

Group Facilitation Plan

The purpose of this therapeutic group is to help individuals improve their coping skills, develop self-awareness, and strengthen their interpersonal relationships. The group provides a safe, supportive space where participants can share experiences, explore personal challenges, and learn from one another. The long-term goal for members is to develop practical coping strategies and build healthier, more meaningful relationships while improving emotional resilience (Corey, 2016; Yalom, 2020).

The objective for the first session is to establish a welcoming environment, build rapport among group members, and introduce the group's purpose and norms. By the end of the session, group members will have a clearer understanding of the group's focus and begin to identify personal goals for their participation. The session will focus on reducing initial anxiety and encouraging open communication to set a foundation of trust and cohesion.

To create a welcoming and safe environment, the session will start with a structured icebreaker called *Teach a Class*. In this activity, each participant will introduce themselves, share their pronouns, and answer the question: "If you could teach a class on anything, what would it be?" This activity encourages self-expression and highlights each person's unique interests. According to Yalom (2020), icebreakers like this help ease tension and build connections among group members, which fosters a more comfortable and open group atmosphere.

After the icebreaker, I will review the group's purpose, confidentiality policy, and group norms, emphasizing mutual respect and open communication. Participants will have an

opportunity to contribute additional norms, further promoting shared ownership of the group experience (Corey, 2016).

Two evidence-based exercises will be used in the session:

1. Coping Strategy Reflection

The first exercise will help participants reflect on and share their current coping strategies. This exercise encourages self-awareness and allows group members to learn new strategies from one another, promoting connection and mutual support. Participants will reflect on how their current coping strategies impact their well-being and discuss alternative methods.

2. Round Discussion on Personal Goals

The second exercise will encourage participants to set personal goals for the group experience. This activity aligns with the session's objective of helping participants feel grounded and focused in the group. By identifying personal goals, members begin taking ownership of their growth and progress.

Both exercises are designed to deepen participants' engagement and create opportunities for interpersonal learning and universality, two of Yalom's (2020) curative factors. Universality will help members recognize shared experiences and understand they are not alone in their struggles. For example, I may say, "It sounds like several of us are working on managing anxiety, this is something we can explore together." Instillation of hope will be reinforced by encouraging members to share personal stories of progress and growth, reminding the group that positive change is possible through shared support.

Creating an inclusive and culturally responsive environment is essential to the success of the group. The group will be structured to promote inclusivity and cultural competence. I will acknowledge and respect the diverse experiences and backgrounds of each participant. Open-ended questions will help each member feel invited to contribute, and regular check-ins will ensure participants feel comfortable. I will validate individual experiences while encouraging members to reflect on how their unique perspectives contribute to the group as a whole.

I will use regular check-ins to gauge how comfortable participants feel, periodically asking questions like, "How is everyone feeling about where the conversation is going?" or "Would anyone like to add a different perspective?" This helps create an inclusive environment where diverse perspectives are welcomed and respected. Language will be sensitive and nonjudgmental, ensuring participants feel heard and understood.

Character profiles:

1. **Amanda (Age 32)** – Amanda is a creative writer with a passion for storytelling. She struggles with perfectionism and anxiety related to career pressures. Amanda joined the group to find healthier ways to manage stress and avoid burnout.
2. **Carlos (Age 28)** – Carlos is a barista who is naturally outgoing but feels socially anxious in unfamiliar settings. He wants to improve his confidence and learn how to set boundaries in his relationships.
3. **Leila (Age 42)** – Leila is a teacher navigating a difficult divorce. She is focused on rebuilding her self-esteem and improving her emotional well-being. Leila hopes to develop coping strategies for managing her stress.

4. **Eli (Age 35)** – Eli is a software developer who has recently relocated to a new city. He feels isolated and wants to build connections while working on managing his feelings of loneliness and homesickness.

By focusing on building trust, promoting inclusivity, and incorporating evidence-based activities, the session will help establish a strong foundation for practicing with groups!

References

Corey, G. (2016). *Groups: Process and practice* (10th ed.). Cengage Learning.

Yalom, I. D. (2020). *The theory and practice of group psychotherapy* (6th ed.). Basic Books.

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