

## Segment One

### *Getting Started, Purpose, and Rounds*

Therapist: Good evening, guys, and thank you so much for showing up to our group tonight. I just want to personally welcome each and every single one of you. I know it's not ideal meeting through video chat, but with everything going on, I know it's safer for us to do it this way. So thank you for bearing with me tonight. My name is Karissa Goodman, and I'm going to be the group facilitator for these next 12 weeks as we're going to be meeting. Just to kind of give you guys an idea of the purpose of what this group is. Each of you in your applications have identified that you have a sibling with autism. And you have also expressed that you're having trouble finding your identity outside of your sibling role. And that's what the purpose of this group is, it's to come together and to work on different strategies and coping mechanisms on how we can develop our identities outside of our sibling roles. So before we begin, I just want to get acquainted with you guys and have you guys get acquainted with each other. So I'd like to go to go around, and I know you guys can't see each other so I see your names on the screen. So we'll start with Kayla. If you could just introduce yourself, say your name, how old you are. And if you could travel to one place in the world, where would you go?

*Comment: I really liked how I opened this session by explaining how this is not the ideal way of meeting but still thanked each member for showing up regardless. I believe I introduced myself correctly. I could have done better with introducing the purpose of the group. I sounded so uncertain and unconfident when I said "Just to kind of give you guys an idea of the purpose ..."*  
*I should have elaborated more on the purpose and brought together the reason why they were in this group.*

*Correction: "You are all here for a similar reason and purpose. All of you share a commonality of having a sibling with autism, and each of you have expressed having difficulty finding your individual identity outside of your sibling role. The purpose of this group is to provide you the tools you need to develop your identity as an individual as well as being able to express your needs to those around you."*

Group Member: Hi, my name is Kayla. I am 17 years old, and I could travel anywhere in the world it'd be to Pohnpei, Micronesia.

Therapist: Ooo! Can you tell us why you would travel to Pohnpei?

Group Member: Because it's the most beautiful place on earth I hear.

Therapist: Awesome. Thank you so much, Kayla. It's really great to meet you and I'm glad you're here. So next we'll go to Paola.

Group Member: Hi, my name is Paola. I am 19 years old. And somewhere that I would like to be would be Paris.

Therapist: Ooo, and what is appealing to you about Paris?

Group Member: Um, I took French for a long time, so I've always wanted to go there and just see everything and get to experience the language also there.

Therapist: Wow, that's actually really cool. That's awesome. Thank you for checking Paola. Next we'll have Elizabeth.

Group Member: My name is Elizabeth and I'm 16 and somewhere I would like to visit is Norway.

Therapist: Norway! Because of what so sorry, I cut you off.

Group Member: No, you're good. You're good. I like nature. I hear it's really pretty over there.

Therapist: Yeah, all the pictures I've seen of Norway are absolutely gorgeous. Thank you for sharing. And last but not least we have Leslie.

Group Member: Hi, my name is Leslie and a place that I would like to visit has to be Greece.

Therapist: Greece! And why Greece?

Group Member: Just everything I've seen on TV looks so beautiful. You know the ocean right there and it's like the wind and blue with the houses and just like the scenery looks so amazing.

Therapist: Yeah. Have you seen the movie? Mamma Mia?

Group Member: Yes, I have.

Therapist: I know that's based in Greece and just the scenery from that movie is gorgeous enough to want to go. Awesome. Thank you for sharing Leslie. So, before we dive into the group, I want to get some pleasantries out of the way, I just want to explain what my role and my purpose here is. Um, my role as a facilitator is to keep us on track. You all are here for a reason, and I don't want to waste your time. So if I feel or see that the group is getting off topic, it's my job to bring us back in, refocus the group and get us back on track. I'm also here for you guys outside of groups. So at the end, I'll be providing my email and my phone number. If you guys need anything or want to talk about anything specific. I want you to know that I'm here for you as well. And this is just a place where you can feel free to talk and open up and we're going to take this journey together. Do any of you have any questions on my role or how this group is going to go so far?

*Comment: Pleasantries was definitely not the right word to use in this situation. I think I did a pretty good job with explaining my role as the facilitator and what they could expect from me. I could have been more concise with my explanation and focused it more on meeting their needs and that everything I am doing is for them.*

*Correction: "Now I want to explain what my role is as the group facilitator. You have all taken time out of your day to be here and my job is to make sure that this time is not wasted. Each meeting I will have an agenda of items to cover, and if you would like to talk about something specific just let me know and we can add it to our agenda. If I notice that our conversations are going off topic, it is my job to reign us back in. Making sure that each of you feel safe and comfortable to share and discuss the topics in this group is very important to me."*

Group Member: No

Therapist: Awesome. Okay, so like I said at the beginning, this group is going to be meeting for 12 weeks, we will be meeting on Wednesday nights at 7:00 for these 12 weeks. This is also a closed group. So the people that you see here on this chat are the only people who are going to be here, we're not going to be adding any new members to this group at all. If for some reason you feel like you're gonna miss a group, go ahead and just shoot me a text or an email and let me know so that we can be prepared and we're not having the group wait on you for about like 15 minutes and just wasting part of the session, and I just want to make sure you're okay as well, and so we're not wondering if something happened to you. So this is a closed group. And with that being said, I want to kind of dive into some group rules. So first of all, I want to say some rules and then I want to open the floor to have you guys discuss any rules that you feel would be appropriate to add to this group. So first and foremost, um, confidentiality. What is said in this group, I want to stay in this group. So that means not talking about what somebody said outside of group or to somebody else, keeping it confidential, and within the five of us. Um, I am a mandated reporter. So if you guys do report, wanting to harm yourself or somebody else, or abuse to an elderly individual, a child or a person with a disability, I am obligated to report that,

but other than that, anything else that we discussed will stay in this group? And I would just like to get a verbal confirmation from each of you that you agreed to that as well.

