

Improving Student Performance and Personal Growth: A Review of Group Counseling in High Schools

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The high school years are a critical period in students' lives, marked by rapid academic, social, and emotional development. Group counseling in high schools has emerged as a vital tool to support students through these challenges, offering a unique avenue for addressing a range of developmental and educational needs. This article aims to explore the impact of group counseling on enhancing student performance and personal growth within high school settings.

Methods and Materials: The review involved a comprehensive search of academic databases using keywords such as "group counseling," "high school," "student performance," and "personal growth." Studies specifically examining the impact of group counseling on high school students were included. The selected literature was analyzed and synthesized to provide a coherent understanding of the current state of group counseling in high schools, focusing on its methods, effectiveness, challenges, and best practices.

Findings: The review highlights the effectiveness of group counseling in various domains, including academic support, social skills enhancement, and mental health improvement. Key challenges in implementing group counseling programs were identified, such as resource constraints, student participation, and variability in program implementation. Effective practices and recommendations for schools were outlined, including tailored interventions, collaborative approaches, continuous training for counselors, and integrating counseling into the school curriculum.

Conclusion: Group counseling in high schools is a valuable intervention that significantly impacts student performance and personal growth. It addresses the holistic needs of high school students, contributing to their overall success and well-being. The review suggests areas for future research and development in group counseling and recommends that schools develop policies and practices to integrate group counseling into their educational framework, ensuring that all students have access to these vital services.

Keywords: *Students, High school, Performance, Personal Growth, Group Counseling. Students, High school, Performance, Personal Growth, Group Counseling.*

1. Introduction

High school is a critical period in students' lives, characterized by rapid development and significant challenges. During this time, students navigate complex academic, social, and personal landscapes (Parsakia, 2023). The role of group counseling in high schools has gained prominence as an effective tool to support students in these areas. It provides a platform for addressing a range of developmental and educational needs, from academic struggles to emotional and social well-being (Abas, 2019).

Group counseling in high schools is supported by several educational and psychological theories. Social learning theory, for example, suggests that students can benefit from observing and interacting with peers in a group setting, fostering both academic and personal growth (Beasley et al., 2023). Developmental psychology provides a framework for understanding the unique challenges faced by adolescents, highlighting the importance of supportive interventions during this critical stage. Group counseling is particularly effective in high school settings due to its emphasis on collaboration and interaction. This approach not only aligns with the developmental needs of adolescents, who are forming their identities and social relationships, but also provides a supportive space for sharing experiences and learning from one another (Mares et al., 2021).

This review aims to explore the impact of group counseling on enhancing student performance and personal growth within high school settings. It focuses on how group counseling, as a collaborative and supportive intervention, can positively influence students' academic achievements and personal development, contributing to their overall success and well-being.

2. Methods and Materials

The literature review is designed to synthesize and analyze existing research on the effectiveness of group counseling in high schools, focusing on its impact on student performance and personal growth. Literature Search Strategy: The search involved an extensive exploration of academic databases including JSTOR, PsycINFO, ERIC, and Google Scholar, complemented by reports from relevant educational and government organizations. The search strategy employed a combination of keywords such as "group counseling in high schools," "student performance," and "personal growth." The inclusion criteria were set to peer-reviewed articles published between 2010 and 2023, focusing specifically on group counseling in high school

settings, and written in English. Studies outside this scope, particularly those not in peer-reviewed journals or focusing on individual counseling, were excluded.

The process began with an initial screening of titles and abstracts for relevance, followed by a thorough review of the full texts to assess their contribution to the topic. The quality of each study was critically evaluated based on factors like research design, sample size, and analysis techniques. This rigorous evaluation helped in ensuring the reliability and validity of the findings included in the review.

From each selected study, key information such as objectives, methodologies, findings, and conclusions were extracted. A thematic analysis was then conducted to identify recurring themes, patterns, and trends across the studies. This analysis focused on the variety of group counseling approaches, their outcomes, and the challenges encountered in their implementation.

3. Findings and Results

Social Learning Theory, as proposed by Albert Bandura, plays a crucial role in group counseling. It suggests that students learn from observing and interacting with their peers. This theory underpins the effectiveness of group counseling in high schools, where students can benefit from shared experiences and mutual learning within a group setting (Han, 2022). In the context of group counseling, social learning theory emphasizes the importance of modeling positive behaviors. Students can observe and emulate coping strategies and positive behaviors demonstrated by their peers and counselors, leading to behavioral change and personal growth (Wang & Liu, 2022). Moreover, developmental psychology provides a framework for understanding the unique challenges and needs of high school students. It highlights the importance of addressing developmental tasks, such as identity formation and social relationship building, which are crucial during the adolescent years (Xu, 2023). Further, group counseling in high schools aligns with developmental psychology by providing a supportive environment for emotional and social development. It offers a space for students to explore their identities, build relationships, and develop emotional regulation skills (Wudy et al., 2021).

Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT) is another foundational theory in group counseling. It focuses on identifying and changing negative thought patterns and behaviors. In a group setting, CBT can be used to help students challenge and reframe irrational beliefs,

contributing to improved mental health and academic performance (Rismawan & Gading, 2021). The group dynamic in CBT allows students to see how others deal with similar problems, which can normalize their experiences and provide multiple perspectives on common issues faced during high school (Rini & Iswara, 2020).

Gestalt theory, with its emphasis on self-awareness and the 'here and now', is also applicable in group counseling settings. It encourages students to understand and accept their thoughts and feelings, promoting self-awareness and personal growth (Wudy et al., 2021). Gestalt group counseling can aid in the holistic development of high school students, addressing not just academic concerns but also emotional and social aspects of their lives (Thakore-Dunlap & Van Velsor, 2014). The Gestalt approach in group counseling emphasizes self-awareness and living in the 'here and now.' This approach can be particularly beneficial for high school students as it encourages personal growth and self-understanding (Wudy et al., 2021). In other words, Group counseling in high schools is not just about academic support; it addresses the holistic development of students. This approach is crucial in a phase where students are not only dealing with academic pressures but also undergoing significant emotional and social changes (Conradty & Bogner, 2020).

With the increasing complexities of the modern world, as seen during the COVID-19 pandemic, students face challenges in decision-making regarding their careers and future paths. Group counseling provides a supportive environment where students can explore their options and develop decision-making skills (Mares et al., 2021). Moreover, the principles of social learning theory apply effectively in group counseling settings. Students learn from each other's experiences and perspectives, which enriches their understanding and fosters a collaborative learning environment (Han, 2022). In fact, group counseling can directly impact academic performance. By addressing underlying emotional or social issues, students are better positioned to focus on their studies and achieve their academic goals (Brougham & Kashubeck-West, 2017).

Further, group counseling helps students develop emotional regulation and coping skills. These skills are essential for managing the stresses of high school life and contribute to overall well-being and academic success (Rismawan & Gading, 2021). Notably, Cognitive Behavioral Theory, often used in group counseling, facilitates behavioral change and adaptation. It helps students challenge negative thought patterns and develop

healthier behaviors and attitudes (Rini & Iswara, 2020). Moreover, developmental psychology underscores the importance of identity formation during adolescence. Group counseling provides a safe space for students to explore their identities and develop a stronger sense of self (Xu, 2023).

Discussing different types of group counseling programs, Academic Support Groups focus on improving students' academic skills and performance. They often address issues like study habits, time management, and dealing with academic stress. Academic support groups can be particularly beneficial in helping students navigate the challenges of high school academics and prepare for post-secondary education (Carey et al., 2012). Social Skills Groups are designed to enhance students' social interaction skills. They cover topics such as effective communication, conflict resolution, and building healthy relationships. Social skills groups are crucial for students who struggle with social anxiety or have difficulties in social interactions (Burkard et al., 2012). Finally, Mental Health Groups focus on supporting students' mental and emotional well-being, these groups address issues like anxiety, depression, and stress management. They provide a safe space for students to discuss their feelings and learn coping strategies (Beasley et al., 2023).

Taking into the account of implementation strategies, group counseling sessions in high schools typically last for 30 to 50 minutes and are held weekly or bi-weekly. The duration of the entire program can vary, ranging from a few weeks to an entire school year, depending on the goals and structure of the group (Carey et al., 2012). Considering group size, the ideal size for group counseling in high schools is typically between 6 to 10 students. This size allows for effective interaction and personal attention while maintaining a supportive group dynamic (Juwita et al., 2023). However, group counseling sessions are usually facilitated by trained school counselors, psychologists, or social workers. These professionals should have specialized training in group dynamics, adolescent development, and the specific issues being addressed in the group (Khairunisa et al., 2022). Finally, successful implementation often requires collaboration between school counselors, teachers, and administrators. Support from the school administration is crucial for providing the necessary resources and creating a conducive environment for group counseling (Sari et al., 2023).

