Segment One

Getting Started

<u>Setting Tone</u>
Therapist: Hi everyone, I want to thank you all for being punctual and on time and it looks like it's about time to start our meeting. So, to start us off I'd like to welcome everyone to our first meeting on self-image and self-esteem. Uh, this group is lasting about 7 weeks and we're going to be discussing topics of improving our self-image, and kinda challenging our negative thoughts. So to start us off, I would like everyone to introduce themselves, even though their names are on the screen, we all want to get to know each other more, especially since we're using Zoom, I just want to remind everybody that um, having your screen view is probably the best as we continue to meet through here, so that we can see everybody.
Comment: I found it challenging to start the session on the right foot; I think it is evident in the amount of times I stumble over my words and fail to clearly state the group's purpose. Though this is not our first video in the class, I still get anxiety as if it's the first day of class.
"Just to make sure everyone is on the right Zoom call, I want to reiterate the purpose of this group. For the next 7 weeks we are learning how to manage our personal expectations as they relate to self-image and how our negative thoughts play a role in our mental health…"

<u>Getting Members Acquainted</u>
Therapist: Um, so, to start us off I can introduce myself and then I'd like everyone to share something that's interesting about them. So my name is Elizabeth, and something that's interesting about me is that I have a dog. And um, whoever wants to go next you can raise your hand or go ahead and start. Yeah, go ahead Xinia.
Comment: This is my introduction section where group members share. I could have made the transition into this section smoother by saying:
"Before we begin, I want to introduce myself to the group: My name is Elizabeth, one thing interesting about me is that I have a dog. Now the next person can introduce themselves to the group and share an interesting fact you'd like to share about yourself."

Purpose
<u>Clarified Purpose</u>
Therapist: …Throughout these next few sessions we're going to address the negative images that we have about ourselves and some of the self-talk that we've had over the past few years. And I know that as you guys are in college, you're in a transitional period and everything can seem overwhelming and we want to address some of those negative thoughts that can contribute to poor mental health as you're in college. So we'll talk about that and then if you guys have any other topics that you would like to address, feel free to email me or text me…
Comment: In this section I was attempting to encompass the issues which surround college students and their struggle to establish their identity and self-image. I think the message got a little muddled in the middle and it sounded like the giant run-on sentence that it is. One way I could improve it is by saying this:
"The way I have structured this group is that we cover the negative thoughts which affect the way we perceive ourselves, understand where those feelings of inadequacy come from, and then focus on how we can change that inner monologue to reflect the message of confidence and

acceptance that we want to see. Being in college makes this all the more challenging because you are being faced with so many expectations: high academic achievement, dressing a certain way for your chosen major, or athletic performance. These can contribute to decreased mental wellness…"

Explained Role:
Therapist: So just to clarify my role before we get into the other part of the meeting, I'm here to guide you guys on your journey as you learn about yourself and how to challenge some of the negative thoughts inside of our head. And so um, this group is definitely… it's definitely run by members so I'm just here to facilitate conversation, but your input is always needed. And that's how we can share and learn from one another.
Comment: My mistake in this area is that I did not make it clear what my role was. I think when I added the part about members running the group, it made it very confusing for the group members to establish who was in authority. I think it's good to let the group know they have the power to change the direction of the topics, but it's ultimately the therapist who provides the useful information to share.
"For those of you who are new to group therapy, it is the role of the facilitator to provide you with subject matter to reflect on in each session, answer questions as they arise, and give you time to process your emotions and thoughts. The group members are the ones who determine how much input you want from the facilitator and what subjects you would like to see covered. I want you to understand the value of your input as we share and learn from one another."

Members Verbalize Expectations
Therapist: So, some of the expectations that I expect of you guys is that I expect everyone to be on time, as well as to be respectful of everyone else's time in the group. So if I do cut you off, it is not my intention to say that whatever you have to say is unimportant, but I do want everyone to be mindful of each other's time. And so that's some of my expectations for the group. Um, I saw some of you nodded that this was your first time in group therapy, so I would like to like to ask you guys that this is your first time, what some of your expectations might be from this group? Yes, Xinia:
Comment: I think I demonstrated this skill well. Here my correction would be to speak less and allow more time for students to share their expectations with me. I realize that I dominate a lot of the air time in these sessions and one way to decrease that would be by saying this:
"Just as you may have expectations for this group, I have expectations of you. My expectation for each of you is that you are respectful of my time and the time of your peers. This looks like being on time and willing to participate. There will be times that I cut you off, but it is not because I don't think what you have to share is important. I want to be respectful of everyone's time. Let's start with Xinia and see what her expectations of the group are…"
Xinia: Gain more confidence in self.
Therapist: Okay, gain more confidence in yourself. Can anyone else relate to that as an expectation? Meredith, what would be one of your expectations from this group?
Meredith: Become more confident and use information to help others
Therapist: Wow, that is very altruistic of you. Thank you for sharing that. Would anyone else like to share? Yes, Tiffany:
Tiffany: Building a small support system for each other.