*Comment: I did not really give my group members time to process how the group will be conducted before I jumped into group rules. I threw so many words at them and left no time for questions before transitioning. What if I had members who had never been to counseling or group therapy before? They might have been so confused about what a closed group is and how this will be conducted.*

*Correction: "Can you raise your hand if you have been in a group therapy setting before? Okay, so a few of you. For those who have not been in a group session before or may not remember much about their previous group, this group is closed. This means that the individuals that you see in this group will be the only ones for the duration of our time together over the next 12 weeks. We will not be adding anymore members. The goal of this is to provide an environment that will hopefully become familiar and safe for each of you to open up in. Having people come and go works for some groups, but this is how ours will be conducted. Are there any questions about how this group will be conducted before I move to the next thing on our agenda?"*

Group Members: Yes.

Therapist: Okay, awesome. So another rule that I have, normally we'd be meeting in person, so eye contact would be a really big one. But since we can't really be meeting in person, I know there's a feature on zoom where we can put it in gallery mode. So I have all of you in gallery mode right now. So I can look at all of you at once. And with that, I'd like it if we could put our cell phones away for this hour so that we're giving each other, our undivided attention. How does that sound? Awesome. So I'd like to go around and if everyone could share a potential rule that they'd want, um, now is the time to do it. So this time we'll start with Leslie.

*Comment: I mentioned here the rule of eye-contact and found a good substitute for it since we were meeting on zoom. I told the group that I was going to use gallery mode but failed to ask them to do the same thing. I also did not explain the importance of eye-contact and why this is a rule in the first place. I think asking the group to put their phones away was an appropriate rule to add. If I was in person, I would have demonstrated this by putting my phone in my purse or bag.*

*Correction: "Thank you all. The next rule that I like to have in my groups is the rule of eye-contact. It is important for us to look at each other when we talk. I know a lot of times it feels almost 'normal' to look at the facilitator when answering a question, but this group is about you all. I want to encourage you to look at each other when answering a question and discussing the topics. I know being online makes this difficult. I have found that zoom has an option called 'gallery mode' and I have my computer set to this so that I can see all of you at once. I want to ask each of you to take a moment and activate this setting on your computers as well."*

Group Member: Um, a potential rule that I want is not to talk over everyone. Especially using this type of format. It can be hard if someone just wanted to say something like just raise my hand, so everyone can feel heard.

Therapist: Yeah, absolutely. So not talking over each other. That's a great one. I'm going to write that one down. Um, Kayla, would you like to go next?

Group Member: Um, I would say to not assert our opinions about each other situation and try to just not judge them based on what they're going through because we're all facing our own journey.

Therapist: Yeah. So judgmental free-zone here is what I'm hearing. Is that correct?

Group Member: Yeah.

Therapist: Awesome. Thank you so much, Paola?

Group Member: Um, I'm not really sure because I think that Kayla and Leslie kind of said what I had in mind.

### ***Problem Situation***

Therapist: Okay, well, I'll give you a moment to think. And then after Liz talks, we'll come back and see if you thought of one, okay? So, Liz, do you have any ideas for a potential group rule?

*Comment: This is where I tried to draw out a quiet member of my group who was not wanting to participate.*

*Correction: I am satisfied with how I went about this part of the session.*

Group Member: I think the cool group would be that everyone shares something that we no one feels left out or like, judged like what Kayla said.

Therapist: Yeah, absolutely. And that ties into what I wanted to say. I just ask that you guys be open and honest. This is a safe place and the more that we talk and get to know each other in our situations, the more beneficial it will be in the long run. So I don't want to forget Paola and want to circle back. Did you think of a rule?

*Comment: When circling back to the group member, I think if I worded the question as an open-ended question rather than a closed question she may have had a rule to say. I think I did a good job at reinforcing that I wanted this to be a safe place for the members.*

*Correction: "I don't want to move on without giving Paola a chance to speak. Paola, what is another rule that you can think of to add to our list?"*

Group Member: The one I thought of was the one Liz just said right now, soooo ...

Therapist: No worries. That's great. Great similar mindsets, guys. I can already tell this is gonna be a great group. Um, are there any questions before we move on? Nope. Great. Okay, so now I want to talk about expectations. I want to get to know you guys a little more and what you're expecting to gain from this group. So I want to know, what, if you have been in group therapy before or if you haven't, and was it effective or not? Um, and then what are you expecting to gain from this group? Like when the 12 weeks are done, what are you hoping to walk away having accomplished? So this time we will start with Liz.

