

Amanda Hershberger

## Segment One

### *Getting Started*

*Therapist:* Hi everybody. Welcome today to our group session... You all don't know each other yet and were referred from different schools. So if you would like to go around the room and introduce yourself and just tell us how you're feeling about being in the group today on a scale of one to five, with five being really nervous and not sure and one being you're okay with it. ***The Name Round or The Introduction Round was used after this segment.***

*Comments:* This particular section helped the members to feel welcome. I could have asked them in a different way about introducing themselves. I could have also thanked them for coming to the group since it was a mandated group. I could have also said my name when we were doing the introductions. I could have also said being here rather than "being okay with it".

*Corrections:* Hi everybody. Welcome to our group session today. Thank you all for coming, I know you all probably would rather be somewhere else having fun right now, but you chose to come to group today. My name is Ms. Amanda and I am your group therapist. I would like for you all to introduce yourselves and tell everyone how you are feeling about being in the group today using a rating of one to five, with five being really nervous or not sure and one being that you are okay with being here. *The Name Round or The Introduction Round was used after this segment.*

*Group member:* What was the question again? I'm sorry.

*Therapist:* (In response to group member question) Introduce yourself, and on a scale of one to five, how do you feel about being in a group today? With five being really nervous and one being okay with it.

*Comments:* I could have acknowledged the member by name and informed her I did not remind repeating the question. I could have also asked the question at the end with clarifying what they were using the scale for right before asking the question.

*Corrections:* Oh, that is quite alright Chiquita, I do not mind repeating the question again. I would like for you all to introduce yourselves and choose a number on a scale of one to five with five being really nervous and one being okay, how do you feel about being in the group today?

### *Purpose*

*Therapist:* Our group is about overcoming anxiety.

*Comments:* I used this as an introduction and could have said this a little differently to incorporate the purpose more. There was more content to follow this particular statement and the group members had not yet started interacting.

*Corrections:* This group is a group focused on overcoming anxiety.

***Explained role***

*Group member:* Well, I've been in a group before and I really liked it and so I guess this one would be pretty good, too.

*Therapist:* Okay, sure. Okay, so you all are really not sure about the group of overall from what I'm gathering. Right? Okay. Hopefully we can change all of that by the end of this session. Let's talk about, first of all, my role is I am your therapist and I will direct and guide the flow of our group by keeping all of us on topic. I may draw you out by asking additional information or trying to pull out knowledge and insight from each of you as you guys are the experts of your own life's experiences. Right? Okay. Does everyone understand what my role is?

***Okay. Universality at beginning of this statement***

*Comments.* I think I could have shortened this and started my sentence a little better. I am not sure if it was appropriate to look at members for acknowledgement that they understood what my role is. I also never introduced myself by name.

*Corrections.* Okay, great, you were in group already and liked it. Hopefully by the end of this session, you all will feel more comfortable with being in this group. Let's go over a few things very briefly. My name is Ms. Amanda and I am your group therapist. My role as therapist is to direct and guide the flow of the group by keeping everyone on topic and focused. I may at times draw you out by asking additional information or trying to pull out knowledge and insight from each of you because you all are the experts in your own life's experiences.

***Clarified purpose***

*Therapist:* The purpose of our group overall is to overcome our anxiety. The purpose of this particular session is mindfulness. And we'll talk a little more in depth about that in just a few minutes.

*Comments:* I might could have held off on mentioning the purpose of group and the session until after I went through the rules and expectations.

*Corrections:* Let's create a set of rules for our group to go by.

***Clarified Purpose***

*Therapist:* Okay. So that brings us back to the purpose of today's group, which is mindfulness. Does everyone know what mindfulness is? Did you guys not look at the email I sent you?

*Comments:* I could have eliminated the remark about not getting the email and said this in a different way.

*Corrections:* Okay, so that brings us back to the purpose of today's group, which is mindfulness. Did you all get the email with the attachments I sent to you? Does everyone know what mindfulness is?

***Clarified Purpose/Explained how the group will be conducted when necessary***

*Therapist:* We'll meet weekly again on Tuesdays at 5:00 pm for six weeks. Well,

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back to the focus of the group was mindfulness, right? So being mindful in this moment right now, we're talking about the group. So if everybody could please just pay attention, I would appreciate that.

*Comments:* I was a little thrown off by a member having played with their glasses, and it took me a moment to get that processed, I could have waited about reminding the members when we meet towards the end of the session, and have brought it up at the beginning of the session instead of here.

*Corrections:* Reminding everyone of the purpose of the group, which is mindfulness, let's all try to stay present with what we are doing right now in the group and all pay attention.

***Explain and Clarify Group Rules/Explained how the group will be conducted when necessary***

*Therapist:* First I want to go over the rules and then get to some expectations. One of the group rules that I like to have for our group is first of all, this is a closed group. Whoever's here is all that will be here, so it won't be open to anyone else. We will meet weekly. Chiquita, could you please put your phone down and focus on the group? Thank you.