Therapist: Okay, thank you so much for sharing. And just to let you guys know, I'm writing everything that you say down because it is important and us to touch on that later in our session. Tori, would you like to share anything at this time?

Tori: Feel comfortable sharing feelings.

Comment: In this section I drew out each group member's expectations and supplied them with affirmation. In my eyes this seemed to be kind of shallow and in need of more substance, however I do not fully know how to give each member affirmations without slowing the entire group down. Perhaps I could have incorporated rounds to make the transitions smoother. This is how I would have corrected it:

"I'm writing down everyone's answer so that I can refer back to them later in the session, thank you all for your patience. I also want to thank you Tiffany for sharing your expectations with the rest of the group. Lastly we have Tori. Is there anything you would like to share at this time?"

Explaining Group Rules

Therapist: And that's going to lead us into our rules that we're going to set up for the next few weeks. So, um, so since we want keep everyone comfortable and safe here in this space, we just need a couple of rules to help us maintain those either boundaries or standards that we want in this group. And since you are all group members, everyone has a valid opinion and so you're more than welcome to share what kind of rule that you would like to see in this group.

Comment: I could have been less direct in the way I targeted my group member for being both distracting and on her phone. This encounter could have gone a little like this:

"One of my session rules is that all participants remove smart watches and put their phones on silent while in group. I respect your time as much as you respect your peers; if it's an emergency, I encourage you to take that call, otherwise no phones. Thank you Xinia for reminding me of my favorite rule."

Focus

Mood Check

Therapist: So moving into kinda the heart of our session, I want to get everyone's general mood, or comfort ability, while they're here in the session. So on a scale of one to ten, I'm going to ask all of you to rate how comfortable you feel presently in this group as we address some self-image and self-identity. Um… if you're to rate yourself on a scale of one to ten, where would you rate yourself?

Comment: I believe the mood check was presented in a confusing way and it's quite visible that I'm not sure how to ask it. In this section what I should have done was introduce the scale and then ask the question. What I should have said was this:

"Now that the formalities are through, can I get a mood check on each of you? You'll rate yourself on a scale of one through ten as to how you're feeling in terms of comfort, one being the least comfortable and ten being completely at ease…"

Encouraged Eye Contact with Group Members

Therapist: Um, one of the rules the I have personally is that we stay off of our phones and we try and maintain eye contact with each other as much as possible while we're here. I know it can be a little bit tricky determining if anyone's paying attention because, again, we can't exactly see

each other in the way that we want. But yeah… that's one of my rules: to maintain eye contact as much as possible and not to be on our phones. Anyone else like to share a rule?

Comment: I think this could have been reworded to state the importance of eye contact and what that means for the other members. I should have said this instead:

"I know it sounds silly that I ask everyone to look at their computer screens while we're in groups, but I have no way of knowing anyone is engaged and your peers can't see your body language through the computer. If I have everyone's eyes on their screen, I have at least one way of knowing that you're listening to what others have to say. Does this sound fair to everyone?"

Cut Off Member When Necessary

Therapist: And Meredith, it looks like you were excited to go. Please tell us about yourself.

Meredith: Chanel bag collector,

Xinia: Responds with questions on where to find the bags

Meredith: Continues talking [chronic talker]

Therapist: Well, thank you so much for sharing, Meredith, and it sounds like you've got a lot to tell us about these really cool bags… and yeah, thank you so much for that. And Tori, as our last person would you like to share something?

Comment: I was able to deflect the over-talking member into listening to her peers in this segment. I could have been more direct in the way I addressed her inappropriate use of air time. That correction would have gone like this:

"Thank you for sharing your hobby with the rest of the group, Meredith. Perhaps after the group you and Xinia will have an opportunity to talk to one another about your shared interest in bags. Let's remember the agenda we have set for this session and that we have one more group member who has not shared her interests with us. Tori?"