*Comment: I stacked too many questions here. I think this was a lot to ask all at once and should have broken them down and done one at a time.*

*Correction: "Now I want to talk about what expectations you all may have from this group. The first thing I want to know is if you have been to therapy before and if you found it effective"*

*(Group answers) "Thank you all for sharing. My next question is this: What are you expecting to gain from this group? When these 12 sessions are done, what are you hoping to walk away from this with? We can start with Liz this time."*

Group Member: Okay. Um, this is my Second group, the other one that I went to was at my high school, but it closed down because there weren't enough people in it.

Therapist: Mhmm

Group Member: So I guess it's like a chance to restart. And something that I want to get from this group is, I guess, to manage my anger with my sibling who has autism.

### ***Yalom***

Therapist: Yeah, definitely. And I've had a lot of people come through this group for that exact reason. And after the 12 weeks, it has seemed to be beneficial to them. So there is hope for accomplishing that goal that you're setting for yourself. Thank you for sharing. Um, Kayla?

*Comment: Here is where I used Yalom's "Installation of Hope" by letting them know that this program has been beneficial to others in the past. I think I could have been more confident with my response here rather than "it has seemed" when telling them about the results.*

*Correction: "Thank you for sharing Liz. I have had many individuals come through this group with similar expectations as well. They reported that the content and tools learned through these sessions has been very beneficial to them. I want you to know there is hope for accomplishing this goal that you have set for yourself."*

Group Member: A goal I would have for this group is to kind of stop feeling guilty for having my own goals and dreams because everything revolves around my sister and I just, I want to be there but I also want to be able to not feel guilty about having my own things that I want to do.

Therapist: Absolutely. "I'm feeling guilty" is something that a lot of people in your guys' situation feel a lot. Can anybody else relate to Kayla on stealing some type of guilt towards her sibling and the feelings that you're having? All of you nod your head so you're not alone in this Kayla, you guys are here together and we've already found something in common with each other. Thank you so much for sharing. Um, Paola, we'll go to you next.

*Comment: Here is where I used Yalom's "Universality" by having my members relate to one another. I think to enforce this even more, I could have asked someone to share a situation that was similar to her. This would have bonded the members even further and let the member who shared really know that she was not alone.*

*Correction: "This is not the first time that I have heard someone in this situation say they feel guilty about the thoughts and feelings they are having. Can any of you relate to Kayla on this? Does anyone else ever feel guilty when it comes to their sibling? Does anyone want to share a time when you felt guilty like Kayla did?"*

Group Member: Um, I think that I have similar thoughts with Kayla like, not wanting to feel guilty and I guess also just finding myself like who I am outside of my family but also just being my siblings, older sister, like, I want to find who I can be making my own decisions and feeling good about them. And not like Kayla said, like not feeling guilty that I'm letting them down because I'm not thinking of them.

Therapist: Yeah, so learning how, in a sense to stand on your own two feet and make your decisions without that feeling of guilt, like that we've mentioned before?

Group Member: Yes.

Therapist: Awesome. Thank you for sharing. Leslie?

Group Member: Um, I think a goal I have for this group is just to be like open minded one like everyone else, and learn what they went through, because I feel like that can do really hard. And I've done group therapy before and hasn't really worked for me in the past, I guess because everyone there was so close minded and really didn't want to learn. And then the therapist herself she was kind of flaky not really there all the time. So it wasn't really stable, so just like something that's really stable and I'm able to learn from it and it's experience with other people experience. Also, just to show my parents that I'm able to, you know, to put myself out there and know that like how I think Kayla said like, I'm not this again, my guilt off because I've had been feeling guilty. I have a younger sibling who does have autism, and I just feel like I'm not able to grow. So just wondering how to grow.

Therapist: Yeah, absolutely. So becoming more open minded and growing in yourself, is what I heard. Did I miss anything there?

*Comment: I will admit, I did not do good with this. This participant was my chronic talker, but she just kept over talking about relevant things. I found it very hard to even want to cut her off.*



She never went off topic throughout the session, so I did not need to bring it back. She just talked a lot about what she wanted from the group. Here I cut in and tried to paraphrase everything she had just said in order to move the session along.

Correction: "Thank you so much for sharing Leslie. I'm going to have to cut you off there so that we have time to hit everything on our agenda. From what I heard, it sounds like an expectation you have is to become more open minded and to grow yourself. Is this correct?"

Group Member: No.

### ***Focus***

Therapist: So I heard Leslie and Paola state that their sibling was younger. Is that correct? And then what about Kayla and Liz is your sibling younger or older than you?

Group Member: Younger.

Group Member: Older.

Therapist: Younger. Did you say older Liz? Okay. And if you see me veering to the side and looking at the side, I actually have my notebook and I'm taking notes. So just that I remember everything and I can provide the best, um, knowledge to you guys that I can. Okay. Thank you guys so much for sharing. It's been great getting to know you guys a little better and your situations and what you're going through. So before we dive into the content of the group, I want to just assess everybody's comfortable level. I know some of you have been in group before some of you might have not. So I just want to see where everybody is comfortably right now. So I'm gonna ask each of you the same question and it is: on a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being absolutely not comfortable, the most uncomfortable you've ever been, and 10 being absolutely comfortable, like you couldn't be more comfortable. Where would you put yourself at on that scale right now? Starting off this new group. And we'll start with Paola for this one.

