

Secondary
Group Facilitator's
Handbook
For
ANOKA-HENNEPIN DISTRICT NO. 11

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PREFACE

The Anoka-Hennepin School District is committed to helping all students fully realize their potential. We know that students cannot reach this potential if they are harmfully involved with chemicals. Involvement with chemicals can seriously inhibit their capacity to learn and to function effectively in our schools.

Our secondary schools are involved in a comprehensive chemical awareness program. This handbook is designed as an aid to facilitators of Support and Concerned Person's Groups. It is hoped that with the information and activities included in this handbook, our facilitators will feel more comfortable with the group process and continue to assist students in making informed decisions regarding chemical issues.

The writing team wishes to thank Judy Sutter for allowing this curriculum writing to happen. We also wish to thank the numerous authors of materials used. Insofar as possible, we gave these people credit for their work.

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THE GROUP PROCESS

Facilitating a group is not an easy task. The dynamics within a group are intermingled and always in a state of change. Groups are unique entities that usually follow no set course, and groups are unpredictable. You may have a planned outline for the group and end up dealing with totally different issues.

Support Groups and Concerned Person's Groups are organized for two main reasons: (1) to bring together students with common concerns, and (2) to create an atmosphere of care, whereby students can express their feelings and receive support. It is important to realize that the group will not always be successful. Some of your group meetings will not always leave you with a feeling of completion or success. It is important to remember that the group is in a constant state of change. As facilitator, your main role is to help the group evolve towards a positive direction. Guiding the group towards healthy change can be accomplished through the following awarenesses and suggestions:

1. Become aware of your own personal feelings and attitudes. Since you are a group member, your feelings and attitudes can affect the group.
2. Allow the group some freedom. Do not expect to control the group.
3. Be alert to the feelings of group members. Occasionally glance at the members to see what their nonverbal signs say.
4. Encourage members to be open. This is done by being friendly, warm, responsive to what members say, and accepting their contributions.
5. When the group seems to be at a lull, initiate new ideas, initiate new ways of looking at the group's process or initiate activities to stimulate group discussion. (See activities in the Activity Section.)
6. Clarify a group and individual's opinions or comments. At times, clarification of a student's concerns is needed, thereby putting it into a perspective which will allow the entire group to understand what is being expressed. This can easily be accomplished by rephrasing the comments. (Example - "Mary, I hear you saying that you feel sad because you have been lonely lately.")

7. It is important to remember to focus on individual behaviors rather than the person. Refer to what a person does rather than comment on what you think he/she is.
8. Accept a leadership role as facilitator. This does not mean that you are responsible for the entire group. What it does mean is that as an adult and trained facilitator, you lead the group towards healthful change.

At times, it may be necessary for you to assert your leadership role in order to direct the group back to the issue at hand. Occasionally, different personality traits of the students will cause interruptions. Below is a brief outline of these personality traits and suggestions on how to handle the situation.

- a. Side Talker - Bring the student into the conversation, or let them know by a glance or comment that it is not acceptable to be talking while someone else is taking time.
 - b. Rambler - Point out that it is important to stay on the immediate subject and it is also very important to talk about the feelings associated with the incident. (Example - "It sounds as though you had a fun time at the party, John, but why don't you talk about the argument you had with your parents?" or "John, I would like to know how you felt about having the argument with your parents.")
 - c. Nonparticipant - If the student seems bored, ask for his/her comment on the topic being discussed. If the student is shy, attempt to bring him/her into the group discussion. Sincere, quiet group members will also learn from active listening. If it becomes apparent that a student doesn't want to be in a group, privately discuss those feelings.
 - d. Monopolizer - Praise the student for showing interest, but suggest that other members need to take time also.
9. Make productive use of group time. This does not mean that every minute has to be planned out. What it does mean is that a basic format for any group can be followed to insure time management. Below is an outline which will help you to organize the group meeting:

