

## Remember the Titan Curriculum Guide for Group Counseling

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Using movies to teach is nothing new. There have been several disciplines including history, art, and psychology that have been using this technique for years. The field of counseling has gradually bought into the concept of using movies in the classroom to teach over the past several years. Many academicians do not want to ere on the side of compromising course content over using movies to demonstrate course concepts. Faculty often wrestle within their own mind how to make this process work. They often think is it worth using my class time to show a movie or do I want to assign my students to watch this movie outside of class. Across time, there has been a shift in mindset as to how assigning a movie for a class project can have immeasurable benefits for students.

You will discover many students are very laced with excitement to escape the traditional lectures and PowerPoint presentations. They are looking for innovative means to bring the content alive other than the traditional modalities of lecture and the textbook. Even if it is a popular movie, the students have not absorbed the movie through applied concepts which they can be exposed to in class.

Currently, we are serving students who are totally enmeshed into social media. They find watching movies, movies clips, and videos as an added bonus to lectures. The idea that students would most likely to go the sleep if you turn down the lights has not been the case for me. Using media in the classes is just a way to enhance the classroom experience for students.

In operating my group counseling classes, I normally assign a minimum of three groups depending on the size of the class. The maximum number of students who can enroll in the class is a total of fifteen students. Ideally, I usually have two sections of this class which greatly reduces the overload of graduate students signing up for this class.

Group counseling is a course that allows students to get an understanding of what it means to develop and participate in group counseling. My course is very interactive and hands on, because I want the students to leave the course with an understanding of all of the many dynamics of a group.

In the groups the students are assigned questions they have to answer. This allows the students to work and process their work in a group setting. They are expected to participate fully within the group setting.

The movie selected to demonstrate the dynamics of a group was "Remember the Titans". Remember the Titans is a movie that is based on real life events in suburban Virginia in 1971. The closing of one black and white school forced students to attend T. C. Williams High School under federal regulations. Prior to this, both schools had been segregated. Now, they were having to integrate under federal law. The board selected a black coach to head the football team. The movie's main focus is around the coaches and the football team.

Of course, my students understand this is a Hollywood portrayal of the events. That is why it is important when you are developing your critical debriefing professor questions that the professor, along with students, can discuss those incidents concerning what is fact or fiction.

I selected this movie for this class at a point in the curriculum where there were discussions regarding diversity issues as it relates to group counseling. Certainly, this is not a counseling group in the typical sense of group counseling. However, on some level, it is a group that is being challenged by learning how to develop as a more cohesive functioning group.

Personally, I am of the notion this movie is an innovative way to bring to life a challenging subject most people do not want to speak on that is impacting our society, which is racism. This a great opportunity to get the students to open up about this topic by looking at historical incidents and comparing those to what is currently going on our society among various ethnic groups.

As stated earlier, the students are given the opportunity to view this movie outside the class on their own time. For my classes, I actually designate class time where the students are given the opportunity to review the movie and work on their assigned questions. I do this because many of the students work full time and have families. I want to make sure they are able to get the most out of this assignment. Obviously, I do not have control over whether they use the time that has been designated for watching the movie. Students are not required to come to class on that day. They can choose to meet where it is most conducive for the group. It is highly recommended they use this allotted time for the purpose it has been designated. Those students who meet and do the work display excellence in their final product they deliver in their PowerPoint or Prezi presentation.

The questions each group are assigned are questions which requires the students to do some critical thinking and possible research topics that might not be included in the movie. So, for the students to be successful in passing this assignment, they have to research at a deeper level beyond the movie content. This is an assignment that requires the students to apply concepts from the textbook and other useful materials. This allows me to see who has been reading and keeping up with the course lectures.

Students are given an assigned day to present their presentation to the entire class. This is a very exciting moment because each group is given the fortitude to be creative in the presentation of the final product. Honestly, I never know exactly what to look for; whether it will be done in the form of a talk show, game show, book signing, or them pretending to invite in the characters from the movies. It is always a real treat to see my students love to have a great time so there is always food to eat.

During the spring semester of 2018, I taught two sessions of Group Counseling at Alabama A & M University. I taught a class on Monday and Wednesday from 6:00 p.m. to 8:45 p.m. I had a total of twelve (12) students in my Monday night class. There were eight (8) students registered for the Wednesday night class.

I administered a short survey to get an overall understanding of what the students thought about using the movie in the class. The survey consisted of seven questions. Questions 1 - 3 were questions pertaining to the students. The students anonymity was kept confidential. Questions 4 - 7 were directly related to what they thought about using a movie for this class.

### Results-Monday's class:

- 6 out of 12 students strongly agreed that the use of a movie as a teaching technique for this class was enjoyable. The other 6 reported they agreed.
- 8 out of 12 students strongly agreed they would recommend the use of a movie for future use of this class. The other 4 reported they agreed.
- 8 out of 12 students strongly agreed that they were overall satisfied with this course. 4 reported they agreed.

The following are a list of comments the students provided in their own words to question 7- Please provide any additional suggestions or comments for improving the use of a movie for this course:

- Awesome!
- Great idea to use the video especially for visual learners.
- Nothing, I really enjoyed the course.

