

The Interplay of Therapeutic Factors in Group Development and Client Outcomes

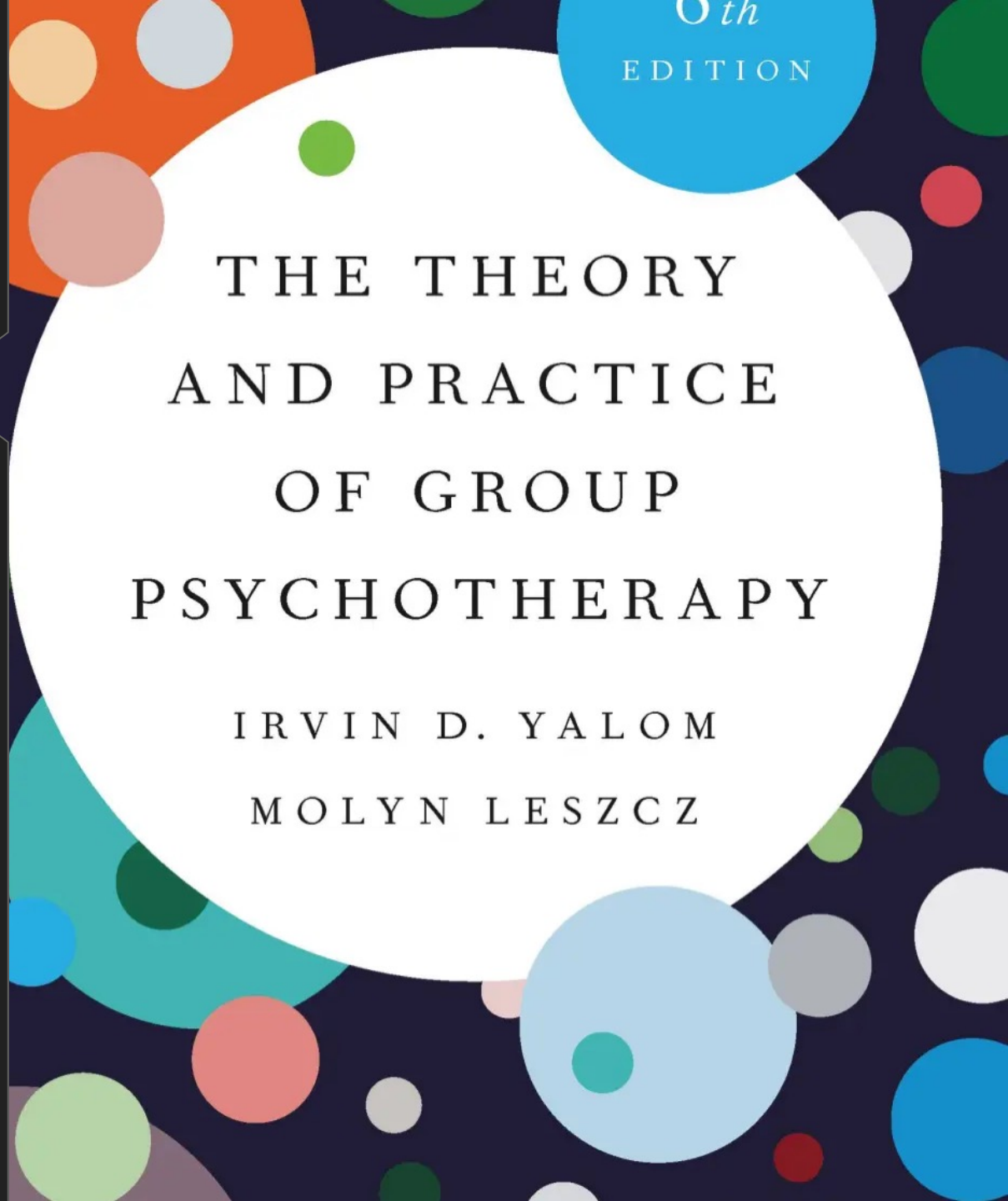
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TLPCA

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Program Summary

Yalom (2020) proposes 12 therapeutic factors, along with modifying forces, that are "in play virtually every moment" during group therapy. In this interactive session, vignettes are provided allowing attendees to identify therapeutic factors and their influence on individual and group experiences. Attendees will examine the perceived value of therapeutic factors and forces through the lens of both the client and the therapist.



