Group Processes to Reduce Intergroup Conflict

An Additional Example of a Workshop for Arab and Jewish Youth

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This article's main emphasis is on describing and illustrating several group processes and theories that were used in an intervention to reduce conflict between Arab and Jewish youth in Israel as an additional example to the main one presented in this volume. These theories used in the Israeli example contribute substantially to the latter. Following a description of the Israeli workshop setting, participants, and structure, this article deals with the change processes that may affect participants' attitudes and behaviors. The theoretical perspectives used to analyze the group processes used in the workshop are the following: the psychodynamic and group therapy perspective, the cognitive-behavioral perspective, and the self-theory perspective. These three perspectives are applied to analyze the processes that occurred during the workshop in relationship to participants, facilitators, workshop structure, and content.

Keywords: *Lewin; change theory; conflict management workshops; change processes in groups*

The small group serves as the main vehicle for interventions to reduce intergroup tensions and to develop positive attitudes and behavior toward others who differ from one's self in terms of ethnicity or race (Stephan & Stephan, 2001). In fact, several of the main explanations of the development of prejudice and discriminatory behavior relate to group processes and their impact on the personality and identity of group members. Hence, it will be demonstrated in this article that the use of groups to achieve change is the most appropriate approach to modify the attitudes and social cognitions of high school students.

We will start by describing Lewin's theoretical contributions to an understanding of the change processes that group members undergo that can modify their attitudes and values. Following this, the article will describe an intervention to reduce conflict between Arab and Jewish youth

in Israel, which we offer as an additional example to the main experience reported in this volume. This example is relevant, also, to our project inasmuch as we drew heavily on it in the design of our program. The change processes used in this example will be analyzed through the lenses of three theoretical perspectives: the psychodynamic and group psychotherapy perspective, the cognitive-behavioral perspective, and the self-theory perspective.

Social science interest in intervening to change intergroup tensions is especially tied to the work of Kurt Lewin, and he dedicated several of his writings, using field theory, to suggest the constructs and processes of social change. Lewin was committed, also, to the notion that the mission of social science is to contribute to social change, and the next section presents Lewin's theory of social change.

Kurt Lewin's Theory of Change
Through Group Encounters

Lewin's (1947/1951) approach to the topic of social change is elaborated in his last paper, "Frontiers in Group Dynamics." Under the subheading "The Creation of Permanent Changes," Lewin described social change as a change of force fields:

> In discussing the means of bringing about a desired state of affairs, one should not think in terms of "the goal to be reached" but rather in terms of change "from the present level to the desired one." . . . A planned change consists of supplanting the force field corresponding to an equilibrium at the beginning level L^1 by a force field having its equilibrium at the desired level L^2. It should be emphasized that the total force field has to be changed at least in the area between L^1 and L^2. (p. 224)

Lewin applied the principle of behavior as "a function of the total situation" to his theory of social change, as follows: "For changing a social equilibrium, one has to consider the total social field" (p. 224). In the same vein, Lewin claimed that changing peoples' attitudes or behavior "means trying to break a well-established 'custom' or 'social habit.' Social habits usually are conceived of as obstacles to change" (p. 224). He later termed those habits as "inner resistance" to change. "To overcome this inner resistance an additional force seems to be required, a force sufficient to break the 'habit,' to 'unfreeze' the custom" (p. 225). Lewin's more general and sociological explanation for the inhibiting or resisting forces is that

social life proceeding on a certain level leads frequently to the establishment of organizational institutions. They become equivalent to "vested interests" in a certain social level. A second possible source of social habits is related to the value system, the ethos of a group. (p. 225)

Lewin applied the force field approach to individuals and groups alike. On the individual level, he referred to the pressure that group members exert on individuals who deviate excessively from group standards. In that connection, group standards become a "central force field which keeps the individual in line with the standards of the group" (p. 226). In this connection, Lewin used the following principle to summarize his view regarding the issue of social habit and resistance to change: "The greater the social value of a group standard, the greater is the resistance of the individual group member to move away from this level" (p. 227).