**Results-Wednesday's class:**

- 8 out of 8 students strongly agreed that the use of a movie as a teaching technique for this class was enjoyable.
- 7 out of 8 students strongly agreed they would recommend the use of a movie for future use of this class. 1 reported they agreed.
- 7 out of 8 students strongly agreed that they were overall satisfied with this course. 1 reported they agreed.

The following are the list comments the student provided in their own words to the question 7- Please provide any additional suggestions or comments for improving the use videos for this course:

- The video used in this class was useful. In addition to lectures it was a good way of communicating different topics to the students. Making the PowerPoint was also another way to demonstrate what you learn from the video.
- Maybe using a different movie next time instead of Remember the Titans.
- The video was a good teaching technique because it allowed the students to have a physical and visual experience. Watching the video also gives the student a different learning perspective and all the students to be more engaged.
- The video was very inspiring and you can actually learn from the characters' reactions.
- Have each group review a different video.

Overall, it appears from the students' comments they felt it was a rewarding experience. However, there were a few students who recommended using a different movie for each group. Perhaps seeing some of the same clips and ideas repeatedly can become somewhat redundant. When thinking about this further, possibly assigning a different movie for the assigned groups would greatly impact the discussion groups. This would allow the students to gain insight into various movies.

Nevertheless, here is the curriculum guide I used to teach my class. I hope is both helpful and beneficial.

**Note:** Please be advised the author does not own the copyright to the clip arts.



*Figure 1*

Remember the titans

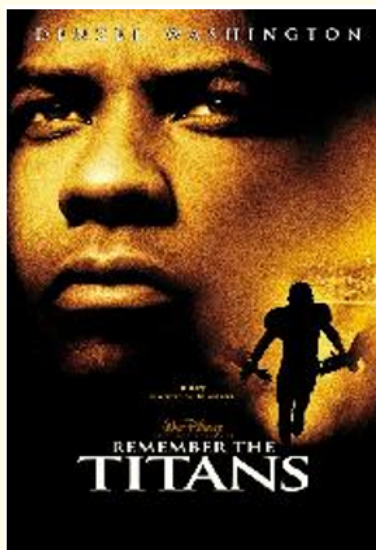


Figure 2

Overview

Even though schools had been integrated for nearly thirty years, racial and ethnic tensions were still quite prevalent. “Remember the Titans,” is based on the real-life story of the undefeated 1971 T.C. Williams football team in Alexandria, Virginia, who displayed prejudices, discrimination, and racial hostility toward Herman Boone, the black head coach (Denzel Washington). Herman Boone, together with Bill Yoast (Bill Patton), the former white Titan head coach ended up working under the leadership of Mr. Boone. This was the first school to experience integration; however, the real integration actually took place on the football field.

Remember the titans

Group A



Figure 3

Discuss the following questions:

1. Explain what you think Dr. Day meant when he said to Coach Boone, “Black folks have never had anything in this city to call their own except humiliation and despair”.

2. What do you think was the real reason that Coach Yoast worked under the leadership of Coach Boone? Tell about a time you had to work for someone who was racially different than you. How did you handle any conflicts that aroused? What recommendations would you provide for both Coach Boone and Coach Yoast to get along in order to achieve their end goal? What might you have done differently in either of the coach's places?
3. Coach Boone had to desegregate the school buses before leaving for football camp. He also forced black and white players to room together and get to know one another. Do you think these were effective techniques? Why or why not?
4. You have been asked to establish a pre-screening interview for the "Remember the Titans" team.
5. What type of questions would you ask and why?
6. How would you go about selecting the members for the team?
7. Based on what you know about "Remember the Titans," is there anyone you would not select? If so, why or why not?
8. Ray appears to be "resistant" to change. How would you as a group leader deal with him in a group setting? Specifically, what techniques would you utilize to deal with a resistant member in a group? (Demonstrate your answer)
9. You are placed in a position where you have no choice but to release a member from your group. How would you go about performing this group task? Do you agree/disagree with how Ray was cut from the team? Why or why not?
10. Make a list of as many racial/ethnic/cultural incidents you observe throughout the movie. Explain what impact they had.
11. Pick at least three characters in the movie that stood out to you and explain why.
12. When we think of group counseling, explain in your own words how this football team evolved as a group and developed group cohesiveness.
13. Who would you consider to be the leaders of the group? Explain their leadership style. Do you think they were effective? If so, how?
14. Explain at what points you see the team go through the various stages of group (i.e. initial stage, transition stage, working stage, and ending stage).
15. How and in what way do you think the team members change individually and collectively as part of this group process? Be sure to explain your answer from a group leader perspective.
16. Identify at least two characters you think the group had the least impact on and explain why. How might this be applicable in group counseling?
17. You have been asked as a group therapist in training to replicate many of the activities Coach Boone utilized to get the members to break down racial barriers. Which would you implement and why or why not? What legal and ethical concerns would you have? Explain.
18. What is the one thing you take most from the movie as a group leader? Explain.