*Comments:* I had to deal with a lot all in this one incident. I feel like I could have waited about mentioning expectations and when we will meet and what type of group it is. I could have stated at the beginning that we have a closed group rather than throw it in here. I could have mentioned the expectations after completing the rules.

*Corrections:* Before we get to our mindfulness topic for today, I would like to talk about our group rules.

***Explain and Clarify Group Rules***

*Therapist:* Everything we say here is confidential and will be kept here. So what we say here will not go outside of this group and will be kept amongst each other. Are there any other rules that you guys can think of that you would like to have as part of the group rules? Liz?

*Comments:* I feel like I could have summarized what confidentiality is a little better.

*Corrections:* The first rule I have is to maintain confidentiality. What that means is that anything we say in this group stays in this group and is not shared outside of this group. The only exceptions to this is are if one of you says you want to hurt yourself or someone else, I may have to speak to an authoritative figure if that were to happen. Does everyone understand the rule of confidentiality? Are there any other rules that you guys can think of that you would like to have as part of our group rules?

***Explain and clarifying rules/Helping members verbalize expectations***

*Therapist:* Okay. So nonjudgmental, and keeping it confidential what we say here, not judging each other, respecting each other. Is everyone in agreement with the

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group rules? Okay. And weekly, I will come back to the rules just kind of to remind you and ask you what you remember about them. Okay? Let's move onto our expectations. What do you guys expect to gain out of group?

*Comments:* I could have restated the rules the members came up with as a group better.

*Corrections:* Okay, just to recap our rules, being nonjudgmental, keeping everything confidential, not judging each other, respecting each other. Are we all in agreement with our group's rules? Great. Weekly, I will remind you all about our rules and just ask what you can remember about them. Let's move onto to our expectations. What do you guys expect to gain from participating in group?

### ***Focus***

#### ***Establish and maintained the group's focus***

*Therapist:* The purpose of our group overall is to overcome our anxiety. The purpose of this particular session is mindfulness. And we'll talk a little more in depth about that in just a few minutes.

*Comments:* I think I established the focus here, but also redirected it by mentioning we would talk a little more about it later.

*Corrections:* The purpose of our group is overcoming anxiety, today we will focus on mindfulness. However, we have a little housekeeping to get out of the way and then we will bring the focus back to mindfulness after that. Sound good?

#### ***Bringing focus back***

*Therapist:* So that brings us back to the purpose of today's group, which is mindfulness. Does anyone know what mindfulness is?

*Group member:* Is it like being aware?

*Therapist:* That's a good point to bring up, Daniel, being aware. So I'm going to just tell you a little bit about mindfulness. And then we're going to go into an exercise. Okay? So mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way, on a purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally. It is also a mental state achieved by focusing on being aware of what you're doing right now and not thinking about the past or what you have to do later, but what you're doing right now. And it isn't about getting anywhere else. During a state of mindfulness, you will notice your thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations as they happen. The goal is not for you to clear your mind or to stop thinking. It's just to become

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aware of what your thoughts and feelings are rather than getting lost in them. Does that make sense?

*Comments:* I wish I had sent each member an email that had descriptions of mindfulness on it so they could follow along and my explanation would not have been as long.

*Corrections:* Let's look at the attachment from the email that was sent to you guys titled Mindfulness Descriptions... Does everyone have one? Great. I would like to ask you all to read a sentence about what mindfulness is... starting with you, Daniel, please read....

***Shifted focus from a person to a topic and back to another person...and (drew a member out)***

*Group member:* An incident where I could have been a little bit more aware is... So that would've been helpful to be more mindful.

*Therapist:* Okay. That's a really good example. Sorry guys. I was choking here. How about you Liz? I noticed you kind of nodding your head. What was something you thought of?

*Comments:* I think I could have acknowledged the fact that Liz was relating to what the previous member was sharing in a different way.

*Corrections:* Okay, that is a really good example. Liz, I noticed that you seem to relate to what Daniel was sharing in our discussion about his recent argument. What was something that you thought of for how you could have been more mindful?

*Group member:* Something that I thought of was.... And instead of telling her that, I got really angry and I just broke stuff in the house.

*Therapist: (was able to deepen the focus)* And how did your mom react to you breaking the things in your house?

*Group member:* I mean, she was upset. But at the same time, she also knows that I kind of get angry when I get scared and upset. So.

*Therapist:* So is your mom the one who took you to the principal to talk about this?

*Group member:* Yeah, she did.

*Therapist:* Okay. So hopefully we can, if you need to talk a little more after the session to learn how to deal with your anger a little more or for it not to get to that point, we can also set up individual sessions if you'd like, Liz. Anyone else want to share what they thought of?