Lewin believed that the best and most effective means for bringing about change in individuals is through group encounters. In Lewin's own words,

experience in leadership training, in changing of food habits, work production, criminality, alcoholism, prejudices— all seem to indicate that it is usually easier to change individuals formed into a group than to change anyone of them separately. (p. 228)

Toward the end of the article "Frontiers in Group Dynamics," Lewin characterizes the change process as follows: "A successful change includes, therefore, three aspects: unfreezing (if necessary) the present level L^1, moving to the new level L^2, and freezing group life on the new level" (p. 228). When elaborating on each of the steps, he claimed that at the unfreezing stage the individuals who take part in the change process need to be emotionally stirred up many times. Allport (1954) referred to this process as catharsis, which he defined as the situation that is necessary before prejudices can be removed. In Lewin's words, unfreezing is important "to break open the shell of complacency and self righteousness."

The "moving" stage, or the change process, is best demonstrated through the "principles of change," or reeducation. Lewin formulated these principles in 1945/1948 in his article "Conduct, Knowledge and Acceptance of New Values."

Principles of Change—Reeducation

Lewin used the term *reeducation* to describe a change process that is more than merely acquiring new information, habits, and social skills. It is a process of effecting change in self-perceptions and enabling individuals to overcome

inner-resistance. Because behavior patterns are anchored in norms and interpersonal relations originating in the groups to which one belongs or aspires to belong, successful reeducation must include changes in one's own culture. In Lewin's (1945/1948) own words,

> it is a process in which changes of knowledge and beliefs, changes of values and standards, changes of emotional attachments and needs, and changes of everyday conduct occur not piecemeal and independently of each other, but within the framework of the individual's total life in the group. (p. 58)

Changes in values, in the self, and in one's social perceptions can only be effected if the individual is part of a small group. Lewin (1945/1948) characterized the optimal conditions for change in terms of group norms. Then, he described the social climate that must prevail and the central role of the facilitator. The group is the major leverage for changing the individual's attitude and behavior because

> only by anchoring his conduct in something as large, substantial and super-individual as the culture of the group, can the individual stabilize his new beliefs sufficiently to keep them immune from the day-by-day fluctuations of moods and influences to which he, as an individual, is subject. (p. 59)

For reeducation to succeed, the group facilitator must create a strong "we feeling." As Lewin (1945/1948) formulated this, "the establishment of this feeling that everybody is in the same boat, has gone through the same difficulties, and speaks the same language is stressed as one of the main conditions facilitating the reeducation" (p. 67). An additional condition facilitating reeducation is

> the creating of an atmosphere of freedom and spontaneity within the group. Voluntary attendance, informality of meetings, freedom of expression in voicing grievances, emotional security, and avoidance of pressure may lead to changes in the individual's self-perception and social perceptions, including the stereotypes he or she holds, and even in his or her value system or super-ego components. (p. 65)

According to Lewin (1945/1948), provision of information is insufficient to change the individual's values and opinions about the other group: "We know that lectures or other similarly abstract methods of transmitting knowledge are of little avail in changing his subsequent outlook and conduct" (p. 60). Moreover, he felt that even the experience of meeting people with different

attitudes and values is not enough. In his view, only revision of self-perceptions and social perceptions will enable the individual to perceive people and social events in a way that reaches beyond common stereotypes or false notions.