Comment: I did not do a good job at introducing this mood check or explaining it at all. I stumbled over my words and knew when I was speaking that I had messed up. I also think I should have explained that I was taking notes at the beginning of the session. Explaining this earlier on in the session would have let me clients know why I was looking away from the camera. Looking back on this, sometimes it looks like I am distracted by something else when in reality I was taking notes.

Correction: "Before we dive into our topic for today, I want to do a mood check with you all. What I am going to be doing is scaling how comfortable you are right now, and then at the end of the session, we will do it again. This just helps us all to visualize where you are on the scale and it lets me know what I can do to help make you more comfortable. I would like for each of you to go around one by one answering this. On a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being not comfortable whatsoever in this group right now to 10 being absolutely comfortable currently, where would you put yourself at on this scale?"

Group Member: Um, can you repeat? Which ones which?

Therapist: Yeah, absolutely. So 1 would be not comfortable. And then 10 is definitely comfortable.

Group Member: Um, I think that I'm at a 4.

Therapist: A 4. And can you explain what a 4 looks like to you?

Group Member: Um, I guess just because this is a new setting for me. I don't like talking about myself as much. I guess I'm just not used to it too. I'm not as comfortable to talk about everything yet.

Therapist: Yeah, absolutely. And I hope that as we move forward in this group and these next 12 weeks that we'll be able to build that comfortability level with you. Thank you, Paola. Um, Leslie?

Group Member: I would say that I'm at a 2.

Therapist: A 2, and why a 2 Leslie?

Group Member: I guess it has to go back to my other group therapy I've been in, and how that's kind of drawn me back and made me not feel comfortable in a way. I mean, I talk a lot but at the same time, that's like my deflect and how I cope with things. Reflective of like how I really feel and my last group on therapy, I felt like shut down. So I think that's why I kind of feel uncomfortable right now.

Therapist: Yeah, definitely. Thank you. And I really want to make this a safe space for you where you don't feel like that anymore. And you can feel safe and comfortable sharing and opening up and hopefully throughout the process, you guys might become friends and support each other and become that system that you might have been looking for. And if you're ever not feeling safe or something has been said that you didn't like or something went wrong, please always feel free to pull me aside after group or text me or email me and then we can have a conversation about that. Thank you for sharing Leslie. Um, Kayla, where would you scale your comfortability level?

Group Member: Probably about a 5.5.

Therapist: 5.5, and what is a 5.5 look like?

Group Member: So I'm kind of in the middle a little uncomfortable, but more towards the comfortable side. I don't know I find it easy to trust my story with strangers. So it's, I'm a little wary because you guys are all new, but also I can see potential so I think that I'm pretty okay.

Therapist: Okay, thank you for sharing Kayla. And then Liz.

Group Member: I think I'm at a 4.

Therapist: A 4. And I know Paola was at a four. So what does a four look like for you Liz?

Group Member: Um, since the last group didn't really work out so great. Um, I guess I'm not scared of you guys, but at the same time, I'm scared that the group will dissolve.

Therapist: Okay, and those are all perfectly common and normal fears to have. And I hope that throughout our time together, we can lessen those fears. So does anybody have any questions before we move on? No. Okay. So, as stated before, you guys are all here because you have a sibling with autism. And just a quick, um, recap, I'm sure most of you probably already know the definition of autism, but it's a developmental disorder, um, that's characterized by, um, difficulty in social interactions and communication which is usually from, um, having a restricted or repetitive pattern either physically or, um, restrictive or repetitive thoughts as well. So right now, um, and you guys have expressed struggling with your identity and we've talked through some expectations we you guys are hoping to gain and I've gotten a little bit of insight of what you're wanting to gain out of this group. So now I'd like to go around and dive just a little bit deeper, and I want you to tell me more and tell the group more about what you're particularly struggling with, in regards to your sibling and finding your own identity. I know. We'll go ahead and start with Liz earlier you mentioned like managing your anger. Can you tell me about maybe a specific situation where you're getting angry at your sibling and where that's affecting you and how and why you want to change that.

*Comment: In this section, I decided to "refresh" and educate my members on the clinical diagnosis of ASD. I neglected to ask them how old their sibling was when they were officially diagnosed, so I was treating this as a group where a member could potentially not know the true*

definition since the diagnosis may have just happened. I feel like here I could have broken things up more. In this section, I wrapped up the mood check, educated them, reminded them of the purpose, and asked them to get more vulnerable. I feel like this might have been a lot and I should have paused between sections to see if there were questions.

Correction: "I know that some of you listed on your application that your sibling was diagnosed with ASD within the past year. I just want to take a moment to provide a quick recap on what the definition of autism is. Autism is a developmental disorder that is characterized by difficulty in social interactions and communication, which is usually from a restrictive or repetitive pattern, behavior, or thought. Do any of you have any questions on what autism is and what it means to be diagnosed with it before we move on?"

