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Abstract
There are many psychotherapy varieties, but all are delivered through two predominant modalities—individual and group. This article outlines differences between individual and group treatment and the advantages and disadvantages of each. The author focuses on psychodynamic treatment, but the differences between the two modalities apply across all theoretical orientations. Human beings are social animals with an innate drive for relationships. With the advent of mass transit and mass communication, many historic bastions of relationships, such as the family, the neighborhood, and religious institutions, have been disrupted, and the roots of relationships have become shallow. As a result, many people seek psychotherapy to help build and sustain more intimate and healthier relationships, a goal for which group therapy is well suited. As relationships develop in group psychotherapy, group members demonstrate the assets and liabilities of their relational styles. Their defenses against intimacy become apparent. For these reasons, group therapy is the treatment of choice for many people. The interpersonal nature of group psychotherapy provides an opportunity to recognize interpersonal behavior patterns and thus may provide tools to allow for more intimate relationships. When meeting a new patient, the therapist seeks not only the theoretical treatment that might be most amenable to the patient’s individual needs but also the form of therapy that might work best. The aim of this article is to examine the unique features of group therapy and of the patients this modality may especially help.