Lewin (1945/1948) likened false stereotypes and prejudices to erroneous concepts and theories. In his view, the first step to changing those concepts and theories is to reexamine them. Reexamination should be carried out through an alternative perception of the self and one's social relations. It cannot be left to accident, and group experiences should be planned as a forum for such reexamination. Lewin suggested that through the group one can acquire norms and means to learn new perceptions and behaviors, marked by a commitment to self-examination, active confrontation with one's own perceptions and perceptions held by the other group members, active involvement in problem solving, and a willingness to expose oneself to empirical examination of ideas and conceptions:

> A factor of great importance in bringing about a change in sentiment is the degree to which the individual becomes actively involved in the problem. Lacking this involvement, no objective fact is likely to reach the status of a fact for the individual concerned and therefore influence his social conduct. (p. 63)

The group within which the person experiences such reexamination is the vehicle for adopting new behaviors:

> This principle of in-grouping makes understandable why complete acceptance of previously rejected facts can be achieved best through the discovery of these facts by the group members themselves. Then, and frequently only then, do the facts become really *their* facts (as against other people's facts). An individual will believe facts he himself has discovered in the same way that he believes in himself or in his group. (Lewin, 1945/1948, p. 68)

The third stage in the change process proposed by Lewin (1947/1951) is termed *freezing*—namely, following the group's advancement from level L^1 to level L^2, group life will be determined on a new level. Lewin summarized this stage as follows: "Since any level is determined by a force field, permanency implies that the new force field is made relatively secure against change" (p. 229).

In "Frontiers in Group Dynamics," Lewin (1947/1951) pointed to the ideal organizational conditions for bringing about change in people. He referred to camps and workshops in changing ideology or conduct:

> It depends in part on the possibility of creating such "cultural islands" during change. The stronger the accepted subculture of the workshop and the more

isolated it is, the more will it minimize that type of resistance to change which is based on the relation between the individual and the standards of the larger group. (p. 233)

Lewin applied these principles to the context of intergroup relations. At the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Center for the Study of Group Dynamics, he and a team of researchers were invited to assist the newly formed Connecticut Advisory Committee on intergroup relations in an attempt to train community workers to deal with intergroup tensions. The workshop lasted 2 weeks and was perceived as a pioneer experiment. Lippitt (1949) summarized the project as follows:

> The research techniques of social science were brought to bear on the ever present task of training community leaders to deal effectively with the problems of intergroup relations. Bringing together in a single cooperative adventure the skills and resources of both men of science and men of action, this project is an example of action research. (p. ix)

Arab–Jewish Relations in Israel and Conflict Management Workshops (CMWs)

In addition to the project presented in this volume, we present another one as an example of the application of the theories described in this article. This is the work of Bar and Bargal (1995), who since 1985 (Bargal, 2000, 2004; Bargal & Bar, 1992, 1994) have applied Lewin's principles of change to the Arab–Jewish conflict in Israel. In the following pages, their CMW for Arab and Jewish youth will be introduced. The description will include objectives, method for selection of participants, their preparation, and details of the workshop structure.

The Israeli–Palestinian conflict is a protracted one and has recently even escalated to the point of frequent suicide bombings and harsh responses by the Israeli army. About 18% of the population of the State of Israel comprises Arabs, who identify with many of their relatives residing in the Palestinian Authority. However, the Arabs residing in Israel are considered full-fledged citizens of the state and are entitled to full legal, social, educational, and welfare privileges. In practice, because of the ongoing conflict between the Arab countries and the State of Israel, its Arab citizens have been subjected to discrimination, deprivation of some rights, and isolation from the Jewish population for almost 50 years.

Although behavioral sciences may not have a direct impact on the political process, which affects Israeli–Palestinian relations, it is possible to bring

about change among individuals at the level of interpersonal and intergroup relations. One of the interventions that has been developed to improve relations between Arab and Jewish youth who are citizens of Israel is the CMW.

Bargal and Bar (1990a) defined the CMW as

organizational arrangements devised to bring together two opposing groups (on ethnic, political, or interpersonal grounds) at a relatively isolated location. Through the use of interpersonal, group and organizational means, the two parties come to know each other's members closely. Some of the roots and manifestations of the conflict between the groups are brought into the open, discussed and clarified, in order to enable them to get along more satisfactorily. (p. 5)

CMWs for Arab and Jewish Youth: Objectives, Selection, and Preparation of Participants

Objectives

As suggested by Bargal and Bar (1990b), the workshops aimed to achieve the following objectives: (a) to initiate contacts and acquaintances between participants belonging to the two national (Arab and Jewish) groups, (b) to arouse awareness of the complexity of the Arab–Jewish conflict situation, (c) to change previous distorted stereotypes and prejudices that the members of the two national groups hold toward each other, (d) to help participants develop impartial behavior and attitudes toward one another; (e) to teach basic skills for conflict management, and (f) to help participants develop humanistic, democratic perspectives and an orientation toward working for social justice.

