

12 Angry Men Curriculum Guide for Group Counseling

Linda J. M. Holloway*

Associate Professor, Program Coordinator of Counseling Education Programs, Department of Instructional Support Programs, Alabama State University, Montgomery, Alabama, USA

***Corresponding Author:** Linda J. M. Holloway, Associate Professor, Program Coordinator of Counseling Education Programs, Department of Instructional Support Programs, Alabama State University, Montgomery, Alabama, USA.

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Group counseling is a class where students learn the fundamental concepts of group therapy. They are taught the stages of the group, effective group leadership, and the ability to apply theories to group settings. This is a very interactive hands on class. It is my goal for this class to keep the students engaged.

I coined a concept for my classes several years ago. The term is "FIT" which stands for Film In Teaching. One of my favorite past time hobbies is that I like to go to the movies. So, being able to watch a movie and craft them to integrate within my classroom settings has always been very fascinating to me. We live in a society where people are continuously engaging in various forms of media including the radio, internet, e-mail, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, and videos. Integrating movies in the form of teaching in my classes appeals to be the most natural thing to do given how technology drives our society. Students are easily bored by lectures and paper and pencil type of classroom teaching styles. Visual learners yearn to have some form of engagement for their learning style.

This article is designed to illustrate how I used the movie 12 Angry Men in my graduate group counseling class to teach students training to be therapists. There are actually two versions of this movie including the black and white version where the cast is all white, and the updated color version of the movie where the cast is diverse. The most updated version is the one I use to teach my students.

Of course, the challenge is do you show the movie during your class time or allow students to watch it on their own time. For the best management of my class time, I allow students to watch the movie outside of class. The students are usually divided into three groups. I label the groups A, B, and C respectively. I recommend the students select a group captain and co-captain for their group. The group captain's role is to ensure the group runs smoothly by bringing the group together at the appointed times to complete the assignment according to the classroom standards. Additionally, the captain will handle all group issues and if need be, this is the individual who will establish a meeting with the professor should they run into problems they feel like they cannot solve among themselves. The co-captain's role is to assist the captain and keep the captain on track with the group's agenda. The co-captain is also prepared to step in as captain if necessary. Throughout my 25 years of teaching, I have found that students are able to work out issues among themselves. This is what I expect since they have been learning about group dynamics, and it is a wonderful opportunity to put there group counseling skills to use.

12 Angry Men is a movie about twelve men who are meeting to try and decide on the verdict of a young Hispanic boy who is either innocent or guilty of the death of his father. I chose this movie because it addresses a lot of cultural issues. The goal is to create a space where students are given the opportunity to think critically and apply the concepts they have learned in the class about groups to the movie. This movie actually allows students to see actual group work. Of course, a twelve men jury group is not a therapeutic group, but it does allow the students to see a group function from start to finish. As a professor, I want to develop my students' creative skills and using this type of movie has allowed them to stretch their learning capacity.

At the end of the class, I administer a short survey to collect what my students thought about this style of teaching. I conducted this during my time at Alabama A & M University. I taught two sections of group counseling; one on Tuesday night and the other on Wednesday night. The maximum number students that would enroll in this class varied, depending on the size of the overall counseling classes. During the fall semester of 2017, I had a total of 16 people enrolled in my Wednesday class where the evaluations were administered.

Students were not allowed to put their names on the survey for anonymity purposes. The survey consisted of a total of 7 questions where 3 of them were Likert scale questions from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4). The last question was a discussion where students were given the opportunity to provide comments and suggestions about the video. The first three questions were data sampling questions. The survey was done so the instructor could get feedback from the students to see what they thought about the "Film In teaching" concept and whether it was beneficial to their learning.

Results of the survey:

- 14 out of 16 students stated they strongly agreed to the use of video as a teaching technique for the class, and it was enjoyable. 2 students reported they agreed.
- 13 out of 16 students stated they strongly agreed using the video for the future class. 3 students reported they agreed.
- 14 out 16 students reported they strongly agreed that they were overall satisfied with the course. 2 students reported they agreed.

The 7th question on the survey was designed so students could provide their personal feedback. The question read: "Please provide any additional suggestions or comments you have for improving the use of videos in this course". Out of the 16 students, 10 students provided handwritten comments. Here are the comments taken directly from what the students wrote:

- None, I enjoyed the movie.
- Great movie for this class. Only suggestion is that some of the concepts for forming and running a group don't fit well with a one day jury group.
- Great Job! Enjoyed the class!
- None, I enjoyed the video; it connected well with the class.
- There could have been more visual lectures available in order to allow students to be able to grasp information better. This would appeal more to visual learners.
- This was my first counseling course. It was definitely a challenge, but I can say that I enjoyed it overall. I appreciate the way you structured the course as well. Thank you for being a great professor for me and my colleagues.
- The video was perfect for this class. It showed me ways I could conduct a group in various settings and situations that was occurring during the video. It was very interesting and creative, which make it easier for students to learn and retain the information - 😊.
- I would recommend students find their own group to lead, than them being assigned to a group.
- Personally, I think the video was very effective.
- I enjoyed the video assignment because it was not the traditional book and paper assignment. More professors should follow this pattern because it gives the student a chance to enjoy it because it doesn't seem like a task.