Rounds

Demonstrating Use of Rounds

Therapist: Um, so, to start us off I can introduce myself and then I'd like everyone to share something that's interesting about them. So my name is Elizabeth, and something that's interesting about me is that I have a dog. And um, whoever wants to go next you can raise your hand or go ahead and start. Yeah, go ahead Xinia.

Comment: This is my introduction section where group members share. I could have made the transition into this section smoother by saying:

"Before we begin, I want to introduce myself to the group: My name is Elizabeth, one thing interesting about me is that I have a dog. Now the next person can introduce themselves to the group and share an interesting fact about themselves."

Xinia: Obsessed with Mickey Mouse…

Therapist: Obsessed with Mickey Mouse? Alright! What do you like about him? …. That's very cool. Thank you for sharing that. Who would like to go next?

Tiffany: Likes Christmas lights…

Therapist: You like Christmas lights. What do you like about them? …. Okay, that's really cool. Is your room decorated with them now? … Thank you Tiffany. And Meredith, it looks like you were excited to go. Please tell us about yourself.

Meredith: Chanel bag collector, [chronic talker]

Comment: I think in this section I was not making good use of rounds. Though I used this time for individuals to share something interesting about themselves, I did little to deepen the focus and find out more about them. I would briefly touch on their interest, then move on entirely. I saw in other videos that friends would ask more about the individual's hobby, how they became interested, and doing more to get to know group members. How I could have improved this section is by doing this:

"That's an interesting hobby you shared with us (group member). Has anyone else seen or done these things (Mickey Mouse, Chanel bags, Hiking, Stringing Christmas lights)? I appreciate you sharing that with us. What kind of emotions do you feel when you are surrounded by your interests? Do you ever share them with others?"

Exercises

Introduced Exercise

Therapist: So moving on to our exercise, I'm going to share my screen with you guys and we're going to be viewing a picture. And what I want everyone to do is, I want you to take a look at the photo, maybe determine one or two things that you find interesting from it, and then we're going to talk about it in just a second and I'll explain more of the exercise…

Comment: Here I begin to explain the picture exercise to my group. I should have been more upfront about what the exercise entails; the description found here is awfully vague and doesn't really tell the group members what I'm looking for. What I could have done was explain more on the front end, that way it doesn't appear as though I'm explaining the whole exercise in the middle:

"The exercise we'll be doing today is one which is fitting to our group's mission: our perceptions. In just a moment I'm going to show you a picture painted by Claude Monet in a style called impressionism. Artists around that time period were capturing whimsical moments as how they imagined it in their mind's eye. For the purpose of our group, we're going to take a look at what Claude Monet saw when he painted this scene. Each of you will find two things you notice about the picture and we'll come together to see what found to be the most compelling part of the picture."

Demonstration and Processing Exercise/Deepening the Focus

Therapist: So to start us off, Meredith, why don't you share with us one thing that you found from this photo that piqued your interest?

Meredith: Noticed group of people and nature. Links nature with positivity.

Tori: people swimming in the background.

Tiffany: Lady in the white dress.

Xinia: The canoe at the bottom of picture.

Therapist: So it sounds like everybody found something that was slightly different from another person in our group that they noticed. There was the boat, there were people, a lady in a while dress, and there's so many other parts to the photo. And you know, just like any other photo that's out there, (but that one's my favorite) theres a lot of parts that go into ourselves just like that photo is made up of so many parts. We have those intricate parts too and sometimes when we negatively view ourselves, we're not seeing the whole picture. And so we're seeing maybe one or two parts that we like about ourselves, and then in the background we're seeing a lot of things that we don't like about ourselves. Sometimes we can get hung up on maybe one thing that we don't like, or that one personality trait that we see in ourselves and we don't think others

will like, but there's so many other things that are in us that we can appreciate. Sometimes it just takes an outside viewer to tell you what they see and what they like.

Comment: In this section I am attempting to bridge the concept behind the exercise and how they apply it directly to their struggles with self-esteem and their perception of self. I could have benefitted from writing a script in this section, it seems like the message is communicated in a haphazard way and that I have not prepared the material well. If I had more confidence in my delivery of 'deepening the focus', it would have sounded like this:

"How easy was it to find something interesting in this photo? Pretty simple, right? Let's apply this to ourselves for a moment. Imagine it's the first day of class and you're meeting new people. You don't know most of them and it's quite possible that they don't know you either. What are two positive things someone may notice about you? … That took a bit longer, didn't it? We're you imagining parts of yourself you didn't like? Just like the photo on the lake, there are many interesting parts about us that others may like or qualities they align with. Sometimes it's harder to see the 'bigger picture' when it comes to appreciating our personal qualities, especially when we focus only on the parts we don't like. Sometimes we have to step back and reintroduce ourselves to our brain, this time starting with the positive parts."