*Comments:* I might could have addressed this situation a little differently, perhaps by asking everyone to think about what is being said instead of drawing her out specifically for individual sessions.

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*Corrections:* Hold on just a moment... I would like for you guys to really think about what is being said here... do you guys think that acting out in anger is the solution to dealing with your anxiety? Many of us do get upset and angry at times, but what we don't have to, and we certainly don't have to result to destructiveness. We can choose to be mindful of how we are feeling in that moment and I would bet if you would look at each of your situations, you will see many unhealthy patterns. In these moments when you feel like breaking things, yelling, hurting someone, or acting in a manner that would get you in trouble... I would like for you to think about being mindful and how you can choose to not act out.

***Deepened the focus...***

*Group member:* Oh, his dad called the police on me and my mom had to come pick me up from the police station. But I didn't get any charges. But they told me I had to come to this group.

*Therapist:* Okay. That's pretty heavy. Do you guys see where, if you don't learn to deal with your anxiety, where it can lead? What do you think Daniel?

*Comments:* I attempted to ask a thought-provoking question here and used another member to help deepen the focus but feel like it could have went more smoothly.

*Corrections:* Wait a minute here, I want you all to think about what Chiquita just shared... Do you see how not being mindful of ourselves and actions can get us into trouble? What do you think Daniel?

***Cut off members:***

*Group member:* Mm-hmm.

*Therapist:* Okay. Let's see how everybody else is feeling? Who wants to go next? You down here, playing with your hair.

*Comments:* I wanted to shift the focus here instead of spending too much time on one member.

*Corrections:* Thank you, Chiquita, let's go ahead and see how everyone else is feeling? Who wants to go next? You there, playing with your hair?

***Cut off members: (this was also part of one of the checking for comfort exercises)***

*Group member:* My name is Leslie and I really do not want to be here. I see no point of me being a part of this group...

***Problem Situation- The negative member***

*Therapist:* I see. So you're at a five and you really don't want to be here. Hopefully we can change all that and get you kind of closer to a one by the end of this session. Nice to meet you Leslie. Who wants to go next?

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*Comments:* I was summarizing the long-winded response from this group member while also putting a stop to her interjecting with anymore comments by asking who wants to go next. I might could have interjected and asked her to hold the details and just give me a number especially since she was being so negative and long-winded about the idea of being in group.

*Corrections:* Leslie, let me ask you to hold off on all the details, and just state your number, we can come back to you another time to discuss exact details. What would you say your number is for your comfort level of being in group today?

***Rounds: Introductions and checking comfort levels***

*Therapist:* You all don't know each other yet and you were referred from different schools. So if you would like to go around the room and introduce yourself and just tell us how you're feeling about being in the group today on a scale of one to five, with five being really nervous and not sure and one being you're okay with it. Whoever wants to go first. Chiquita, if you don't mind, please put your attention here with the group so that everybody can be present.

***Problem Situations- The distractor***

*Group member:* Oh, okay. Sorry. Sorry.

***(Drawing the member out)***

*Therapist:* Thank you. And since I've already said your name, go ahead and introduce yourself.

*Group member:* What was the question again? I'm sorry.

*Therapist:* Introduce yourself. And on a scale of one to five, how do you feel about being in group today? With five being really nervous and one being okay with it.

*Comments:* Perhaps, I could have reworded how I would like them to introduce themselves and use the word anxiety for something they were rating rather than the way I did. Also, I may should have ignored her behaviors in regards to her attempts at distracting the group by not asking her to put attention in the group, but asking instead for her to go first.

*Corrections:* I would like for us all to get to know each other. We will go in a round, taking turns by each of you stating your name and rating your anxiety level in terms of how you feel about being in the group today. When you introduce yourself, please let us know how comfortable you feel on a scale from 1 – 5 with 1 being completely comfortable and 5 being completely uncomfortable.

***Another round: Rules***

*Therapist:* Everything we say here is confidential and will be kept here. So what we say here will not go outside of this group and will be kept amongst each other.

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Are there any rules that you guys can think of that you would like to have as part of the group rules? Liz? (*Calling out a quiet member*)

*Group member:* I think having no judgment would be a group rule.

*Therapist:* Everybody is okay with not judging each other? Okay. Anyone else?

*Comments:* Since our group was new, I wanted all members to join in and feel they belonged in this group by setting up the rules of *their* group rather than being told what they will have to do or what not to do. I think I could have reviewed confidentiality a little more smoothly and precisely.

*Corrections:* Our first rule is, confidentiality. What that is is everything we say in this group will be kept in this group and will not be discussed outside of this group. The only exception to this is if one of you disclose that you intend to harm or have harmed yourself or others, I have a duty to warn members in authority of these type of circumstances. Does everyone understand about the rule of confidentiality? (*Scans for nods*) Great. Are there any rules that you guys would like to have as part of the group's rules? Liz?

