

Group Therapy Intervention Script

Getting Started

Helping members get reacquainted, setting a positive tone

Clinician: Welcome, everyone. I'm glad to see you all back here today for our group session on anxiety and how to cope. I know before we closed last week, a couple of you shared that you felt worried about some things that were coming up. If you all are ok with it, I thought we could talk about some of that today. What do you all think?

Group members: *Nod, say sure, etc.*

Mia: Um, if it's still ok, I mentioned last week that I wanted to hear what you all thought about how I should go about a conversation I need to have with my boss. I feel like he is being really unreasonable with what he wants me to accomplish, but I don't know how to deal with that.

Purpose:

Clarified the purpose/objective of the group session for the day and connected it to the purpose of the group (goal).

Clinician: Of course, Mia. As you all know by now, the purpose of our group sessions is to provide a safe and understanding space for us to explore and manage our anxiety. As your facilitator, my role is to guide our discussions as needed, provide resources, and offer support. I'm here to help create a positive and empathetic environment where everyone feels comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings and where you all feel comfortable leading discussions. Mia, I appreciate you bringing your own topics to the table, so to speak. With the individual concerns brought up last week and Mia's topic for discussion, I believe that it will be a good time for us to focus on our **anxiety surrounding the expectations of others**. This is a theme that has come up frequently, and I wonder if you all agree that it relates to your individual experiences of anxiety enough to warrant a full session. What are your thoughts?

Group: *Agrees.*

*Facilitator explained their role for the day, explaining and clarifying group rules/
Reinforced commitments made by the members*

Clinician: Today, I'd like to guide us through some exercises that may be a bit challenging. I'll also be here to assist in discussions as needed. Before we begin, though, would someone mind reminding us of the rule of confidentiality and our other group rules?

Sam: Sure, confidentiality means that we won't share with others what we've discussed in group. Our group norms are active listening through eye contact and whatnot, respect for others, and empathy.

Ronald: Don't forget, with confidentiality if we say we're going to hurt ourselves or hurt someone else, that will have to be reported.

Sam: Oh yeah thanks

Addressed confidentiality (received either verbal or behavioral recognition)

Clinician: Great, thanks you two. Does everyone agree with these rules and norms, still?

Group: *All agree*

Explained how the group will be conducted

Clinician: Ok! So, as I said a moment ago, this session will focus on anxiety and expectations of others. We'll start by discussing expectations then checking in on everyone. Next, we will go into a sort of role playing activity. Mia, I think you will find this helpful with the situation you've described. Finally, we'll end with a mindfulness activity before we move into our closing portion. *Pauses.*

Helped members verbalize expectations for the session, Demonstrated the use of a rounds

Clinician: Starting off, then! What are some expectations you all have for today? Whoever would like to go first is free to do so, then we will go in a circle from that person's left.

Alex: I have been having some issues this week with confrontation and expectations, actually. I'd like to see how others feel about expectations, I guess to see if I'm overly paranoid or crazy or if everyone else feels similarly.

Sam: Well I have a feeling we're all a bit crazy. That's why we're here right?

Group: *Laughs*

Mia: Maybe this confirms the allegations, but I do feel a bit better that we're all struggling with something similar.

Curative Factor: Universality

Clinician: *Laughing* Well, I wouldn't say crazy, but we all are here because of our challenges with anxiety. Mia, you touched on an important point. The idea that each individual here is not isolated and is struggling with feelings of anxiety can help us to feel as if we are not alone in our struggles.

The clinician looks around the room, inviting participation.

Sam: Well, I guess I'm also curious to see how everyone feels about expectations placed on them. That is one of the main reasons I joined this group. While I'm confident in my identity as a nonbinary person, I do struggle with figuring out how to deal with expectations people have from me, from those who don't understand or accept my identity or from those who think I should be a certain way because of it. So I guess I'd like to learn how to balance what's realistic and healthy to expect from myself and what can be discarded from others.

