Group Therapy at UCC- FAQ

What is group therapy and can it help me?
Each semester, the UCC offers a variety of group therapy experiences. In group therapy, you can count on the expertise of the therapists who facilitate the group, and you can also get to know other students who are experiencing similar issues as you. Group therapy, like individual therapy, is intended to help people who would like to gain support, increase self-awareness, and learn new ways to cope with personal or interpersonal challenges. A common theme for group members is wanting to learn how to change thinking, feelings, and/or behavior to feel better about themselves and cope more effectively with life.

Am I eligible for group therapy services?
Undergraduate and graduate students, who are registered for classes at the University of Rochester and have paid the health services fee, are eligible for group therapy services.

How much does it cost?
There is no cost for group therapy services at UCC.

What are the different types of groups?
UCC offers two different types of groups: (1) process-oriented therapy groups; and (2) structured, skills-based groups. Both types of groups average 6-8 group members and meet weekly with two therapists for one hour and twenty minutes. Process groups can be especially effective for people interested in exploring their interpersonal style and enhancing their approach to relationships in such areas as trust, intimacy, anger, conflict, assertiveness, taking risks, or improving self-esteem. Structured groups are particularly beneficial for people seeking skills and strategies to deal with specific issues and symptoms that have been negatively impacting their daily lives, such as high anxiety, panic attacks, depression, lack of motivation, mood fluctuations, and lack of interpersonal assertiveness. We encourage students to make use of the differing benefits of both types of groups.

Are therapy groups the same as workshops?
No. Workshops bring people together for a limited period of time to explore specific themes such as test anxiety or stress management. The size of the group and number of sessions varies. Workshops typically last between one to two weeks and can have a stronger didactic component.

How do I join a group or a workshop and when do they start?
Every semester, a variety of different groups and workshops are offered. To be referred to a group or a workshop, you must either consult with your current therapist at UCC if you have one, or call UCC at 585-271-3113 to schedule a 45-50 minute initial assessment with a therapist. The therapist will recommend whether the group or workshop could be of benefit to you. Most groups start near the beginning of the semester and a few will start mid-semester. Workshops occur at different times throughout the semester.

Can I trust that group counseling will be confidential?
The UCC staff is ethically committed to confidentiality and federal and state laws require it. That means that even your attendance in a group at UCC is kept private and confidential by our staff. The issue of confidentiality is an important one which is always addressed in the group immediately. Group members are asked to make a commitment to protect each other by agreeing not to divulge details which would identify you outside of group. While it is okay to share your own group experience with friends or family, it is not okay to discuss other members in any way. While we at the UCC cannot provide you an
absolute guarantee of confidentiality since we cannot control every group member, our experience indicates that students respect each other’s privacy, because they want their privacy respected as much as you do.

Several issues do not remain confidential and are based on the issue of protection. If someone appears to be planning harm to self (suicide), harm to others (homicide), or is aware of children or elderly individuals who are being abused, the counselor is legally bound to break confidentiality in order to provide individuals the assistance they need.

**Who are the group therapists?**
Groups are facilitated by UCC therapists who have training in group therapy and expertise in the specific areas that a group has been designed for. Group therapists are there to help ensure a safe environment in which everyone in the group has the opportunity to seek out and receive feedback in a supportive, confidential context. As group members begin to trust and accept one another they generally experience the feedback they get in group to be remarkably positive, constructive, and thought-provoking. The therapists and group member alike work to give and receive feedback in respectful and helpful ways, and the ability to give and receive feedback appropriately is a valuable skill that you can develop through participation in the group.

**What do I talk about when I am in group therapy? Do I have to talk?**
Most people are anxious about beginning to talk in group. However, within a few sessions people typically find that they are able to talk in the group and that they get support from other members as they begin to share whatever is troubling them or whatever brought them into therapy in the first place. Of course, you control what, how much, and when you share information with the group. And while it can be very helpful to simply sit and listen to others and think about how what they are saying might apply to you, most people find that once they have had a chance to observe the group for a little while they begin to see that the group can be very helpful and affirming to its members, and they begin to feel more comfortable about participating more actively.

For process groups, the issues discussed each week arise from the members rather than being initiated by the group therapists. Members can discuss personal concerns or problems from everyday life; relationships with friends, family members, or significant others; or specific reactions, thoughts, or feelings to events within the group. Essentially, no topic is off limits in the group. Furthermore, because unexpressed feelings are a major reason why people experience difficulties in relationships, sharing your feelings in the group affects how much you will be helped by it.

In structured groups the issues discussed each week relate to the particular theme or focus of the group, e.g., anxiety. Some meetings will have a strong didactic/educational component as specific skills or strategies are introduced. Discussions and/or personal disclosures are typically related to member’s thoughts, feelings, or behaviors related to the theme and/or member’s experiences applying the skills and strategies in their daily lives. Members tend to benefit most from these groups when they actively commit to practicing and applying the skills. Actively participating in group can provide more opportunists for validation and support from other members and more tailored support and guidance from the therapists.
What is expected of the members in a group?
Members are asked to commit for a semester but can remain in the group until they feel they have reached their desired goals. Group trust is achieved when all members make a commitment to the group. As in any relationship, the commitment to remain in the group is an important part of building trust, cohesion, and a sense of safety, which in turn allows people to talk personally and honestly. Group members will be expected to share their personal experiences, give and receive feedback to each other, and empower themselves to succeed in all aspects of their lives.

Groups offered at UCC
- CBT for depression or anxiety
- Coed undergraduate process group
- Coed graduate process
- DBT Skills
- LGBTQIA+ process group
- Mood and Food process group
- Mosaic: Ethnic and racial diversity
- Survivors of sexual assault and/or abuse
- Women’s graduate process group

For more information or to participate in a group or workshop, call (585)275-3113.

Workshops offered at UCC
- Stress and Coping: Back to Campus
- Adjusting to College
- Meditation
- Dissertation Workshop: Working Effectively: Understanding Barriers to Writing and Research
- Managing Test Anxiety
- Mind over Mood
- Self-care through Art Therapy
- Being a Person of Color on a Predominantly White Campus
- Nurturing Relationships
- Thinking about Drinking