***Rounds:***

***Expectations...***

*Therapist:* Okay. So nonjudgmental, and keeping it confidential what we say here, not judging each other, respecting each other. Is everyone in agreement with the group rules? (*Scans for acknowledgement from members*) Okay. And weekly, I will come back to the rules just kind of to remind you and ask you what you remember about them. Okay? (*Scans for acknowledgement from members*) Let's move on to our expectations. What do you guys expect to gain out of group?

*Group member:* How to handle my anxiety a little better and not get frozen. I don't know about anybody else, but sometimes the anxiety eats me up and I'll just stay frozen and I won't get my homework done or I won't have an [inaudible]

*Therapist:* You're kind of cutting out on us Daniel. That's one of the downsides of us having to do this all by Zoom, because of the current pandemic going on. So you were saying that you want to learn to deal with your anxiety because it's sometimes hard to handle and hard to focus on your homework and what? Then you cut off. (*mentioned pandemic here*)

*Comments:* I was trying to let this member know that I heard part of what he said but his response was not fully understood due to his microphone cutting out.

*Corrections:* Your mic is cutting out on us, Daniel, what were you wanting to add after not being able to get your homework done?

***Checked out the comfort level of members again:***

*Therapist:* Before we close, I want to go back around the room and everyone on the same scale question that I asked, on the one to five, how are you feeling now about the group? Let's start with you, Chiquita.



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*Group member:* I'm feeling a two. I'm more comfortable now. I think before I was a little anxious about everything, and being around these people that I don't know and sharing my problems.

*Therapist:* But now you feel like everybody is here for pretty much the same thing you are and everybody knows what you are going through. And we're all here for you.

*Group member:* Mm-hmm. (nods head)

*Comments:* I think I could have clarified the scaling question a little better here, but assumed everyone remembered from the beginning of the session.

*Corrections:* Before we close for today, I would like to go back around to each of you and ask you to go back to our question at the beginning of group today, about on a scale of 1-5 rate your anxiety level now about how comfortable you feel about being in our group, with one being extremely comfortable and five being not comfortable at all.

***Exercises: Demonstrated two kinds of exercises: Appropriately introduced and appropriately processed exercises...***

***(Exercise one introduction and actual conduction of)***

*Therapist:* Okay. So one of the exercises that I wanted to go over with you guys is... We can't really break up into groups. But if you could just take a couple of moments, think about something where in the past month or even in the past week, where you could have recognized, where being mindful could have helped you in a particular situation. Maybe you got upset about something and you overreacted or you got into a fight or the reason you were sent to the principal's office. Think about something that you could have done differently to have avoided that. And then we'll talk about that in just... I mean I'll give you about 30 to 45 seconds. And then we'll each discuss it one by one. Okay? **(pauses for group to think)** ***(This exercise was appropriately introduced here in this segment)***

*Therapist:* Is everyone ready? Or you need just a couple more seconds? You're all ready?

*Group member:* Mm-hmm.

*Therapist:* Who wants to go first?

*Group member:* I mean, I can go.

*Comments:* I think I could have went ahead and asked this same member to go rather than asking who wants to go first.

*Corrections:* Okay. One of the exercises that I wanted to go over with you guys is... since we can't really break up into groups, I would like each of you to just take a couple of moments to think about something that happened to cause you anxiety in the past month or even in the past week, and think about how you could

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have recognized, where being mindful could have helped you in that particular situation that caused you so much anxiety. Maybe you got upset about something and you overreacted, or you got into a fight or the reason you were sent to the principal's office. Think about a way that you could have reacted differently to have avoided being sent to the principal's office based on what we discussed about what mindfulness is. I'll give you about 1-2 minutes. And then we will each discuss it one by one. Okay? **(pauses for group to think)** *(This exercise was appropriately introduced here in this segment)*

If everyone is ready, I would like for you to go first, Daniel, what did you think of that you could have done differently to have avoided going to the principal's office?

*(Processing exercise one)*

*Therapist:* What happened when you did that?

*Group member:* Oh, his dad called the police on me and my mom had to come pick me up from the police station. But I didn't get any charges. But they told me I had to come to this group.

*Therapist:* Okay. That's pretty heavy. Do you guys see where, if you don't learn to deal with your anxiety, where it can lead? What do you think Daniel?

*Group member:* I think it just comes to show that we just need to learn how to think before we react with aggravating situations. And that's really easier said than done for me. So I'm hoping that maybe throughout the group, we can understand how that works, because a lot of times we just act out before we think.

*Therapist:* Right. Exactly. That is the whole point of what I was trying to get you guys to see here...

