

Western HealthSciences

Brescia School of Food and Nutritional Sciences

FSDH 2237B – Introduction to Group Counselling Winter 2026

Campus Supports

Western University is committed to a **thriving campus**. For help with:

- Both physical and mental health, go to [Wellness & Wellbeing](#)
- Studying with disabilities, go to [Accessible Education](#)
- Writing skills, go to the [Writing Support Centre](#)
- Learning skills and strategies, go to [Learning Development & Success](#)
- Contacting the ombudsperson, go to the [Office of the Ombudsperson](#)



Your course coordinator can also **guide you** to available campus resources and/or services.

Important Dates

Classes Begin	Reading Week	Classes End	Study day(s)	Exam Period
January 5	February 14-22	April 9	April 10-11	April 12-30

March 30, 2026: Last day to withdraw from a first-term half course without academic penalty

Contact Information

Course Coordinator/instructor	Contact Information	Office Hours
Dr. Kym Briggs	kbriggs@uwo.ca	Fridays 10:30am -11:30am

NOTE: All course information including grades, assignment outlines, deadlines, etc. are available via [OWL Brightspace](#). Download the Brightspace Pulse App to stay up-to-date on course communication and enable your notification settings within “Communications” in the top toolbar. Check the website regularly for course announcements. If you need assistance, visit [OWL Brightspace Help](#) or contact the [Western Technology Services Helpdesk](#). They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

Calendar Course Description (including prerequisites/anti-requisites):

This course introduces students to group counselling principles, theories, and models, focusing on group dynamics, stages, and leadership techniques. It includes experiential learning to build practical skills and confidence. Ethical guidelines, self-reflection, and feedback are emphasized for competent and compassionate group counselling.

Antirequisite(s): The former Family Studies and Human Development 2235.

Prerequisite(s): Any 0.5 course from any department in the Faculty of Health Sciences, the Department of Anthropology, the Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies, the Department of Psychology or the Department of Sociology; or permission of the Department.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course, and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

NOTE: If you wish to enroll in this course without the stated pre-requisite(s), you must obtain written approval from the course instructor. The approval should then be forwarded to your academic counsellor.

Delivery Mode: Blended

Component	Date(s)	Time
Lecture 200	Online	
Tutorial 002		

My Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the principles and practice of group counselling. Students will explore key theories and models of group work, with particular attention to group development, leadership styles, and the dynamics that shape group processes. Through experiential activities, reflection, and feedback, students will develop practical skills for facilitating groups in a variety of settings. Ethical considerations and self-awareness will be emphasized to support the development of effective, compassionate, and competent group leaders.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Explain major theories, models, and stages of group counselling.
2. Analyze group dynamics and identify factors that influence group processes.
3. Demonstrate core facilitation and leadership skills for group counselling.
4. Apply ethical principles and professional standards to group work scenarios.
5. Engage in self-reflection to assess personal strengths, biases, and areas for growth as a group facilitator.
6. Provide and integrate constructive feedback to enhance individual and group learning.
7. Recognize and address cultural and contextual considerations that impact group counselling practice.

Course Content and Schedule

Week & Class Date	Topic	Study Material/Readings	Things due
1 Jan. 6	Course introduction Introduction to group work	Syllabus Jacobs et al., Chapter 1 Smith & MacGreggor (1993)	
2 Jan. 13	Stages of groups, group processes, therapeutic forces & purpose of groups	Jacobs et al., Chapter 2 & 3	
3 Jan. 20	Getting started & basic skills for group leaders	Jacobs et al., Chapters 5 & 6 Chen & Rybak, 2018	
4 Jan. 27	Counselling theories and therapy in groups	Jacobs et al., Chapters 13 & 14 Kaklauskas et al., 2020	
5 Feb. 3	Dealing with difficult situations	Jacobs et al., Chapter 16 Sethi (2016)	
6 Feb. 10	Introducing, conducting, and processing exercises	Jacobs et al., Chapters 10 & 11	Assignment #1 Due - Traversing the Wounds and Using the Strengths of Our Family of Origin
7 Feb. 17	Reading Week – No Class		
8 Feb. 24	Working with specific populations	Jacobs et al., Chapter 17 DeLucia-Waack, 2006	
9 Mar. 3	Equity, diversity, and social justice in groups	Pelech et al., 2010	
10 Mar. 10	Skills practice – small groups	Groups 1, 2, 3	
11 Mar. 17	Skills practice – small groups	Groups 4, 5, 6	
12 Mar. 24	Skills practice – small groups	Groups 7, 8, 9	
13 Mar. 31	Skills practice - small groups	Groups 10, 11, 12	
14 Apr. 7	Group closure	Jacobs et al., Chapter 15 Chen & Rybak, 2018	Assignment #3 Due - Final Paper Group Reflection and Analysis

