Navigating with the IASWG Standards for Social Work with Groups in Practice, Supervision and Education

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Abstract:

The Standards for Social Work with Groups of the International Association for Social Work with Groups are a navigational tool (or compass) for students and practitioners, as well as for supervisors and educators. First published in 1999, with a second edition in 2005, the IASWG Standards for Social Work Practice with Groups were crafted through collaborative discussions among social work academics, researchers and practitioners (IASWG, 2010). The standards can be accessed at: [http://www.iaswg.org/Practice_Standards](http://www.iaswg.org/Practice_Standards)

The IASWG Standards communicate distinguishing concepts of social work with groups, and highlight key practice perspectives of group workers. Rather than prescribing practice, they provide an overview of values, skills and strategies of group work, using stages of development as a framework. They are used across a variety of international practice settings, and applicable in work with a wide range of types of groups, including support, including support, treatment, education, task, and social action.

Research findings on the Standards’ current use and future development (Cohen & Olshever, 2013) discuss how they can be used to demystify practice while raising the quality of worker interventions. Their multi-faceted application enhances facilitator competencies and group member benefits.

Group facilitators are invited to familiarize themselves with the Standards, and apply them in their own settings. A new resource for this work is the 2013 Special Issue of the Journal of Social Work with Groups on the IASWG Standards for Social Work with Groups: Research, Teaching and Practice (36 (2/3)). Additionally, we encourage participants to join in using the Standards, reporting their experiences and challenges, and participating in the continuing evolution of the Standards to meet needs of members and their communities. Please email Carol Cohen or Greg Tully with your ideas.

Bringing Rigor to Group Interventions:

- Includes guidance in values, knowledge & skills
- Across a wide range of models, settings and fields
- Applications to administrative groups and team work
- Developed through practice wisdom and evidence
- Evolving over time and culturally adaptable
- Adopted and tested internationally
- Focus on stages of group development

Resources from the Special Issue of the Journal of Social Work with Groups on the IASWG Standards for Social Work with Groups: Research, Teaching and Practice (36 (2/3)):

- David R. Topor, Darryl Grosso, Joshua Burt, and Thalia Falcon (2013), Skills for Recovery: A Recovery-Oriented Dual Diagnosis Group for Veterans with Serious Mental Illness and Substance Abuse.

Studying Utilization, Revision of Standards, and Practice Implementation:

- Operationalization of use in evaluation and assessment
- Adaptable for use in qualitative and quantitative designs
- Rich examples of study across fields and locations
- Research contributions to ongoing review of Standards
- Collaborative research opportunities
- Growing literature and range of publication and dissemination opportunities

Resources from the Special Issue of the Journal of Social Work with Groups on the IASWG Standards for Social Work with Groups: Research, Teaching and Practice (36 (2/3)):


References:


How Can the IASWG Standards Inform Your Work with Social Work with Groups? [http://www.iaswg.org/Practice_Standards]