Ronald: Well said, Sam. I am glad you are able to learn these things when you're young. When I was your age, my parents made all those determinations for me. It wasn't until I was older that I began to realize that I have to manage others' expectations myself. I guess this is what makes my time at work so stressful. Especially with all you young people and your technology, I have to make sure that I can keep up so I don't get forced into retirement or fired or something. It's a lot.

The Leader brought the group's focus back to the agenda/purpose when necessary

Clinician: Thank you, Sam and Ronald. I appreciate hearing your perspectives. Ronald, do you have any expectations for today?

Ronald: Well, I think I'd just like to see where this session goes and learn from it. I don't think I have anything very particular in mind.

Clinician: Sounds good, thank you Ronald.

The clinician turns to Mia

Clinician: Alex, what are your expectations for our group sessions?

Alex: I'm hoping to gain some new coping mechanisms for dealing with my anxiety, I feel like I deal with a lot of self-imposed expectations. Maybe I got them from others? Who knows.

Drew out members

Clinician: That's a great goal, Alex. Our group sessions are a great opportunity to learn from each other and build a support network. Mia?

Mia: I'd just like to share about my... issue I guess. Hear some perspectives. I just hope you all are kind to me, *laughs nervously* I know I've got issues.

Sam: Thanks for being vulnerable, Mia. I feel like you've really started feeling more comfortable with sharing with the group.

Mia: Thanks, Sam.

The session begins, with the group engaging in their first activity or discussion.

Encouraged members to look at other members

Clinician: Well, before getting into our activities, I'd like to start us off with a positive check-in. Would everyone mind sharing something that they did or accomplished this week that they're proud of? And just as a reminder, let's all be sure to look at whoever's talking so they feel heard and respected. Who would like to start?

Alex: Well, this week, the girl I've been talking to for a few weeks mentioned that she went on a date with someone else. I would usually have gotten really upset and felt like she was preparing to dump me, but I remembered what you said last week, Mia.

Mia: Oh!

Alex: You pointed out that, because I know I struggle to commit to relationships, I don't have a conversation with girls about whether we should see other people or if we are moving towards something exclusive. So, after a night of sleeping very little *laughs* I called Rachel, the girl, and told her that I was a little uncomfortable hearing about her other date and asked if we could talk about our relationship soon. She agreed and didn't seem upset. I'm still really nervous for the conversation we'll have - look, my hands are starting to sweat just thinking about it - but I'm proud of myself for not spiraling.

Mia: I'm really happy for you, Alex. I think that would be difficult for anyone to do. I'm even getting anxious just imagining myself in that situation. I guess I'm proud of myself for being prepared with a topic I want to talk about today. I feel like I don't like sharing too much about myself here because I feel selfish or like I'm wasting people's time. But yeah. I'm proud that I'm using the group session for some of my issues, too.

Clinician: I'm happy to hear that, Mia.

Sam: I was hoping something like this would come up. I did something this week that I'm really proud of.

Ronald: Oh good, dear!

Sam: So at work, there is an older gentleman who I work with. I think he struggles understanding my identity because he often stumbles over my pronouns or calls me by my legal name, even though I've gone by Sam for years. Anyways. I've never really corrected him because I worried it would create an issue. So last week, he called me over to help with something and we were by ourselves, which was a good opportunity for me to talk too him. I went over and as I was helping him, I told him that my name is Sam and that I'd appreciate if he would call me by that name. I felt so nervous. My hands were shaking and my stomach really hurt. Then, he actually apologized and said he didn't realize that I went by Sam. I'm not sure how that's possible, but I'll give him the benefit of the doubt. He said he was glad I let him know and asked if he could even make it up in any way. I told him it was alright, but I went a step further and asked if I could explain pronouns to him. Even though we were on the clock, we

actually had a really good conversation. I still think he is a bit confused, but now I'm not as stressed when I encounter him at work and we're buddies now.

Mia: Sam, that's amazing. I'm really happy for you. Do you think you'll be less nervous if you have to have similar conversations in the future?

