

GROUP PROGRAMS

Group therapy at Aligned Minds

Group therapy is not a lesser version of individual therapy. The largest meta-analysis of direct format comparisons screened more than 500 studies and found that when the treatment, the patients and the dose are matched, individual and group formats produce statistically indistinguishable outcomes. Depression, substance use, anxiety and eating disorders showed the strongest improvement.

Groups also do things individual therapy cannot. Patients discover their experience is not unique, practise new interpersonal behaviour in real time with people who are not their therapist, and receive feedback from peers living the same problem. For skills based work in particular, learning alongside others struggling with the same skill tends to hold better than learning it one to one.

WHAT WE RUN

- DBT skills groups: mindfulness, distress tolerance, emotion regulation and interpersonal effectiveness
- Trauma groups, phase based, beginning with psychoeducation, stabilisation and resourcing before any processing work
- Schema Therapy groups
- ADHD groups
- Return to work and WorkCover groups

HOW GROUPS ARE RUN HERE

- 4 to 10 participants, closed groups with a fixed start and finish
- Every participant has an individual screening appointment before the group begins, so fit is assessed and the person knows what they are walking into
- Sessions run 60 to 120 minutes depending on the program
- Group work runs alongside individual therapy where that is useful, or on its own

WHO GROUP WORK SUITS LESS WELL

Patients in acute crisis, or with current instability needing individual containment first; patients who cannot tolerate a group setting; and patients whose presentation requires a comprehensive adherent DBT program. Referring for individual work first and moving to a group once the person is stable is a common and sensible sequence.

Worth telling your patient: the group allocation is separate from the individual allocation, so someone who has used their 10 individual sessions for the year is not out of options. Group sessions also carry a materially lower out of pocket cost per session.

Sources: Burlingame et al., format equivalence meta-analysis, societyforpsychotherapy.org; Neacsiu et al. 2014, randomised controlled trial of stand alone DBT skills training, PubMed 24974307.