Selection of Participants

The selection of the appropriate participants for the workshops will largely determine the extent of their success. Group research emphasizes the importance of prior selection of candidates for group interventions to attain attitudinal change and symptom reduction work (in social work with groups, see Glasser, Sarri, & Vinter, 1974; Toseland & Rivas, 2001; in group psychotherapy, see Melnick & Woods, 1976; Moreland, Levine, & Wingert, 1996; Yalom, 1985).

The groups of Jewish and Arab youth who took part in the workshops were paired in terms of socioeconomic background to promote maximum symmetry between them (Allport, 1954; Amir, 1969). Moreover, the participants in both groups resided in close geographical proximity to each

other so that there could be continued interaction between them after the workshop ended.

Based on theory, research, and professional experience, it was decided to select participants on the basis of three qualities: high motivation to take part in the CMWs, which is a prerequisite for many change-oriented activities (Egan, 1986; Lieberman, 1983; Yalom, 1985); empathy with and sensitivity to others (the ability to enter the "other person's shoes")—a prerequisite for encounters that involve changing negative stereotypes and identifying with the other's sorrow, humiliation, and injustice (Stephan & Finlay, 2000); and leadership qualities—for example, "gatekeepers" (Lewin, 1947/1958) or influential members of the class or community. Influential people may disseminate the messages of the workshops to their groups and communities of origin.

Preparation of Participants

To enhance the impact of the workshops on the participants, preworkshop programs were designed for each national group. In these programs, the groups met separately in their home territory, and sessions were led by the prospective facilitator or facilitators from the same national group (for a detailed discussion of the preworkshop preparations, see Bargal & Bar, 1990b). The preliminary meetings aimed to provide the potential participants with three kinds of knowledge: basic information on the workshop setting, increased cognitive awareness, and emotional preparation.

The information provided at the preworkshop program included a general orientation to the schedule and the nature of activities and accommodations at the workshop setting. At the cognitive level, the prospective participants in the preparatory phase were expected to develop a heightened awareness of the importance of tolerance toward the different attitudes and values they will experience at the workshop. An additional issue emphasized in the preparatory sessions concerned the deep cultural differences between the groups that will be meeting under very intimate conditions.

Notably, Arab society—be it Christian or Muslim—was alien to the Jewish participants. For the Arab participants, who had never met with Jewish youth on close terms before, the open interpersonal relationships—especially between boys and girls—and the spontaneous expression of feelings was likely to be strange and even threatening.

The third type of knowledge focused on differential "emotional inoculation" of the two national groups. The Jewish participants had to be emotionally prepared to overcome their fear of Arabs, which is rooted in their sense of the persistent threat of annihilation by the surrounding Arab countries. The Arab participants had to be reassured that in the workshop they

will be able to disclose their personal experiences of humiliation and rejection by members of the Jewish majority.

The Workshop Structure

The 3-day workshops opened with a preliminary "warm-up" session aimed at establishing a contract between the participants and facilitators. During this session, participants introduced themselves and described their expectations and fantasies regarding the workshops. They collaborated with the facilitators on designing a realistic program. Based on these interpersonal dynamics, meaningful relationships were formed between participants of both nationalities. The remainder of the day was spent in a mixed informal gathering (Bargal, 1992; Bargal & Bar, 1994).

During the second day of the workshop, activities focused on familiarization with the cultures of each group. Participants in each group discussed their perspectives on issues such as parent–child relations and relations with members of the other sex. The discussions focused on the difference between Arab culture, which is mainly tradition oriented, and Jewish culture, which is relative modern and oriented toward the individual (Riesman, 1950).

