

Group Intervention Script

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Getting Started

Leader: Hello everyone! I hope everyone is doing well today! How was your day?

Group members: “I got a haircut.” “I got to miss school for an appointment.” “I was late.” **[and other mixed responses]**

Leader: Wow! Sounds like an interesting day! As you all know by now, I am Ms. Phoebe and I am the facilitator of this group. That means that I help guide the conversation and make sure everything during the group runs smoothly. We’ve discussed anxiety, it’s triggers and coping skills during our last 10 sessions. During today’s session we will practice a different type of coping skills. **(Pause)** Can anyone help me remind the group of our rules?

Monica: Respect

Joey: Pay attention

Leader: Anything else?

Chandler: Confidentiality

Rachel: Be nice

Ross: Don’t judge

Leader: You are all exactly right! So, let’s make sure we keep these rules in mind for today’s session.

How was everyone’s week? Thumbs up, down or side-

(Monica interrupts the leader)

Monica: I didn't have a good week. My cat died and then my foster mom got really sad and because my foster mom was sad I was sad.

Rachel: Oh my gosh!

Chandler: Oh man that sucks

Joey: I'm sorry Monica

Chandler: How did he die?

Monica: It was a she and I don't wanna talk about that right now

Focus

Leader: Monica, I'm so sorry to hear about your cat. That couldn't have been easy to deal with this week. You said that you felt sad, how have you been dealing with that?

Monica: Well.. I've tried going outside to listen to the birds and the wind

Leader: Does that usually help you feel better?

Monica: Yes. It sounds like music

Leader: That's very interesting that you've noticed it sounds like music. We will be doing an activity later on in the group that you might find helpful. Has anyone else here dealt with hard emotions and what did you do to make things better?

Rachel: Yeah, my grandma died when I was 8. My mom was really sad, too. I would ask my mom to sing to me. She would sing, and braid my hair. It would make her smile.

Chandler: My neighbor's dog passed away. My neighbor was sad so my mom made her a *flan*, a jello-like pastry with caramel on top. It seemed to make her feel better.

Ross: My pet iguana died last year. It was tough for me because I loved him so much. I was sad, but I knew he was in a better place because the vet said he had a heart problem. I would listen to music to feel better.

Joey: When my babysitter's brother died, I remember she would cry when she would put me to bed. She was sad for a very long time. It made me sad seeing her sad, too. I remember that she would make me dance with her in the kitchen. It would make her so happy. I'm sorry that I asked how your cat died.

Leader: Thank you all for sharing. It is clear that a common response to loss is sadness. I also heard that many of you used different methods to feel better: dancing, singing, enjoying a good dessert, and listening to music. I hope this has provided some insight and has helped you understand the sadness you and your foster mom feels is normal.

Monica: Yes, I didn't know everyone felt that before...

Leader: That's okay, everyone is constantly learning, and we're here to support each other. Has anyone experienced any anxiety from the sadness they felt?

Group members: "Yes" "Yeah" & "Mmhmm"

Monica: I want to learn about how I can be calm in the middle of what is happening even if it's sad and scary.

Group members: "Yeah." "Me too."

Leader: Great! I think the exercise that I plan to do with you guys may be helpful for this. It is kind of about keeping calm in the eye of the storm. But we'll save that for later. For right now, let's move back to the discussion about our weeks. Is anyone willing to share with the rest of the group?

(Silence.)

Leader: It's Monday and I know some of us are tired or exhausted. Would you all be more comfortable talking in groups of two rather than the whole group to start?

Various group members: “Yeah.” “Yes” “Ok.”

Leader: Great! I’ll pair you all off. Ross and Monica together, Chandler and Joey together and Rachel, I’ll partner up with you. Is that ok with everyone?

Various group members: Yeah.

All of the groups have a dialogue about their week. This takes 3 minutes.

Leader: Ok everyone! Let’s talk about how our weeks have been. We’re going to go around the circle and let everyone explain how their partner’s week went. Ross and Monica, would you mind going first?

Ross: Uhhh I guess...*(shy)* Monica had a hard week because of her cat dying. She says she misses her cat and she hates how her foster mom is sad. But her foster mom took her to Dave and Busters to get their minds off the cat. So, Monica is better.