Sam: I kind of doubt that I'll feel less anxious, I had a stomach ache for the rest of the day.
Laughs

Ronald: Sam, I feel like I relate a bit to your coworker. I mean, I know your name and I don't even know what else I would call you, but I don't really know how your pronouns work. In my mind, I think, "Oh, Sam said 'he' was going to work," but everyone else would say "Sam said 'they' were going to work." I don't want to be rude, but I feel like wanting everyone to automatically know what you want to be called is kind of ridiculous. I mean, I don't feel right walking around on eggshells around you young people and your tempers if I get something wrong.

Promoted an inclusive and safe environment to improve the cohesion of a multicultural/diverse group setting.

Alex: Yikes, Ronald, I know we talked about being open to discuss difficult topics, including race or sexuality in our group, but I don't think you're being very open-minded right now. I feel like -

Ronald: See! That's exactly what I'm talking about! I can't even ask for help understanding without someone getting upset. You people never allow space for us older folks to express our opinions!

Group is silent for a moment

Mia: Ronald, I don't think Alex or even Sam were getting upset. I think Alex was just sharing that the way you were confronting Sam seemed a bit rough, even though you said you didn't want to be rude. Sam even said in their story that they weren't upset at their coworker for not knowing, they were just anxious to confront him.

Sam: Thanks Mia. I'd be happy to have a conversation with you, Ronald, but I would require that we all have open minds. I am fine sharing my perspectives with you, but I don't want you to tell me what you think my emotions or reactions are. *Slightly raises voice* You can't put your expectations for how I will respond onto our interactions!

Ronald: Hmmph

Socializing techniques / Sensitive to any multicultural/diversity issues as necessary / Prejudice and insensitivity

Clinician: There seems to be a bit of a disconnect between what you all want to communicate to one another and how you expect it will be perceived, especially surrounding issues like gender identity. I want to remind everyone that our group norms include respect and empathy. These are really important when creating space for conversations that may be challenging. How do you all think we can move forward with this in mind?

Alex: Ronald, I know these conversations can be difficult, but I didn't feel respected when you cut me off, and I'm not sure that Sam felt respected either. How about we restart this conversation?

Ronald: Fine. I suppose. Sam, could you please explain your pronouns to me?

Sam: Sure. When people talk about you, they say "he did this" or "go speak with him," right?

Ronald: Yeah

Sam: Well, and maybe we can talk more after group, but really simply, you use "he/him" pronouns because you identify as a man. I don't use "he/him" or "she/her" pronouns because I don't identify as a man or a woman. I don't believe that I fit within either of what people define as "male" and "female." Even though I may appear more feminine one day or masculine the next, I don't think these categories define me. Because of this, I prefer "they/them" pronouns. Does that help?

Ronald: I mean I think I would still like to talk to you afterwards, but I suppose I can just accept that, even if I don't completely understand it all.

Sam: That's ok, I don't need you to even fully understand. I just ask for you to respect me. Thank you for listening.

Ronald: Sure, I'd like to apologize for assuming you'd get upset with me.

Sam: Thanks Ronald. I appreciate it.

Ronald: Well, I guess to bring us back to the topic, I am grateful to you all for being patient with me and proud of myself for taking a step back and listening.

Clinician: Sam, how do you feel after that conversation?

Sam: I am glad we could have it and I'm willing to talk afterwards, too, but I think that it made me pretty anxious to be confronted. I'm ok, just feeling tired. It can be exhausting to be like Google for people, managing all their questions. Not that I mind all the time, especially here. I guess I'm just feeling a bit drained, now.

Alex: Well, Sam, we have the mindfulness exercise planned for the end of the session. Maybe that can help ground you a bit.

Checked out the comfort level of members when necessary

Clinician: Good point Alex. Sam, do you want to keep talking about this now, or do you want to move on to something else?

Sam: I think I'd like to move on. *Turns to clinician* What was the activity you had planned? Something about role playing?

Demonstrated, as appropriate, two kinds of exercises

Activity 1: Psychodrama (Part 1)

Appropriately introduced the exercises

Clinician: Yes, we are going to try a new activity in the group today: a psychodrama exercise. This will give us an opportunity to explore deeper some of the conflicts we have discussed in past sessions, in an interactive way.

Sam: Psychodrama sounds like a horror film.