Toward the middle of the second day and on the third day, the focus of the workshop shifted to issues of identity, including those related to political and social aspects of self-identity. In this context, participants grappled with issues such as stereotypes, prejudice, and discriminatory behavior. The meaningful personal and cultural relationships formed between members of the two nationalities created fertile ground for examining and modifying erroneous misguided perceptions and behavior. This activity was followed by political discussions in which individual participants expressed their beliefs and attitudes concerning the Arab–Jewish conflict. Facilitators helped participants acknowledge the toll taken by the conflict on Arabs and Jews alike, as well as the individual and group efforts required to change the situation. On the whole, the workshop exposed participants to various aspects of living with conflict and provided them with a better understanding of each group's role in it.

The workshop's basic unit was the small group, which was the main arena for effecting change. Intervention activities were held in both uninational and binational groups. In these settings, we sought to enable participants to gain insight concerning their various social identities as teenagers, as members of a specific national group, and as individual human beings (Babad, Birnbaum, & Benne, 1983). The insights achieved at the level of social and personal identities were used to help the participants deal with

the Palestinian–Israeli conflict, to acknowledge its existence, and to develop the concepts and tools necessary for working toward change.

The change that takes place in the process of the workshops was slow and was accompanied by a significant emotional investment. To adopt a new view of the world, it is first necessary to separate from and experience the loss of unrealistically rosy or bleak perceptions of the world. The process of development and change was expressed by each of the participants in the group. In the presence of other group members, they struggled with the forces that encouraged them to preserve existing fantasies and stereotypes and required them to remain alienated from members of the other group. This process leaves room for a new perception, which is founded on tolerance of differences, and acknowledgement of the pain and self-destruction on both sides.

Change Processes That Affect Workshop Participants' Attitudes, Perceptions, and Behavior

The mechanisms for effecting change during the workshop focused primarily on the emotional and cognitive dimensions, such as exposing participants to new sources of information, allowing them to reflect on the sociocultural and political contexts in which they live and interact, and enabling them to restructure their social perceptions (Babad et al., 1983; Lewin, 1945/1948; Lieberman, 1983). The section will first refer to the three theoretical perspectives to analyze group processes presented earlier and then will focus on analysis of the processes of change that occurred during the workshop in four of its components: participants, facilitators, workshop structure, and content topics (Bar & Bargal, 1995).

Theoretical Perspectives to Analyze Change Processes in Groups

In a recent comprehensive book on group research and practice (Wheelan, 2005), the editor included several different theoretical perspectives on groups. In line with this helpful conceptual device for the analysis of groups, we suggested earlier the three theoretical perspectives that will explain the group processes operating in the CMWs reported earlier. They may also be useful for intergroup workshops worldwide.

First is the psychodynamic and group psychotherapy perspective (Freud, 1959; Yalom, 1985, 2005). This perspective assumes that interpersonal

interaction is sometimes irrational and symbolic; it uses mechanisms of transference and defense mechanisms. It also assumes that the group culture created provides several important therapeutic (change) factors: instillation of hope, catharsis, and identification with group members as well as the facilitator. Second, the cognitive-behavioral perspective (Fiske & Taylor, 1991) assumes that the mind categorizes information about situation, object, and people. The cognitive products of these processes are schemata or representation regarding one's self or one's social world. Interventions that are brought about during group activities aimed to reduce intergroup conflicts are directed toward bringing about changes in the set of categories (Wood, 1989) toward the social world that the participants possess. Also included here are mechanisms of social comparison and cognitive dissonance. The third theoretical perspective is self-theory (Rogers, 1961, 1973). This perspective deals with the conditions and processes through which a person's self or ego grows, matures, and actualizes itself. A facilitator's attitude toward a group member that is emphatic and nonjudgmental on one hand and confrontational on the other may enhance the latter's willingness to examine himself or herself and his or her readiness to perceive the other party in a nondiscriminatory way. Through group processes that enable self-disclosure by participants, other group members provide feedback that helps participants to gain insights into their biases and distortions.

