

Role of Social Worker in Group Work

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Introduction

You may look at this chapter as a recapitulation of all that you have learnt about the method and practice of social group work, especially, in terms of what a group worker does in different kinds of groups, within the context of values and philosophy of social work profession.

Social workers adopt many roles to achieve their goals of social justice, the enhancement of the quality of life of people, and the development of the full potential of each individual, family and group in society. Some social workers act as planners and developers of services. Others manage services and try to ensure that systems work smoothly. Some act as advocates and negotiators for those discriminated against or unable to act for themselves. Other social workers work as therapists with individuals, couples, families and groups as they deal with issues that arise throughout their lives. Some social workers act as information givers, providing enquirers with information about a large range of resources and services. In some areas of practice, such as corrections and child protection, social workers make assessments of situations and may write reports with recommendations that may affect the lives of those with whom they work.

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The very fact that social group work has been acknowledged as a method of social work implies that group work method shares with other social work methods the goal, basic premises, values and beliefs, generic principles and interventional strategies of social work profession. The concept of 'role' is widely used to clarify group worker's authority, responsibilities, functions, and tasks; thereby highlighting the impact of group work practice on persons who come together as members of a group.

For the sake of convenience, the term 'group worker' in the masculine, rather than 'social worker in group work', will be used throughout the following discussion.

Concept of Role and its Implication for a Group Worker

Role and status are two important concepts which prove to be valuable in explaining the responsibilities, obligations and power that devolve on the group worker in his capacity as a professional associated with some social agency.

Role: Definitions

The dictionaries define role as 'the actions and activities assigned to or required or expected of a person'; 'normal or customary activity of a person in a particular social setting'; and, 'behavior in relation to a specific function or task that a person (the group worker) is expected to perform'. The roles are concomitant to a status or a social position. A set of expectations govern the behavior of persons holding a particular role in society; a set of norms that defines how persons in a particular position should behave.

As a sociological term, a role is described as a comprehensive pattern of behaviour that is socially recognized, providing a means of identifying and placing

an individual in a society. It also serves as a strategy for coping with recurrent situations and dealing with the roles of others.

The social 'worker' is an achieved status, a position that a person assumes voluntarily which reflects personal skills, abilities, and efforts. Roles associated with this status are governed by the norms, standards and professional ethics.

A role, therefore, is a series of actions which guide and determine our behaviour according to what is expected of us in a certain situation. Roles generate consistency and predictability of behaviour. All roles are functional in that they serve some purpose.

Each social status, further, involves not a single associated role, but an array of roles or role-set, that is, a complement of role-relationships in which persons are involved by virtue of occupying a particular social status. While working with groups the social worker performs a variety of roles, depending on different situations, groups and persons. However, the roles remain relatively stable even though different people occupy the position of a group worker.

The discussion of roles of group workers, therefore, is useful in conceptualizing their activities, evaluation of professional interventions, and training of new professionals.

Roles of a social worker working with Groups

Widely quoted authors Compton and Galaway (1984) focused on social worker's, interventive roles whose enactment meant the translation of expectations (of the profession) into behaviour. These roles refer to the behaviours through which the client – an individual, a family, a group or a community – expects the worker to help accomplish goals, agreed upon mutually by the client

and the worker. The roles conceptualized by the authors include the following:

- a) **social broker** – connecting the client system with the community resources based on broad knowledge of community resources and the operating procedures of the agencies; the worker may bring the specialized resources to the group; referral is a basic part of enactment of the broker's role.
- b) **enabler** – assisting clients to find coping strengths and resources within themselves to produce changes necessary for accomplishing the stated objectives with the supporting and enabling function for the client, whether individual or group; for example, the worker who assists a group of residents in a community in thinking through the need for and then in identifying ways of establishing a day-care centre; who helps a group to identify sources of internal conflict and influences blocking a group's goal achievement and then to discover ways of dealing with these difficulties is serving as an enabler in relation to the group. Encouraging verbalization, providing for ventilation of feelings, examining the pattern of relationships, offering encouragement and reassurance, engaging in logical discussion and rational decision-making are other avenues through which enabler's role may be enacted. (Compton & Galaway, 1984, p. 430)
- c) **teacher** – providing groups with new information necessary for coping with difficult situations, assisting group members in practicing new behaviour or skills. It is different from broker's role as it implies providing additional resources to members' environment; for example, supplying information about low cost nutritional diet; informing parents regarding child development for coping with difficult problems of children; providing vocational guidance to adult

patients requiring rehabilitation after loss of limbs. Teacher's role helps group members make informed choices and cope better with social reality. One important dimension of this role is role-modelling - offering to group members a model of behaviour, of communication and relating.

