

Photo Story Template

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OT-530-A: Groups

Professor Morgan Villano

April 16, 2026

Copy this template onto a separate document and append your reference list so they are one document. This is what you will upload to BB. Add a Cover Page and Reference page to the submission per APA 7th edition formatting.

NAME: Sydney Hess

TASK	YOUR WORK	POINT BREAKDOWN	POINTS	POINTS GIVEN
A naturally occurring group in the community not associated with an illness or condition or status is identified	The group I have chosen for this project is the Sacred Heart University Softball Team, spanning all seasons from the Fall of 2022 through Spring 2026. According to Villano (n.d.), a sports team is considered a social group, one not associated with an illness, condition, or status.	n/a it has to be a naturally occurring group NOT related to illness, condition or status	n/a	
The group description correctly identifies the details of the group: 1. Setting 2. Occasion 3. frequency of meeting 4. Participants [e.g. family, friends, co-workers etc.)	1. Setting: The Sacred Heart University Softball team meets in multiple different settings. During the fall and spring, the team primarily meets at its designated field for practice and at the Pitt Center's weight room for team lifts. Depending on the weather, the team may practice inside the Pitt Center's gymnasium if it is too cold or rainy outside. During the winter, the team consistently meets in the Pitt Center's gymnasium, at an indoor facility called Insports, and in the Pitt Center's weight room for team lifts. In special instances where the setting may change, such as away games, in which the team will	n/a This content is required to provide context	n/a	

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	meet at the Pitt Center to board a bus, away games, in which the team will meet for breakfast each morning and in the lobby to travel to the game together, or a variety of settings in the case where the team meets for team bonding. 2. Occasion: N/A 3. Frequency of meeting: The frequency of the team's meetings is dependent on the season due to NCAA regulations. In the fall and spring, the team is limited to 24 hours of meetings, while in December, it can meet for up to 8 hours. These hours include time spent in the weight room and on the field. 4. Participants: The team's total number of participants each year was around 25 student-athletes. The team also has a head coach, an assistant coach, an athletic trainer, a pitching coach, a catching coach, and a lift coach. In the start of the season of Fall 2025, the team also welcomed a volunteer assistant coach.			

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Thoroughly define <i>minimally</i> 7 highlighted concepts used in your presentation applicable to group dynamics. Use in text citation here for the definitions and correlate with a reference.	Concept #1: Group Norms • According to Cole (2025), group norms are present in every group, may be outlined or implied by members' behaviors and interactions, and can change over time as new members join or others leave. • Group norms include rituals, which are defined as, in regard to groups or populations, "shared social actions with traditional, emotional, purposive, and technological meaning contributing to values and beliefs within the group or population" (OTPF, 2020, p. 82). Concept #2: Group Cohesiveness • Group cohesiveness is defined as "the sum total of complex interactions and interrelationships that engage and connect therapist and members with one another, forming a positive bond" (Cole, 2025, p. 33). Concept #3: Cognitive-Behavioral Continuum • The Cognitive-Behavioral Continuum is defined as an observable and measurable way to adapt, expand on performance skills, and focus on self-control and self-management (Villano, n.d.). • A particular approach under this theory was developed by Skinner, known as Rehearsal and Practice (Villano, n.d.). Under this approach, repetition, repetition, repetition promotes performance-related outcomes and builds confidence in the individual or group. Concept #4: Cognitive Restructuring	One point per concept	7	

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	• Cognitive restructuring encompasses the process of questioning group decisions, life structures, and considering alternatives (Cole, 2025). Specific examples of cognitive restructuring for stressful scenarios and strong emotions include recognizing your thoughts may be their source, becoming aware of your emotions, identifying and challenging irrational thoughts, replacing them with rational ones using coping statements, engaging in healthy distractions, and practicing unconditional acceptance of yourself, as well as of others (Halperin, n.d.). Concept #5: Group Roles • According to Hoffman (2023), group roles are the specific patterns of behavior that individuals assume within a group to help it function effectively. Team members should be assigned specific roles within the group because understanding the various roles individuals assume helps identify any gaps or areas where roles aren't being fulfilled effectively. This insight can guide the team in developing strategies to enhance the team's performance. Concept #6: Conflict • According to Villano (n.d.), conflict is defined as a struggle for control within a group, often emerging when social conventions are relaxed, and members feel free to express personal criticisms. It involves challenges to authority, hostility, and division among members, as well as resistance to self-disclosure, reflecting tensions among dominance,			

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	rebellion, and differing expectations of the leader and of one another. Concept #7: Universality According to Yalom (2005), universality is the therapeutic understanding that one's thoughts, feelings, impulses, and life experiences are not unique but shared by others. It happens when clients realize that others face similar fears, struggles, or secrets, which lessens isolation, encourages connection, and offers relief by confirming that their experiences are part of the common human condition.			
- For each concept, now apply the definition, and explain how it fits your photo story content. - The explanation must be realistic. - The explanation identifies why the concept	- Concept #1: Group Norms - Application – Team Norms (Cole, 2025): For this specific group, the team's norms are established verbally and in writing by the head and assistant coaches. On the first day before the first practice of each fall, the head coach meets with the team to discuss a written contract outlining the group's rules and expectations. Examples of norms include, but are not limited to, arriving 15 minutes early for each group meeting, keeping your shirt tucked in on game days, not missing class for practice, and not using phones during any team event unless there is an emergency.	Full credit – explanations meet the criteria of realism, applicability to this particular group, and concepts are observable in the presentation. Partial credit – explanations do not clearly or fully meet criteria No credit – not done	9	

