**AGPA Connect 2023 Presenter Information**

**Course Code:** 37-5

**Course Title:** Dungeons & Dragons therapy Groups: Therapeutic Application of Tabletop Role Playing Games in College Counseling Centers

**Course Times:** 2:30 PM - 4:00 PM

**Course Dates:** Friday, March 10

**Instructors:** Samuel Chun

**Course Description:** This open session will be a fun experiential introduction to applying tabletop roleplaying games (TTRPGs) to brief group therapy modalities. The presenter will briefly cover relevant literature before diving into an experiential session to show how the collaborative role playing elements of TTRPGs directly enhance interpersonal process groups and group cohesion. The session will end with group discussion about the experience, diversity concerns, and Q&A as needed.

**Learning Objectives**

The attendee will be able to:‎

1. ‎‎‎‎Summarize why TA-TTRPG groups theoretically are a perfect fit for brief university counseling ‎centers.‎
2. ‎Compare and contrast their previous experiences with a first session of unstructured process groups ‎to a potential first session in a DnD-based structured process groups.‎
3. ‎Explain how to address diversity concerns through DnD-based process groups.‎

**Significant Articles:**

1. Gelein, M., & van Miltenburg, J. (2019). A Game of Friends.‎
2. Causo, F., & Quinlan, E. (2021). Defeating dragons and demons: consumers’ perspectives on mental ‎health recovery in role-playing games. Australian Psychologist, 56(3), 256-267.‎
3. Denton, L., Gross, J., & Wojcik, C. (2017). Group counseling in the college setting: An international ‎survey of center directors. International Journal of Group Psychotherapy, 67(4), 540-564.‎
4. Garcia, A. (2017). Privilege, power, and Dungeons & Dragons: How systems shape racial and gender ‎identities in tabletop role-playing games. Mind, Culture, and Activity, 24(3), 232-246.‎
5. Krishna, M., Honagodu, A., Rajendra, R., Sundarachar, R., Lane, S., & Lepping, P. (2013). A systematic ‎review and meta‐analysis of group psychotherapy for sub‐clinical depression in older adults. ‎International journal of geriatric psychiatry, 28(9), 881-888.‎

**Agenda:**

1. Brief literature review on TTRPGs and mental health (5 minutes, Obj. 1, Sami Chun, Lecture/Powerpoint) Defeating dragons and demons: consumers’ perspectives on mental health recovery in role-playing games (Causo & Quinlan, 2021) A Game of Friends. Why do we role-play? A case study into Dungeons and Dragons (Gelein & van Miltenburg, 2019)
2. Brief theory on why TTRPGs are a fit for university counseling centers (5 minutes, Obj. 1, Sami Chun, Lecture/Powerpoint/Handout) Popular media (Stranger Things) Early adulthood population (18-27) TTRPGs reflect social systems & create microcosms (Article: Garcia, 2017) Yalom & Leszcz argue that structured groups may not be a good fit for long-term groups but can be done well for brief groups (Yalom & Leszcz, 2020) Universities have very limited resources Groups == more clients per hour Groups == effective Limited to semesters == almost always brief groups Universities use brief groups; Yalom & Leszcz argue structured activities enhance brief groups; college-aged populations are exposed to DnD because of popular media; TTRPGs already have mental health benefits and create social microcosm. Put it all together and you get? TA-TTRPG groups!!!
3. Experiential small group activity (30 minutes, Obj. 2, Sami Chun, Role play/Demonstration/Small Group) Collaborative world-building
   1. Draw map
   2. Name locations (collaborative spelling)
   3. Make up gossip (place & thing)
   4. Generate overall rumor (place, problem, party interest)
4. Discussion & processing of experiential activity (15 minutes)
5. Diversity discussion (15 minutes, Obj. 3, Sami Chun, Discussion/Q&A)
   1. To be aware of PCs: Encourage diversity I categorize PCs into four common types:
      1. Fantasy self
      2. Aspirational
      3. Oppositional
      4. Shadow
   2. NPCs: make your world representative differing ages, races, sexual orientations, religions, gender identities, cultures, body size, abilities or socio-economic realities What unconscious messages do your good guys send? Your bad guys? Good guys are all young, beautiful, heteronormative, cisgender, able-bodied people? Bad guys are vengeful because they were abused? Crippled? Bullied? Feel the world has to pay them back? Rich and arrogant? Poor & greedy? What messages does that send? “What types of questions do you all ask in groups to spend time processing concerns related to diversity?”
6. Q&A (15 minutes, review Obj. 1, 2, & 3, Sami Chun, Discussion/Q&A)
7. Participation evaluations (5 minutes)

**Assessment Questions:**

Question 1 (include possible answers)

Question: What do Yalom & Leszcz argue about the use of structured activities in groups? (a) They have no cost, only benefits (b) They are always terrible (c) They are a good fit for brief group modalities (d) They are fine as long as you choose from a pre approved list of activities

Correct Answer 1

(c) They are a good fit for brief group modalities

Question 2 (include possible answers)

Question: Why do universities primarily use brief group modalities (a) They don’t care about students (b) Brief group gets more money (c) You can eat food during a brief group but not a long-term group (d) Limitations of time and the ratio of students vs. clinicians

Correct Answer 2

(d) Limitations of time and the ratio of students vs. clinicians

Question 3 (include possible answers)

Question: What does TTRPG stand for? (a) Tabletop Role Playing Game (b) Therapeutic Tasks that Require Pre-approved Guidance (c) Totally Trippy Reasons to Postpone Graduation (d) True Table Rules to Prove Guilt

Correct Answer 3

(a) Tabletop Role Playing Game

Question 4 (include possible answers)

Question: Which of the following elements should a game master consider when worldbuilding? (a) Diversity (b) Trauma (c) Accessibility (d) All of the above (e) none of the above

Correct Answer 4

(d) All of the above

Question 5 (include possible answers)

Question: According to Yalom & Leszcz, what is the ideal number of group members? (a) 2-3 (b) 4-5 (c) 6-8 (d) 9-10

Correct Answer 5

(c) 6-8

Question 6 (include possible answers)

Question: True or False, DnD is satan worship True False

Correct Answer 6

False

Question 7 (include possible answers)

Question: What types of groups do university counseling centers typically run? (a) brief outpatient groups (b) brief inpatient groups (c) long-term outpatient groups (d) long-term inpatient groups

Correct Answer 7

(a) brief outpatient groups

Question 8 (include possible answers)

Question: According to the current body of research, which of the following is a potential outcome of playing DnD even WITHOUT a therapeutic emphasis? (a) Decrease in academic performance (i.e., too sucked into games) (b) Increase of inattentiveness in reality (i.e., daydreaming) (c) Increased mental health awareness (i.e., psychoeducation) (d) Increased confidence in social settings (i.e., speaking up more)

Correct Answer 8

(d) Increased confidence in social settings (i.e., speaking up more)

Question 9 (include possible answers)

Question: During the training, what popular TV show was mentioned as normalizing TTRPGs like DnD? (a) Dungeons & Dragons (b) Stranger Things (c) Unicorn City (d) That 70’s show

Correct Answer 9

(b) Stranger Things

Question 10 (include possible answers)

Question: What is the recommended length of a D&D-structured process group? (a) 90-minutes: about 45 minutes of gameplay, about 45 minutes of process (b) 120-minutes: about 30 minutes of gameplay, about 90 minutes of process (c) 90-minutes: about 30 minutes of gameplay, about 60 minutes of process (d) 120-minutes: about 60 minutes of gameplay, about 60 minutes of process

Correct Answer 10

(d) 120-minutes: about 60 minutes of gameplay, about 60 minutes of process