Imparting information

Clinician: I mean, now that you mention it... *laughs* Psychodrama is a form of therapy where group members act out or replay conflict-filled situations that have occurred in their lives in a safe space to help let go of any negative or hidden emotions connected to those situations. Research suggests that psychodramatic therapy may lead to an increased sense of competence and self-efficacy and it may contribute to a better understanding and resolution of trauma, therefore decreasing anxiety related to those situations. Is everyone comfortable trying it?

Group: *Agrees*

Clinician: We can begin by setting the scene. Does anyone have a situation they would like to try this with? Mia, I know you wanted to talk about something in particular.

Mia: Sure, I can go. Let's try it with the situation that I talked about last week where my boss questioned my performance and told me I needed to change. I feel that he's asking too much of me. We don't have capacity to accomplish what he wants at our startup, but I don't know how to tell him that. I guess I'm trying to protect myself and my coworkers.

Clinician: Ok, great. Thank you Mia. I think that would be a good choice of a situation to use in this exercise. Would anyone like to volunteer to be Mia's boss?

Ronald: I can give it a shot.

Clinician: Ok, you can both go ahead when you are ready.

Used dyads

Ronald: *Pretending to be Mia's boss:* Mia, we need to talk about your performance at work. I've noticed a decline lately, and I need you to step it up.

Mia: I am sorry, I have been struggling lately.... I'm really trying to do my best.

Ronald: Your best isn't good enough, Mia. I need your old self back when you weren't afraid to take risks. You are going to get fired if you don't step up! I've been disappointed in you. I hope you haven't been pleased with your work lately, because I certainly wouldn't be if I were you.

Mia: I'm trying!! But it feels like no matter what I do, it's never enough. I am never good enough.

Crying / Hostile member

Ronald: I understand, Mia. But "trying" isn't going to accomplish our goals. Our company is going to go under and it is going to be all your fault! You -

Mia: *starts to cry*

Cut off members when necessary

Clinician: Ronald, let's give Mia a moment to gather herself and respond

Mia: I'm scared. I am scared of taking those risks now. I am afraid of failure! I am afraid things won't go well and that my coworkers will suffer if I make mistakes!

Clinician: Mia, how does it feel to voice these fears?

Mia: *Gathering herself, stops crying and wipes eyes* It's ... scary. But it also feels like a weight lifted off my shoulders. It's like... admitting them makes them feel less strong. It makes me remember what we talked about two weeks ago, that we can't be in control of how others react to everything.

Clinician: Mia, you're very brave. Just know, you're not facing these fears by yourself.

Sam: Yeah Mia, we're here for you, every step of the way, supporting you.

Was able to deepen the focus when necessary

Clinician: Mia, how do you think what you're feeling now can help you in your interactions with your boss or with others?

Mia: Maybe... it's about finding the courage to speak up for myself. To not let my anxiety control me, but rather to acknowledge it and move forward anyways. I think by embracing my

fears, I can become stronger and more resilient in facing challenges, including talking with my boss.

All group members: *agree, nod, etc.*

Alex: *To the clinician:* Ronald seemed to be being a little too harsh, don't you think?

Clinician: Alex, it's valuable that you noticed that. Ronald, your portrayal was intense, and it's important to recognize how our words and actions can affect others, even in a therapeutic setting. What do you all think of this?

Sam: You seemed quite comfortable talking harshly. Is there anyone in your life that you typically speak that way to, such as yourself?

Ronald: *pauses for a moment to think about it* Wow, I didn't realize I was coming off so harsh. Yeah, I guess I do talk to myself like that sometimes, especially when I'm stressed. Maybe I need to be nicer to myself.... And to others. I'm sorry I came across too harsh Mia, it wasn't personal. I'm sorry that I made you cry.

Mia: Thank you for your apology, Ronald.

Clinician: It takes courage to expose those inner struggles, and I appreciate your honesty in sharing that with us. It is very important to recognize that the way we speak to ourselves can greatly impact our well-being, as well as those around us. Mia, would you like to try a reverse roleplay, where you're the boss and Ronald plays as you?