Leader: I’m so glad to hear that she is doing better. Thank you for sharing Monica’s week with us. Monica, can you describe Ross’ week?

Monica: Ross’ week was good. He got to hang out with his friends outside on their skateboards this week. He had fun. But can we talk about my week? Yes, I went to Dave and Buster’s An-

Focus

Leader: Monica, thank you for being willing to share more details about your week. I just want to make sure everyone is getting the chance to share their week as well.

Monica: Ok. *(Monica crosses her arms and rolls her eyes.)* But first I want to comment on Ross’ week. *(Uncrosses her arms and looks at Ross.)* I think it’s cool that you spent your week with some friends and went skateboarding. Because last time

you said you're working on putting yourself out there by playing less video games and using your phone less too

Ross smiles at Monica.

Leader: Ross, you are smiling. What are you thinking?

Ross: I didn't realize I wasn't inside all weekend and was hanging out until Monica pointed it out.

Leader: How does that make you feel right now?

Ross seemed a bit hesitant but took a deep breath and looked at his group members.

Ross: Confident.

Leader: Continues to stare at Ross and remains silent

Ross: I feel better about myself. (**Looks at Monica.**) I think it's cool you pointed it out. Thanks.

Ross continues to smile at the group members and group leader.

Leader: Thank you, Monica and Ross!. Chandler and Joey, how did your week go? Who wants to share first?

Joey: Me!

Leader: Go right ahead!

Joey: Chandler's week was awesome because he got to hang out at a hotel!

Chandler: And Joey's week was awesome because he got to hear about me hanging out at a hotel.

Chandler and Joey laugh and so does the rest of the group.

Dealing With Problem Situations

Joey: Chandler's house is being exterminated so he's staying at a hotel. He has tons and tons of bugs crawling around his house and all over him and they could jump off of him and right onto you at any second!!

Monica and Rachel scream and run away from the group. Joey bends over laughing at the girls' reaction.

Chandler: I don't have bugs on me! Joey, stop!

Joey is still laughing.

Leader: Let's stay focused. Let's look around and see if there are any bugs around. Do you see any bugs Rachel or Monica?

Rachel: No I don't see any

Monica: Well.. no

Leader: Great, would you mind coming back to your seats. ***(Monica and Rachel sit down)*** Everyone, let's remember the rules we spoke about earlier. Let's be nice and respectful to one another.

Joey: Sorry. It was just a joke

Yaloms Curative Factors

Leader: Chandler I notice you weren't laughing, did you find that funny?

Chandler: No I didn't.

Leader: Are you comfortable with letting everyone know why?

Chandler: Well back in my home country bugs weren't a big deal. Most of our homes had bugs in them. In the US bugs seem to freak everyone out. My mom said if we didn't get rid of the bugs, she could get in trouble by having my siblings and I there...wait am I going to get in trouble for saying that?

Leader: No Chandler, thank you for trusting us with that information. It seems like your mom is doing what she can to ensure you and your siblings are okay.

Rachel: So the bugs didn't bother you?

Chandler: Nope. It only bothers me when Joey says things like that.

Rachel: So, in Honduras there were bugs and your family didn't care?

Chandler: No but over here you have to spend tons of money to get rid of them.

Monica: Well, maybe the nicer thing to do would be to apologize, Joey.

Joey: Chandler knows I like to joke around. He told me all about his life in Honduras.

Chandler: Hon-der-us, and I didn't take that one as a joke

Joey: I'm sorry I didn't think it would bother you that much

Leader: We all should remember we come from different backgrounds and families.

Sometimes there are things one person is familiar with, that another person doesn't understand. The best thing we can do as a group is to be accepting and supportive of others. If we have questions, we can ask the person in a kind way and they have the right to agree or to say no. Let's finish our activity from earlier. Rachel, would you mind sharing next or would you like me to share first?

Rachel: I'll go! Ms. Phoebe's week was good. She worked a lot but she loves her work so it's okay. She also took time for herself and took a long walk which she loves as well.

Leader: Thank you for sharing about my week, Rachel! Rachel's week was good also. She found a new hobby. She discovered that she loves painting. She's been doing it a lot with her Dad. Thank you everyone for sharing! It was nice to learn about everyone's weeks.

