

be covered in a group session. It is, however, better to plan for more than not plan for enough. The size of the group and the quality of interaction often suggest the number of topics that can be discussed in a given session.

The group plan can be divided into four sections. The first section is a statement of purpose, or objectives. It tells what the session is expected to accomplish. The second section looks at the materials that will be used and what needs to be collected prior to the session. Materials, including blank paper, topic-oriented games, posters, construction paper, a chalkboard and chalk, crayons, scissors, or an overhead projector or a video, might be used with all group levels. The third section of the plan details the specific strategies that will be used in a session. Strategies include what the group leader plans to say to the group, group activities, topics for discussion, and homework assignments. The specific strategies address what was stated as the purpose of the session. A brief summary of what was accomplished would conclude the session. This summary would be restated at the opening of the following session as a reminder of what had occurred in the previous meeting and what was being discussed when the session ended.

At the final group meeting, there should be an evaluation of the group experience both in terms of individual growth and the extent to which the group, as a whole, accomplished its objective. Group members would be asked to complete a short evaluation. Teachers would also be asked to evaluate the progress or changes they saw as a result of the group experience. Both evaluations are important to the group leader.

What follows is an example of a group plan for seventh graders who need to improve their self-esteem. It is developed for a middle school setting.

GROUP PLAN FOR DEVELOPING SELF-ESTEEM

Group level: Seventh grade
 Number of sessions planned: 8
 Number of members: 5 or 6
 Gender: Male or female
 Time for each session: 35 to 40 minutes
 Location of sessions: Counseling conference room
 Group leader: Single leader (co-leading is preferred)

PREGROUP PREPARATION

At a screening interview, each prospective member would be told the purpose of the group, the number of times the group would meet, that there would be rules they will be expected to follow, and that one of the most important rules is confidentiality. During the screening interview, the school counselor would briefly indicate how groups function and what is expected of a group member. Essentially, they would be told that they will be expected to listen to what is being said, share their opinions and feelings with the group, show respect to group members, and try to help their fellow members by being a good listener, offering suggestions, and showing friendship. These points would be repeated at the first group meeting for emphasis. If students show interest in becoming members of the group, the prospective members would be asked to have a parent

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sign a permission slip. They would be told the date of the first meeting and that they could not participate in the group until the signed slip was returned. If the slip is not returned before the first meeting, they would not be permitted to be in the group.

SESSION 1**Goals**

1. To review the purpose of the group.
2. To introduce group members to each other.
3. To present an "icebreaker" to relax the group.
4. To establish group rules.
5. To have students sign a contract stating they are willing to abide by the rules.
6. To begin talking about self-esteem.

Materials Needed

Chalk and chalkboard
 A Rules Agreement
 Blank sheets of paper

Specific Strategies

1. Explain why the group was formed and establish group goals.
2. Ask members to introduce themselves by stating their (1) name, (2) name of teacher, (3) some things they have fun doing, (4) some things they don't like to do.
3. Introduce a 10-minute icebreaker. The group leader says, "You are walking along a beach near the water on a hot summer day. As you walk, you are looking down at the sand. You see a bottle that's almost buried in the wet sand. You stop and pick up the bottle. There is a cork in the top of the bottle and when you look inside you see a little statue. You're curious about that little statue. You take the cork out and all of a sudden, the statue starts to move and a genie begins to come out of the bottle. As the genie comes out, he gets larger and larger. You watch as the genie becomes a giant. You are not afraid because the genie is smiling. Finally, the genie is completely out of the bottle. He is wearing a turban and a flowing robe and has a large sword strapped to his side. The genie bows to you and says, "Don't be afraid of me. I want to thank you for letting me out of this bottle. I've been trapped in it for many years, and you are the first person who took the time to take the cork out of the bottle and let me out. Now I will reward you for your kindness by allowing you to have three wishes. You may wish for any three things you would like and I will grant your three wishes." Then say to the group, "If this had happened to you, what would you tell the genie? What are your three wishes?" The group leader should write down each member's wishes to gain insights into the needs and maturity of the members.
4. Explain to the group the importance of having group rules. Prepare, in advance, a Rules Agreement for the members to sign. Ask the group if it would like to include other rules. Write these rules down and distribute copies to each member at the next session. Explain the consequences of breaking a rule.
5. All group members are asked to sign a Rules Agreement:
 I, _____, have heard and understand the rules that my group will be using throughout our group sessions. I feel all of the rules are important and I understand that breaking a rule can have serious consequences. I promise not to break any of the rules.
 Signed _____ Date _____
 In the event the members cannot write their names, a handshake would suffice.