Group Member: So my brother is four years older than me.

Therapist: Mhmm

Group Member: And my parents were thinking of sending him to college. They were looking at different colleges and I was getting really angry because I was like he won't have the same college experience that I will have. So I should be the one that goes instead of him.

Therapist: Mhmm

Group Member: Yeah, I felt really bad after that.

Therapist: Okay. Yeah, definitely, and maybe there was some maybe guilt and shame my feeling that way internally right? And what happened after? What was the end result of this?

Group Member: I haven't really resolved it, I guess. But my parents said that they'd have a conversation later.

Therapist: Okay, good. Thank you for sharing Liz. Paola, can you tell us a little more about your situation and what part of your identity you're trying to find? I know you said you're trying to stop feeling guilty and wanting to find yourself, but can you dive a little deeper into that and explain more what that means to you?

Comment: This was my quiet member again, and I wanted to pull more out of her here and dive deeper. I think I did a good job with this by reflecting back what she had stated earlier in the session to the group.

Correction: I am satisfied with how I handled this part.

Group Member: I think this just, whenever I want to do something, I always have to think about, like, "who's taking care of my sibling?" or like, "should I bring them along?" and it's like, I want to be able to do things without having to think about them all the time.

Therapist: Yeah, okay. So being able to not have that, in the back of your head, every move you have to make you have to be thinking about your sibling but being able to make decisions for yourself as well. Is that correct? Thank you for sharing. And then Kayla?

Group Member: Mine's kind of similar to Paola's, my little sister, she's three years younger than me. And I'm always the one who gets stuck looking after her because both my parents work and they're never really home. And so I don't have much of a social life and especially being a 17 year old, you want to go do things you want to go to parties you want to go hang out with your friends, but I never can unless I have my sister with me and it's not always fun having a 14 year old around that acts like a five year old and I feel bad about that. But I just I don't know what to do.

Therapist: Mhmm. And I, you mentioned feeling stuck. Can you explain a little more about what you mean by that and maybe other people here can relate to that as well?

Group Member: Well, it's just that like, everything that I do I to keep her in mind and like, I don't feel bad about that, but I feel bad because I want to do things and I just have to make sure that



everything with my sister's taken care of and sometimes there's just too much pressure for me to deal with and I just get really overwhelmed.

Therapist: Okay, so a lot of pressure and getting overwhelmed very easily. Can anybody else relate to Kayla on feeling a lot of pressure especially from parents? Thank you for sharing Kayla. And then Leslie?

*Comment: Here I tried to bring the group together again through universality. I could have asked others what pressure they are feeling when they answered.*

*Correction: "I hear that you're under a lot of pressure and are overwhelmed easily. Is there anyone else who can relate to Kayla on this and share when you have felt overwhelmed of under pressure?"*

Group Member: Mine is kind of like a mixture between Kayla and Liz. I'm going to college soon, so I'm getting ready. So it's kind of like me trying to figure out like what life is going to look like at college. And my parents kind of want me to go to in-state college,

Therapist: Mhmm

Group Member: So they can have, I can stay at home and take care of my sibling, but I don't want to. Because I feel like if I stay here and my freedom is going to be taken away. I'm not going to have a college experience. Because I'll be home, I'm not going to be able to go out with my new friends I'm making. So just trying to handle that and just balance it like okay, if I do stay home, then what's going to happen? Like, am I going to have a social life? Am I going to talk to my parents how I need to go out? Or if I do go to out of state college, do I pick a far one away? And then my younger sibling minds like oh, you abandon me you don't love me anymore. And then now kind of cause conflict between me and my family. And it's really hard trying to like figure out what to do especially like since deadlines for college applications are soon, just trying to figure out if it's best for me to stay here or go out of state. And if I gotta stay, we gotta talk about expenses, and then knowing that my family spend so much money on me and college can be really hard to.

### ***Exercise and Rounds***

Therapist: Yeah, so it sounds like you're really struggling with finding a balance of your life outside of the home, versus staying at home and wanting to separate but not wanting to at the same time and finding that balance and what to do next. Is that right? Okay, well, thank you for sharing. Um, so next, I would like to move into a little exercise that I have prepared for you guys. So first, I just want to explain it and see if you guys have any questions before we begin. Um, but the purpose of this exercise is for you guys to truly dive into how you view yourself and your situation right now currently. Not really where you want to be, but how it is right now. So that throughout our time, together we can work on changing how you view yourself because that is something that you have all expressed, wanting to do. So what's gonna happen is I have four different items. And I'm going to show them to the camera. And each of you are going to pick an item to relate to. So let's say for example, um, a stapler. What would happen is if I pick the stapler, I would explain how that stapler represents me right now in what I'm doing and how I'm feeling. So it might be if I chose the stapler. I feel like I'm the stapler because I'm holding my family together, and without me they would fall apart. Does that make sense? Is that clear on what we're about to do? Are there any questions about that before we begin? Okay, so I'm going to show the four items and then I'll ask each of you to choose one. So first, have a pair of headphones, I have a headband, sticky notes, and then a planner. So I'm going to start with Kayla. Which item would you like to choose?