*Comments:* I think I could have reworded what I said here. I also could have asked Chiquita to state what she could have done differently instead of moving on from her. I also felt the one member's response was enough validation that everyone got the goal of the exercise and moved on to discussing mindfulness more instead of asking if anyone else got anything different out of it.

*Corrections:* **(First)** Okay, Chiquita, what do you think you could have done to have avoided having the police called and being sent to this group?

**(Second)** What insights did you get from doing this exercise? How do you all think you can use this exercise to help you in your life?

*Processing exercise two...*

*Therapist:* So let's go now to this exercise. It's called the five senses. And what that is is we'll talk about each one of our five senses. You guys know what that is. You learned about that in kindergarten. So what I want you to do now is think about what are five things that you can see. Look around. Notice five things that you've never noticed before. Maybe there's a pattern on the wall or on the ground, some light reflecting somewhere in the room where you're at. **(Pauses)**

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*Continued:* What are four things that you can feel? Maybe you can feel the pressure on your feet on the floor or the pressure of your shirt touching your skin. Or the temperature on your skin, whether it's hot or cold. Pick up an object. Notice the texture of this object. How does it feel? **(Pauses)**

*Continued:* What are three things that you can hear? Notice all the background sounds you had been filtering out, such as an air conditioning, birds chirping, music playing, maybe water running, or cars on a distant street. **(Pauses)**

*Continued:* What are two things that you can smell? Maybe you can smell flowers, coffee, or freshly cut grass. It does not have to be a nice smell either. Maybe there's overflowing trash that you just forgot to take out, or a nearby sewer or a pig farm. **(Pauses)**

*Continued:* What is one thing you can taste? If you have some gum, pop a piece of gum in your mouth or sip on a drink, eat a snack if you have one, or simply notice how your mouth tastes. Taste the air to see how it feels on your tongue. **(Pauses)**

***Continued with processing question:*** These are just a guideline of how to bring yourself back to the present and not focus on your racing thoughts or what you were doing just five minutes ago, or what you still need to do. You can also try doing this exercise while you're doing an activity like washing the dishes, listening to music, going for a walk, or working out. What did you guys think about this exercise?

*Group member:* I guess for me, it helped me pay attention to my surroundings more. And I felt more grounded in the environment I was. And I just stopped, my brain stopped racing.

*Comments:* I might should have reworded the processing question.

*Corrections:* These are just a guideline of how to bring yourself back to the present and not focus on your racing thoughts or what you were doing just five minutes ago, or what you still need to do. You can also try doing this exercise while you're doing an activity like washing the dishes, listening to music, going for a walk, or working out. How do you all think you will be able to use this exercise to help you in your life?

***Yalom:***

***Universality***

*Therapist:* Okay, sure. Okay, so you all are really not sure about the group of overall from what I'm gathering. Right? Okay. Hopefully we can change all of that by the end of this session.

*Comments:* The goal was to bring awareness of how all the members shared the same feelings and thoughts about being in the group.

*Corrections:* Okay, so all of you guys shared the same feelings about not being sure about being in the group.

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***Universality and Group cohesiveness:***

*Group member:* My heart starts racing and it seems like it's forever until I calm down and it's calmed down. I feel sometimes I'm going to jump out of my skin, that kind of stuff.

*Therapist:* Does anyone else experience these same feelings when they are anxious? Leslie?

*Group member:* Yeah, I do.

*Comments:* I was trying to make all members aware that they were not alone in experiencing the same feelings. I wanted to give them a sense of belonging, acceptance, value, and allowing them to feel secure with sharing.

*Correction:* Is anyone else experiencing these same feelings when they experience anxiety?

***Imitative Behavior:***

*Therapist:* How do you think you can use this to deal with one of those situations where normally you would have done something that got yourself in trouble? Leslie?

*Group member:* I think it helps you just to take a step back. So in my situation, when he was saying that I could have just ignored him, instead of be listing off the five things I can see, and just start focusing on my surroundings and just tune him out.

*Comments:* The goal was to get the members to think about more effective ways of confronting their problems by applying new and appropriate methods that disrupt their old, dysfunctional patterns. I wanted the members to process this exercise and state what they could do differently.

*Corrections:* How do you think this exercise could have been helpful, or will be helpful when you are facing one of these situations where you normally end up getting yourselves into trouble?

***Imparting Information: (Also explained any special terms when necessary)***

*Therapist:* Okay. So that brings us back to the purpose of today's group, which is mindfulness. Does anyone know what mindfulness is? Did you guys not look at the email I sent you?

*Group member:* Is it like being aware?

*Therapist:* That's a good point to bring up, Daniel, being aware. So I'm going to tell you a little bit about mindfulness. Then we're going to go into an exercise. So mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way, on a purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally. It is also a mental state achieved by focusing on being aware of what you're doing right now and not thinking about

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the past or what you have to do later, but what you're doing right now. And it isn't about getting anywhere else.