Mia: Sure.

Clinician: You are free to begin whenever you feel ready.

Mia: *Roleplaying as her boss* Mia, we need to talk about your performance. I've noticed a decline lately, and it's concerning.

Ronald *Roleplaying as Mia, responds in a higher pitched voice:* I'm doing my best. But it's been a tough time for me lately.

All group members: *Giggle in response to Ronald trying to imitate Mia's voice*

Ronald *Roleplaying as Mia, responds in his normal voice realizing him trying to imitate Mia's voice was too distracting:* I'm doing my best. But it's been a tough time for me lately.

Mia: I understand. We all go through rough patches, but it's important to find ways to overcome them and to do your best, for yourself and for the company.

Ronald: Thank you. I'll do my best to improve and to meet your expectations. Do you have suggestions for how I could improve?

Clinician: How did that feel Mia?

Mia: It's kind of eye opening. Acting as my boss, I see how important it is to be understanding and supportive when things get tough.

Clinician: That's a big moment, Mia. Understanding others' perspectives can really make a difference.

Activity 1: Processing (Part 1)

Appropriately processed the exercises

Clinician: Ronald how did it feel to be Mia after being the boss?

Ronald: It felt scary, I know you all said my portrayal of her boss was intense but I have had bosses like that. *pauses* It felt powerful, in a way to be the boss in the roleplay to be yelling at someone else instead of being yelled at. But switching to being Mia was scary because I thought I was going to be yelled at.

Alex: But she didn't yell at you.

Ronald: I know, that was surprising. Mia I thought that you were supposed to be playing your boss, why did you decide to be so understanding?

Mia: I was playing the boss I wish I had, or the boss that I want to be one day. It felt really empowering to realize that I can change how I treat other people, and interact with them in a way that makes them feel safe and supported while also holding them accountable for the work they are doing. Even if my boss doesn't treat me that way I can still treat myself with love and support.

Ronald: Huh, I haven't really had a boss like that. If you mess up at work you don't need love for that you just need to get your act together in my experience.

Sam: Maybe some of these new perspectives can help you in your experiences, Ronald.

Ronald: Yeah, maybe

Activity 1: Psychodrama (Part 2)

Clinician: Is there anyone else that would like to try this exercise?

Sam: I think I would.

Clinician: Sure, Sam. What situation would you like to address?

Sam: The other day my friend was trying to make me go to a social gathering with them. I had just gotten off of work, and was tired on top of being anxious going out and dealing with people anyway, but she kept not taking no for an answer. I actually got so irritated that I hung up on her and haven't talked to her since. In retrospect, I feel like I could have handled it better, but I don't know how or where to go from here.

Clinician: That sounds like a good situation that we can use in psychodrama. Alex, would you mind being the other half of Sam's dyad and role-playing as their friend?

Alex: Sure.

Clinician: Sam, let's try this from how you could speak to your friend if you contacted her now, after this incident happened. You can start when you're ready.

Sam: Hey, Becky, it's Sam. I know we haven't talked since the other day.... I just wanted to call because I've been thinking about what happened and how I snapped at you and hung up on you, and it wasn't cool that I did that. I'm sorry.

Alex: *responding as the friend:* It's ok Sam. I know you were tired and feel easily drained around people. I also shouldn't have kept pushing you to go, I just wanted to hang out with you.

Sam: Yeah, I appreciate that you were trying to include me, and I didn't mean to make you feel bad. I guess I just got overwhelmed and didn't handle it well. Maybe we can do something more low-key next week?

Alex: Aaand scene.

Activity 1: Processing (Part 2)

Clinician: Sam, did it help to express these feelings and apologize to your friend?

Sam: It was relieving... I feel a lot less tense, like I can breathe a little better now. That has been bothering me the past few days by acknowledging what happened and apologizing.

Clinician: That's great! Now, let's explore how you can move forward from this. What do you think would be a constructive way to address this situation with your friend and rebuild your relationship?

Sam: I think I'll do something similar to what I did just now. I'll try calling her and explain how I was feeling that night and apologize for behaving like I did and hanging up on her. I hope she is as accepting as Alex was in role-playing as her!