1. The Participants

The main cognitive and emotional mechanisms that operated in the intervention processes were cognitive dissonance, decategorization (cognitive behavioral perspective), limiting the use of denial, splitting and projection as defense mechanisms (psychodynamic perspective), and anxiety aroused as a consequence of fading illusions (Schein, 1979).

Participants in the CMWs described a change in attitudes resulting from cognitive dissonance (Bargal & Bar, 1992; Maoz, 2000). The dissonance was reflected in the discrepancy created between their perceptions and a stereotypic image of the other group and the actual behavior of participants in that group with whom they interacted intensively. The process of attitude change has also been referred to as decategorization or destereotyping (Brewer & Brown, 1998; Dovido & Gaertner, 1998; Lewin, 1945/1948). In this process, negative characteristics attributed to the other national group based on ascription of collective attributes and stereotypes were gradually replaced by new impressions that developed as a result of personal acquaintance with individuals in the other group (cognitive-behavioral perspective).

This suggests that stereotypes may ultimately be undermined as a result of favorable personal experiences with members of the other group. However, changes in cognitive perceptions are not immediately incorporated into the psyche. Feelings of frustration may be aroused by awareness of the need to alter distorted perspectives and develop new perceptions of one's self (self-perspective). In addition, feelings of anxiety may be aroused by fear of restructuring cognitive and emotional frames of mind embedded in each individual (e.g., perceptions of one's self as inherently bad, irrational, violent, and uncompromising). At this point, the reality personified by individuals in the other group may clash with the mechanisms of denial and splitting that participants have employed all their lives (psychodynamic perspective). Notably, the anxiety and fear associated with giving up the use of these mechanisms may cause participants to express intense anger, and they may blame members of the other group for the political situation and the protracted conflict between their two parties.

This emotionally charged (catharsis in Allport, 1954; Yalom, 1985) and dissonant situation also provides the "building blocks" for restructuring participants' new social perceptions. The educational tools for facilitating this situation are group and intergroup dynamics created through the facilitators' interventions, as well as themes focusing on development of perceptions and skills conducive to "living with conflict" that provides the skills to manage conflictual situations (Bargal & Bar, 1994; Bar & Bargal, 1995). Two important additional interpersonal processes facilitate changes in self-perceptions and perceptions of the other group: identification with participants from the other group and identification with facilitators of both nationalities.

2. Facilitators

The workshop facilitators bore an important share of the responsibility for effecting change. In the intervention process, the facilitators make it possible for participants to express some of their disappointment, frustrations, and anxieties through catharsis. The facilitators employ basic counseling principles, such as positive regard, empathy, genuineness, and support for participants (Carkhuff, 1969; Egan, 1986; Rogers, 1961, 1973) in the encounters (self-perspective). They also work to establish an atmosphere of cohesiveness (Yalom, 1985). In so doing, they convey the message that the encounter is safe enough to enable participants to reassess previous beliefs and express feelings and opinions that they had never dared express before. Although these principles are a *sine qua non* for efforts to change attitudes and behavior and although provision of support and security may be effective and even vital conditions, they are not sufficient to effect change.

Facilitators must focus on using skills that help participants deal with contradictory views and feelings toward themselves or other group members. This is done through the use of confrontational means (Egan, 1986) (self-perspective). Such confrontations help participants achieve the cognitive dissonance described earlier. Facilitators also provide feedback to participants who express feelings and behavior that can help counteract prejudiced and unrealistic views of their own group or members of the other group. Moreover, facilitators are in a position to provide alternatives to violence through providing information ("imparting knowledge"; Yalom, 1985) about techniques of mediation or by exposing participants to role-plays regarding instances of real-life conflict as a means of solving controversial intergroup political or ideological issues.

