

# Declaration of Purpose

When in the course of human events it becomes necessary to dissociate from managed care, one must know what is available and how to obtain it. So be it with group therapy, where cost cutting is not necessarily equivalent to efficacy, and where individual responsibility might fill the gap if choice is not available. Our purpose here is to study the theory and practice of group psychotherapy and to work towards therapeutic self-sufficiency. If the essence of therapy is relationship, then therapy and “being” eventually merge into one. A medical degree is not required for “being”, and if taken too seriously can interfere with relationship. So we have no practical theoretical restrictions to this endeavor. For sure, an individual should have a choice in his path to personal integrity. Self-sufficiency maximizes that choice. Our hope is to maximize the sufficiency part of self-sufficiency.

We shall start with Irvin Yalom’s, *The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy*. This is the gold standard of group psychotherapy. Then we will turn to his other major work, *Existential Psychotherapy*, a loosely defined although common theoretical orientation, but one that fits poorly with managed care. Existential is not a six session problem. And it should not necessarily be the responsibility of managed care. After all, life is not a medical condition. Self-sufficiency might offer the next best option.

Yalom’s writing and the concepts he presents are comprehensible to any serious student. They require no formal training or prerequisite courses. They do require attention and reflection. And putting them into practice necessitates a commitment to be emotionally available.

It is true that relationship is the cornerstone of therapy, but alone it is not sufficient. Having lunch is not therapy. Therapy is relationship plus reflection. And reflection puts limits on relationship. Two people enter into a dialectic for the purpose of increasing efficiency, the efficiency of both. And the effort is only as successful as the honesty and integrity of the relationship. Then again, that is only the position of an existential/interpersonal orientation. There are numerous other orientations, some crafted to fit the current medical payment system. Also, calling it therapy might be somewhat pretentious, for it is not too different from friendship. Getting paid as a therapist is a bit like getting paid to play basketball.



Herewith we proceed.

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