Alex chuckles

Leader Maintained the Group's Focus

Clinician: Our next activity will give us an opportunity to experiment with being kind to ourselves in a radical way that I think will be really meaningful. Before we get to that though I want to hear from the rest of you. What were you feeling watching this situation play out between Mia and Ronald?

Alex: I know it's a different situation but it kind of reminded me of the conversation with Rachel, the girl I've been talking to. It felt like the complete and utter rejection that in my most anxious moments I am sure is waiting for me in that upcoming conversation. Just like this feeling of whatever you do it is not good enough.

Sam: But do you think that is what is actually going to happen, Alex?

Alex: No, she seems to really enjoy our time together and I don't think that it will actually be that bad. It just felt like my fears took the shape of a person and were telling me I'm worthless. How was it for you Sam?

Sam: I guess I related more to the second situation, when Ronald and Mia switched. I think Mia, you remind me of my mom, calling me out for stuff but in a loving way and helping me get the support I need to make my goals happen.

Ronald: *Makes a face* Well our mothers have very different personalities then.

Mia: I'm glad I reminded you of your mom Sam. You've mentioned how supportive she is before so that means a lot to me. Ronald, I know it sounds like you haven't had a lot of support in your life, I want you to know that even though a lot of us are younger than you here, we care about you and want to support you. Just because you haven't been supported in the past doesn't mean you aren't supported by us now.

Ronald: Some people just have different ways of supporting their children, my mom had such high standards because she wanted a better life for us and she worked hard for us to have what we had. Thanks Mia, and all of you guys, that really means a lot.

Sam: I guess that's part of why I've been worried. For the last, like, over a month now you guys have been a huge support for me. I know we still have some sessions session left, but I'm worried about saying goodbye to you guys and never seeing you all again.

Clinician: I'm glad you brought that up Sam, has anyone else been worried about the ending of group coming up?

Everyone nods except for Ronald, he shakes his head no

Ronald: Not that I don't like you guys, I've just said goodbye to a lot of people *pauses* and maybe I'm looking forward to not being anxious about saying the wrong thing in group.

Mia: I've been worried about the end of group. When we first started I thought this would feel like forever but we're basically done already and it feels like I'm just really starting to know you guys.

Alex: Yeah I feel the same way. I thought I was the only one, I'm glad you guys are going to miss this too. 2 months ago we had no idea each other even existed, it's crazy.

Was able to appropriately shift the focus from a person to a topic and back when necessary

Clinician: Saying good bye can be really hard, and it speaks to how close you guys have grown as a group. Lets start our second activity now, and check-in with those worries afterwards to see if the activity impacts them at all, how does that sound?

Affirmative responses from the group

Activity 2: Mindfulness (Loving-Kindness Meditation or the Present Moment Awareness Meditation)

Clinician: This practice can help us cultivate feelings of compassion and connection towards ourselves and others, which might be particularly helpful as we navigate the upcoming transition of saying goodbye to each other. For this activity I'm going to read this script. What I'm asking you guys to do is follow along and try this exercise so we can talk about it. This is a mindfulness exercise. For some people "tuning in" to their body can be triggering as it may bring up something that has happened or something you are uncomfortable with. I want to remind you all that this activity is for you, so, if it in any way makes you uncomfortable, feel free to step outside for a moment, keep your eyes open or close them as you wish, and do what you need to do to take care of yourself. That being said, sometimes figuring out what is making us uncomfortable can be really helpful in our growing process so I would challenge you to sit with any potential negative thoughts or emotions and be curious about them first, if possible, instead of disconnecting from them immediately. This way, we can learn from ourselves in addition to one another. Pay attention to what you are able to handle and when you need a break. Does that make sense?

Affirmative responses from the group

Ronald: What we are able to handle?!?

Clinician: Don't worry Ronald that phrase made it sound worse than it is, at the most it might be uncomfortable ideas, not doing or saying anything that could physically harm you.

Ronald: Ok, just making sure.

Clinician: Ok, any other questions before we begin?