At this stage, facilitators also use a strategy referred to by Yalom (1985) as "instillation of hope." The intensity of the conflictual situation may encourage participants to adopt a fatalistic, pessimistic approach, which signals passivity and withdrawal from coping with the object of their relationships. Thus, facilitators aim to preserve a group climate that portrays the difficult, complex reality of the conflict between the two groups, on one hand, and opens a window of hope, on the other (psychodynamic and group psychotherapy perspective). Because people create the conflict, there is hope that people may also find a way to solve it.

Another strategy at the facilitators' disposal is "cognitive reframing." Every change in self, even in the emotional sphere, is transformed into a cognitive framework. Words, concepts, rationales, attitudes, and values reflect various perceptual and cognitive "gestalts" that are elaborated and adopted by the self. Hence, the facilitator's function in this phase is to explain and clarify the meanings of the changes within the group from a "here and now" time perspective (Egan, 1986). This is done without ignoring their implications for the external social-political and cultural reality of the participants' lives.

Finally, the facilitator's task is to contain difficult feelings expressed by the participants, especially anger and anxiety (Yalom, 1985). The facilitator clarifies that the participants' feelings at this stage reflect an imbalance in their perceptual and emotional orientation, which is a prerequisite for change. Facilitators also provide information and explanations regarding the intra- and intergroup processes experienced by participants (e.g., pressure to conform to the norms of one's group and demonization of the other group; Dovido & Gaertner, 1998). Moreover, participants gain insight into the group and intergroup dynamics that they experience in the workshops and in the real world. In addition, they become more aware of their impact on shaping behavior and attitudes (Bargal & Bar, 1994).

3. Workshop Structure

Work in a relatively large binational group creates a paradoxical situation. On one hand, an atmosphere of cohesiveness and solidarity is formed as a result of the intensive interpersonal relationships and close contact that develop under the conditions of an isolated "cultural island." On the other hand, the topics discussed and the constant feeling that one's own national group is right and good, while the other group is bad, generates an atmosphere of anxiety and disharmony between the group members.

Even under these circumstances, however, each participant can still identify with the pain, injustice, fear, and other intense personal emotions genuinely conveyed by members of the other group. Yalom (1985) terms it *interpersonal learning*. This identification helps break down the "walls of hate" and counteracts stereotyped categorization while enabling participants to see the other side's point of view. Concurrently, activity among homogeneous national groups, in which participants are able to share the feelings of anxiety aroused by cognitive dissonance, helps them incorporate identification with the other group into their selves. In this process, participants begin to understand their need to preserve their own social and national identity, bearing in mind the emotional cost of ignoring other group's identity (Abrams & Hogg, 2004).

An additional change mechanism at the disposal of participants at this stage of the workshop is identification with the facilitators. Yalom (1985) termed this change factor *imitative behavior*. In particular, participants can identify with facilitators of the same national group as models who have managed to find a balanced way of living with the contradictory contexts of Arab and Jewish society (Bargal & Bar, 1990a). In this connection, facilitators are viewed as individuals who have managed to adopt a complex perspective of the situation while remaining confident of their own social identities so as to be able to understand the other side's point of view. In many respects, the workshop participants aspire to achieve this state, especially when they feel somewhat confused and threatened and need a model to help them implement the desired change. Mature interpersonal relationships between Arab and Jewish facilitators, which are based on consideration and sensitivity, also serve as a model for workshop participants to emulate.

4. Content Topics

One of the many contributions of the facilitators was inculcation of the concept of "living with conflict" (Bar & Bargal, 1995). At this stage,

the participants experienced the meaning of living with conflict in their interactions—a conflict that emanates from the respective identities of each group and their differential cognitive, emotional, and political needs. In this phase, the facilitators provide information regarding majority–minority relations while portraying the asymmetry between the two groups and its implications for political processes. Minority groups are often underrepresented and deprived of privileges granted to the majority group (e.g., Jewish Israelis receive a monetary allowance after completion of compulsory army service, but Arab citizens of Israel are not entitled to this compensation because they do not serve in the army).