*Continued:* During a state of mindfulness, you will notice your thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations as they happen. The goal is not for you to clear your mind or to stop thinking. It's just to become aware of what your thoughts and feelings are rather than getting lost in them. Does that make sense? **(Scanned for acknowledgement or questions from members)**

*Comments:* I thought this was a good place to discuss and explain what mindfulness is since it was the purpose/focus of our session today. The goal was to educate and empower the group members with knowledge pertaining to mindfulness and how it could help in their particular situations. I could have asked the question about the email more effectively. I could have acknowledged Daniel's answer better.

*Corrections: First:* Okay. So that brings us back to the purpose of today's group, which is mindfulness. Does anyone know what mindfulness is? Did you guys look at the email I sent to you all?

*Second:* Good job, Daniel. Mindfulness is exactly like being aware. Let's talk more about what exactly mindfulness is, as some of you are shaking your heads that you don't know what it is. After we talk about what it is, we will practice a lesson that incorporates the use of mindfulness. So mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way, on a purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally. It is also a mental state achieved by focusing on being aware of what you're doing right now and not thinking about the past or what you have to do later, but what you're doing right now. And it isn't about getting anywhere else.

*Continued:* During a state of mindfulness, you will notice your thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations as they happen. The goal is not for you to clear your mind or to stop thinking. It's just to become aware of what your thoughts and feelings are rather than getting lost in them. Does everyone understand what mindfulness is now? **(Scanned for acknowledgement or questions from members)**

***Imparting information further:***

*Group member:* ...So I'm hoping that maybe throughout the group, we can understand how that works because a lot of times we just act out before we think.

*Therapist:* Right. Exactly. That is the whole point of what I was trying to get you guys to see here. Let's talk now about back to mindfulness. So we're not thinking about what we've done wrong or anything like that, but the reasons why mindfulness can help us. It does reduce your symptoms of anxiety. It helps you to be able to have stronger or more satisfying relationships in your life, whether that be with friends or family. Your memory focus and your mental processing speed become enhanced when you learn to be mindful of what you're doing instead of letting your thoughts get carried away.

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*Continued:* You also have an improved ability to adapt to stressful situations. So hopefully I'm going to teach you guys an exercise in a few minutes and we'll talk about how it made you feel and you guys can let me know if you think it's going to help in your everyday lives. Okay? **(Scans for acknowledgement or questions)**

*Comments:* After I discussed a little more about mindfulness, I think I could have prepared better for what would come next, but it was hard to know that the group member was going to bring us back to our focus here. If I could have thought ahead of time, I would have changed how I worded things at the end of this segment.

*Correction:* Mindfulness also gives you an improved ability to adapt to stressful situations. We are about to do an exercise that requires you to think about things in a mindful way, from what we have learned, and how you can incorporate the use of it into your every day lives. After the exercise, you guys can let me know how it made you feel and how you can use it in your situations. Any questions? **(Scans for acknowledgement or questions)**

***Installation of hope:***

*Group member:* I'm feeling a two. I'm more comfortable now. I think before I was a little anxious about everything and being around these people that I don't know and sharing my problems.

*Therapist:* But now you feel like everybody is here for pretty much the same thing you are and everybody knows what you are going through. And we're all here for you.

*Group member:* Mm-hmm. (nods head)

*Comments:* The goal of this was to allow for members to have a sense of optimism about being in the group and the future of the group and see how one member's feeling that everyone is here for the same thing and all know what they are going through, creates hope within the group that everyone is there for each other.

*Correction:* But now, you feel more comfortable with sharing your problems, because everyone here is dealing with the same type of problems, and you can with help from the group, get to a much better place than what sent you here because we are all here for you?

***Problem Situations:***

*Group member:* My name is Leslie and I really do not want to be here. I see no point of me being a part of this group...

***Problem Situation- The negative member***

*Therapist:* I see. So you're at a five and you really don't want to be here. Hopefully we can change all that and get you kind of closer to a one by the end of this session. Nice to meet you Leslie. Who wants to go next?

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*Comments:* I was summarizing the long-winded response from this group member while also putting a stop to her interjecting with anymore comments by asking who wants to go next. I might could have interjected and asked her to hold the details and just give me a number especially since she was being so negative and long-winded about the idea of being in group.

*Corrections:* Leslie, let me ask you to hold off on all the details, and just state your number, we can come back to you another time to discuss exact details. What would you say your number is for your comfort level of being in group today?

*Therapist:* You all don't know each other yet and you were referred from different schools. So if you would like to go around the room and introduce yourself and just tell us how you're feeling about being in the group today on a scale of one to five, with five being really nervous and not sure and one being you're okay with it. Whoever wants to go first. Chiquita, if you don't mind, please put your attention here with the group so that everybody can be present.