Leader: Today we are going to be doing an activity called a Body Scan.

Joey: Ooh! I can use a body scan to see...

Focus

Leader: Joey, this is not an appropriate time to discuss that. We all just spoke about being respectful,

Joey: (*Responds with slight attitude*) Sorry. I wasn't going to say anything bad. I won't talk for the rest of the day

Monica: That's not what she's saying, but that's not funny. I don't like where I think that sentence was going.

Joey: Okay, Monica. I get it

Exercise 2

Leader: Thank you, Joey, for keeping this a safe environment. A body scan is actually a type of mindfulness exercise. We did an activity a few weeks ago that I called mindfulness. Can anyone tell me which activity that was and what mindfulness means?

Rachel: Was it the leaves and water thing?

Leader: Yes! It was the "Leaves on a Stream" activity! Great job! Can anyone tell me what mindfulness is?

Joey: Isn't it the thing we do with our eyes closed that makes us calm?

Purpose

Leader: Yes! Mindfulness is kind of like meditation. It involves deep breathing, visualizing and allowing our bodies to relax. It also teaches us how to clear and organize our minds. Today, we will be doing a mindfulness activity that teaches how to scan our bodies for stress, tension and tightness. I would love for you all to participate

and learn how this exercise and how mindfulness can be a great coping skill to deal with the anxiety we talked about before.

Monica: Maybe this will help me with my cat

Leader: That's true! This body scan might be very helpful for you! Ok. Everyone get as comfortable as you can without disturbing anyone around you. You can lay down or sit, leave your eyes open but relaxed on one area of the room or close them. Whatever makes you feel most comfortable. **[Mindfulness script starts here]**

Leader: Take several long, slow, deep breaths. Breathing in fully and exhaling slowly. Breathe in through your nose and out through your nose or mouth. Feel your stomach expand on an inhale and relax and let go as you exhale.

Begin to let go of noises around you. Begin to shift your attention from outside to inside yourself. If you are distracted by sounds in the room, simply notice this and bring your focus back to your breathing.

Now slowly bring your attention down to your feet. Begin observing sensations in your feet. You might want to wiggle your toes a little, feeling your toes against your socks or shoes. Just notice, without judgment. You might imagine sending your breath down to your feet, as if the breath is traveling through the nose to the lungs and through the abdomen all the way down to your feet. And then back up again out through your nose and lungs. Perhaps you don't feel anything at all. That is fine, too. Just allow yourself to feel the sensation of not feeling anything.

Dealing with Problems situations effectively

Leader notices Joey poking Chandler to get his attention. Joey succeeds and starts making faces to make Chandler laugh. Joey and Chandler laugh resulting

in disruption of the activity. Monica becomes distracted looking around, Monica makes eye contact with the leader.

Monica: (*whispering*) I think you guys are being rude to Ms. Phoebe's exercise.

Remember our rule about being respectful? Like come on guys, please be quiet.

(Joey and Chandler shrug their shoulders and reluctantly close their eyes and continue with the exercise.)

Leader: Okay, everyone let's continue. When you are ready, allow your feet to dissolve in your mind's eye and move your attention up to your ankles, calves, knees and thighs. Observe the sensations you are experiencing throughout your legs. Breathe into and breathe out of the legs. If your mind begins to wander during this exercise, gently notice this without judgment and bring your mind back to noticing the sensations in your legs. If you notice any discomfort, pain or stiffness, don't judge this. Just simply notice it. Observe how all sensations rise and fall, shift and change moment to moment. Notice how no sensation is permanent. Just observe and allow the sensations to be in the moment, just as they are. Breathe into and out from the legs.

Then on the next out breath, allow the legs to dissolve in your mind. And move to the sensations in your lower back and pelvis. Softening and releasing as you breathe in and out. Slowly move your attention up to your mid back and upper back. Become curious about the sensations here. You may become aware of sensations in the muscle, temperature or points of contact with furniture or the bed. With each outbreath, you may let go of tension you are carrying. And then very gently shift your focus to your stomach and all the internal organs here. Perhaps you notice the feeling of clothing, the process

of digestion or the belly rising or falling with each breath. If you notice opinions arising about these areas, gently let these go and return to noticing sensations.