- d) **mediator** – efforts to resolve conflicts that may exist between the client system and external systems like other persons or organizations by finding a common ground on which they might reach a resolution of the conflict (utilizing techniques of constructive conflict resolution); for example, residents' group wishing to secure a playground but not having adequate political clout to do so.
- e) **advocate** – Speaking for the client (individual, family, group or community) by presenting and arguing the clients' cause. It becomes essential when working with client-systems who belong to disadvantaged and marginalized groups in society, are oppressed due to structural social inequalities, or are invisible and voiceless. Advocacy is becoming increasingly popular role of social workers in the context of focus on social justice concerns and human rights. Unlike other roles, advocacy can be used without direct involvement of the client-system.

Besides these roles conceptualized by Compton and Galaway, others mentioned in social work literature include the roles of Organizer (covering planning and implementing action), consultant and facilitator. The role of facilitator is relevant in the changed perception of group members as interdependent entities engaged in mutual aid based support groups and self-help groups which require minimal professional intervention.

On one point all the experts agree that the roles mentioned above are neither discreet entities nor comprise an

exhaustive list. There is often blurring of boundaries and hence overlap. The roles also get into a new constellation as and when required by the demands of the situation, purpose of the group (the client) and the dynamics emerging out of interaction among the three basic elements of group work practice, that is, group (along with its members), worker and the social environment.

Group Worker as A Leader of the Group

One of the frequently debated dimensions of the role of a group worker is that of leadership. While some authors perceive group workers in the role of group leaders others focus more on the worker's 'helping' role. A brief exposition of both the perspectives follows below.

- A) Leader refers to a person who is designated to exert positive influence over others. The process and the function through which he does so are defined as leadership. Leadership is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the group in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent. Leadership is critical—for the vision and to see the commonalities; to see the group through; and to identify and mobilise resources for the group.

The group worker occupies the position of a leader on account of his employment with the social agency; the position which gives the worker authority to accomplish certain tasks and objectives, based, in turn, on professional knowledge and skills.

As a leader, the worker is the '**central person**' in the group, often being the person who formed the group and to whom more communications are made than anyone else. At the initial stages of group formation, the worker decides about the membership, structure and the rules of conducting the group sessions. Even

later, if the members are not sufficiently confident, the worker may have to play an active role in guiding members to take necessary decisions about group structure, norms and tasks to be performed by different members.

Another facet of the role as a leader is that the worker acts as an **'influence person'**. Influence has been defined as the general acts of producing an effect on another person, group, or organization through exercise of a personal or organizational capacity. Influence is powerful in that it can produce change, persuade or convince, overcome obstacles, motivate and bring about attitudinal changes. As a leader and an influence person, the worker's input is to create a climate favourable for the needed work (achieving the group goal), heighten the motivation of those who need to work, 'provide a vision' for the work to be done together, and deal with the resistance involved. An important base for influence is the skill and knowledge of the worker in developing and using relationships with a variety of persons in a variety of situations. The relationship between the worker and the group members is a major source of a worker's influence. Influence can be exerted by those who know about and can use the planned change process. Influence derives from understandings about human development, human diversity, the variety of social problems, and the availability of services and resources. (Johnson, p. 89)

The real power of the worker arises, therefore, from his capacity to influence situations within the group - to influence, guide and direct group processes and interactions within the group. The fact that group work is described also as 'guided group interaction' goes to validate the group worker's role as a leader who guides

as well as directs group situations and processes so as to achieve group goals. The worker is an important influence on members' behaviour, interpersonal relationships, patterns of communication, on roles members are willing to perform, and on realization of group's purpose. The worker may, for supporting the group's purpose, influence persons and systems operating in the external environment of the group in the form of negotiation, mediation, referral, and advocacy.

