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Group Work in

School Social Work

Spring 2026
SOWK 587
Week 12

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Plan for Week 12

Session Agenda

Experiences in group work

Demo of WhyTry group

Solution-focused group work

Policy paper

Session Learning Objectives

- Identify examples of group work done in a school setting
- Reflect on facilitation skills
- Explore and reflect on the selection, development, and facilitation of group interventions in school settings
- Be able to engage in solution-focused group work



What Does Group Work Look Like for You?



- Groups of 4-6
- Designate a note-taker
- Share about group work at your placement with your group
- Summarize your discussion for the class



What Side Do You Fall On

Had opportunities to participate in groups

Had opportunities to facilitate groups

Enjoy group work

Feel skilled in facilitating groups

Task versus therapeutic





The WhyTry Program

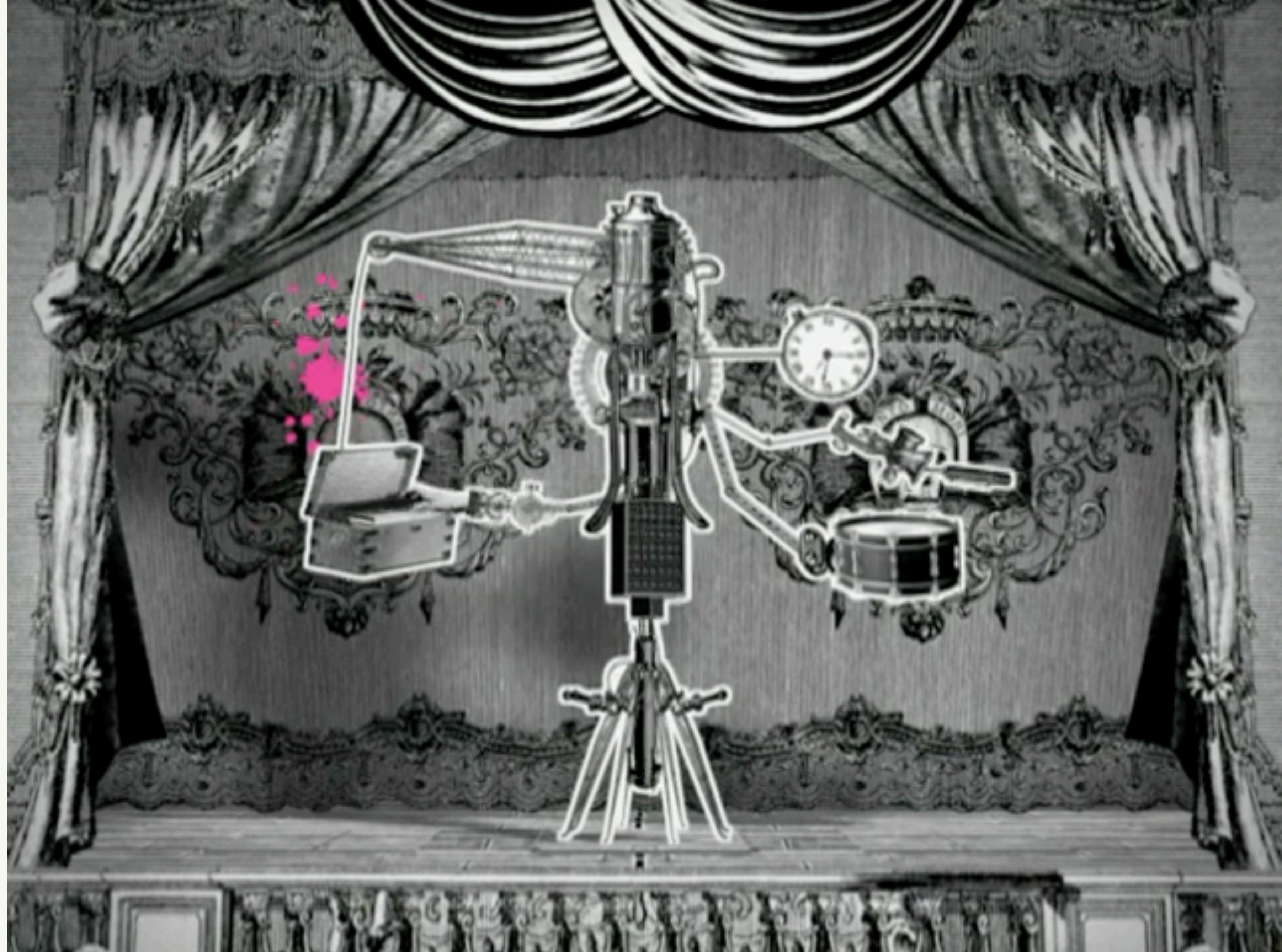


Demo

Jumping Hurdles

Ali In The Jungle

The Hours



Full Value Contract

(Schoel & Radcliffe, 1988)

We practice safety first, emotional and physical

Use kind words and actions, no discounting

Give and receive honest feed

Hold no grudges, let it go

We are a group with group and individual goals



5	I feel fantastic!
4	I feel well.
3	I am ok, but I feel a little off.
2	I am not well. I just need time.
1	Angry, leave me alone, check in with me later.

5

Point Scale

Jumping Your Hurdles