As you continue to breathe, bring your awareness to the chest and heart region and just notice your heartbeat. Observe how the chest rises during the inhale and how the chest falls during the exhale. Let go of any judgments that may arise. On the next outbreath, shift the focus to your hands and fingertips. See if you can channel your breathing into and out of this area as if you are breathing into and out from your hands. If your mind wanders, gently bring it back to the sensations in your hands.

And then, on the next outbreath, shift the focus and bring your awareness up into your arms. Observe the sensations or lack of sensations that may be occurring there. You might notice some difference between the left arm and the right arm – no need to judge this. As you exhale, you may experience the arm soften and release tensions. Continue to breathe and shift focus to the neck, shoulder and throat region. This is an area where we often have tension. Be with the sensations here. It could be tightness, rigidity or holding. You may notice the shoulders moving along with the breath. Let go of any thoughts or stories you are telling about this area. As you breathe, you may feel tension rolling off your shoulders.

On the next outbreath, shift your focus and direct your attention to the scalp, head and face. Observe all of the sensations occurring there. Notice the movement of the air as you breathe into or out of the nostrils or mouth. As you exhale, you might notice the softening of any tension you may be holding.

And now, let your attention expand out to include the entire body as a whole. Bring into your awareness the top of your head down to the bottom of your toes. Feel the gentle rhythm of the breath as it moves through the body.

As you come to the end of this practice, take a full, deep breath, taking in all the energy of this practice. Exhale fully. And when you are ready, open your eyes and return your attention to the present moment. As you become fully alert and awake, consider setting the intention that this practice of building awareness will benefit everyone you come in contact with today.

Leader: When you're ready you can open your eyes (*Waits for everyone*) How was that exercise for everyone?

Chandler: It made me more tired. I felt like I was losing focus sometimes.

Leader: That's okay, that's normal. It's just being able to acknowledge what you're thinking about, and allowing yourself to refocus.

Chandler: That's the thing. I do and then don't like refocusing. It's just something about slowing down and how you said to bring awareness to my breathing kinda reminded me of the past. (*Chandler abruptly stops and stares at the ground.*)

Joey: What is it, man? (*Joey looks at the leader, leader nods.*) Do you mean about your journey?

Chandler: I think so. It's like when Ms. Phoebe said to focus on my toes, feet, legs, arms, chest...everything in my body, I couldn't help but remember how my body felt when I was walking the desert. Like I told you guys before, I was in the desert for two days. Everything in my living body ached and I was so, so, so tired.

Ross, the quietest one so far in the session, leans toward the group circle.

Ross: Is that why you said this exercise made you more tired?

Chandler: Yeah. It made me think about those times but when Ms. Phoebe told us to breathe, it was as if my breathing helped face the worst feelings I felt, and I realized I actually wasn't in the desert but an air conditioned room.

Leader: That's mindfulness. Mindfulness can enhance present-moment awareness, increase self-compassion, and strengthen a person's ability to self-regulate. What we've discussed what mindfulness means for each of you individually. How does it make you feel about the others in the room? Do you feel more connected to the group?

Chandler: I like that, Ms. Phoebe, because it helps me to remember that's the past, and things are different now.

Leader: You bring up a great point about recognizing what is going on in the present moment versus what has happened to us in the past. Can you explain a little more about what you mean by "different?"

Chandler: I guess I mean that I have come a long way. Not just distance, but me as a person. I think I have learned a lot from life and that I'm not really a kid so much anymore.

Leader: Thank you for sharing, Chandler. I am glad to hear this activity was helpful in realizing that. Growing up can be really hard. But the best we can do is to put one foot in front of the other and allow ourselves to enjoy the moment at hand. Does anyone else want to share how they felt during the Body Scan?

Rachel: I think this exercise can help me with my panic attacks, especially when I feel anxious during school.

Ross: Same. Mine gets really bad when I am in school. This exercise seemed to help ease down my heart rate and thoughts.

Leader: You can always practice mindfulness when you are on the go. This is a great coping skill to use during your daily activities in school (**looks at Ross and Rachel**), at night (**looks at Joey**), and any time when you are feeling anxious (**looks at Chandler and Monica**).