Facilitators point out the similarities as well as the differences between the two groups. They emphasize the overall need for national group identity and the importance of each group's unique history. In this connection, it is noted that both groups have suffered traumas and disasters (e.g., Jewish participants are affected by the memory of the Holocaust, whereas many Arab participants have relatives who were exiled following the War of Independence). These examples serve to highlight similarities in the concerns and aspirations of each national group. The dialogue that ensues between the participants also exposes different political solutions to the conflict proposed by each group. The main strategy for coping with the conflict is acknowledgement of each party's right to autonomous existence. In the case of Israeli Arabs, emphasis is placed on acknowledgement of their full rights and acceptance as equals by the Jewish majority.

At this stage, it is assumed that participants are able to integrate the new perspectives they have incorporated and practice the new behavior or express the reframed attitudes in real-life situations (Lewin, 1947; Schein, 1979). In accordance with the previously mentioned objectives of the workshop, at the end of the process, participants are expected to better understand themselves and realize the complexity of the social-political situation (i.e., that there are no easy and clear-cut solutions to the Arab–Israeli conflict).

Summary and Conclusions

Even though the example discussed earlier focused on intergroup CMWs for Arab and Jewish youth in Israel, it seems that several group components and processes mentioned can be applied to intergroup workshops and dialogue in other parts of the world as well. They seem to be universal principles that are effective to bring about change in the realm of human relations. Based on the theoretical perspectives that have been introduced,

it is possible to sketch the ideal scenario for an effective change process that may operate in conflict management and dialogue groups.

According to the psychodynamic and group psychotherapy perspective, it is essential that the group develop a sense of cohesiveness that parallels the creation of rapport in individual therapy (Yalom, 1985, 2005). It will provide the individual group member a feeling of being an integral part of a supportive collective. This assuring and trust-embedded atmosphere is enhanced and reinforced through the use of measures originated in self-theory and that convey positive regard and a nonjudgmental approach toward group members. Only under these circumstances is the individual group member able to "unfreeze" his or her biases and wrong stereotypes regarding other group members, usually the ones who differ on ethnic, cultural, or gender characteristics.

Following the phase of unfreezing, there comes the need to reexamine one's existing cognitive schemata to change them according to the meaningful new interpersonal input accumulated during the intimate and intensive interaction with fellow members in the group. According to the cognitive-behavioral perspective mentioned earlier, confrontation used by the facilitators or other group members helped to bring about changes in members' social perceptions and attitudes. Cognitive mechanisms of dissonance, reframing, and social comparison operate to incorporate the "new information" into one's consciousness. An important ingredient in the individual member's behavior in the group is the need to be actively involved in the process because, as Lewin (1945/1948) reminded us, "lacking this involvement, no objective fact is likely to reach the status of a fact for the individual concerned and therefore influence his social conduct" (p. 63).

The change of negative intergroup attitudes, stereotypes and prejudices, and the provision of conflict management skills requires a long and incremental process. From our own significant experience in this process and based on the experience of others (Bar & Bargal, 1995; Paluck-Levy, 2006), we learned that intergroup interventions demand sacrifices from participants, facilitators, and organization officials and leaders. Social scientists who want to engage in it should abandon scientific models of a short-term, one-shot intervention and evaluation and adopt long-range, action-research designs.

When comparing the Israeli example of an intervention among adolescents to the project reported in this volume, a major difference stands out with regard to the setting where the two interventions took place. The Israel example, which was unfolded above, took place in what Lewin called "a cultural island"—namely, an isolated retreat place cut off from the day-to-day political and organizational constraints. In this type of intervention,

there is a problem of how to generalize what has been learned under laboratory conditions to the real world. The project reported in the other articles in this volume, in contrast, has been executed in the real-life settings of two high schools. The impact on the two organizations and their students is well recorded in the various articles in this special issue.

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