Now that you have an idea as to what the students thought about the movie, I am going to provide you the curriculum that was provided for the students. The students were given the instruction to create either a PowerPoint presentation or they could use Prezi. Additionally, all the students were told they should be creative when they are presenting their presentation. This always make for an exciting time because I have students who conduct their presentation in the form of talk shows, game shows, and even role play. I am always amazed how the students pull the presentation together. It is a very fun and exciting way to get all the students involved.

Whenever you are using a movie in the classroom for teaching purposes, it is extremely important you ensure the students are allotted time to discuss the movie. I hope you find the curriculum helpful.

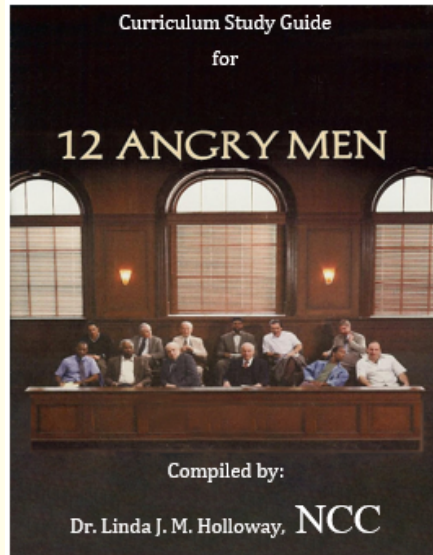


Figure 1

You will watch the “Twelve Angry Men” and answer questions related to the group process. You are encouraged to develop your understanding of the film based on your knowledge learned in this class. You may use whatever notes you choose. “Twelve Angry Men” is a story about twelve jurors who must decide the fate of the defendant. The jurors demonstrate many characteristics of a working group. Your task is to identify these characteristics. The second version of this film produced by Terence A. Donnelly from MGM Television and is what will be utilized for this class session.

Note: Each group must come to class prepared to present their questions and answers to the class. Do be creative!

Critical debriefing questions

Group A

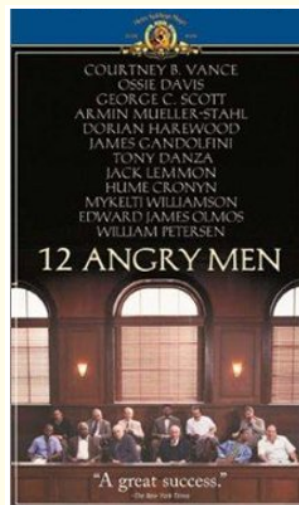


Figure 2

1. There a few members of the group who achieved personal development moments. Who are they and describe when you thought it happened.
2. What was the conversation like among the group at the beginning of the film? What stage would you say they were in and why?
3. Who would you say is the leader of this group and why? Please describe his leadership style. If you were leading this group, what would you do differently and why?
4. Describes the group dynamics when the group leader takes a more directive approach.
5. Explain the pros and cons of conflict within a group. What group techniques should be employed to handle group conflict? Several times throughout this group context, the members encountered group conflict. Explain what and when it happened. Do you think it added value to the group why or why not?
6. List the stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination you observed in the film and think about how would you as a group leader deal with these issues.
7. As a group leader you have been selected to develop a plan to work with Juror number #10 (Muslim) to assist him with being integrated in the group and a more cohesive member. Explain how you would make this happen.
8. What theoretical framework do you think would be most effective with this group and why?
9. In what ways did the group give you a different perspective on group dynamics than what you read in the textbook? Explain.
10. What technique do you suggest a group leader employ to deal with group members who are being repeatedly sarcastic?
11. Pick at least one juror you think the group has actively changed? Explain.
12. Pick at least one juror you think the group had no impact on? Explain.
13. Juror 3 (George C. Scott) remained the only juror to vote guilty. Below is excerpt as to what he said. "What do you think I am, an idiot? You lousy bunch of bleeding hearts! Well, you're not going to intimidate me. I am entitled to my opinion. I can sit in this goddamn room for a year!....Every single thing has been twisted and turned in here....The phrase was, "I am going to kill you". And he said this to his own father. I don't care what kind of man that was, it was his father! Goddamn rotten kid! ...I know what they're like. I know what they can do. My God! Don't you see? Why am I the only one who sees? Jesus! I can feel the knife going in".
At this point, Juror 8 (Jack Lemmon) says, "He's not your boy. He's somebody else". Upon hearing this, Juror 3 (George C. Scott) agrees to vote not guilty.
Describe what you think he is actually communicating. What impact do you think this has on George C. Scott? What are your overall reactions to this event? What impact, if any, do you think it had on the rest of the members of the group?
14. Describe in what ways this movie is relevant in our society today.
15. What group rules would you recommend for this group and why?