6. Begin a discussion about self-esteem.
 - Self-esteem is how we feel about ourselves.
 - Self-esteem is also how we think others feel about us.
 - What are some ways we can feel about ourselves?
 - Why do you think we feel the way we do about ourselves?
 - Do you think our self-esteem can change?
 - What would make our self-esteem change?
 - How much do you like yourself? (Ask members to rate themselves using a seven-point scale with 1 being lowest.) The leader should make note of the number members assign to themselves. This question will be asked again at the last group meeting.
7. Summarize the session.

SESSION 2

Goals

1. To review the summary of the first session.
2. To present a brief icebreaker to relax the group (optional).
3. To continue to discuss self-esteem.
4. To evaluate each member's feelings about personal successes.
5. To begin discussing ways to become successful.

Materials Needed

Chalk and chalkboard

Specific Strategies

1. Review the summary of the first session.
2. Review the group rules.
3. Icebreaker. Who has
 - Been to a theme park (e.g., Disneyworld, Busch Gardens, King's Dominion)?
 - Played a musical instrument?
 - Caught a fish?
 - Made something in the kitchen (e.g., brownies, fudge, sandwich, etc.)?
 - A dog, a cat, a fish, a bird at home, etc.?
4. Resume the first session's discussion of self-esteem. (See item 6 from the first session.)
5. Ask all members to mention something that made them feel successful.
6. Ask members to name something they would like to accomplish and what they would have to do in order to successfully accomplish it.
7. Summarize the session.

SESSION 3

Goals

1. To encourage each member to set personal goals.
2. To discuss what it takes to be successful.
3. To continue to discuss self-esteem and ways of gaining success.

Materials Needed

A copy of the group's rules

Specific Strategies

1. Review the summary of the second session.
2. Review the group rules, if necessary.

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3. Present a brief icebreaker. Who has
 - Flown in an airplane?
 - Made a snowman?
 - Had a stomachache?
 - Slept outside?
 - Been to a zoo?
 - Been a patient in a hospital?
4. Open a discussion on the characteristics of successful people.
5. Ask members to identify one or more personal goals.
 - What would you like to be able to do?
 - Why would this make you feel better about yourself?
6. Summarize the session.

SESSION 4**Goals**

1. To continue discussing personal goals and examining the obstacles that would need to be overcome in order to attain these goals.
2. To continue discussing self-esteem.

Materials Needed

Chalk and chalkboard
 A copy of the group's rules
 Blank sheets of paper
 Predetermined homework assignments for each member

Specific Strategies

1. Review the summary of the previous session.
2. Review the group rules, if necessary.
3. Ask all members to talk about the personal goals they have set.
4. Determine the obstacles members feel they would have to overcome in order to attain the goals they have set for themselves.
5. Assign buddies to form diads. Each member of the diad is asked to help the buddy develop a plan for attaining a personal goal. Allow time for this diad meeting.
6. Buddies will also assist members in finding solutions for obstacles that need to be overcome in order to reach their goal. Write down all suggestions that are offered.
7. Indicate an appropriate assignment for each group member and request that this "homework" be done by the next meeting. Homework should be directed at helping members do something that would approach the goal that they have set. (For example, Bryan wants to do to get a better grade in English. His homework could be to ask his teacher what he needs from things the buddy discussed with the member.) The homework assignment could come
8. Summarize the session.

SESSION 5**Goals**

1. To review the personal goals for each member.
2. To check on the group's homework assignments.
3. To talk about motivation in general and motivation to accomplish personal goals in particular.

Materials Needed

Blank sheets of paper

Specific Strategies

1. Summarize the previous session.
2. Quickly review the group rules, if necessary.
3. Check on homework. Praise those who were successful and help those who were not successful in completing their homework assignment.
4. Open a discussion on motivation.
 - What is motivation?
 - Why is motivation important?
 - What are you motivated to do?
5. Discuss the importance of being highly motivated to succeed. One way of presenting motivation is to differentiate the *should* level of motivation from the *will* level of motivation, from the *must* level of motivation. The *should* level only tells us that we know right from wrong. This does not often motivate us to change. Everyone knows that we *should* do what our parents ask us to do and we *should* do our homework, but some students don't listen to their parents or do their homework. Allow the group to mention other things we *should* do. The *will* level is like a promise. When we do what we promise we *will* do, we get respect. You may have said, "I *will* keep my room neat or I *will* go to bed when my parents tell me." Unfortunately we don't always do what we promise we will do. Allow the group to mention other things they have said they *will* do. The *must* level is very different from the *should* and *will* levels. The *must* level has a consequence that we don't want. The *must* level has an *or else* attached to it. For example, you *must* listen to your parents or else you will be punished. You *must* do your homework or else you will not get good grades and you might not be allowed to watch television. You *must* brush your teeth or else your teeth will get cavities and you could have a toothache. Or, you could say to someone who smokes cigarettes, "You *must* stop smoking or else you will become addicted to nicotine and you could develop lung cancer." In order to be highly motivated, we need to be at the *must* level.
6. Refer to the *must* level of motivation and determine the consequences for members who will not be successful in attaining their personal goals. In other words, what is the *or else* if they do not attain their personal goals?
7. Summarize the session.