Course Materials You Must Acquire and Their Costs

Required Course Materials

- Jacobs, E., Schimmel, C., Masson, B., Harvill, R. (2022). *Group Counselling. Strategies and Skills. Ninth Edition*. Cognella. (Approx. \$140)
 - E-book \$87.95
 - Paperback \$103.95
 - Used editions are acceptable as long as they are the 9th edition
- Additional course readings will be available on OWL Brightspace.
- Smith, B., & MacGregor, J. (1993). What is collaborative learning? https://www.academia.edu/56697865/What_is_collaborative_learning
- Chen, M. & Rybak, C. (2018). The first session and the forming stage. In *Group leadership skills* (pp. 129-150). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. <https://sk.sagepub.com/book/mono/group-leadership-skills-2e/chpt/the-first-session-the-forming-stage>
- Kaklauskas, F. (Ed.), Greene, L. (Ed.), Block, M., Stephens, A. (2020). *Core Principles of Group Psychotherapy*. New York: Routledge, Chapter 8 (Leadership Tasks) <https://doi-org.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/10.4324/9780429260803>
- Sethi, B. (2016): *Healing Through Group Work, Social Work with Groups*. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01609513.2015.1065387>
- DeLucia-Waack, J. L. (2006). Introduction. In *Leading psychoeducational groups for children and adolescents* (pp. 1-15). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi: 10.4135/9781452204291.n1 <https://sk-sagepub-com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/books/leading-psychoeducational-groups-for-children-and-adolescents/n1.xml>
- Pelech, W., Basso, R., & Wickham, E. (2010). Diversity in Group Work: Interdisciplinary Perspectives. *The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences*, 5(4), 135–144. <https://doi.org/10.18848/1833-1882/CGP/v05i04/51681>
- Chen, M. & Rybak, C. (2018). Skills of termination: completing the cycle. In *Group leadership skills* (pp. 459-484). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. <https://sk-sagepub-com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/books/group-leadership-skills-2e/i2956.xml>

Assessments and Evaluation

Below is the evaluation breakdown for the course. Any deviations will be communicated.

Assignment	Format	Weight	Due Date	Flexibility	Learning Outcome
#1 Paper – Traversing the Wounds and Using the Strengths of Our Family of Origin	Written	25%	Feb. 10 at 11:55 pm	72-hour no late penalty	2, 4, 6, 7
#2 In-Class Practice Skills – Small group Facilitation Practice	Group presentation (30%) and peer participation (10%)	40%	Choose ONE Mar. 10, March 17, March 24, March 31	You choose your group and participation date.	All
#3 Final Paper Group Reflection and Analysis Paper	Written	35%	April 7 at 11:55 pm	72-hour no late penalty	All

Assignment #1 - Paper - Traversing the Wounds and Using the Strengths of Our Family of Origin

Weight: 25%

Length:3-4 pages (including genogram)

Due: February 10, 2026 at 11:55pm

Purpose

Our family of origin provides the foundation for understanding relationships, communication, and group interactions. The patterns established in family life, whether supportive or challenging, shape how we participate in groups throughout our lives. This assignment invites you to reflect critically on your family of origin as a way of better understanding your own style of communication, leadership, and participation in group settings.

Note: Only share the details you are comfortable sharing about yourself and your family.

Instructions

1. Family Profile
 - List the first names and approximate ages of your “core” family of origin (this may include parents, siblings, grandparents, foster/kinship members, etc.).
 - Provide one brief sentence describing each person (e.g., *David is my father. He is 52, an elementary school teacher, and a devout Catholic.*)
2. Strengths and Challenges
 - Identify the strengths of your family of origin (e.g., health, caregiving, education, financial resources, traditions/rituals, spiritual values, fun activities).
 - Identify challenges (e.g., health issues, communication difficulties, power dynamics, separation/divorce, caregiving pressures, financial strain).
 - A SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) may be used to frame your assessment.

3. Critical Reflection
 - Reflect on how your family of origin experiences may influence your style in group settings. Consider communication, conflict, authority, leadership, collaboration, and participation.
 - You may use the Johari Window resource (posted on OWL) to guide your reflection on self-awareness.
4. Genogram
 - On the final page, include a three-generation genogram that visually depicts family relationships, communication patterns, and dynamics.
 - The genogram does not need to be “fancy.” It can be hand-drawn, created digitally, or even mapped using sticky notes. Choose whichever format feels most comfortable.

