

Group Co-Leadership Self-Evaluation Paper

Suzy Vaile

Department of Counselor Education and Supervision, Liberty University

Author Note

Correspondence concerning this paper should be addressed to Suzy Vaile, 1971

University Blvd, Lynchburg, VA 24515. Email: ssvaile@liberty.edu

Reflection on Skills

I worked with Dr. Cheyne in her COUC 512 class with master's level students. The class was held in an online format, and Dr. Cheyne opened the class with prayer and announcements, and then answered questions regarding the group setup for that day. Dr. Cheyne and I previously discussed the need to demonstrate both how to be disruptive in a group and how to facilitate a group with a disruptive member. Dr. Cheyne asked if I would demonstrate being the disruptive member in the teaching portion of class, as well as during the feedback and follow-up portion of the class, and she and I were the only ones who knew that I was playing this role. It was interesting and challenging because I was also answering questions that the students had, so I was playing a bit of a dual role. I love acting and wanted the experience of having a disruptive group member to be as real as possible for the students; I spoke excessively, trailed off during thought, said "you know" and "a lot" throughout my ramblings. I interrupted several students and challenged them on their thought processes, while still trying to offer helpful feedback throughout the class. I believe I was convincing because at one point, the students were wide-eyed wondering what was happening in their class. One very interesting observation I made was that my disruptions sparked some very in-depth conversations; it is almost as if the disruptions challenged the students to think deeply and engage more during the class.

Reflection on Co-Leadership

Dr. Cheyne and worked very well together both in class and in our preparation time together. She shared that the class needed help navigating challenging group members and giving constructive feedback, so we decided that I would help demonstrate both how to be a disruptive member and how to give constructive feedback.

During the group feedback process, during one of my disruptive moments, Dr. Cheyne demonstrated beautifully how to handle a disruptive member by thanking me for my input and asking me nicely to please use the “hand raise” option in the chat so that everyone in the group would have an opportunity to talk. When I challenged her on my ability to do that, she acknowledged my interruption and continued with the group. I noticed that the students seemed shocked at these interactions between me, group members, and Dr. Cheyne. As a personal reflection, I felt terrible interrupting Dr. Cheyne, and when she corrected me, I truly felt as though I was that disruptive group member.

Reflection on Self

Toward the end of our group time, I felt a tremendous feeling of relief when Dr. Cheyne asked me to reveal my role in the group that day. When I announced that I was the “disruptor”, I saw many faces start laughing and several wide mouths on the screen. I enjoyed tying the role of disruptor to teaching the skill of handling a disruptor in group. I reflected on self-awareness, and the weight of responsibility that we feel as group leaders. I shared about the importance of being prepared for group, of being present, and of being mindful of my reactions as well as navigating the group. I enjoyed interacting with the students and encouraging them to engage and share about their hopes, their fears, and what skills they enjoy using right now. I encouraged them to

remain curious in their learning journey, as that will help them build their counselor identity.

This experience truly solidified my love of teaching and my love of walking in my purpose.