Figure 3



Figure 4

Group B

1. Identify as many group member roles you observed in this group. Explain when you thought they were actually being demonstrated.
2. As a group leader, what type of group intervention strategies would you implement and why?
3. Describe and identify the following stages within this group:
 - a. Initial Stage
 - b. Working Stage
 - c. Transitional Stage
 - d. Ending Stage
4. From your viewpoint, which character would you say contributed to conflict or the impairment of the group? Explain your answer.
5. What character(s) in the film played the supportive role that was actually leading to the truth? Explain your answer.
6. What impact did group pressure have on making the group members willing to take risks?
7. Explain as a group leader how you will handle the many overt/covert racial relationship issues?
8. What theoretical framework as a group leader would you utilize and why?
9. In what ways did the various ethnic groups give you a different viewpoint of group dynamics compared to what you have read in the textbook? Explain.
10. What group counseling techniques will you recommend be implemented as a group leader to deal with group members who are being resistant?
11. Which group members would you recommend seek additional individual counseling and why?
12. After observing this group is there anything you would do differently as a group leader? Why or why not? Explain.
13. Juror 3 (George C. Scott) remained the only juror to vote guilty. Below is excerpt as to what he said.

“What do you think I am, an idiot? You lousy bunch of bleeding hearts! Well, you’re not going to intimidate me. I am entitled to my opinion. I can sit in this goddamn room for a year!...Every single thing has been twisted and turned in here....The phrase was, “I am going to kill you”. And he said this to his own father. I don’t care what kind of man that was, it was his father! Goddamn rotten kid! ...I know what they’re like. I know what they can do. My God! Don’t you see? Why am I the only one who sees? Jesus! I can feel the knife going in”.

Describe what you think he is actually communicating? What impact do you think this has on George C. Scott? What are your overall reactions to this event? What impact, if any, do you think it had on the rest of the members of the group?

14. How might having a co-leader would have benefited this group?
15. Why is diversity training necessary for leading a group?
16. How can you relate to this group in today's society?



Figure 5

Group C

1. Pick one character and tell why he stands out the most to you as it relates to group dynamics.
2. Explain the leadership style of the appointed leader. Tell what you approved/disapproved of according to his leadership. What you would have done differently?
3. Discuss at least three (3) phases of group processing you observed in the movie.
4. Discuss at least three (3) episodes of conflict you observed and explain the effectiveness or ineffectiveness these conflicts had on the overall group dynamics. How might you have handled these periods of conflict as the group leader?
5. You have been strongly recommended by your group professor at your prospective university to lead this group. How would you go about leading this group? Be sure to include group rules and any ethical considerations.
6. You have been contacted because of your expertise in "multicultural counseling" to develop a group plan to implement for this group to work through their cultural diversity issues. Please explain your plan.
7. As the group leader of this group, what theoretical framework would you use to effectively lead this group? Explain why.
8. After observing this group are there any ethical concerns you might be concerned about? Why or why not?
9. List at least three (3) critical events you think that has the most profound impact on group dynamics. Explain.
10. You have been requested to pick at least one group member to write a letter about regarding some concerns you have about their evolution in the group. Who would it be and why? What exactly would you tell the group member?

11. How has this movie changed your perception of group dynamics based on what you have learned from the textbook, etc.? Explain.
12. Juror 3 (George C. Scott) remained the only juror to vote guilty. Below is excerpt as to what he said.

“What do you think I am, an idiot? You lousy bunch of bleeding hearts! Well, you’re not going to intimidate me. I am entitled to my opinion. I can sit in this goddamn room for a year!....Every single thing has been twisted and turned in here....The phrase was, “I am going to kill you”. And he said this to his own father. I don’t care what kind of man that was, it was his father! Goddamn rotten kid! ...I know what they’re like. I know what they can do. My God! Don’t you see? Why am I the only one who sees? Jesus! I can feel the knife going in”.

Describe what you think he is actually communicating? What impact do you think this has on George C. Scott? What are your overall reactions to this event? What impact, if any, do you think it had on the rest of the members of the group?

13. Take a look at Michelle Alexander Book “The New Jim Crow- Mass Incarceration”. How do you relate that to what you observed in the movie?
14. After viewing this movie, how has it impacted the way you view group dynamics amongst groups?
15. When putting together a group with people from various backgrounds, what things would you consider and why?
16. What are some reasons you would say it is important for a group leader to have tried within the group context?

Note: Please be advised, the author does not have the copyrights to the clip arts used in this article.



Figure 5

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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