Addressing the effectiveness of group counselling in high schools, research showed that it has been effective in reducing behaviors like academic procrastination, which

directly impacts student performance. A study on the effectiveness of reality group counseling showed significant reductions in academic procrastination among vocational school students, leading to improved academic outcomes (Salam & Astuti, 2023). Moreover, interventions focusing on developing a growth mindset, often a component of group counseling, have been shown to improve students' academic performance. While a direct improvement in core grade point average may not always be evident, the development of a growth mindset contributes to better academic engagement and resilience (Brougham & Kashubeck-West, 2017). Furthermore, group counseling interventions, such as gratitude exercises, have been effective in managing academic stress among high school students. These interventions help in reducing stress about personal future and academic concerns, contributing to better emotional regulation and personal well-being (Sahar et al., 2022). Programs like non-face-to-face self-regulation training for student-athletes, which can be considered a form of group counseling, have shown improvements in self-regulation and mental toughness. These skills are crucial for personal growth and coping with the challenges of high school life (Park, 2023). To a greater extent, group counseling has also been effective in increasing career involvement and reducing career confusion among high school students. This is particularly important for personal growth as students make critical decisions about their future careers (Salma & Septiana, 2022). Notably, the application of digital mental health clinics in secondary schools has shown effectiveness in crisis prevention and intervention. These digital platforms serve as an extension of group counseling, providing support during nonworking hours and aiding in suicide and self-injury prevention (Xu, 2023). Ultimately, understanding gender differences in academic performance is also a crucial aspect of group counseling. Addressing these differences can lead to more tailored and effective counseling strategies, thereby improving the academic performance of all students (Sam, 2016).

Taking into the account of the challenges and limitations in the field, one of the primary challenges in implementing group counseling programs is the lack of resources, including insufficient funding and limited access to trained counselors (Juwita et al., 2023). Moreover, engaging students in group counseling can be challenging, especially in addressing issues like stigma or reluctance to participate in mental health-related programs (Abdillah & Nurhayani, 2023). Furthermore, finding time within the school schedule for group counseling sessions can be difficult, given the

packed academic calendars and extracurricular activities (Xiong et al., 2022). Catering to the diverse needs of students within a group setting can be challenging, as each student may have different issues and levels of comfort in group discussions (Sofyan et al., 2023).

4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study was conducted to investigate the effectiveness of group counseling in high schools in enhancing student performance and personal growth. It also identifies practical challenges and limitations in current research, emphasizing the need for tailored interventions and a collaborative approach. This review has comprehensively explored the role of group counseling in high schools, highlighting its significant impact on student performance and personal growth. The effectiveness of group counseling is evident in various domains, including academic support, social skills enhancement, and mental health improvement. The review underscores the importance of group counseling in addressing the holistic needs of high school students, particularly in fostering emotional regulation, self-esteem, and career decision-making skills.

The challenges and limitations associated with implementing group counseling programs, such as resource constraints, student participation, and the variability in program implementation, have been identified. Despite these challenges, the review has outlined effective practices and recommendations for schools to maximize the benefits of group counseling. These include tailored interventions, collaborative approaches, continuous training for counselors, and integrating counseling into the school curriculum.

Looking ahead, the review suggests several areas for future research and development in group counseling in high schools. Longitudinal studies are needed to assess the long-term impact of group counseling and to explore innovative approaches that address the diverse needs of students. Additionally, there is a need for more research on the generalizability of findings and the standardization of best practices.

For schools looking to implement or improve group counseling programs, the review recommends developing policies and practices that integrate group counseling into the educational framework. This integration ensures that all students have access to these vital services, contributing to a supportive school culture that values and supports mental health.

In conclusion, group counseling in high schools is a valuable intervention that plays a crucial role in enhancing student performance and personal growth. By addressing the unique challenges and needs of high school students, group counseling contributes to their overall success and well-being. Schools, educators, and policymakers are encouraged to recognize the importance of group counseling and to invest in its implementation and improvement, ensuring that students receive the support they need during these formative years.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethics Considerations

All research included in this review was evaluated for adherence to ethical standards, particularly regarding participant consent and data confidentiality.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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Authors' Contributions

This article's development was a collaborative effort by both A.R. Asadi and E. Mede. They worked together to conceive and design the study, performed an extensive literature review, and synthesized the research findings. A.R. Asadi took the lead in drafting the manuscript, while E. Mede contributed valuable revisions and feedback. Both authors jointly approved the final version of the article for submission.

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