5th
EDITION

THE THEORY
AND PRACTICE
OF GROUP
PSYCHOTHERAPY

IRVIN D. YALOM

MOLYN LESZCZ

Objectives – “Participants will:

- Recognize the interplay of Yalom’s (2020) therapeutic factors in group therapy.
- Describe strategies to maximize the therapeutic forces for improved client outcomes.
- Differentiate the comparative value of therapeutic factors between clients and therapist views.

Operational Definitions

Therapeutic Factors

- Defined as an interplay of human experiences or **interdependency**
- **Arbitrary** constructs
- **Always** in play in **every** moment
- **Vary** across group type, group member, and time
- Categories include: Interpersonal (input), Catharsis, Cohesiveness, Self-understanding, Interpersonal (output), Existential factors, Universality, Instillation of hope, Altruism, Family reenactment, Guidance, and Identification.
- **ALL** have potential healing impact

Modifying Forces

- Type of group therapy
- Stage of group therapy
- Extra-group forces
- Individual differences

ACTIVITY ONE

Exploring Therapeutic Factors

VOLUNTEERS.....?



please.....

1. Based on Yalom's descriptors, share with the group your personal definition of the therapeutic factor.

2. Group discussion on client views of most beneficial factor/s.

- Interpersonal (input)
- Catharsis
- Cohesiveness
- Self-understanding
- Interpersonal (output)
- Existential factors
- Universality
- Instillation of hope
- Altruism
- Family reenactment
- Guidance
- Identification



Comparative Value of Therapeutic Factors

Clients value:

- **Catharsis**
- **Self-understanding**
- **Interpersonal learning (input)**
- In a male HIV positive group
 - Support, cohesion, universality, altruism, & existential factors
- Individual therapy
 - Relationship factors
- Least valued: family reenactment, guidance, and identification
- **Most valued: catharsis, self-understanding, and interpersonal learning (input)**

Therapists value:

- Modeling and experimenting with new behaviors
- In a male HIV positive group
 - Cognitive restructuring
- Individual therapy
 - Technical skills
 - Techniques
- Caution: Structured activities may relay therapist competence, however, excessive use is less effective and demonstrates little sustainable improvement in member growth.



GROUP THERAPY

Vignettes: Practical application of therapeutic factors

Barabara – Ken – Susan & Jean – Joesph - Vijay - Sara

Identify the therapeutic factors at play in the scenario.

Select a spokesperson to share with us what factors you noted and their impact on group or individual outcomes, positive or negative.

Barbara

Factors in play:

Universality

Instillation of hope

Self-understanding

Imparting of information

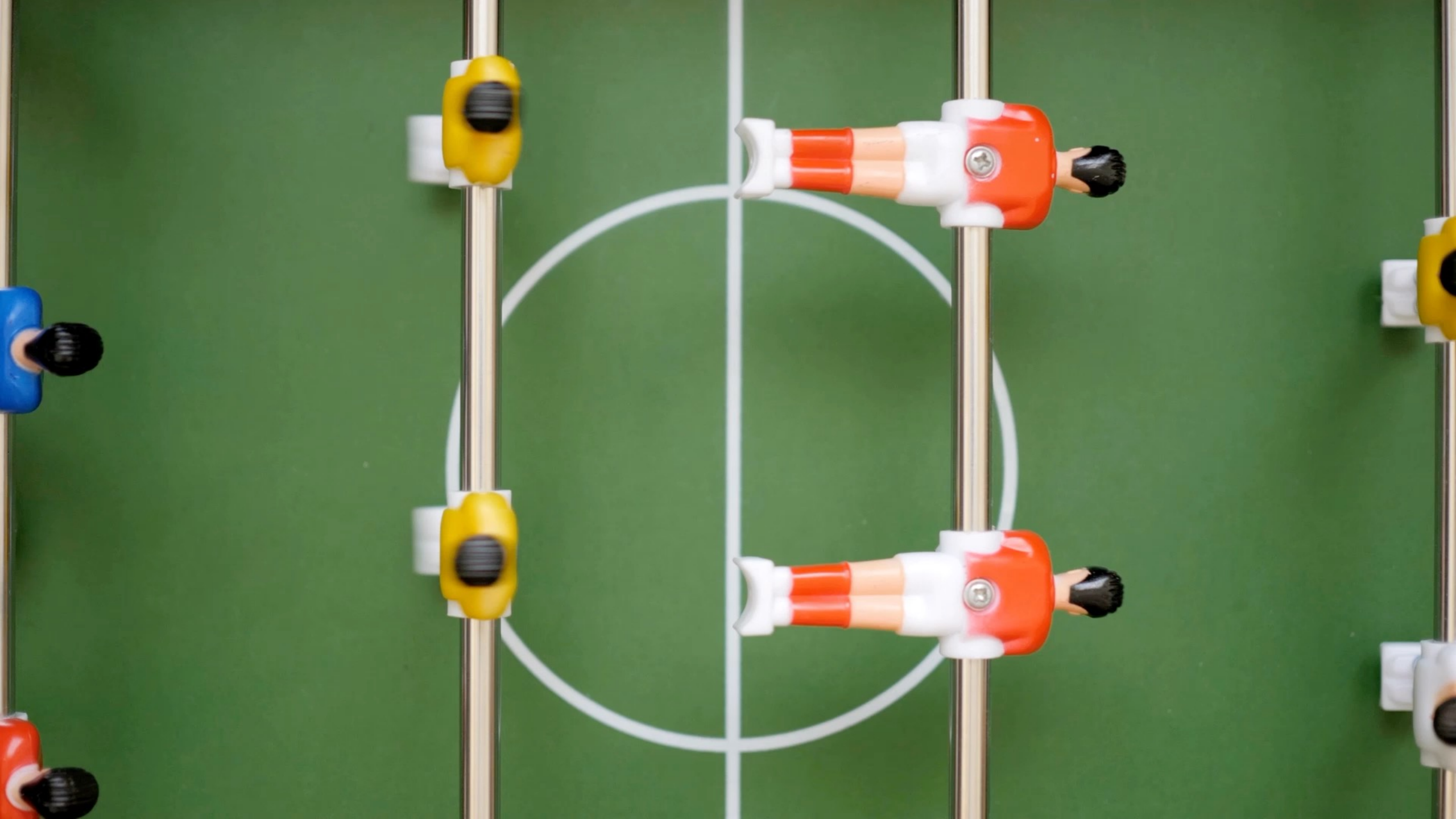
Family reenactment

Interpersonal learning

Catharsis

PRIMARY FACTOR?

- 35 year old female, single
- Recently laid off from work
- Chronically depressed
- Depressive assumptions
- Childhood memory of anxious mother
- Family motto, "Disaster is always around the corner."
- At eight, had labs to rule out tuberculosis. Still haunted by mother's statement: "Don't worry – I will visit you in the sanitarium."
- Learning to receive group feedback and reassurance.





Ken

Factors in play:

PRIMARY FACTOR?

- Male, thirty-eight-year-old, married
- Impulsive behavior; intermittently explosive
- Incapacity to recognize and speak about feelings
- Immigrant
- Authoritarian father (harsh, shaming)
- Observed openness of group members about their emotions
- Called out for his 'poker face'
- Identified with cultural background and experiences of others
- Learned the strength of openness versus silence

Susan & Jean

Factors in play:

PRIMARY FACTOR?

- **Susan** - forty-six-year-old; school principal
- **Jean** - twenty-one-year-old; high school dropout
 - Susan perceives Jean as libertine lifestyle; sloth and promiscuous
 - Jean perceives Susan as judgmental, sanctimoniousness, sexless, with a closed posture to the world. Fortunately, both women were deeply committed members of the group.
- Both had difficulty in tolerating and expressing anger
- Eventually each realized the cruelty of their judgments of the other
- Learned to appreciate differences on both a personal and symbolic level
 - Jean wanted Susan's approval
 - Susan envied the freedom Jean permitted herself



Joesph

Factors in play:

PRIMARY FACTOR?

- Age unknown; Socially avoidant male
- Sense of alienation
- Believes he is getting nowhere in the group
- Reported many positive feelings toward a couple of the group members
- Desires a more accelerated and precise form of therapy
- Intellectual criticism of the group therapy format
- Has always avoided or fled intimacy
- Needs to explore his interpersonal problems in vivo



Vijay

Factors in play:

PRIMARY FACTOR?

- 42-year old, male
- Mandated to therapy for domestic violence
- Working on emotional recognition and self-expression
- Secretive; not fully transparent due to shame and guilt
- Learning culturally relevant family history and their secrets helped him frame his own abusive behaviors
- Members describe him as having various cul-de-sacs in his emotional world
- Secrets inhibited group member cohesion and trust



Sara

Factors in play:

PRIMARY FACTOR?

- Eighty-two-years-old; female
- Anxiety and depression
- Intensely anxiousness about upcoming event and exposure to large crowds
- While sharing with the group she started to panic, hyperventilate, and cry
- Another member took her hand and led her through breathing and grounding techniques
- Others around the group circle joined in
- Session then focused on the sense of effectiveness the group members felt in working together and supporting one of their members



Q & A

Thank you for your participation!

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