Format Requirements

- APA (7th ed.) formatted title page, page numbers, 2.54 cm margins, 1.5 or double spacing, 12-point Times New Roman font.
- References are not required, but if used, must be cited in APA (7th ed.).

Assignment #2 – In-Class Practice Skills – Small Group Facilitation Practice

Weight: 40% total

Group Facilitation Practice: 30%

Participation as Group Member: 10%

Dates: March 10, 17, 27, 31 – Choose One

Length: 20-30 minutes

Purpose

This assignment provides students with an experiential opportunity to practice facilitation skills in a safe, supportive environment. Working in small groups, you will design and deliver a structured 20–30-minute group session. You will also participate as a member in another group’s session on the same day, allowing you to experience both facilitation and group membership.

Instructions

1. Group Task
 - Each group will decide whether to demonstrate an Introduction to a Group (e.g., establishing safety, clarifying purpose, introducing members, setting guidelines) or a Closing of a Group (e.g., summarizing themes, reviewing progress, consolidating learning, providing closure).
 - You should spend some time at the beginning of your presentation outlining important information about your group(ex: open vs. closed, location, type of group, number of sessions, etc)
 - Your facilitation must include at least one group activity that is appropriate for the stage of the group you are demonstrating.
 - Groups have a maximum of 30 minutes to deliver their session. Presentations that exceed 30 minutes will be stopped. Aim for 20–30 minutes total.
2. Preparation
 - Groups will consist of 4–5 students.
 - Each group must submit a Group Info Sheet outlining whether you are demonstrating an introduction or closing, your activity plan, and your goals for the session.
 - Topics/approaches must be approved by the Professor.

3. Participation Requirement
 - On the same day your group presents, you will also participate as a member in another group's session.
 - Participation will be assessed based on engagement, contribution, and respect for the group process.
4. Evaluation
 - Normally, all group members receive the same grade for facilitation. Individual grades may be adjusted based on contribution, peer feedback, or analysis of the group process.
 - Each student is encouraged to keep a brief personal record of group planning, roles, and dynamics to support Assignment #3 (Final Reflection Paper).

Assignment #3 – Final Group Reflection and Analysis Paper

Weight: 35%

Due: April 7, 2026 at 11:55pm

Length: 3-4 pages

Purpose

This assignment asks you to reflect on and analyze your group's development and process, from its formation through to the facilitation session. The goal is to connect your lived experience of the group with course concepts and theories, while considering your own personal learning & growth.

Instructions

Your paper must include the following three components:

1. Description of the Group Process and Task
 - Provide a concise account of your group's development and the tasks you undertook.
 - Highlight key events, decisions, challenges, and turning points.
 - Comment on how and why certain dynamics emerged, and how your group evolved over time.
2. Personal Insight and Critical Reflection
 - Reflect on how participating in the group impacted you personally.
 - Discuss your contributions, challenges, and what you learned about yourself in relation to others.
 - Consider how this experience might inform your participation in future groups.
3. Theoretical Analysis
 - Apply at least one relevant group work theory or model to explain your group's process (e.g., stages of group development, leadership styles, group roles, communication patterns).
 - Use theory to interpret and explain what occurred in your group, making clear connections between concepts and practice.

Format Requirements

- 3–4 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 pt font, 2.54 cm margins.
- APA (7th ed.) formatting for title page, in-text citations, and reference list.
- Minimum of two academic references, not including the textbook (though you are welcome to use it in addition).
- Use headings to organize your paper clearly.

General information about assessments

- All assignments are due at 23:55pm EST unless otherwise specified.
- Students are responsible for ensuring that the correct file version is uploaded; incorrect submissions including corrupt files could be subject to late penalties (see below) or a 0.
- Written assignments will be submitted to Turnitin (statement in policies below).
- A student might not receive the same grade as their group members if it is determined that the distribution of work was not equal.
- After an assessment is returned, students should wait 24 hours to digest feedback before contacting their evaluator; to ensure a timely response, reach out within 7 days.
- Prior to the filing of a written request for relief, students must attempt to resolve the concern regarding a mark or grade through informal consultation with the instructor. If the student is dissatisfied with the decision of the instructor or does not receive a decision from the instructor, a written request for relief must be submitted to the Undergraduate Chair of the School offering this course, within three (3) weeks from the date that the mark was issued.

The table below outlines University-wide grade descriptors.

Letter grade	Number grade	Description
A+	90-100	One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
A	80-89	Superior work which is clearly above average
B	70-79	Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory
C	60-69	Competent work, meeting requirements
D	50-59	Fair work, minimally acceptable
F	below 50	Fail

Rounding of Grades (for example, bumping a 79 to 80%)

This is a practice some students request. The final grade documented is the grade that you have achieved. There is no rounding to the next grade level, or 'giving away' of marks. Please don't ask me to do this for you; the response will be "please review the course outline where this is presented".