Leader: Thank you for sharing Rachel and Ross. Does anyone else want to share how they felt during the Body Scan activity?

Monica: I kept thinking about my cat, and how she would jump on my lap, so I can feel her fur. Sometimes she would light scratch my thighs and knees with her paws. When you were telling us to wiggle our toes, I could imagine feeling her fur with my feet.

Leader: Thank you Monica for noticing the parts of your body that stood out to you during the exercise. Were all of these memories positive memories, or did it make you feel down or sad?

Monica: Positive, I actually liked it. It gave me good memories about her, and I felt like she was with me and I could touch her.

Leader: I'm glad that this was a good experience for you, and you recognize that you can utilize this exercise anytime you want to think positive thoughts about your cat.

Does anyone else want to share how they felt?

Joey: (*raises his hand*)

Leader: (*Points to Joey*) Yes, Joey.

Joey: I always find mindfulness activities interesting because it reminds me of a poem. The flow of the words together. Just hearing you do it made me feel so relaxed. I could even draw while listening.

Monica: I enjoy mindfulness too, I never thought to use it outside of therapy though.

(Looks at Joey.) Hey Joey, don't you think you could use it at nights when-

Focus

Leader: Hey, Monica, it seems like you have a suggestion for Joey, let's start by asking Joey if he's open to hearing this suggestion first.

Monica: Umm okay, what do you mean?

Leader: For example, 'Hey Joey I have a suggestion. Is it okay if I share it with you?'

Yalom's 11 Curative Factors

Monica: Okay...Hey Joey, I have a suggestion for you. Is it okay if I share it?

Joey: Sure, that's fine

Monica: Okay so as you said last week you feel stressed and anxious at night, do you think it would help if you listen to a recording of this or something

Joey: That could actually be really cool. Where would I get a copy?

Leader: Good suggestion, would you like for me to give you a list of YouTube videos that could be played throughout the night?

Joey: Ya thanks

Chandler: I need that list too!

Rachel: Me too!

Leader: Can I see a show of hands of the individuals that would find the mindfulness exercise useful to them?

Everyone raises their hand except for Ross

Yalom's 11 Curative Factors - Group Cohesion

Leader: We can all keep in mind that studies show that mindfulness teaches people, even kiddos your age, to focus on the present. It can help you manage difficult emotions. Being mindful can even help build self-esteem, and make you more aware of your thoughts and feelings. I'll provide a list of YouTube videos to everyone. Hey, Ross. I noticed you've been a bit quiet. It is your choice if you want to share, is there anything you noticed about yourself during the exercise that you wanted to share?

Ross: Umm... I don't know, I guess I didn't think that much about my phone or video games during the exercise-- ***Interrupted by Monica.***

Monica: Which is more of a reason that you should get that list!

Leader: Monica, it seems like Ross was still speaking when you spoke. Let's try to have everyone finish what they have to say and remember our rule of respect.

Monica: Sorry, Ross. I didn't realize you were still talking, I mean I did but I was trying to make a point.

Rachel: (*Looking at Monica*) You seem to always be doing that, though. I am low-key getting tired of you taking over the conversations today.

Ross: No, it's okay. No worries.

Rachel: Ross, stand your ground.

No one talks. Silence.

Chandler: *(in a tune-like singing voice)* Awkward.

Ross: My anxiety is kicking in.

Joey: Honestly, I am surprised by Rachel's reaction. *(Looks at Rachel.)* I see that you are advocating for Ross because you have realized how much he tends to let things go. It's like you're fighting for him right now.

Rachel: I did because seeing him wanting to open up, as this is already hard enough to do. Like, Chandler has already picked on Joey about the bugs and people talking over each other. It upsets me.

Monica: Why, though?

Rachel: It's hard for all of us already. Like we need to speak up for ourselves. Ross over here is the youngest of us all and the one time he has the floor, Monica interrupts him.

Leader: I can sense and see how upset you feel about all of this. What I am hearing from you is the importance of self-worth. Do you feel comfortable sharing with your group members more about that?