SESSION 6**Goals**

1. To continue to discuss motivation to succeed.
2. To continue to look at personal goals.
3. To examine a model for problem solving.
4. To discuss risk taking and why it is sometimes hard to take a risk.

Materials Needed

Chalk and chalkboard
Blank sheets of paper

Specific Strategies

1. Review the summary of the previous session.
2. Quickly review group rules, if necessary.

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3. Continue previous session discussion on topics of motivation, goal setting, and overcoming obstacles to attaining the goals.
4. Look at a problem-solving model. For example:
 - Develop a clear statement of the problem/concern.
 - Identify what the ideal outcome would be.
 - Define a realistic outcome.
 - Brainstorm for all possible solutions to the problem/concern.
 - Eliminate the solutions that are unrealistic, impractical, and impossible to achieve.
 - Arrive at one or two workable solutions to the problem/concern and eventually decide on a single solution.
 - Determine all of the things that must be done to accomplish this solution.
5. Talk about risks and why it can be difficult to take a risk.
 - You could fail in doing what you try.
 - You could end up feeling rejected, embarrassed, sorry you tried, or end up feeling worse.
 - You might not know what you should say or what you should do when you take a risk.
 - You don't feel ready to take a risk.
6. Talk about the consequences of not taking risks.
 - Nothing changes.
 - You could become disappointed or angry with yourself for not trying.
 - Things can go from bad to worse.
7. As a homework assignment, ask all members to come up with a solution to one thing that they *must* do in order to feel better about themselves.
8. Remind the group that there are only two more sessions.
9. Summarize the session.

SESSION 7**Goals**

1. To check on the progress of each member.
2. To review the concepts of motivation and problem solving.
3. To check on the homework assignment.

Specific Strategies

1. Review the summary of the previous session.
2. Briefly review group rules, if necessary.
3. Check on the homework assignment. Did any member take a risk?
4. Check on the progress each member has made on attaining personal goals.
5. Review information about self-esteem, personal success, motivation, and problem solving.
6. Remind the group that the next session will be the last meeting.
7. Summarize the session.

SESSION 8**Goals**

1. To review the group's goals.
2. To indicate progress shown by specific members of the group.
3. To identify what each person needs to continue to work on.
4. To evaluate the eight sessions.

5. To terminate the group and arrange for follow-up.
6. To have a 5-minute party.

Materials Needed

Blank sheets of paper
 Member evaluation form
 Healthy refreshments
 Evaluation forms for group members
 Evaluation forms to be given to teachers

Specific Strategies

1. Review the topics covered in the previous sessions.
2. Examine the progress made by individual group members.
3. Knowing that the group will not be meeting again, ask members to suggest a homework assignment for themselves that they can work on after the group ends.
4. Using the question from the first session, ask each member, "How much do you like yourself?" On a seven-point scale with 1 being the lowest, record the number and compare it with the number given at the first session.
5. Ask each member to evaluate personal and group progress. The group leader could say, "Because this will be our last session, it is important that I learn if this group accomplished what we set out to accomplish. Please answer each of these questions by putting a circle around either the word *yes*, *no*, or *maybe*." The group leader then distributes a sheet on which the following questions are written. The group leader reads each question to the group.

1. Do you have a better understanding of what self-esteem means?	Yes	No	Maybe
2. As a result of having been in this group, are you more aware of what you can do and those things you need to improve in?	Yes	No	Maybe
3. As a result of having been in this group, have you been able to define your personal goals more clearly?	Yes	No	Maybe
4. As a result of having been in this group, do you have a better understanding of the things that have prevented you from reaching your personal goals?	Yes	No	Maybe
5. As a result of having been a member of this group, do you have a better understanding of what is meant by motivation?	Yes	No	Maybe
6. Do you have a good understanding of what is meant by a <i>must</i> level of motivation?	Yes	No	Maybe
7. As a result of having been in this group, do you feel you can do a better job of problem solving?	Yes	No	Maybe
8. Do you feel you accomplished something as a result of having been a member of this group?	Yes	No	Maybe
9. Do you feel more prepared to take good risks?	Yes	No	Maybe
10. Would you want to be included in another group some day?	Yes	No	Maybe

If there were things about this group that you did not like, please indicate what they were.

Members are asked to arrange for an individual meeting with the counselor in about two weeks to report on their last homework assignment and overall feelings about attaining their personal goal.

An evaluation form should also be given to the teachers of the group members.

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