- a. Group Opening - In order to get everyone settled down for group, it is a good idea to open with a prayer, A.A. reading (Day By Day, Big Book, etc.) or another type of appropriate reading. When setting up ground rules, let the students decide how they want to open their group.
 - b. Introduction - Have everyone go around and introduce themselves. To change the routine, you could have everyone introduce himself/herself and then also state a feeling presently being experienced by each person; or, have each person state a color that represents how he/she feels. Be imaginative! There are many ways to make the introduction more fun and interesting. (Refer to general activities section - "GO AROUND EXERCISES.")
 - c. Recognition - Ask group members if anyone has an accomplishment or special day he/she wants to share. (Example - Sobriety dates, medallions earned, birthdays, good test grades, etc.)
 - d. Taking Time - Ask group members, "Who wants to take some time today?" This is usually the core of group. Lead students into the group process by opening up discussion. If no one talks, initiate individual disclosure by asking a question like, "Mary, how have things been going for you lately?" If it seems as though there are no pressing issues to share, direct the focus of the group to an activity.
 - e. Summary - Near the end of group, attempt to summarize the general mood of the group. Go back to individuals and restate encouragement, praise, concerns, etc. This is a good time to suggest assignments for individuals.
 - f. Closure - Allow the group to select the way in which they want their group to close. Like the opening, it may be with a prayer, reading, etc. After this is completed, remember to get some hugs!
10. Know the following group terminology. Those listed below are important for productive group process:

Feedback - Feedback is communication to a person which gives that individual information about how he/she affects others. Feedback assists an individual in learning how congruent behavior is with feelings. Useful feedback is specific,

descriptive of one's own feelings, directed towards behavior and not the individuals, and given in a caring manner.

Feedback is a way of giving help. It allows one person to do two things:

1. Explain to another person that his/her behavior is not congruent with his/her feelings, or that the resulting behavior is not acceptable.
2. It allows the sender to take care of himself/herself by expressing how he/she is affected by the behavior.

Confrontation - Confrontation is a form of feedback. It is most useful when spoken with concern and accompanied with examples of confronted behavior or data. Confrontation is descriptive of what we have observed in the other person. Guesses, advice, or discussions about something we have not witnessed is not confrontation. In a sense, when we confront, we hold up a mirror to let another person know how he/she appears to us. We are most useful as confronters when we are not so much trying to change another person as we are trying to help him/her to see himself/herself more accurately. (Example - "Your sarcastic remark suggests to me that you are angry." or "Your voice sounds so sad and hopeless, I see you feeling sorry for yourself.")

Leveling - Leveling is responding openly to one's own feelings after receiving feedback or a confrontation. We level when we take the risk of showing and expressing our feelings. Taking the risk to level with one's own feelings draws one closer to others. If, instead of leveling, we respond without true feelings, we are hiding.

The ways in which we hide our feelings are many. These "hiding behaviors" are called defenses. A defense acts as a decoy to avoid expressing a present feeling. The use of defenses prevents people from getting to know us. Group members can be most helpful in assisting other members to identify their own defenses. The following is a list of defenses we all use to some extent:

Rationalizing	Debating, arguing	Frowning
Justifying	Minimizing	Glaring
Projecting	Evading, dodging	Staring
Blaming, accusing	Defiance	Questioning
Judging	Attacking, aggression	Switching the subject
Intellectualizing	Withdrawing	Denying
Analyzing	Silence	Arrogance
Explaining	Verbalizing, talking	Joking
Theorizing	Shouting, intimidating	Smiling
Generalizing	Threatening	Complying

When we identify our defenses, it is easier for us to level with our true feelings more effectively. Leveling allows us to get closer to people. Taking the risk to share our feelings helps us to grow; and this is what group is all about!

Empathy - Empathy is understanding and feeling what another person is experiencing. Empathy is important in that it is reassuring to individuals to know that he/she is not alone. Feedback towards the person leveling are empathetic when one restates the feeling being expressed. (Example - "I know what you are feeling when you are saying you are sad because your brother doesn't take time to talk with you.")

Hopefully, the utilization of these ten points will make your group experience more successful and enjoyable. Helping students to grow and to discover their feelings is an enormous task. Best of luck! Remember that you will learn more with each new group experience.

ROLE OF A FACILITATOR

Facilitating groups involves a variety of responsibilities. In stating these as simply as possible the facilitator should do the following:

1. Create an atmosphere or climate for learning:
Arrange the room so people can see one another;
Let participants know that they are welcome;
Provide materials;
Set the tone for the type of acceptable behavior (e.g., no rudeness, listen to and respect one another).
2. Start a process going:
Be the leader of this process but be careful to keep from dictating to the people involved.
3. Guide the discussion:
Remember that each person in the group is a valuable resource and needs to be used as much as possible. Although these people come together as a group, they still remain individuals with different needs. Each person, including yourself, should be given time to express what he/she expects from the group. These needs should be used in deciding the goals, rules and discussion areas for the group.
4. Deepen the discussion:
As the facilitator you are bringing experience and training into the group. Based on your background you can add depth and insight to what is being said.
5. Foster relationships and interactions:
In addition to recognizing the individuality of each person in the group, channel the group interaction in a positive direction. Caring, respect, love, and harmony need to be nurtured in a group and the facilitator can play a large role in not allowing behavior that would work against these positive forces.

