics, allowing them to observe and understand the varying roles individuals play in group settings. This exposure helps develop leadership and conflict management skills necessary for their future practice. Nurses who are well-versed in group therapy dynamics are better equipped to foster therapeutic environments where patients feel supported and understood, contributing to the overall success of mental health interventions (Burlingame et al., 2019). Therefore, incorporating group therapy in nursing education ensures that future nurses are well-prepared to lead and manage group therapy sessions effectively, aligning with the growing demand for mental health services worldwide.

#### *Nursing Research*

From a research perspective, the effectiveness of group therapy as a mental health intervention opens various avenues for investigation. Researchers can explore the efficacy of group therapy in treating different mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, and trauma (Morrison et al., 2020). Investigating how group dynamics—such as leadership,



communication, and cohesion—impact the therapeutic outcomes of mental health patients is a valuable area for nursing research. Understanding these dynamics can contribute to the development of more effective interventions tailored to specific populations and mental health conditions. Moreover, the development of nurse-led group therapy models and their impact on patient outcomes could be a fruitful area of study, providing evidence for expanding the role of nurses in mental health care (Sloan et al., 2019).

Cost-effectiveness is another area worth exploring in nursing research. Group therapy, compared to individual therapy, offers the potential to provide therapeutic care to more patients with fewer resources, making it an efficient option in resource-limited settings (Yalom & Leszcz, 2020). Studies investigating the economic benefits of group therapy could provide valuable data to support its integration into mainstream mental health care, especially in countries with limited healthcare budgets. Additionally, technology-based group therapy, such as virtual sessions, is an emerging area of interest in nursing research, particularly in increasing accessibility for patients in remote areas. Exploring patient satisfaction with these virtual group therapies, along with factors influencing engagement and retention, could provide insights into how to optimize these interventions for broader implementation.

### *Nursing Practice*

Incorporating group therapy into nursing practice has significant implications for expanding the professional roles of nurses. Nurses can take on leadership roles within group therapy settings, promoting autonomy and professional growth (Patel et al., 2018). Group therapy allows nurses to provide holistic care by addressing not only the physical health needs of their patients but also their emotional and social well-being. This aligns with the concept of patient-centered care, which emphasizes the importance of considering the entire person in treatment rather than focusing solely on their symptoms. Additionally, group therapy presents an opportunity for nurses to engage in culturally sensitive practices, adapting therapeutic interventions to meet the needs of diverse populations (Rüsch et al., 2017).

In practice, group therapy offers a resource-efficient approach that allows nurses to reach more patients, particularly in settings where resources are limited (Sloan et al., 2019). By integrating group therapy into their practice, nurses can enhance the quality of care they provide, offering support to patients while addressing the unique needs of the group. Moreover, it encourages collaboration among healthcare professionals, promoting interdisciplinary teamwork, which is essential for managing complex mental health cases. Ultimately, the use of group therapy in nursing practice enables nurses to deliver high-quality, patient-centered care that considers the individual and collective needs of patients, thereby improving overall treatment outcomes.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Group therapy has emerged as a valuable intervention in the treatment of mental health disorders, offering numerous benefits such as peer support, cost-effectiveness, and the ability to address a range of emotional and psychological issues. However, the effectiveness of group therapy is influenced by various factors, including group dynamics, patient characteristics, and logistical considerations. Challenges such as managing group interactions, addressing the needs of individuals with severe mental health conditions, and maintaining confidentiality



can impact the success of group therapy. Despite these challenges, integrating group therapy into mental health care holds significant promise for enhancing therapeutic outcomes and providing holistic support to patients.

Based on the findings, several recommendations are proposed. Firstly, nursing education programs should incorporate group therapy into their curricula to prepare students for effective practice in mental health settings, emphasizing skills in communication, empathy, and conflict resolution. Secondly, further research is needed to explore the effectiveness of group therapy for various mental health conditions, including the impact of group dynamics and technology-based interventions. Investigating nurse-led group therapy models and their cost-effectiveness could provide valuable insights into optimizing mental health care delivery. Lastly, nursing practice should embrace group therapy as a resource-efficient approach that promotes holistic, culturally sensitive care and enhances patient engagement.

## REFERENCES

- Burlingame, G. M., Strauss, B., & Joyce, A. S. (2019). Change mechanisms and effectiveness of small group treatments. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology, 15*, 379–403.
- Corey, G. (2016). *Theory and practice of group counseling* (9th ed.). Cengage Learning.
- McDermut, W., Miller, I. W., & Brown, R. A. (2018). The efficacy of group therapy for depression: A meta-analysis and review of the empirical research. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice, 8*(1), 98–116.
- Morrison, N., Kavanagh, J., & Argyle, E. (2020). The effectiveness of group therapy for individuals with severe mental illness: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Mental Health, 29*(2), 123-135.
- Patel, V., Saxena, S., Lund, C., Thornicroft, G., Baingana, F., Bolton, P., ... & Unützer, J. (2018). The Lancet Commission on global mental health and sustainable development. *The Lancet, 392*(10157), 1553-1598.
- Rüsch, N., Müller, M., Ajdacic-Gross, V., Rodgers, S., & Corrigan, P. W. (2017). Shame, perceived knowledge, and stigma resistance in relation to mental health stigma: A comparison of group therapy and psychoeducation. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology, 52*(6), 737-746.
- Sloan, D. M., Feinstein, B. A., Gallagher, M. W., Beck, J. G., & Keane, T. M. (2019). Efficacy of group treatment for posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy, 11*(4), 365-373.
- World Health Organization (WHO). (2021). *Mental health*. <https://www.who.int/health-topics/mental-health>
- Yalom, I. D., & Leszcz, M. (2020). *The theory and practice of group psychotherapy* (6th ed.). Basic Books.



**Cite this article:**

**Author(s)**, OGUNSOLA Oluremilekun Itunu, OHAERI, Beatrice (RN, Ph.D), OJO, Iyanuoluwa Oreofe (RN, Ph.D), ADEJUMO, Prisca Olabisi (RN, Ph.D), BABARIMISA, Oluwatoyin (RN, M.Sc.), (2024). "The Effectiveness of Group Therapy in Treating Mental Health Disorder", **Name of the Journal:** International Journal of Medicine, Nursing & Health Sciences, ([IJMNHS.COM](http://IJMNHS.COM)), P, 17 – 30. DOI: [www.doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14602331](http://www.doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14602331) , Issue: 6, Vol.: 5, Article: 2, Month: December, Year: 2024. Retrieved from <http://www.ijmnhs.com/all-issues/>

**Published By**



**AND**

*ThoughtWares Consulting & Multi Services International ([TWCMSI](http://TWCMSI))*