***Problem Situations- The distractor***

*Group member:* Oh, okay. Sorry. Sorry.

***(Drawing the member out) CHECKING COMFORT LEVEL AT BEGINNING OF GROUP***

*Therapist:* Thank you. And since I've already said your name, go ahead and introduce yourself.

*Group member:* What was the question again? I'm sorry.

*Therapist:* Introduce yourself. And on a scale of one to five, how do you feel about being in group today? With five being really nervous and one being okay with it.

*Comments:* Perhaps, I could have reworded how I would like them to introduce themselves and use the word anxiety for something they were rating rather than the way I did. Also, I may should have ignored her behaviors in regard to her attempts at distracting the group by not asking her to put attention in the group, but asking instead for her to go first.

*Corrections:* I would like for us all to get to know each other. We will go in a round, taking turns by each of you stating your name and rating your anxiety level in terms of how you feel about being in the group today. When you introduce yourself, please let us know how comfortable you feel on a scale from 1 – 5 with 1 being completely comfortable and 5 being completely uncomfortable.

***Closing: There was adequate time for closing with how the entire session went***

***Reinforcing commitments made by members:***

*Therapist:* Okay, so everybody can use this in their everyday lives then, based on what we've learned today. I would like for you all to practice this over the next

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week. Each time, at least once a day, or more than that if you feel the need, like if you're going to become upset for any reason. Can anyone agree to do that? And if you will journal about it and how it made you feel and we'll talk about it at our next session next week on Tuesday at 5:00. (**Scanned for acknowledgement and questions**)

*Comments:* I think I could have condensed this by saying it differently.

*Corrections:* Great, so everybody can use this in their everyday lives. What I would like for you all to do before our session next Tuesday at 5:00 pm is to practice these exercises at least once a day, or if you feel yourselves becoming upset for any reason, and also when you do practice them, or forget to practice them, journal about what happened and how it made you feel so we can discuss it in our session next week. Can everyone agree to do that? (**Scans for acceptance of homework**)

***Planned for and conducted an effective close of session and summarized and highlighted the main points of the group***

*Therapist:* Okay. But now you know why you're here and you see that it can actually help. Right? (**Scans for acknowledgement or comments**) Okay. So just to summarize what we did today, we focused on mindfulness and how that can help us in our everyday lives. And we will meet each week on Tuesdays at 5:00 PM. Does anyone have any questions or concerns before we go? (**Scans for questions**) No? Okay. I already have your forms ready and will email those to your parents. Thank you, guys, for coming today and I look forward to seeing you all next week.

*Comments:* I let the group know before this segment that we getting ready to close by telling them before we close, I would like to do the scaling question, they were ready for the closing after everyone answered the questions. I feel like I might could have reminded them about the homework here as well as what I already said.

*Corrections:* Okay, by now, you all realize why you are here and can see the benefits of the group. To summarize what we did today, we discussed what mindfulness is and learned new ways to practice mindfulness when we are feeling upset. I would like to remind you all about your homework, which was to practice the exercises we learned today, I have emailed you all a copy of those as well. And to journal about what happened when you practiced the exercises or forgot to practice the exercises. We will discuss what you guys journal in next week's session on Tuesday at 5:00 pm. Does anyone have any questions, comments, or concerns before we go for the day? **Scans for questions** No? Alright, I have already completed your forms from the school and have emailed those back to your parents for you go give the school. Thank you, guys, for coming today and I look forward to seeing you all gain next week.



## **Segment Two**

### ***Reflection & Issues***

#### ***A. Cultural Issues***

The group I conducted consisted of high school aged students who had been sent to the principal's office in multiple school districts for problematic behaviors resulting by their inability to react appropriately to their anxiety. No problems surfaced during the session; however, I think that the fact that all of the students went to different high schools, could have been a cultural factor that could have surfaced. Most high schools have rivalries with other schools in their districts, and this automatically can create feelings of discomfort and/or hatred towards each other because of the preexisting rivalry amongst the schools in terms of sports competitions, etc. If a fight were to have broken out over the videos, I would not have been there physically to intervene. I could perhaps interjected between students who were going at each other over the video by interrupting the students. And then by acknowledging the fact that we all are aware that we are from different schools, and that there is influences engrained within each of those schools that could cause them to view one another through a different lens, but I would reiterate the commonality of why we are all here and bring the focus back on the reason everyone was there and detract them from fighting about school rivalries. I could research cultural competency in this aspect if I plan to hold a group like this in the future and learn how discuss those differences in a nonjudgmental way to get the participants to accept each other as they are despite any differences.

I would like to sharpen my cognitive behavioral therapeutic skills in terms of dealing with various cultural issues that I may face as a therapist in practice. I can do this by conducting research, as well as discussing with my field supervisor different treatment modality recommendations, and approaches to various cultural issues.