Comment: I think I could have explained the exercise better. After reading this transcript, I see that I gave an example of the exercise before I even finished explaining it. I think I did a good job at introducing the exercise but could have elaborated and clarified the purpose more thoroughly.

Correction: "Now I would like to move into an exercise that I have prepared for you all. This activity may seem a little weird at first, so bear with me. I have four items that I am going to be showing the camera. Each of you is going to have a chance to pick one of the items. Once you pick an item, I am going to give you all a few minutes to think about how you can relate to the item. The goal and purpose of this exercise is to help you each visualize yourself and bring out what you are thinking and feeling about yourselves. By projecting this onto an object and relating to it, this can be very helpful. For example, let's say that I chose a stapler. I could say that I relate to the stapler because most times I feel like I am the only thing holding my family together and without me, everyone and everything would fall apart. Do any of you have any questions before I show the items?" (Group answers) "Okay. So, I have a pad of sticky notes, headphones, a planner, and a headband. Kayla, which item would you like to choose?"

Group Member: Sticky notes.

Therapist: Sticky notes. Okay. Um, Elizabeth, which item would you like to choose?

Group Member: Headphones.

Therapist: Headphones. Okay, Leslie?

Group Member: The planner.

Therapist: Planner. Okay and then so then Paola, that leaves you with the headband. Okay. So I'm going to give you guys about a minute to just think about that and take your time and really come up with something that is meaningful to you. Okay, so I'll give you guys that time to do that. If you're done if you could just go ahead and just like raise your hand so I can see who's ready. Okay, it looks like everybody's ready. Would anybody like to start us off? Leslie, go ahead.

Group Member: Um, so I chose the planner. And then I nearly went to the act of the planner has so many like months in it and like that's how you schedule your life and I kind of went to like I have so many things I want to do in life like in my days. But I'm not able to do them because they get filled with my siblings, um, doctor's appointments, or I need to take them to this and this and that. So my things kind of don't get going the planner,

Therapist: Mhmm

Group Member: It's usually theirs.

Therapist: Okay, so envision that, envision that with me for a second. If you had the planner in your hands right now and you opened it, and how you mentioned everything is booked with your sibling's appointments, what emotions or feelings does that elicit or bring up when you open and see that in your planner?

Comment: Here is where I tried to get my client to go deeper with what she had just stated. I wanted to get into her feelings and emotions.

Correction: I am satisfied with how this went.

Group Member: Frustration and kind of like disappointment. I think it's the frustration comes because it feels like my parents don't have time for me at all anymore. And then the disappointment comes because like, I know that's kind of selfish, but like I'm, I'm their firstborn, you know, and I'm also their child, but yet I feel like they don't prioritize my time or the things I want to do. Like I was involved in sports before anything happened, but let's say the sibling had

a doctor's appointment or had a group session during that time that kind of fell above me going to my soccer game.

Therapist: Yeah. Has anybody else had a similar situation where your parents had to choose your sibling over something that you were doing? Thank you for sharing Leslie. Who would like to go next? Kayla, thank you.

Group Member: I chose sticky notes because so many times I feel like my family and people just use me to do what they want and like, kind of just deplete me of my resources. And then when I'm when I'm not there, kind of like when you can't find your sticky notes and you need to write down something important. You just get frustrated. So I feel like they take a lot of frustration out on me when I'm not there. And sometimes when I'm overused I lose my stickiness. So I'm not always as present as I want to be. And people get mad at me because I can't be who they want me to be. And I try to fit into this person that I'm not. And I just want to be me and be alone.

Therapist: That was a great analogy of losing your stickiness. Thank you for sharing that Kayla. Paola or Liz, who would like to go next? Okay, thank you Liz.

Group Member: Um, so I chose the headphones because it has two ear buds. And so I'll get like one side of the argument with my parents being like, "Hey, you need to listen to your brother's needs. And even though he's older than you, we still love you, but at the same time, his needs come first" and then on the other side of the headphone I hear like what I want. I want to do things with my friends and I want to go to college too. And I want to be my own person and not live in a shadow. But at the same time, I could hear what my parents are saying and it makes sense, but what I'm hearing what I'm saying makes sense too.

Therapist: Mhmm

Group Member: And the headphones have microphone pieces and so I have to decide like what I say, or like what I put out there because other people are listening without hearing both sides.

Therapist: Yeah, so having to monitor everything that you want to say you might not be able to say everything you want to say, but having to monitor that monitor that and then finding a balance between your parents voice in your own voice. Thank you for sharing Liz. So Paola, you have had the headband.

Group Member: Um, yeah, I guess with the headband ... Like, you use it to like keep your hair together. And I guess like in a sense, like the headband like represents like, having to keep the family together and like being perfectly positioned and like you have one purpose like to keep everything together and I feel like sometimes that's how I feel.

Therapist: Yeah, absolutely. And you mentioned being like placed perfectly. Um, what would happen if you weren't placed perfectly? What would you think would happen?