6. Set an example:

The facilitator of a group is being observed by every member of that body. Hypocrisy will work against the success of the whole, therefore, honesty is a must for a facilitator. Group members, especially adolescents, will look to a facilitator as a role model.

Virginia Satir has captured the role of a facilitator so well in the following description:

"When I'm using myself in the interest of somebody else's growth I see myself as:

the leader of the process, not the people
a model of communication, guiding the making of meaning
a camera - seeing
a microphone - hearing
a ladder - reaching for what is not there
a theatre producer - making things come alive
a detective - finding the pieces
a platoon leader
a plow horse - that's the patience part
a garbage collector - hearing the dirt
a weather vane - reading the temperature
a mathematician - seeing the units
a human - human being
a physicist - pointing in the context, looking in the context
an explorer - taking risks
a linguist - making language a helpful thing
a historian - developing continuity and making life's events understandable

These are pieces of me at moments in time which I'm free to call on."

DO'S AND DON'TS FOR GROUP FACILITATORS

Listed below are (1) successful techniques; and (2) "pitfalls" to be avoided when facilitating a group:

"DO":

1. Have a co-facilitator.
2. Have a "focus" for each meeting.
3. Know why you are here - have a commitment to what you are doing.
4. Be aware of self-attitudes toward different people - own values.
5. Be willing to share own feelings and ideas about discussion topics.
6. Create warmth and trust - "What is said here stays here!" - Respect all members.
7. Try to relax and learn from the group process.
8. Have a good sense of direction and clear idea of immediate and long range goals for the group.
9. Try to get in-serviced by "sitting in on" groups at treatment centers or own personal growth group.
10. Encourage members to share their ideas and feelings.
11. Be aware of nonverbal as well as verbal communication.
12. Be an active listener.
13. Show empathy to individual member's concerns and feelings.
14. Keep group on the subject - use direct questions, prevent avoiding, explore defenses.
15. Use open-ended questions to stimulate discussion.
16. Periodically pull together related parts of discussion.

17. Confront with respect and sensitivity.
18. Refer serious problems to coordinator or other qualified personnel (administration, psychologist, counselor, etc.).
19. Allow time to process/evaluate each group.
20. Take a few minutes to write reminders so you can pick up on problems at next meeting.
21. Keep your sense of humor - spontaneity is an important group function.
22. Arrange the meeting room so members can easily see each other.

"DO NOT":

1. Feel group success or failure is your sole responsibility.
2. Allow gossip during group - talking about people who are not present is unrewarding and unhealthy.
3. Be patronizing, or "know it all" or give advice - you are not expected to have the answers - seek group reactions to problems.
4. Do group therapy - neither you nor the group is trained to do this.
5. Tell members what they should or shouldn't do.
6. Be a "caretaker" - allow members to be responsible for their own feelings.
7. Have an excessive need to reassure members they are achieving.
8. Function solely as a parliamentarian thereby remaining passive and permitting a comparison of experience to suffice as a group discussion.
9. Avoid silence - it is healthy for groups to be silent even though you may feel awkward.
10. Carry group member's problems into personal life.

PROFILE OF A PROFESSIONAL CARETAKER

By Thomas Wright

1. Caretakers usually have grown up with a strong parental injunction "Don't be selfish." Consequently, they go through life masking their self-concern. They turn all their attention to the concerns of others and largely ignore their own emotional needs. They live in the constant fear of being indicted on the charge of "Selfishness."
2. Caretakers are usually lonely and emotionally undernourished. They operate in an emotional trade deficit. They give enormous amounts of compassion to others and never get enough emotional nurture in return. They have many friends but few intimate, nourishing relationships.
3. Caretakers are always subject to depression as a result of their stroke deprivation. This stroke deprivation results largely from the caretaker's unwillingness to receive compliments or care from anyone else. They are afraid to accept care from others for fear it would jeopardize their role in life.
4. Caretakers are predictable, steady, useful, and safe. They are sensitive to the needs of others. They are also boring! They are not particularly enjoyable because they only smile and rarely laugh. (A spontaneous, raucous, belly laugh is of great therapeutic value.)
5. Caretakers have much difficulty remembering names, even the moment after an introduction. They are so preoccupied with their own self-consciousness ("How am I doing?") that they don't pay attention to others.
6. Caretakers wear sweatshirts with a message on both front and back. On the front we see, "How Am I Doing?" On the back we read, "Try Harder!" All emotional transactions of the caretaker are designed to gain approval.
7. Caretakers are usually very harried. They over-commit their time and over-promise themselves. They are usually running late because they cannot break away for fear of encountering disapproval.