2 What Have I Jumped Over?

-
-

3 What Can I Jump Over?

-
-

4 Why Should I Try To Jump My Hurdle?

-
-
-

5 Strengths:

-
-



1. Identify Problem:
What problem do I really want to overcome?

2. Create Options
What are some options I can create?

3. Get Help
Who can help me get over my hurdle?
Who can I help?

4. Take Action
What specific behaviors (actions) do I need to stop or add to jump my hurdle?

Stopped Behaviors	Added Behaviors
•	•
•	•

5. Believe in Change:
On a scale from one to ten, circle where you are in believing change will happen.

"I can't change"	"Maybe"	"I know I have the strength"
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.		
★	★	★

6. Jump Back Up:
If I trip how will jumping back up make me stronger?

1

My Problem:

You Only Lose If You Give Up!

★ What Should My "Self Talk" Be Telling Me As I Try To Jump My Hurdle?

Famous Failures

Barr Brothers

Pyramid of Cups

In life, we encounter problems – or hurdles – on a daily basis. The key to success in solving these problems is to utilize the resources and support around us, and to consistently engage in positive self-talk. This activity helps reinforce this principle.

The only thing that can touch the cups is the rubber band, meaning the cups cannot be handled with your hands.

The strings cannot be tied around the cup, only attached to the rubber band.

One end of each string can be attached to the rubber band.

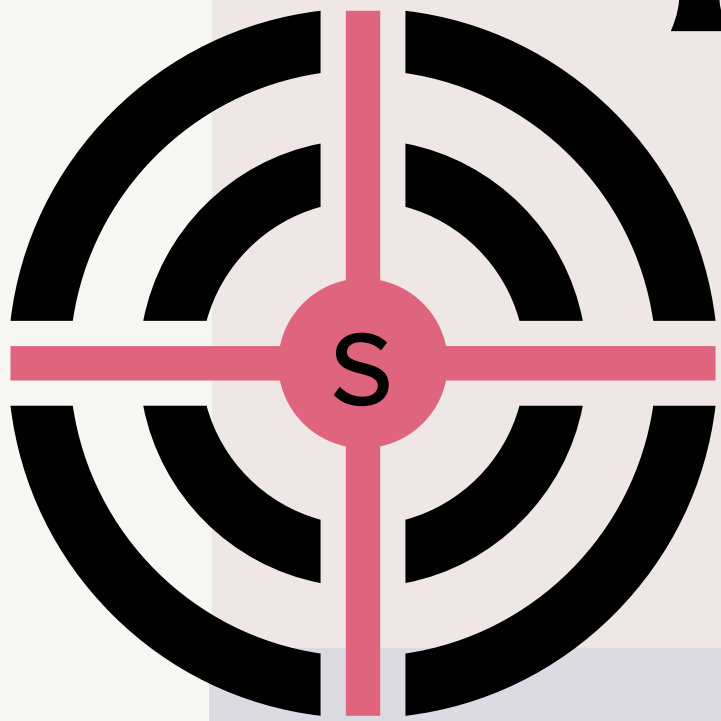
Each participant must hold the free end of one string.