Despite the fact that the worker has authority and power to influence the group processes, the worker is bound by professional ethics or code of conduct to use this power in the service of the clients, that is, the group members and not for his own ends. Workers need to be aware of the nature of the power and influence they wield in relationship with the group members. Every effort needs to be made to guard against the potential for abuse of power with the clients (group members). These two facets of group work functions, namely, expertise and its selfless use for the benefit of group members place the worker at a distance from the members. Although the worker participates in the group processes, he is not a member of the group in the same way that the other participants are. Unlike the group members, a worker is mandated to participate in the group on account of his professional understanding of the members' needs and interests. The worker, in fact cannot deny authority devolved on him. "Reluctance or refusal by the group worker to provide leadership to act on his authority can be very damaging at critical stages of transition when the group rightfully looks to the worker for guidance, reassurance and structure". (Benson, p. 38)

- B) The other view point focuses on the worker in the helping role. The worker is seen in the group as an **enabler** to do things *with* the group rather than *for* the group. His influence, it is claimed, is indirect rather than direct. A great deal of facilitation may be done nonverbally, with eye contact and a nod to someone who is trying to participate or a smile when a member has made a valuable contribution. He works through the members of the group, helps members to determine group's objectives and purpose; helps them to develop group-feeling; acquire an understanding of their capacities and limitations; recognize internal conflicts and problems and to resolve the same with the worker's help. The worker helps the group to identify indigenous leaders to take responsibility for group's effective functioning. (Trecker, p.26)

Another role which is preferred by those favouring a non-leadership stance is that of a **facilitator**. The group worker is not seen as the only expert in the group. In fact, each group member is a potential leader and helper for the other members. The primary task of the group worker is to facilitate the group process so that the group becomes a prime influence on the behaviour of the group members. Facilitating the group process involves motivating and assisting members to participate actively and collaboratively in the process because the primary means of help in the group is the support and challenge members give to each other, supplemented by the worker's inputs to the members' work. The group dynamics comprising of interactions, relationships, communications, and role performances within the boundaries set by the members themselves by definition, is the prime source of change, growth and satisfaction. The worker facilitates this process to run smoothly, without conflicts and road blocks so that members can benefit from positive and constructive group experience. The group worker makes it possible that the

group becomes a mutual aid and mutual need-meeting system, a primary source of help.

In the role of a **teacher** the worker teaches the group how to function as a group. The group members, identifying with the worker, are likely to learn roles of a leader. Leadership will shift during the course of a group's life with several members taking turns as leaders, or sharing leadership depending on the session or content.

In a support group of parents of disturbed children, the worker and parents both perform the role of experts, though in different spheres. The worker has to appreciate the expertise of parents in the context of their experiences of having a disturbed child. In encouraging and guiding one parent, the worker shares his helping role with other members (parents) of the group.

The aim of the facilitator is a) to establish the conditions and trust in the group whereby members can help one another and then to 'get out of the way' to allow them to do it; b) to benefit the persons in a group through making as full use as possible of the potentials of the group as a medium for help. Although, the extent to which this is possible will depend on the type of group in question. (Whitaker, 1985) In the final analysis, however, the facilitator has ultimate responsibility for the group and can never give this over.

Social group work is often best done by combining these roles. A competent worker will move from one to the other as needed by the group. It is important not to be more active, not to be a leader or a teacher, when the group can do just fine with a facilitator or enabler. The idea of many groups is to have members exercise self-determination and learn how to make more effective decisions. The achievement of these goals is threatened by a dominant group worker. It is also important to recognize when the

group needs a leader and to act effectively if so, or to teach when the group needs to learn new ways to interact or need new information. The most important thing is to be aware that groups have different needs at different times in their development, and that different groups need different mixtures of these roles. Three main activities of the worker, described first by Benne and Sheats in 1948 (cited by Benson, p.70) whether as a leader or a facilitator/enabler include task, maintenance and personal functions. Task functions refer to those needs and behaviours and roles that are required to help the group achieve its goals; the second, maintenance functions encompass those behaviours and roles that help the group look after its emotional and interpersonal well-being; and the third functions are concerned with personal motives, needs and interests that each individual member brings to the group.

Role Differentiation: Factors Affecting Roles of Group Worker

In the preceding discussion, there have been numerous references to changes occurring in the perception of group worker's roles according to different group situations. Here we are selecting two important factors which influence the roles of a group worker, namely, the purpose and types of group. Because groups and the situations within which they operate are so different, the worker needs to first understand the group and the circumstances surrounding it before attempting to define specific aspects of his role. (Trecker, p.34)

Purpose of the Group and Roles of a Group Worker

Purpose for which a group comes into being is the most basic determinant of what the worker's responsibilities are.

The amount and nature of help that the group members expect from the worker, the amount of autonomy that the members are anxious to retain and the content of the group experience (programme) that is essential or advisable to achieve the specific purpose – are some of the important determinants of the worker's role.