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makes a difference in your particular group. 4. The concept is observable in your presentation.	• Application – Rituals (OTPF, 2020): Rituals include, but are not limited to, writing a positivity note each day before practice and placing it on the designated wall, standing hand-in-hand while the national anthem plays before each game starts, slapping our “believe, perform, win” sign and holding a team huddle before each game to create a shared focus for the game, and shaking hands with the other team after each game or series. • How applications make a difference: These concepts impact my group by fostering unity, demonstrating maturity, establishing shared values and beliefs, and enhancing game results. • How the concept will be observable: Norms will include a picture of my coach discussing the contract with the team, a video of the team hitting the “believe, perform, win” sign, huddles before games, and pictures of the team lined up for the national anthem. 2. Concept #2: Group Cohesiveness (Cole, 2025) • Application: Group cohesiveness is most evident through our support for one another after both successes and failures. Specific examples include giving a teammate or coach a high-five or helmet tap to celebrate successes; offering advice to others when failure occurs, especially when lineups are announced; taking notes on the opposing			

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	team when not playing to inform teammates who are on the field; huddling before each defensive inning to support the pitcher; and continuously standing and cheering verbally for one another. Sacrificing individual biases, beliefs, and even personal statistics for the good of the team is essential. • How applications make a difference: To achieve desired outcomes, commitment to the group's goals must be prioritized. • How the concept will be observable: Pictures showcasing team cohesion will be displayed, including pre-defensive and pre-offensive inning huddles, high-five or helmet tap exchanges, and a couple pictures of players on the bench supporting their teammates on the field. 3. Concept #3: Cognitive-Behavioral Continuum (Villano, n.d.) • Application – Rehearsal and Practice: This relates to the Softball Team, as the group generally practices developing basic skills such as hitting, catching, running bases, and throwing. A more specific example is each position player completing their “every day” drills (e.g., outfielders will work on fielding ground balls and preparing to throw home; pitchers will work on spins to each other; hitters will engage their arms before swinging).			

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	• How applications make a difference: Rehearsal and practice improve skill development and boost confidence, leading to better performance, emotional control, and team unity. • How the concept will be observable: Videos and pictures of the team at practice or games will show “every days” being performed by pitchers, infielders, outfielders, and hitters. 4. Concept #4: Cognitive Restructuring (Cole, 2025) • Application: The team incorporates cognitive restructuring during “mental” practices, where athletes actively examine and modify their thought patterns related to performance. For example, while reviewing film, players reflect on mistakes and identify the thoughts they had in those moments (e.g., fear of failure or self-doubt), then work to reframe them into more adaptive, performance-enhancing perspectives. Learning from college coaches and players through interviews and mandatory readings further supports this process, as athletes identify effective mindset strategies and apply them to reshape their thinking. Similarly, once a year, we have the opportunity to interact with alumni, during which we all take time to ask them about their experiences and seek their advice on adopting a positive mindset. A more recent development is our positivity			

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	wall, where we write a positive note before a game or practice, about any aspect of our lives. Through these approaches, athletes are not only reflecting on performance but also actively restructuring maladaptive thoughts to improve confidence and performance. • How this application makes a difference: Cognitive restructuring improves performance and team cohesion by helping athletes replace negative self-talk with more confidence-building thoughts that enhance focus and emotional regulation. • How the concept will be observable: Pictures of mental practices, our self-affirmation wall, mental discussion on the designated chapter for the week, watching team film on the bus in small groups, and connections with alumni day will be shown. 5. Concept #5: Group Roles (Hoffman, 2023) • Application: Upperclassmen on the team often fill leadership roles because they are expected to be approachable, have more insight on what is expected, lead by example, and set the tone for practices and games based on their experience. Team captains serve as coordinators or communicators, relaying important information, initiating practices, and helping keep the team organized. Coaches take on task-oriented leadership roles by developing structured			

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	practice and strength-and-conditioning plans and providing feedback. Freshmen often assume more task-specific roles, such as setting up equipment for practice, which improves overall team efficiency and demonstrates role differentiation by experience level. All players also take on task roles based on their positions; for example, catchers lead on the field by directing plays, managing the pitcher, and overseeing game flow, while outfielders focus on preventing scoring opportunities by catching fly balls and limiting runners' advancement. • How this application makes a difference: Ensuring all team members understand and assume a role promotes overall team cohesion and efficiency. • How the concept will be observable: Pictures will include my coach providing discipline and coach-led infielders warm up by hitting ground balls, my class's last day of freshman set up, captains leading team huddles, the role of an infielder, and the upperclassmen leading the stretch and run to the outfield after exchanging high-fives with the other team. 6. Concept #6: Conflict (Villano, n.d.) • Application: Conflicts within the team frequently emerge when players fight			