Explained Special Term/Shifting Focus from Member to Topic
Meredith: Discussing weight and being unable to fit into clothes. Had friend affirm her.
Therapist: I'm glad that you had that friend that was able to give you confidence and kind of the support that you needed at that time… So as we go through this exercise, what I'm trying to ask you guys is for your thought, and then your feeling because in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy there is an exercise in which you are assessing your automatic thoughts. What's the first thought that you have, and then those thoughts kind of build into your feelings, and then those feelings build into your actions. And so through the negative thoughts that we're hearing and we're processing through now, we're going to try and address the feelings and behaviors that come from those.

Comment: What I should have done in this section was explain that I will be using CBT to address their negative inner thoughts. By telling the group about SBT in the middle of the session, it's really not effective or important to them. If I had started the session by saying that I was going to ask them later about their thoughts, I think this section could have gone smoother. This is how I propose I fix it:

"Earlier in the session we touched on CBT and what that means for our thoughts and actions. Just to recap, we use cognitive behavioral therapy to address our inner monologue that tells us that we're not pretty or deserving of love from others. We target the main perpetrator of this thought: our insecurity. Once we're aware of where this thought is coming from, we're able to shape how we choose to respond when situations trigger us or make us feel uncomfortable. Then we can address the way we feel and finally shape our resulting actions."

Yalom

Instillation of Hope & Universality
Xinia: Difficulty opening up to others and being vulnerable about insecurities
Therapist: Well, I want to thank you for being here and for being honest with us. I also want to let you know that other people have been through this group and they have definitely found that

talking about some of their struggles with others has helped them to become more confident and to be more comfortable sharing openly with other people.

Comment: I realize I have a flat affect and my words sound kind of hollow when I share them with the group. If I could do it over again, I would say it like this:

"Thank you for being vulnerable with us, Xinia. How many of us can relate to that feeling of being hesitant about sharing something so personal with others? It can be challenging. As proven in the past, attending group therapy voluntarily have shown to improve a person's emotional health and perception of self. We can all benefit from having a group where we know others are feeling the same way as us. I want you to know that we're in this together."

Tiffany: Unsure how group will go, scared that it won't work out in groups. First time in a group setting.

Therapist: Thank you so much for being open to trying it. Trying new things can be very hard and I want to affirm you in that this a group where you can feel comfortable to share and that we're going to be here to support you as best as we can.

Comment: Here I attempt to instill hope in this particular grope member who does not feel confident moving forward in group therapy. I think the way I phrased it, it sounds like the other group members are also responsible for allaying her fears. That duty should not fall to the group members, I should have said this instead:

"Tiffany, I'm so glad you made it today. I realize how challenging it must be to not only meet for our first session online, but to be introduced to the group like this. I will do my best to support you as we move forward in our group sessions, as I will support anyone else who does not feel comfortable either. Like I mentioned with Xinia before, these sessions are proven to work over a period of time."

Problem Situations

Chronic Talker

Therapist: And Meredith, it looks like you were excited to go. Please tell us about yourself.

Meredith: Chanel bag collector, [chronic talker]

Therapist: Well, thank you so much for sharing, Meredith, and it sounds like you've got a lot to tell us about these really cool bags… and yeah, thank you so much for that. And Tori, as our last person would you like to share something?

Comment: Having a chronic talker in a group posed one of my greatest challenges as a facilitator. I lack the assertiveness to address problematic members in a group, therefore I felt anxious even attempting to cut her off. In the moment I was unsure how to address her, but looking back I could have cut her off like this:

"Thank you Meredith for sharing your interests. For the sake of time I'm going to have to cut you off here, however if there's time at the end of the session you're welcome to tell us more. We want to be respectful of everyone's time since this meeting is only for 30 minutes."

Distractor

Therapist: Hey Xinia, I see that you're on your phone and we're going to address group rules in just a second, but if we could just stay off our phones for now that would be very helpful. (question from group member about phone) No, unless it's an emergency, I do ask that you keep your attention here.