Group Member: Um, I guess like, that's where like everything like, where I hesitate because like, if I don't do something like I feel like there's no one to take over for what I do like for like taking care of my sibling or like being there. And so like, it just kind of creates chaos. I feel like/

Therapist: Yeah, thank you for sharing. From what I've heard from all of you. It seems that you all play such a crucial role in your, not only your siblings' life, but your family's life as well. And that's a lot of pressure and overwhelming to do 24/7, so I'm hoping in this group, we can talk more about ways to communicate with your parents that you do need a break sometimes, you're not the parent, but you do have a very hefty role as a sibling and it's okay to want to step back and take a break and have some me time. How did you guys feel about relating your internal selves and what you're feeling and thinking about yourself to an object? How did that feel? Or how did it go for you?

*Comment: I think I did a pretty decent job with wrapping up this exercise and processing it. I think I could have expanded on processing this exercise even more with the group members. I know it was weird and a little uncomfortable for them, but I could have gone deeper with what emotions or thoughts it brought up.*

*Correction: "I know this exercise was a little weird and could have been uncomfortable for some. I would like to go around and process this some more with each of you. After completing this activity, what specific feelings or thoughts came to your mind in relation to your situation?"*

Group Member: It was pretty weird at first, but then I realized, whoa, I really am the headphones.

Therapist: Yeah, I know some, a lot of exercises we'll be doing this group can get pretty weird, but I promise there's always a purpose behind them. Thanks, Liz. Um, Leslie?

Group Member: I guess at first like was kind of weird. But then they kind of put my life into more perspective. And I realized that, in a way, I since I'm getting older, I'm kind of in charge of my own life, and my planner. And if I did make the decision to go to out of state college, I know my parents would like, be this like, be sad at first, but I know they would let me and then that way I can able to like make my own life in a way. So it was kind of it was cool chat is putting it out there like that.

Therapist: Yeah, thank you. Thank you for sharing. Um, we'll go to Paola next.

Group Member: Um, I guess like this exercise made me have to look at myself. Like, I'm really reflect on like, how I what I do, and like how, what that means to me like, because like how we were saying like, with the whole having to be perfect and like, be a certain role like, I guess like, I've known it and it's weighed upon me, but I guess I just never really thought about how much I feel like I have to do. So it was very helpful.

Therapist: Good. And I'm glad that you were able to take that away from this. Thank you for sharing. And then Kayla.

Group Member: I guess you gave me a new perspective of how to put what I'm feeling into words, and how to describe it better and use something to help me with that.

### ***Closing***

Therapist: Yeah, absolutely. And I want you guys to be able to use this as a tool. If you're ever struggling with how to express how you're feeling or viewing yourself, being able to find something that you have around yourself and doing that it can be really therapeutic to be able to sit down and process how you're feeling and how you're viewing the situation right then in there. Thank you all for sharing. So unfortunately, our time is coming to a close. It has been absolutely wonderful, talking with you guys and getting to know you and your situations a little bit better. Um, but before we close, I don't know if you remember at the beginning of our session, we did what I call a mood check and we scaled your comfortability. And I'd like to do that again. Now that you've gone through one full session with everybody, I want to see where you are on that scale right now. So we'll start with Kayla. Kayla at the beginning of the session, you said you were out of 5.5. Would you say that you decreased in comfortability? Or maybe increased? Where would you put yourself on the scale right now?

*Comment: Here is where I introduced the close to our session by doing our final mood check of the session. I should have repeated the scale for them instead of expecting them to remember something we talked about 30 minutes ago that might have been confusing. I do like that I wrote down their answers and was able to compare their "progress" verbally with them.*

*Correction: "Unfortunately our time is coming to an end for today. Do you guys remember at the beginning of today's session we did a mood check to scale your comfortability? I would like*

*to do this again and see where each of you are at currently after completing a full session. So, on a scale from 1 to 10, 1 being not comfortable at all and 10 being very comfortable, where would you put yourself currently? We will start with Kayla. Kayla, at the beginning you scored yourself at a 5.5. Would you increase, decrease, or not change that number now?"*

Group Member: 6.5.

Therapist: 6.5. Okay. I'm glad that we're able to move up. What was the factor that allowed us to move up a point on your scale?

Group Member: Just seeing that the other girls have a lot of similar things with me. And we're all kind of going through the same struggle just completely different at the same time.

Therapist: Absolutely. Thank you for sharing. Elizabeth. You said you're at a 4 where would you put yourself right now?

Group Member: Probably at a 6.5 with Kayla.

Therapist: Awesome and what increased that jump for you?

Group Member: Well, it's too early to tell if the group will get dissolved. I'm pretty sure that everyone here is on the track of the 12 weeks. So I'm excited about that.

Therapist: So I'm excited too, thank you. And Leslie, you were at a 2, where would you put yourself right now?

Group Member: I would say that I'm at a 4.

Therapist: A 4, and what made that increase two points?

Group Member: Um, I guess just seeing that I had similarities with people in the group

Therapist: Absolutely. You guys are not alone. And we're in this together. And then Paola, you were also at a 4, where would you put yourself right now?

Group Member: I would still put myself at a 4.