### Group B

#### Discuss the following questions:

1. Explain in your own words why you think groups are more likely to segregate than they are to integrate. Give some historical examples where this occurred in our society. Provide examples on how you see this currently taking place in today's society. What measure do you think we can establish to prevent this from happen? In your opinion, do you think integration helped or hurt Black Americans? Please provide facts to support your answers.
2. Make a list of ten (10) questions you would ask someone of another race or ethnic group as a means of getting to know that person. Do you think the assignment that Coach Boone gave to the players was effective? Why or why not?

3. Early one morning, the players ran to the Gettysburg battlefield. Coach Boone notes that 50,000 men died “fighting the same fight that we’re still fighting amongst ourselves today” and “if we don’t come together right now on this hallowed ground, we too will be destroyed, just like they were”. What is your reaction to these words? Are they still applicable today? If so, how? Provide examples of current events in our society today.
4. Review President Abraham Lincoln’s speech at Gettysburg that Coach Boone told team. Compare/contrast what is actually being said by what is taking place in society during both events.
5. Make a list of as many racial/ethnic/cultural incidents you observe throughout the movie. Explain what impact they had.
6. Pick at least three characters in the movie that stood out to you and explain why.
7. When we think of group counseling, explain in your own words how this football team evolved as a group and developed group cohesiveness.
8. Who would you consider to be the leaders of the group? Explain their leadership style. Do you think they were effective? If so, how?
9. Based on the Johari Window, pick at least one team member for each phase and explain why you think they are in this stage. What does this actually mean for them and the group? Be specific with your answer.
10. There are several racial identity model scales. What stage would you say Coach Tyrell is in? Coach Boone? Explain. How would you go about as a group leader working with them in a group setting?
11. Explain at what points you see the team go through the various stages of group (i.e. initial stage, transition stage, working stage, and ending stage).
12. How and what way do you think the team members change individually and collectively as part of this group process? Be sure to explain your answer from a group leader perspective.
13. Identify at least two characters you think the group had the least impact on and explain why. How might this be applicable in group counseling?
14. The cast from “Remember the Titans” are stranded on an island. There is only one boat and it can only carry twelve passengers safely back to shore. Which twelve individuals would you allow to board the ship? Why or why not?
15. What is the one thing you take most from the movie as a group leader? Explain.

### Group C

#### Discuss the following questions:

1. What do you think was Coach Boone’s motivation for telling the Titans prior to playing all white Hayfield “They do not have to worry about race, but we’re better for it”. What actually made them better?
2. Many times in life when you stand up for something you believe in it will cost you something. Pick characters in the movie who stood up and embraced racial injustice and explain what it cost them. What are you willing to stand up and risk regardless of the cost? Can you name at least three people that stood up for racial injustice? Describe in your own words what they risked. Do think it was worth it or not? Explain your answer in details.
3. What role do you think fear plays in keeping us from crossing over racial ethnic boundaries and engaging with people who are culturally different than we are. The scene in the hospital bed room Gerry said, “I was afraid of you Julius. I only saw what I was afraid of. And now I know I only hated my brother”. Explain what you think he meant by this statement. What can we do to overcome our fears? What steps can be put in place to reach out to others that are different than we are? How can this be a problem in group therapy?
4. Gerry Bertier wore jersey number 42, which is the same number worn by Jackie Robinson. Compare/contrast the lives of these two individuals and what impacts they had on racial relationships.

5. Make a list of as many racial/ethnic/cultural incidents you observe throughout the movie. Explain what impact they had.
6. Explain Gordon Allport's theory about Racial Development. How is it applicable to "Remember the Titans". Please be thorough with your answer.
7. What stage of racial identity would you say Gerry Bertier's girlfriend is in and why? How does she evolve towards the end of the movie?
8. Pick at least three characters in the movie that stood out to you and explain why.
9. When we think of group counseling, explain in your own words how this football team evolved as a group and developed group cohesiveness.
10. Who would you consider to be the leaders of the group? Explain their leadership style. Do you think they were effective? If so, how?
11. Explain at what points you see the team go through the various stages of group (i.e. initial stage, transition stage, working stage, and ending stage).
12. How and in what way do you think the team members change individually and collectively as part of this group process? Be sure to explain your answer from a group leader perspective.
13. Identify at least two characters you think the group had the least impact on and explain why. How might this be applicable in group counseling?
14. You have been selected by a national board of group specialists to develop a group plan for "Remember the Titans". What exactly would your plan look like and why? Include:
  - a. Activities used
  - b. Open/closing group
  - c. Ethical considerations
  - d. Group rules
  - e. Goals and objectives of group
  - f. Group rationale
  - g. Theoretical framework
  - h. How would you deal with conflict?
  - i. What leadership style would you use and why?
  - j. What type of group would you develop and why?
15. What is the one thing you take most from the movie as a group leader? Explain.

### Disclosure

This article has not been published elsewhere, nor has it been submitted simultaneously for publication elsewhere. It does not constitute a conflict of interest for the author.

### Recommended Readings

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