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	between each other for positions or make errors during practice or games. External personal issues sometimes impact players' focus and performance, while scheduling conflicts cause tension over attendance due to class commitments. Additionally, the transition of senior players graduating each year created another source of conflict, as leadership roles and starting positions shifted, leading to increased competition and adjustment among team members. Occasionally, disagreements arose with captains or coaches over strategy or expectations. Most conflicts occurred within subgroups, such as between specific players or between players and captains, rather than involving the entire team; however, the graduation of senior players impacted the group as a whole. These conflicts are typically resolved through open communication initiated by captains or coaches, who clarifies expectations and reminded players of team goals. Furthermore, team-bonding also plays a significant role in resolving conflicts. Although some conflicts temporarily hindered performance, the team often grows stronger after resolving them, as players learned to support one another and collaborate despite their differences.			

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	• How this application makes a difference: The presence and resolution of conflict affect the group by shaping communication, trust, and cohesion, ultimately influencing both individual performance and overall team success. • How the concept will be observable: Images will include pictures of those who graduated and team-bonding activities. 7. Concept #7: Universality • Application: Universality is evident in how we support each other both in small and big ways. For instance, we became unified by our coach's cancer treatment. We all empathized with her struggles and worked together to keep our team resilient, recognizing that we were facing similar difficulties. When she officially overcame her cancer treatment, we surprised her with a game and custom shirts that said, "Pam Strong." Today, we are proud to say that she has returned to her normal self and is stronger than ever. • How this application makes a difference: Recognizing common feelings of worry, stress, and dedication among team members deepened our cohesion and resilience, demonstrating how shared experiences foster empathy and collective support.			

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	How the concept will be observable: An edited video of the team walking out to surprise our coach with our custom T-shirts will be displayed.			

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All pictures or videos correlate with the description of the group and clearly illustrate the highlighted concepts throughout the presentation. Do not use the same pictures or videos over and over again.		Pictures correlate with the description of the group and clearly illustrate the highlighted concepts	1	
1. Explain the meaningfulness of the group to the members. 2. Describe why the minimally seven group dynamic concepts you chose impact meaningfulness	Being able to play on the Sacred Heart softball team is incredibly meaningful to its members because most of us, at a young age, dreamed of becoming college athletes, let alone competing at the Division I level. Getting recruited means not only turning that dream into reality but also recognizing that the years of hard work, sacrifice, and dedication we all put into developing our skills were worth it. We see being on the team as an opportunity rather than a given, understanding that a roster spot must be earned and maintained through effort and commitment. Similarly, we value being chosen for the team, knowing many other athletes aspired to be in our place but did not get the same opportunity. This awareness deepens our gratitude and inspires us to make the most of every practice, game, and	Grading based on depth and breadth of answer	11	

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3. This must be minimally three paragraphs long (a paragraph is 5-8 sentences). 4. Your grade is dependent upon you synthesizing all of the above information, with breadth and depth of this written section being critical.	team experience. Beyond these individual successes, coaches and players on the Sacred Heart softball team see each other as their second family, with everyone expected to support one another both on and off the field, making our time together even more meaningful. Group norms, cohesion, and roles are vital for making the experience of being in this group meaningful. First, group norms define what it means to be part of such a talented and rare group by establishing obligations that promote professionalism, ensuring everyone is accountable, and recognizing that being on the team is an opportunity. Rituals embedded in group norms also emphasize the group's importance, as we value how others see us and aim to maintain a positive image, along with the emotional expectations surrounding softball. Next, group cohesion further strengthens the sense of belonging to the team, as teams that face challenges and adversity together often achieve better results. Providing consistent support through both success and failure reinforces the idea that each member is recognized and valued for their best efforts, fostering a stronger sense of unity. Additionally, group roles shape the group's purpose by giving each member a sense of responsibility and significance, ensuring everyone contributes meaningfully to the team. Other important concepts that influence meaningfulness include the cognitive-behavioral continuum, cognitive restructuring, conflict, and universality. The cognitive-behavioral continuum, which emphasizes daily practice, impacts each member's sense of meaning by offering everyone the chance to focus on their role and grow as an			

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	athlete every day. Additionally, cognitive restructuring is vital to the group's sense of purpose because it encourages individuals to engage in the sport they love with a positive attitude. Regarding conflict, when managed effectively, it can deepen meaning by strengthening relationships, as strong connections with others make playing the sport more rewarding and highlight shared values. Finally, universality plays a key role in giving the group purpose by emphasizing that everyone will fail at times. It also adds meaning to playing softball, particularly when my coach was undergoing cancer treatment, as it reinforced the notion that playing the sport we love every day is never guaranteed. In conclusion, these seven concepts together foster an environment where members feel supported, valued, and deeply connected, making the team a meaningful and impactful part of their lives.			
1. Template followed 2. Cover page per APA 7 th ed. 3. In text citations as indicated, per APA 7 th ed. 4. Reference list submitted per APA 7 th ed.		Full credit – both submitted Partial credit – one submitted No credit – neither submitted	4	
Total			Score/32	

References

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