Therapist: Okay, no change, and that's perfectly fine as well. I know, it's still the first session and it's new. We're all strangers. But hopefully throughout our next couple of sessions, we can raise that number a little bit. Okay, so to close I just want to summarize what we've talked about today. Um, we started the group kind of talking about what the purpose of it is, and talking about your different situations and how the group is going to go. We came up with some group rules. I explained my role and we went over expectations and what you guys are hoping to gain from this group as well. Um, thank you guys so much for sharing with me, um, different scenarios with your sibling I know that can be hard. And it can be really hard to open up and talk about feelings of guilt and shame like you all have talked about and I really appreciate you all opening up and being honest about that. And then we did an activity even though it might have been a little weird at the beginning. Um, thank you all for participating in it and going through it and it was really great to listen and watch you guys come up with the answers that you came up with. And then we ended with another mood check to compare where you were comfortability wise versus where you are now. So, before we officially close, um, I just want to thank each of you for coming and we'll be meeting Wednesday nights at seven. And I just wanted to see if you guys had any questions or if anything was unclear from tonight that I can clarify for you right now. Okay, well thank you each and every single one of you for coming out tonight and I look forward to seeing you next week.

*Comment: One thing that I wish I would have added to this section would have been to reinforce their commitments to what they were wanting to gain. I think I did a good job at summarizing what we did, but this could have enhanced the ending and made the members want to continue coming back to group even more.*



*Correction: “Now that I have summarized what we went over today, I want to take a moment to commend each of you for coming to group tonight. You being here and showing up shows how much you all want to learn and work on yourselves. Each of you participated and contributed to tonight’s session, so thank you for that. I hope that during this time together over the next few weeks, each of you are able to gain something that you are seeking and use these skills in your day to day lives. I want to thank each of you for coming tonight and I look forward to meeting with you all next Wednesday at 7:00 pm. Before we log off, does anyone have any last-minute questions? I hope you each have a good week and I look forward to seeing you all next time!”*

## **Segment Two**

### ***Cultural Issues***

Throughout this session, I did not have any cultural issues arise. I know that this is a topic where it is easy for them to surface, but I did not see any in this interview. After working with individuals with ASD and their families for the past year and growing up with cousins diagnosed with autism, I know that culture plays a big role with how people handle certain situations. An issue that could have come up would have been how vocal a family is about their child’s diagnosis. I have had friends who have a sibling with ASD be discouraged from talking about their sibling and the diagnosis to anyone outside of the family. This can be damaging to someone. Having to carry all of this around with you all the time and not be able to speak to anyone about it can be very difficult and overwhelming. On the other hand, there could be a member with a family who is very “out there” about autism and not ashamed of the diagnosis. These are two totally opposite ends of the spectrum but can have many effects on the siblings of a child with ASD. This could potential cause a conflict with how someone “should” react to their situation.

To handle this, I think I would have been honest and recognized this with the group members. I would encourage them to talk about their issues rather than hiding them. Hopefully I would talk it out with the group and explain that we all come from different backgrounds, beliefs, and worldviews. Some families are more reserved while others are more vocal. At the end of the day it comes down to respect and I would want to instill this with my members. I would want to meet my members where they are at and not degrade them for how they have handled things or how their family acts. Through talking, I would hope to show them that I am there for them and that it is okay to discuss even cultural issues related to this topic in this group. I am not an expert in other people’s lives and cultures. By doing these things and being willing to have open conversations about our differences, I hope to build my cultural competence.

### ***Personal Reflections***

My group skills have improved throughout this semester, as demonstrated in this video. Having taken my CBT for individuals last semester, I believe I was better equipped to dive into the world of group therapy. It took me awhile to learn and be able to differentiate the differences between support and therapy groups. I was so used to running support groups from my time in my undergraduate classes, that this was a big adjustment to overcome. I believe that I effectively demonstrated my skills as an autonomous practitioner through the homework videos, in-class facilitation practices, as well as this final video and paper. I became more comfortable with the skills that were taught and was able to stand on my own. Doing therapy scares me, but I was able to do it this semester and proved to myself that I do have the skills to do it. Practice makes a

better practitioner in my book. As social workers, we vow to always be learning throughout our career. I want to continue building on my skills in my practice, even after I get my degree. I learned this semester that I really do enjoy mezzo social work and working with groups. This is something that I would like to incorporate into my future practice.

### *Using Technology*

I did not anticipate ending my semester this way. I am thankful that we live in a technology era and were able to continue our classes and work, rather than having to pause the entire semester. This transition was not too bad for me. For my internship, I had to adapt to telehealth sessions fairly quickly, which helped prepare me for this final project. I must admit that I prefer in-person sessions so much more. Doing the rest of the semester via zoom was a real struggle and caused a certain disconnect in all sessions. I did learn that I do have the capacity to do telehealth and therapy online, which was a nice confidence boost. During sessions, I had to add a piece about technology. I had to let my members know that this is not ideal, but it is what we have right now. One obstacle faced was the disconnect from not being in person with the group members. Another potential obstacle would be working with those with limited technology experience, bad connection, or not having the necessary devices or applications. This is what makes telehealth very difficult. Overall, I am glad that I got this experience and I know that I will never forget it.