Comment: When I asked Xinia to play the role of distracted individual, I wasn't sure what her action would be. However, when she whipped out her phone I knew what to do. I believe I demonstrated assertiveness when I addressed her distracting behavior; another way I could have handled it was like this:

"Hey Xinia, thanks for reminding me of one of the important values in our group: rules and confidentiality. While we're meeting for the next few weeks, I ask that we refrain from using phones and other electronics while in our group. If there is an emergency which you need to address, please do so without distracting others…"

Closing

Summarized Main Points of Group

Therapist: So at the start of this we went through some of the rules and expectations that we have for the group, and I definitely saw that there was no judgment with all of us here. I saw some affirming nods and some of you guys look like you were definitely ready to share with others like, 'hey, I've been feeling this too.' And I want to thank you guys for being so honest with that. And then when each of us were asked how they felt on their level of comfort, Meredith you gave us an 8.5 on your level of comfort… (Revisiting Mood Check)

Comment: I think I could have been more direct with my summary in this section. I liked that I revisited the mood check from earlier in the session (I was very afraid that I would have forgotten) and that I received feedback from the group members. One way I could have corrected this dialogue is by saying this:

"To briefly recap our session, we established rules for the group which consisted of staying off all electronics during the meeting and refraining from judging others, and then we discussed our expectations for the group which were honesty and punctuality. Following that we did a mood check in which each of you gave me a number which you felt best represented your level of comfort. Then we did an exercise, processed it, and went on to assign homework for next week. Was there anything important I left out?"

Reinforced Commitments

(Transitioning to the end) I'm going to remind you guys of our commitments: we plan on being punctual and on time for our next session, and we won't be on out phones. Are we still good on that rule? Alright, thank you guys for coming and I'll see you next week. Bye.

Comment: Ending sessions are always challenging for me. I never find the right words or the right way to politely end a call. Here we can see me rushing the ending so I don't end up tripping further over my words. If I had budgeted time correctly, I would have said it like this:

"To reiterate our commitments to one another: we plan on being punctual, allowing others the opportunity to share without risk of judgment, and not using our phones. Does this sound fair? I will give each of you 10 or 15 seconds to let me know if you'd like to add sometime to the end of the session, it can be feedback or maybe something you've learned. (Wait appropriate amount of time) Thank you all for coming, I'll see you next week.

Segment Two

(A) Cultural Issue

Though we did not discuss cultural issues in the group about self-image, I believe it could manifest in diverse groups in Western society where the standard of beauty is typically that of a white European. Of the four female participants in my session, three were women of color; none of the women fit the Americanized standard of beauty. Had this video been a real therapeutic session and these women were truly struggling with their self-image, I would have seen comments which related to their external looks such as 'my hair isn't long/straight' and 'my skin is too dark'. In the event these comments surfaced, I would address them much like I did in the exercise with the Monet picture. I would have told each group member to consider themselves as intricate and detailed as the painting, then they would find things about themselves and their peers which they liked, then asked them to add these affirmations to their inner monologue.

I understand that each group member comes from different cultural backgrounds. With this being said, I am most familiar with that of Caribbean-American individuals. If one group member, say Tiffany (Korean-American), expressed that her culture's standard of beauty was that women had to be thin with short hair, I would approach her culture from the posture of wanting to learn more. I would continue to learn more through asking her to explain further while doing research on my own. I would understand where she is coming from culturally and then ask her what she considered beautiful. Lastly, I would ask how she could work her positive standard into her personal life and culture.

Reflection on Growth

In the last semester I have seen myself grow in terms of assertiveness, self-confidence, and public speaking. These skills have been evidenced in the way I perform my role as advanced autonomous practitioner. I have shown self-confidence and comfort in public speaking in the way I present the material to my group without terrible anxiety, and assertiveness in the way I ask group members to listen to what me and their peers. I may not be an effective group facilitator, but I know I am much further along in the process than I was five months ago. In order to maintain and group my group facilitation skills in the future, I plan on volunteering myself to take on roles which put me in front of people. I will no longer shy away from opportunities in the workplace to practice my group facilitation skills.

Reflection on Technology

The second half of the semester was a challenge to say the least. From navigating group meetings virtually to connecting with professors via Zoom, it was a rather steep learning curve. Some of the positive experiences I've had using technology are as follow: sharing screens on Zoom with group members allows for us to be on the same page (literally and metaphorically), having one on one time with professors outside the classroom, and less time spent in class on Sunday. I have not added any new skills for therapy that relate to the use of technology. Seeing that we only met once during the second half of the semester, there was no opportunity to practice with peers and little desire to do so. I faced a lack of motivation and a bit of sadness. Our schedules had drastically changed, as had our habits and mental state. Though there were noticeable positive moments, a majority of quarantine has been isolating and socially challenging.