Purpose is the dynamic force that can be mobilized into different groups. Groups based on purpose provide different group experiences to its members. Accordingly, the interventive roles expected of the group worker also vary. While the basic three elements of the worker's role – task-achievement, group maintenance and personal need satisfaction – remain constant (though with varying emphases and combinations), the purpose determines the nature of relationship between the worker and the group members through which these functions are performed. Given below are some of the categories of purposes for which the groups come into existence.

- Enhancement of relationships – to resolve problems in social relationships, to cope with deficits, to strengthen mutual and reciprocal relationships. Whether the purpose is to correct maladaptive patterns of relationships or to help 'normal' persons grow socially, the worker has to use his authority in a flexible manner. The specific purpose will determine whether he provides direction, support, a role-model, a comfortable and a stress-free environment in which to interact and relate; or he facilitates content of the group experience (programme) that offer opportunities for expression, mutual give and take, and growth.
- Dealing with problems of social functioning- One of the purposes which traditionally belong to group work practice is dealing with problems of social functioning. The worker engages the group members in problem-

solving process and helps them to acquire coping skills in the context of problems of social functioning. Whether the worker has a more directive and active stance or relatively more non-directive depends more on the needs and capacities of the group members than on the worker's orientation.

- **Enhancing Social competence** –is preventive in nature. The need for group work service stems from lack of adequate knowledge, social experience, and skills for coping with anticipated event or situation out of a psycho-social development phase or transition to a new or changed role like persons about to get married, or prospective adoptive parents; and persons with physical disability to get socialized into new or changed roles expected of them. Teaching, information giving, brokering, facilitating role-rehearsing and help develop a structure to the group that provides safe and comfortable group environment for experimenting are some of the roles expected of the worker. The worker may also have to engage in referral, negotiation for procurement of needed resources and services, mediation, and advocacy.
- **Coping with stress** –development of capacities to cope effectively with stress caused by situations due to life transition, life-threatening illness, divorce, physical violence, or rape. Members need support from the worker but also from their peers or members of the group. They need to disclose and manage emotions, release tension, enhance damaged self-esteem, and discover new ways of dealing with stress and realities of life. The worker's role primarily is that of an enabler or even that of a therapist. The worker, though, encourages the members to draw upon the potentials of group processes as medium of help. He offers necessary information about available services and

provisions that the members can have recourse to so as to deal with post traumatic experiences. Handling emotions, clarification and interpretation are important inputs by the worker. His role in establishing group structures and patterns of open communication, and encouraging participation in group processes go a long way in alleviating stress of the members.

- Empowerment – Democratic, empowering and participatory approaches are inherent in the ethos, Group Work as being a part of the broader Social Work Philosophy. “Helping people to help themselves” implies worker’s intervention to empower people to take charge of their own lives. However, empowerment belonging to the category of purposes of group formation is more specific. It acquired prominence relatively recently due to social work’s adopting securing of social justice as its mission.

Empowerment comes through being able to understand how the problem lies outside the individual and results from oppressive policies, practices, behaviours and the ideas on which these are founded. Empowerment becomes a strategy of choice while working with minority groups, disadvantaged groups, women or populations at risk. It is meant to provide the group members with support, skills, understanding needed to allow them take control of their own lives and achieve power in situations where earlier they felt powerless. Considering that power equation is tilted in favour of the worker in worker - member relationship, it is essential that the members feel equal to the workers, engage in a dialogue rather than submit to directives of the worker. Once the necessary information for consciousness-raising has been provided, the members are expected to take their own decisions, deal with internal conflicts, and negotiate with external systems. The worker may need to be more active initially while motivating the

members to form the group; then, perform the role of a teacher, facilitate the process of capacity building, engage in supportive roles to enhance their self-esteem and sometimes assist in negotiating with the systems which have been oppressive and discriminatory towards the group members. However, the purpose of empowering the members precludes continued or active role of the professional. The mutual-aid potential of the group, rather than the expertise and authority of the worker, is heavily drawn upon. People, who come together as a consequence of having similar problems or concerns, find themselves in a position where they can collectively confront these forces of oppression, in ways which they could not do single-handedly. Empowerment connotes that members have acquired necessary capacity, skill and confidence to deal with oppressive life experiences. The role of the professional facilitator who is successful in empowering peer leadership will gradually transfer into that of a consultant to deal with specific work-related problems.

