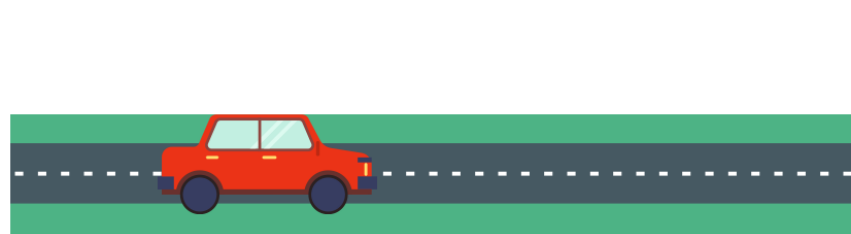




Roadmap to Effective Groups

A Brief Guide to Leading Groups in Schools

Groups enable children to form bonds with peers in a structured, safe environment. Groups enable them to discuss feelings and ideas openly, to learn new skills and practice new ways of interacting.



01 TOPICS/PURPOSE

Start with your goal or objective for the group.

The topic or purpose for your group drives the following decisions. Groups are very effective for many issues. They can be fun and can offer life-altering growth.

02 TYPES OF GROUPS

What type of group would most effectively meet your goal?



Educational: Skill or content based. A group that teaches something and has a specific structure or curriculum.



Support: Established to support the emotional experience and process of its members, who share a common experience.



Process: Unique opportunity to receive multiple perspectives, support, accountability, encouragement, and feedback from other individuals in safe and confidential environment.



03 STRUCTURE

The ease at which your group flows is dependent on its structure. Structure creates the norm, facilitates expectations and enhances safety.

Participants: Group by age, problem, or goals.

Format: Open vs Closed. Length, daily routine, schedule, duration, etc.

Rules: Group created. Designed to enhance safety & cohesion.

Behavior Management: Have a plan. Each day is new day.



Common Problems:

- Disruptiveness
- Polarization
- Monopolizing
- Inappropriate
- Risk Taking
- Over-reactivity
- Giddiness
- Resistance

Note: Rules should be simple and tell children what to DO instead of what NOT to do. Helps the group to establish ownership of rules and consequences. Review and enforce rules regularly. Employ simple but clear consequences (ex. Strike One – Warning, Strike Two – 10 minute Time Out, Strike Three – Parent Conference). Don't Take Back a Consequence but treat each day as a new beginning.

Common Group Topics

Social Skills, Children of Divorced Parents, Teasing, Friendship Skills, Depression, Anxiety, Study Skills, ADHD, Dating, Abuse Recovery

04 KNOW THE PROCESS OF GROUPS

There are always two simultaneous dimensions to groups, the Process and the Content. Good group leaders are aware of both.

Forming: Getting to know the group and the people in it.

Storming: Tension that builds when individuals are feeling comfortable and able to be themselves in the group

Norming: Group resolves some tension and bonds around certain norms, beliefs and commonalities

Performing: Members feel safe enough, and respect each other enough, to offer accountability and deeper levels of support



Tips From Experienced Drivers:

1. Success can be measured by the cohesion among group members.
2. Potential group members should always be screened before entering a group. Not every child is a good fit for every group, and that is okay.
3. Recognize problems in early stages and address them quickly.