#### ***B. Ethical Issues***

Ethical concerns surfaced during the session regarding the group firstly, being exposed to treatment for anxiety, them being afraid of exacerbation of their symptoms, client safety concerns, and clients not feeling comfortable yet to share their problems, as well as members indicating they were not sure about being in the group. These ethical issues were addressed during the session to the best of my ability. I handled some of these issues by trying to go more in depth as the situations occurred with each client, by restating what they said and asking questions related to those incidents and trying to make their concerns validated by incorporating universality and instillation of hope throughout the group session.

In order to facilitate ethical practice through treatment choices, attempts can be made to provide recommendations for treatment approaches by identifying

empirically supported treatments for specifically, anxiety, in this session. Cognitive behavioral therapy could be explored as a treatment modality for use within a group such as this one, as it utilizes techniques to identify and modify maladaptive thoughts and behaviors of the clients. With anxiety clients, a key to CBT treatment is exposure. I can do further research, as well as training, on how to integrate exposure into CBT into group practice sessions, as well as some additional techniques such as skills training and relaxation for people who have anxiety. I might could have reflected more with each member when they were each member and addressed each issue by trying to use exposure; however, I feel I need more training with such practice.

### *C. Social Justice Issues*

While the group did not expressly define any social justice issues during this session, something that could have been a social justice issue would have been bullying. None of the participants expressed that they had been bullied. Had any of the participants been bullied, this could have exacerbated the symptoms of their anxiety and caused them to act out inappropriately and respond negatively to various situations as a result of the increased anxiety levels. Bullying is a major problem today that does affect individuals of all backgrounds and is quite prevalent within the school systems nationwide. Bullying is a social phenomenon that often occurs in the presence of a peer audience, so most students have been involved in bullying as bystanders, if not directly.

In order to address bullying, first I would have to be able to identify it. Bullying is defined as intentional, unwanted and aggressive behavior that is often repeated in relationships with a perceived power differential. It is also important as a therapist, to understand the potential short-term and long-term ramifications associated with bullying. Students who bully others are more likely to have issues related to substance use in their adolescent years and other problems later in life related to criminal behavior, violence and disruptive behaviors. Students who are targets of bullying can also experience negative emotional states, increased rates of suicidal ideation and suicide attempts, and problems related to academic performance and school attendance.

On a larger scale, I could approach the school systems as a whole, and each individual high school to introduce a comprehensive, schoolwide intervention program as a mechanism to prevent bullying. These programs can be difficult to implement because of their related cost and required time allocation. Thus, therapists and counselors can benefit from programs that are more accessible in terms of cost and time allocation, and that establish therapists and counselors in schools as leaders in program implementation. I could invest time and money into training to utilize such programs if I were to become a school Social Worker.

### ***Advanced Autonomy as a Practitioner***

I think I was able to demonstrate this role affectively in the last video specifically in that I was prepared for the session ahead of time, I was able to have the members dig deeper and think critically about their actions and how being mindful could help them in their everyday life situations so that they learn not to react in a dysfunctional manner. I think I can strengthen my role as an advanced autonomous practitioner by continuously educating myself and keeping up to date on the best practices in group facilitation.

I will have the opportunity to improve my group skills in practicum as we (Helen Ross McNabb Center) have an Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) consisting of a group of adults who present with co-occurring disorders stemming from alcohol or drug abuse. I am also a member of a group called the International Association for Social Work with Groups (IASWG). This organization offers opportunities for seminars and continued educational events to continue to grow group work skills for a practitioner. I will have the opportunity as a member, to attend these seminars, symposiums, and CEU events.

I could also look at other ways to become more adept in my group skills by possibly joining other group work related organizations, researching Yalom's curative factors, integrating other group work therapists' approaches into my practice, and learning from my peers.

### ***Technology Transition***

Something positive that I learned from having to transition to utilizing Zoom and technology when meeting for classes and with my groups was that I do not get as nervous in this environment as I do when I am sitting face-to-face with a group of people. I did not like being unable to conduct dyads during the Zoom sessions for our group work. I did experience a loss of internet due to the recent tornado that affected our community, and this left me with having to play catch up on my coursework. I was able a few times to go to other classmate's homes to use their internet but was having to try to do as much work as possible in a limited amount of time.

I feel like the use of technology removed barriers for me in some ways because I did not have to go anywhere or prepare to be away from home, with exception to while I did not have internet. I was able to improve my organizational skills and note taking skills by the use of technology.

The most predominant obstacle I personally faced was being without the internet for twelve days and having to find ways to try to do my work outside of home, when I was supposed to have been staying home in quarantine due to the Coronavirus. This caused myself added stress and I got behind a bit on my assignments. I have to say though, my professors were very wonderful and understanding of my situation and worked with me on extending the deadlines for my assignments.