The discussion above does not include a complete list of purposes for which people come together in groups. It is only illustrative of how purposes affect the kind of roles a group worker is expected to perform in the group.

Types of Groups and Roles of a Group Worker

One of the important determinants of roles of a group worker is the type of the group with which he is engaged. The worker's inputs, stance, approach and style is differentially aligned to the type of a group – is it voluntary group or involuntary? Has the group been deliberately formed or has sprung up spontaneously? Is group open-ended with fluid membership or closed with specified tenure and fixed membership? Is the group comprises of

children, adults; able-bodied or differently-abled? Is it a support group, self-help group, social action group, interest group or a treatment group? Keeping generic roles in mind, the worker offers a combination of different roles, in varying emphases and perspectives.

Involuntary groups in which members' participation is mandatory- like group of probationers or delinquent youth – the worker has to put in considerable time and effort to clarify the purpose and win the members' trust. As the worker is perceived to belong to the establishment with power to supervise their behaviour and reactions, maintaining records and reporting to authorities, this task is very tough and requiring deep empathic understanding. The worker has to deal with internal conflicts, to facilitate establishment of safe and stress free group structures and norms, and to encourage interest-based programme content. Challenging and confrontation, interpretation and building self-esteem along with provision of support are vital interventive roles of a worker in such groups.

In **open-ended groups**, the worker is responsible in helping existing members to accept new members, the latter to understand the group structure and rules of participation; and help members review group's purpose. Since composition of a group impacts the group dynamics in a significant way, the gate - keeping becomes an important function of the worker. Open-ended groups pose another challenge to group leadership-whether professional or indigenous -, that is, the size of the group at any given time. The kind of programme that the group wishes to engage in may present limitations either because the group has become too large or too small; the skill levels may also change. The worker has to quickly assess the situation and enable the group members to adapt to the new situation; divide the group into sub-groups or change the programme.

We have already mentioned that worker's role in **support groups** is of a facilitator; helping members to draw upon the helping potentials of their peers (members) in the group. The worker's role in **self-help groups** involves more behind-the-scene activities, such as recruiting, linking group members with other groups and systems, limited role as a facilitator within the group, supporting indigenous leaders and acting as a consultant. Worker rarely has an active role in the group's activities.

The worker has considerable control over who is invited to join a **therapy group**. Therapy groups seek to produce individual growth and change through the relationships established among members with the help of a professional therapist. Using professional methods, therapist encourages and interprets "here and now" events among members to produce insight and change. The worker often plays an active role in helping the members decide group structure and group norms. As far as the interpersonal relationships are concerned, the worker is more of an enabler than a leader. The worker, however, is responsible for group maintenance and personal growth tasks, encouraging the members to identify and plan positive programme content as an instrument for achieving treatment goals.

Task groups clearly focus more on accomplishing a specific task. While the task-related responsibilities of the worker take precedence over the other two, namely personal growth and group maintenance, the latter are nevertheless as essential because it is through the instrumentality of the positive group experience that the goal of task accomplishment is achieved. Depending on the level of skills and capacities of the members, the group - feeling in the group, the worker has to undertake roles comprising all the three components. **Recreational** groups also need development of group cohesion before the content of group

experience adds to the pleasure and satisfaction of the members.

Stages of Group Development and Roles of A Group Worker

In earlier chapters you have learnt that groups change overtime. Group process is “a frame of reference which limits, focuses and directs the worker’s efforts in a group” (Saari & Galinsky quoted by Benson, p.74) It is based on the assumption that group process can be controlled and influenced by the worker’s actions. Group process can be defined as change over time in the internal structure, organization and culture of the whole or part of the group or individual member. There is a movement and change in the quality of interactions, relationships and communication patterns, in the degree of trust and cohesion, and in the nature of members’ participation in group’s programme. To observe and understand these changes occurring over time in the group’s life span, comprehending the concept of group development is very useful for the group worker as it helps him to determine what needs to be done at a given point of time. Groups do not move sequentially through discreet phases; they may move backwards and forwards or sideways. Each group may spend different amount of time at any one phase of growth or may even move cyclically. Consideration of broad phases of development in terms of major tasks expected of the worker is likely to prove more useful, especially to a new professional.