Information about late or missed assessments:

- Late assessments without academic consideration will be subject to a late penalty of 1% per day.

INC (Incomplete Standing): If a student has been approved by the Academic Advising Office (in consultation with the instructor/department) to complete term work at a later date, an INC will be assigned. Students with INC will have their course load in subsequent terms reduced to allow them to complete outstanding course work. Students may request permission from Academic Advising to carry a full course load for the term the incomplete course work is scheduled.

SPC (Special examination): If a student has been approved by the Academic Advising Office to write a Special Examination and the final exam is the only outstanding course component, an SPC will be assigned. If the class has a makeup exam, the student is expected to write the makeup exam. If the class doesn't have a makeup exam or the student misses the makeup exam for reasons approved by the Academic Advising Office, the student will write the exam the next time the course is offered. Outstanding SPCs will reduce the course load for the term the exam is deferred as outlined in [Types of Examinations](#) policy.

Academic Policies and Statements

Support Services

There are various support services around campus and these include, but are not limited to:

1. Academic Support and Engagement - <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca>
2. Wellness and Well-being - <https://www.uwo.ca/health/>
3. Registrar's Office - <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/>
4. Ombuds Office - <http://www.uwo.ca/ombuds/>

The websites for Registrarial Services (<http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>), and the same for affiliated university colleges when appropriate, and any appropriate Student Support Services (including the services provided by the USC listed here: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>) and the Student Development Services, should be provided for easy access.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://www.uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Statement on Gender-Based and Sexual Violence

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at:

https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html.

Statement on Harassment and Discrimination

Western is committed to providing a learning and working environment that is free of harassment and discrimination. All students, staff, and faculty have a role in this commitment and have a responsibility to ensure and promote a safe and respectful learning and working environment. Relevant policies include Western's Non-Discrimination/Harassment Policy (M.A.P.P. 1.35) and Non-Discrimination/Harassment Policy – Administrative Procedures (M.A.P.P. 1.35). Any student, staff, or faculty member who experiences or witnesses' behaviour that may be harassment or discrimination **must report the behaviour** to the Western's Human Rights Office. Harassment and discrimination can be human rights-based, which is also known as EDI-based, (sexism, racism, transphobia, homophobia, islamophobia, xenophobia, antisemitism, and ableism) or non-human rights-based (personal harassment or workplace harassment).

Student Code of Conduct

The purpose of the Code of Student Conduct is to define the general standard of conduct expected of students registered at Western University, provide examples of behaviour that constitutes a breach of this standard of conduct, provide examples of sanctions that may be imposed and set out the disciplinary procedures that the University will follow. For more information, visit <https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/board/code.pdf>

Absence from Course Commitments

Students must familiarize themselves with the Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs

Students missing course work for medical, compassionate, or extenuating circumstances can request academic consideration by completing a request at the central academic consideration portal. Students are permitted one academic consideration request per course per term **without** supporting documentation. Note that supporting documentation is **always** required for academic consideration requests for examinations scheduled by the office of the registrar (e.g., December and April exams) and for practical laboratory and performance tests (typically scheduled during the last week of the term).

Students should also note that the instructor may **designate** one assessment per course per term that requires supporting documentation. This designated assessment is described elsewhere in this document. Academic consideration requests may be denied when flexibility in assessment has already been included. Examples of flexibility in assessment include when there are assessments not required for calculation of the final grade (e.g. 8 out of 10 quizzes), when there is flexibility in the submission timeframe (e.g. 72 hour no late penalty period), or when timed assessments (e.g., quizzes) are available over an extended period of time (e.g., when you are given a 72 hour time period to start – and finish – the assessment).

Please note that academic considerations in this course are granted by the academic advisors in your home unit and implemented by the instructor of this course in accordance with information presented in this course syllabus. Supporting documentation for academic considerations for absences due to illness should use the [Student Medical Certificate](#) or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation by a health care practitioner. If your absence relates to accommodations that are already supported by [Accessible Education](#), please work with your accessible education counsellor regarding your missed course work.

Accommodation for Religious Holidays

Students should review the policy for [Accommodation for Religious Holidays](#). Where a student will be unable to write examinations and term tests due to a conflicting religious holiday, they should inform their instructors as soon as possible but not later than two weeks prior to writing the examination/term test. In the case of conflict with a midterm test, students should inform their instructor as soon as possible but not later than one week prior to the midterm.