When five cups are stacked, the group must finish the activity in silence.

If talking occurs, 30 seconds will be added for each incident.



Solution Focused Group



Expectations
& Steps

Tasks for the Group “Conductor”

Use Positive and Imaginative Language

Focus Explanations on Action, Not Accuracy

Challenge Problem Linkages

Reframe Problems as Opportunities or Resources

Steps in Group Process

1. **Introduction**–Outline of problem
2. **Clarification**–Participants get things clear
3. **Acknowledgement**–Acceptance and pacing of the problem and positive feedback
4. **The miracle scenario**–Positive visions of the future
5. **Building on progress and sharing credit**
6. **Closure**–Next steps for the client

Now



Implement



Social Policy

A-04: Macro Issue

Due Monday Morning 04/20/26

Students will apply their understanding of social welfare policy to a school-related problem researched for their fact sheet. They will create a policy brief aimed at governmental decision-makers that presents the issue, analyzes its relationship to school culture, and recommends evidence-informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive policy solutions grounded in cultural humility.

Title Page: Include a title page following APA 7 formatting.

Problem Description: Clearly describe your school-related problem and explain its impact on students and school systems. Support your analysis with credible sources. Explore how intersectionality affects students and/or staff, and examine how school culture influences or sustains the problem.

Policy Analysis: Examine the current policies related to your school-related problem at local, state, tribal, and/or federal levels. Summarize at least one of these policies and assess the impact on school systems and students. Include an analysis of how these policies address or fall short of meeting the needs of diverse client populations. Make connections to a theory applicable to social policy.

Recommendations for Policy Change: Identify how change can be implemented across at least two system levels (micro, mezzo, macro). Describe the types of collaboration needed, such as partnerships with policymakers, schools, or community organizations.

Change Strategy and Collaboration: Propose specific, actionable policy changes grounded in your analysis. Ensure your recommendations are rooted in anti-racist and anti-oppressive frameworks. Explain how cultural humility informs your understanding of the issue and shapes your policy recommendations.

Reference List: All sources should be cited appropriately in APA style throughout. A reference list using APA formatting should be included.

Needed
Content



Social Policy Theories

Potential Frameworks Connected to Policy

In your paper, you will want to connect your analysis of the policy (e.g., law) to a theory that can be applied to a social policy. Consider finding a source about a theory, explaining some of the aspects of the theory, and talking about how they relate to the policy you are discussing. The following are some examples of theories you might explore

Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Critical Theory

Feminist Theory

Systems Theory

Social constructionism



Social Policy Macro Issue Rubric

Description		Highly Developed
Competency 5 Practice Behaviors	Policy Examination and Best Practice Recommendations	Provides a clear and accurate review of a relevant social policy demonstrating a strong understanding of its impact on diverse populations; offers specific, evidence-based, and actionable policy recommendations rooted in best practices and anti-oppressive considerations.
	Policy Theory Assessment	Thoughtfully applies relevant social policy theory to analyze the issue, demonstrating deep understanding of how the theory relates to the experiences and needs of diverse client populations.
	Problem Description and School Culture Analysis	The problem is clearly and comprehensively described, supported with evidence; provides a meaningful and insightful analysis of how school culture influences or sustains the issue.
	Intersectionality and Population Focus	Strongly integrates intersectionality concepts to offer a nuanced analysis of how overlapping identities influence experiences related to the problem and population; analysis demonstrates depth and insight.
	Change Strategy and Collaboration	Presents a clear, realistic, and well-supported plan for implementing policy change across multiple levels; thoughtfully identifies and explains the roles of key partners needed for successful collaboration.
	Organization, Clarity, and APA Formatting	The brief is clearly and logically organized with a consistently professional, action-oriented tone; APA citations and references are accurate and properly formatted throughout.
	Following assignment requirements	Closely follows the assignment description and requirements.