At the **pre-group** or pre-affiliation stage, the worker acts as a visionary who establishes the need and feasibility of launching a group and then a motivator to recruit potential members to the group. The role of the worker changes once the members have come together. At the **initial stage**, variously designated as inclusion, forming, orientation or

affiliation stage, the members look to worker for direction, structure, approval and help at difficult times. The worker has to be more active at this time as the members are dependent on the worker. The worker welcomes all the members; allays their anxieties; helps members to communicate with each other and explore; clarifies purpose; to make connections among the members; and establish tentative group structure and norms, that is rules for conducting group sessions and for members' participation. The worker assumes a nurturing and guiding stance with the members.

At the **beginning of the middle stage**, the previously friendly members may reveal a negative streak. The members here are seeking individual roles. In what is described as storming or stage of seeking power control, conflicts develop and there is search for individual autonomy. If not handled appropriately, there may be drop outs. The worker recognizes this conflict as a natural phenomenon and helps the group to revise group structure and group norms. Development of new norms is ensured through members' sharing of ideas and feelings about their expectations from the group and about how the group should function. Giving opportunity to the members to express their feelings and ideas, the worker plays a vital role in group maintenance. He encourages the members in the tasks of harmonizing, compromising, setting standards and expressing group feeling. At the same time he ensures that individual goals are not submerged in the group goals. He ensures that each member gets an opportunity for expression of ideas and feelings. The worker, while performing the roles of facilitator and enabler, does not relinquish his control over the group processes. Judicious use of challenging and confronting and clarifying issues helps the members to view their behaviour in the right perspective. His interventions enable the members

move from less intimate to more intimate system of relationships within the group. Setting of norms (also called stage of **norming or negotiation**) and emergence of indigenous leadership take the group to the next level of development. The members engage in conflict resolution; goals, roles and tasks are designated and accepted. Group traditions are stronger, norms develop, personal involvement intensifies; group cohesion is stronger; and members are freer in sharing information and opinions. (Johnson, p.207)

After the control issues are resolved, the group now settles down to work on its tasks and goals, whether dealing with personal problems and anxieties of the members or accomplishing tasks for which the group came into being. Variously called **performing**, functional, operation or cohesion stage, the role of the worker becomes less active and more facilitative or consultative. The worker provides support, or relevant information, The members work together more effectively. There is growing ability to plan and carry out projects relevant to the purpose of the goal. There is higher degree of integration and cohesion. The worker moves into a less central role. The worker monitors the group's functioning, gives appropriate feedback to the group whether there is an affinity between the purpose and the group programme. Here the worker's influence is more indirect and subtle than direct. The group will expect the worker to be available and provide necessary inputs in case of crisis or some difficulty. Encouraging members to make choices and fostering creativity are other tasks that a worker performs at this mature stage of the group.

Termination, disintegration, separation, mourning or ending stage requires different set of inputs from the worker. According to Benson (p.155), the worker is again more dominant in this stage and offers a mix of nurturing, guidance, and protection and support roles. The worker

deals with physical fact of separation; feelings of anxiety and facilitates members' intellectual understanding of what have they gained through the group experience. The worker helps the members to assess their group experience and to identify ways of stabilizing the gains achieved.

Identifying a group's stage of development allows the worker to respond to the group with better understanding about structures and functioning of the group – which is a means for enhancing the interactional process of the group. (Johnson, p. 208)

Conclusion

Depending on the needs of the individual members, purpose of the group and the stage of group development, the group worker performs a range of roles in his work with the groups- ranging from role of a leader, organizer, motivator, and planner to helper, broker, enabler, facilitator, guide, consultant, mediator, advocate and role-model.

Authority and power are inherent in a group worker's position on account of his professional knowledge, skills and access to certain resource. While the worker need not deny this, he is expected to make judicious use of his authority in the service of the client groups and not for his own benefit. The professional code of conduct offers a number of safeguards to make it possible. The challenge before the group worker is that even while performing the role of a leader, he shares this role with group members. Each group member is a potential helper in the group and may offer a particular kind of expertise. Even when he directs the group members, he is expected to facilitate the members' capacity to get empowered to do things themselves, to take control of their own lives; in short, encourage the emergence of indigenous leadership. The

worker has to operate from democratic, empowering, participative perspectives maintaining strength - based orientation. He is committed to foster group's mutual-aid propensities. Besides, the worker does not perform any one role from among those mentioned above, at any given point of time. He is usually performing a mixture of different roles, the emphasis and amount of the ingredients being different in different groups and situations. As mentioned earlier, social group work is often best done by combining these roles. A competent worker will move from one to the other or combine them as needed by the group.

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