Special Examinations

A Special Examination is any examination other than the regular examination, and it may be offered only with the permission of the Dean of the Faculty in which the student is registered, in consultation with the instructor and Department Chair. Permission to write a Special Examination may be given on the basis of compassionate or medical grounds with appropriate supporting documents. To provide an opportunity for students to recover from the circumstances resulting in a Special Examination, the University has implemented Special Examination dates. The Faculty of Health Sciences has set School-specific dates for these Special Examinations. Please speak with your instructor about the date on which the Special Examination for this course will be held.

Scholastic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the policy on [Scholastic Discipline for Undergraduate Students](#).

Plagiarism

Student work is expected to be original. Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and could lead to a zero on the assignment in question, a zero in this course, or your expulsion from the university. You are plagiarizing if you insert a phrase, sentence or paragraph taken directly from another author without acknowledging that the work belongs to him/her. Similarly, you are plagiarizing if you paraphrase or summarize another author's ideas without acknowledging that the ideas belong to someone else. All papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between Western University and Turnitin.com (www.turnitin.com).

Use of Artificial Intelligence for the Completion of Course Work

Within this course, you may only use artificial intelligence tools (e.g., “ChatGPT”) in ways that are specifically authorized by the course instructor. All submitted work must reflect your own thoughts and independent written work.

Re-submission of Previously Graded Material

Without the explicit written permission of the instructor, you may not submit any academic work for which credit has been obtained previously, or for which credit is being sought, in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere.

Use of Statistical Pattern Recognition on Multiple Choice Exams

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

Accessibility Statement

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Accessible Education (AE) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation or review [The policy on Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). If you think you may qualify for ongoing accommodation (e.g. separate room to write exams, flexibility with deadlines, etc.) that will be recognized in all your courses, we encourage you to visit [Accessible Education](#) for more information.

Correspondence Statement

The centrally administered e-mail account provided to students will be considered the individual’s official university e-mail address. It is the responsibility of the account holder to ensure that e-mail received from the University at their official university address is attended to in a timely manner. Students are further expected to attend to announcements presented through Brightspace, and to read emails generated in this way.

Use of Electronic Devices

During Exams

Unless you have medical accommodations that require you to do so, or explicit permission from the instructor of the course, you may not use any electronic devices (e.g., cell phones, tablets, cameras, smart glass, smart watches, or iPods) during ANY tests, quizzes, midterms, examinations, or other in-class evaluations. **These devices MUST either be left at home or with your belongings at the front of the room. They MUST NOT be at your test/exam desk or in your pocket. Any student found with a prohibited device will be referred for investigation of a Scholastic Offence, per the policy listed above. The typical first-offence penalty for possession of a prohibited device is zero on the test or exam.**

During Lectures and Tutorials

Although you are welcome to use a computer during lecture and tutorial periods, you are expected to use the computer for scholastic purposes only, and refrain from engaging in any activities that may distract other students from learning. From time to time, your professor may ask the class to turn off all computers, to facilitate learning or discussion of the material presented in a particular class.

Copyright and Audio/Video Recording Statement

Course material produced by faculty is copyrighted and to reproduce this material for any purposes other than your own educational use contravenes Canadian Copyright Laws. Unless explicitly noted otherwise, you may not make audio or video recordings of lectures – nor may you

edit, re-use, distribute, or re-broadcast any of the material posted to the course website.

Contingency Plan for an In-Person Class Pivoting to 100% Online Learning

In the event of a situation that requires this course to pivot to online content delivery, all remaining course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on Brightspace for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will **not** change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

Note that disruptive behaviour of any type during online classes, including inappropriate use of the chat function, is unacceptable. Students found guilty of Zoom-bombing a class or of other serious online offenses may be subject to disciplinary measures under the Code of Student Conduct.

Online Proctoring

Tests and examinations in this course may be conducted using a remote proctoring service. By taking this course, you are consenting to the use of this software and acknowledge that you will be required to provide **personal information** (including some biometric data) and the session will be **recorded**. Completion of this course will require you to have a reliable internet connection and a device that meets the technical requirements for this service. More information about this remote proctoring service, including technical requirements, is available on Western's Remote Proctoring website at: <https://remoteproctoring.uwo.ca>.

Academic Appeals and Scholastic Offences

Students can file a **request for relief from academic decisions** if the request is based on one or more grounds listed in the policy. Students can read more about the policy [here](#) and a link to the procedures is listed in the Support Services sections of this document.

Students may **appeal** some academic and scholastic disciplinary decisions by a Dean or their designate, to the Senate Review Board Academic (SRBA). Students can read more about the policy [here](#) and a link to the procedures is listed in the Support Services section of this document.