Rachel: *Looks at everyone.* I care about you all. You all bring something different. Chandler speaks another language, he learned English in like *(Looks at chandler)* one year? He's made friends and is very cool. *(Looks at Ross)* Ross here is the youngest and seems like the most mature one and he got to hang out with friends and ride

skateboards. **(Looks at Joey)** Joey is funny and goofy but also is supportive in everything we say. **(Avoids eye contact towards Monica)** Monica is Monica.

Monica: What does that suppose to mean?

Rachel: *Stares at the ground*

Leader: Rachel, let's explore what you just said about Monica. Let the group understand what you mean when you said "Monica is Monica?"

Rachel: It means that I want to be more like you. **(Looks at Monica)**. You share what's in your mind and you seem not to care what others think of you. I like how you carry yourself.

Leader: Rachel, what I am hearing is you appreciate how Monica values her self-worth?

Rachel: (*appears to be thinking*) Yes.

Monica: I think the way you are speaking on behalf of the boys shows how much you appreciate them. You can do that for yourself, too, ya know?

Leader scans the circle, everyone seems content and no tension after this group process.

Leader: After the mindfulness activity and having this discussion, how is everyone feeling?

Group members except Ross: "Great!" "Relaxed." "Aware." "Open-minded."

Ross: What I was gonna say was I could use that YouTube list of mindfulness.:

Everyone laughs.

Ross: Thank you for that Rachel and Monica. I felt like at the beginning of the activity, I was going to fall asleep, but it allowed me to accept my feelings and thoughts about anxiety. Something I really hate. But when Ms. Phoebe said to gently notice the thoughts in my mind without judgment and bring my focus back to the sensations in my body, it was like I put them on a leaf and they floated away.

Leader: Mindfulness works through a number of ways. Much like what Ross is telling us right now, mindfulness encourages us to open up and accept our emotions. Research has shown that mindfulness helps us reduce anxiety and depression. Mindfulness teaches us how to respond to stress with awareness of what is happening in the present moment, rather than simply acting instinctively, unaware of what emotions or motives may be driving that decision. As a result, we are better able to identify, experience, and process our emotions.

Rachel: Ms. Phoebe, I believe that is what happened to me just now. It's like it encouraged me to be honest and open.

Joey: That's so cool.

Chandler: Word.

Monica: Thank you, Ms. Phoebe.

Leader: Thank you all for your participation, for respecting each other, not judging, for paying attention (***looks at Chandler, everyone laughs***), and??

Group members: Confidentiality!!

Leader: That's right. We are coming to the end of today's session, but before we leave, does anyone have anything you want to share?

Joey: I still feel like I am not cured. Like I will still have anxiety when I least expect it.

Leader: *(Looks at Joey.)* I see that this frustrates you. Realize that change may be slow and subtle. *(Makes eye contact with all group members.)* Remember not to expect one group session to change your life but rather embrace what you learn from all of the session as a whole. Then you can decide what you want to do with what you learned.

Ross: *(Looks at Joey)* I know I will be using the Body Scan activity!

Monica: *(Looks at Joey)* Mindfulness definitely helps me cope with my stressors and anxieties. Especially with my cat but also when my social worker comes and sees me and talks about my case about possibly living with my sister. I know the Body Scan thingy about breathing will definitely help me.

Chandler, Ross and Rachel are both nodding in agreement.

Leader: Thank you all for the positive feedback. I love how you guys support each other. I encourage you all to implement the mindfulness technique in your everyday lives as you leave this room. Be aware of your body and mind and implement deep breathing when you are feeling anxious. This is a great coping skill. Don't be afraid of your feelings, acknowledge it, and gently allow them to float away. You can practice mindfulness in your daily activities. Bring your attention to the present moment *(eye contact towards Joey)*. Mindfulness can be easily applied while washing dishes, noticing nature *(eye contact towards Monica)*, listening, showering, studying *(eye contact towards Rachel)*, winding down for bedtime *(eye contact towards Chandler)*,

moving (**eye contact towards Ross**), having self-compassion, and when simply breathing (**eye contact towards Joey**).

Everyone is quiet and appears to be reflecting what Ms. Phoebe said.

Leader: Any last comments or concerns?

Group members: "Nope." "Thank you!" "I'm good." "Good sesh!" "We got this!"

Leader: Thank you all for your time. I will be seeing you next week! And remember to breathe.