8. Caretakers are afraid of their own anger as well as the anger of others. They avoid conflict at all costs and direct all their anger toward themselves where it is safely converted into depression.
9. Caretakers are only able to exercise assertiveness when they are attacking social injustice or acting as advocates for their students. They rarely assert themselves in direct self-interest.
10. Caretakers are almost paralyzed when it comes to asking for what they need emotionally. They would much rather withdraw or pout than ask for nurturing.

THE FIRST GROUP SESSION

The first group session is extremely important, for it is this session that will lay the groundwork as to what can be gained from group and what is expected from its members. Begin by explaining to the group members that group provides a safe place where they can talk about and get support for any problems they are experiencing in their lives. They will often find there are others in the group who are having similar problems to their own.

The main goal of any group is for the members to learn valuable information about themselves and to learn better ways to deal with problems. Stress to the members that it is their group and it is up to them to make it worthwhile. By sharing their feelings, their needs, their thoughts, their problems and concerns, they will gain valuable insight about themselves and discover others with similar feelings, needs, thoughts, problems, and concerns. It is also important to let the members know there is no right or wrong answer in the group. It is desirable for everyone to be comfortable in taking risks.

After talking about the goals of the group, the rules should be stated. These should include the following:

1. **CONFIDENTIALITY** - What goes on in group stays in group and is not shared elsewhere. No one will repeat anything said here outside the group unless it concerns only him/herself.
2. Everyone who is part of the group belongs here.
3. Stay straight (a must for Support Group).
4. Show feelings.
5. Be honest. Express how you really are.
6. Give support by calling people; getting together outside of group; having one to one's.
7. Be on time to group.
8. Be respectful of others by listening; not interrupting; not laughing inappropriately.
9. Take time in group. Be willing to work. Group is not an excuse to get out of class or be with friends.
10. Give feedback.
11. Complete any assignment given.
12. No skipping group.
13. Take part in any decision needed to be made by the group.
14. Welcome new members.

GETTING ACQUAINTED ACTIVITIES

The following group exercises offer some good getting acquainted activities for the first session to enhance discussion of feelings, experiences, likes, dislikes, and differences.

1. Name Chain

Procedure: Seat the group in a large circle; you should sit in the circle as part of the group. Give the following instructions: "I'll start by telling my name." Say to the person on your left, "You repeat my name and add your own name. We will continue around the circle, clockwise. When it is your turn, repeat the names of all those who preceded you, and add your own name. If you forget someone's name, ask the person to repeat it for you."

2. Adjective Alliteration

Procedure: Go around the circle and have students state their names, preceded with an adjective. The adjective should start with the same initial sound as the person's name and should describe some quality (hopefully positive).

Example: "Trusting Tod"
"Caring Carol"

3. "I am" List

Procedure: Arrange the group in a circle and sit with them as a member of the group. Give each person a sheet of paper numbered from one to ten down the left hand side. After each number are the words "I am. . ." Instruct the group as follows: "Each of you working alone will complete each of these statements by writing after each 'I am' a word or phrase that tells something about you. For example, you might wish to say 'I am the oldest in my family,' etc."

After all have finished their lists, proceed in order around the circle, having each student read one of the sentences until all responses have been read.

4. A Favorite Thing

- Procedure:
- a. The facilitator asks each member to introduce himself/herself to the group and tell them about "a favorite something" (person, activity, relationship, hobby, interest, possession).
 - b. After each member has finished, form dyads. The facilitator asks the members to choose a partner whose favorite something they can most easily identify with.
 - c. After 10 minutes, the group begins again. Process what happened - feelings, thoughts. The facilitator then asks each member to again introduce himself/herself briefly as a repeat.
 - d. The facilitator asks the members to choose a partner whose favorite something they find very difficult to identify with.

- e. After 10 minutes, the group begins again. Process feelings, thoughts. Which activity was easiest to do? Why? Did you learn anything about yourself? Others? How do you feel about what you shared in your introduction? How did you decide what to disclose or to share?

5. Unfolding

- Procedure:
- a. Facilitator makes a brief presentation on the process of getting to know each other through sharing, self disclosure, feedback from others.
 - b. The facilitator explains that they are going to spend some time getting to know each other. Ask each member to briefly introduce and talk about himself/herself. Share what his/her happiest and saddest life experience has been. The facilitator begins.
 - c. Process difficulty in talking about ourselves? Revealing feelings? Sad experience? Do you feel closer to anyone in here? Why?

6. Why I Came

- Procedure:
- a. The facilitator asks each member to introduce himself/herself to the group and while doing so, respond to the following: "I came to this group because. . ."
 - b. After each member has responded, the facilitator asks the members to form a dyad with the person whose response was most similar.
 - c. After 10 minutes, the group begins again. After discussion, the facilitator asks the members to choose a dyad partner whose answer was most different.
 - d. After 10 minutes, the group begins again.
 - e. Process issues in the same manner as above exercises.

APPROPRIATENESS OF GROUP MEMBERS

Although it is relatively easy to determine appropriateness of a Support Group member (i.e., a student returning from treatment and/or expressing a desire to stay straight), this may not be the case for a Concerned Person's Group. A Concerned Person's Group is for students whose lives have been affected by someone else's chemical use. Most students come to this group concerned about a parent or sibling's chemical use. At times, however, a student may indicate an interest in a Concerned Person's Group but the person in their life who is using chemicals is a distant relative whom they see infrequently. The following 17 questions may be used by the facilitator at the first session to determine the appropriateness of each student to participate in this type of group. Each student should answer all 17 questions.

CONCERNED PERSON'S QUESTIONNAIRE

Answer Yes or No to the following:

1. Do you have a parent, close friend or relative whose chemical use upsets you?
2. Do you cover up your real feelings by pretending you don't care?
3. Does it seem like every holiday is spoiled because of drinking or other chemical use?
4. Do you tell lies to cover up for someone else's chemical use or what's happening in your home?
5. Do you stay out of the house as much as possible because you hate it there?
6. Are you afraid to upset someone for fear it will set off a drinking bout or other chemical use?
7. Do you feel nobody really loves you or cares what happens to you?
8. Are you afraid or embarrassed to bring your friends home?
9. Do you think the chemical abuser's behavior is caused by you, other members of your family, friends, or rotten breaks in life?
10. Do you make threats such as, "If you don't stop using, fighting, etc., I'll run away"?
11. Do you make promises about behavior such as, "I'll get better school marks, go to church or keep my room clean," in exchange for a promise that the chemical use and fighting stop?
12. Do you feel that if your mom or dad loved you, she or he would stop using?
13. Do you believe no one could possibly understand how you feel?

14. Do you have money problems because of someone's chemical use?
15. Have you considered calling the police because of someone's chemical use?
16. Do you think that if the chemical abuser stopped using, your other problems would be solved?
17. Do you ever treat people (teachers, schoolmates, teammates, etc.) unjustly because you are angry at someone else for using chemicals?

If you have answered yes to some of these questions, group may help you.

Another tool for the first session of a Concerned Person's Group is the following survey. By having the students fill it out, you will gain insight into how they see themselves, their family, their peer relationships, school performance, and their own chemical use. This information is for facilitator use only.

SURVEY

Answer the following:

Why did you join this group?

I. School Performance

- a. How do you feel that you are doing in school?
- b. Are you involved in any extracurricular activities?
- c. Do you like school? If yes, why? If no, why?

II. Personal Relationships

- a. Do you have any brothers or sisters? Their ages?
How do you get along?
- b. Are both parents living at home?
- c. Are there any drugs or alcohol used at home? If so, what?
- d. What is typical discipline if you misbehave?

- e. Have you had trouble getting along with others?
- f. Do your parents like your friends?
- g. Have any of these situations occurred in your family?

Divorce?	Death?	Drinking?	Drugs?	Separation?
Runaway?	Beating?	Abuse?	Incest?	

III. Peer Relationships

- a. What do you do for fun?
- b. Do you know anyone with a drug problem?
- c. Do you have a special friend?
- d. Do you have a good relationship with your friends?
- e. Are you concerned about any friend's or family member's drug use?

IV. Drug Use

- a. Have you ever tried any drug or chemical?
- b. If so, how often do you use?
- c. Do you use at school, home, alone, with someone?
- d. Have you ever been high?
- e. Has anyone ever expressed concern about your drug use?

Parents	Brothers	Sisters	Friends	Teachers	Counselors
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- f. Have you ever tried to quit?
- g. Do you have rules for your use?
- h. Have you ever gotten in trouble while you were high?

V. General

- a. How do you get your spending money?
- b. What do you do with your money?
- c. What would you like to be doing a year from now?
- d. Would you like to be different? If so, how?
- e. What do you like most about yourself?
- f. What do you like least about yourself?
- g. Do you feel loved?