Negative responses from the group

Clinician: *begins reading*

Begin by getting yourself comfortable. Allow yourself to switch from your usual mode of doing to nondoing, to simply being.

Connect with your body and bring your attention to your breathing.

Follow your breath as it comes in, and then out of your body, without trying to change it. Simply be aware of it, and any feelings associated with it. Give full attention to each in breath and then to each out breath.

Being total here in each moment with each breath. If distracting thoughts arise acknowledge them without becoming involved and return to the practice.

Take a moment now to consciously set an intention for this practice, some examples are: “to open my heart”, “to cultivate loving-kindness”, “to care for myself” (Sharpio & Carlson, 2009)

Bring to mind a person or a pet for whom you are happy to see and have deep feelings of love.

Imagine or sense this person or pet, noticing the feelings you have for them arise in your body. It may be a smile that spreads across your face it may be a warmth in your body. Whatever it is, allow it to be felt.

Let go of this person or pet and continue to keep in awareness the feelings that have arisen. Bring to mind now, and see if you can offer loving kindness to yourself, by letting these words become your words:-

May I be safe

May I be happy

May I be healthy

May I live in peace, no matter what I am given

May my heart be filled with love and kindness.

Notice the feelings and sensations that arise and let them be. Now try offering loving kindness to someone who supports you.

Bring that person to mind and let these words become your words:

May you be safe

May you be happy

May you be healthy

May you live in peace, no matter what you are

given

May your heart be filled with love and kindness.
Notice the feelings and sensations that arise and let them be. Once feelings for a loved one flow easily, turn your attention to someone with whom you have difficulty. It is best not to start with the most difficult person, but someone who brings up feelings of slight annoyance or irritation. See if you can let these words become your words as you keep this person in awareness.

May you be safe

May you be happy

May you be healthy

May you live in peace, no matter what you are

given

May your heart be filled with love and kindness.
Notice the feelings and sensations that arise, and see if you can just allow them, and let them be.
Now bring to mind the broader community of which you are a part of. Imagine your family, your colleagues, your neighbours: fan out your attention until you include yourself in this offering of lovingkindness as you let these words become your words:

May we be safe

May we be happy

May we be healthy

May we live in peace, no matter what we are given

May our hearts be filled with love and kindness.

Notice the sensations and feelings that arise within you. Sit with them for a few moments until you are ready to end the practice.

https://www.letss.org.au/images/Loving_Kindness_Meditation_Worksheet_edited.pdf

Clinician: Ok if you had your eyes closed let's go ahead and open them now and talk about what just happened.

Activity 2 Processing

Clinician: What was that experience like?

Mia: I really enjoyed that. At first I was worried that I wasn't doing the activity right, but then I tried to get curious about that thought like you mentioned and asked myself why was I so worried about getting it right? I know that you guys care about me and are here to help and wouldn't get mad at me. Well, *glances at Ronald* most of you guys anyways.

Almost everyone laughs, Ronald smiles, Alex seems closed off and distant

Sam: But for real it was like my worries melted for just a little bit, it was like... I felt love just so tangibly, it really inspired me actually. I think the world would be a better place if we..., I don't know, if world leaders started sessions with this or something.

Alex: That's great Sam, and no offense, I'm happy for you but like I think I had the opposite experience.

Clinician: What do you mean by that Alex?

Alex: Like, you said to imagine a person that we have deep feelings of love for and I started, like, freaking out, like what if I can't find someone who has deep feeling of love for me? I know we've talked about how my relationships have turned out badly in the past and I'm starting to feel hopeful again with Rachel kind of but the hope is the worst part you know? Like with this group, yeah you congratulated me on opening up to you guys and everything but since we're going to be done soon, what was the point of me sharing all this with you guys? We're just going to leave and never talk to each other and be strangers for the rest of our lives. It was all a waste.

Sam: So you encouraging me the other week about the situation with my friend, that was all a waste?

Alex: Well.....

Sam: And Mia crying earlier and learning what it could be like to have a compassionate boss, and Ronald learning about different identities, and all the times we've talked about our highs and lows from the past week, that's all a waste to you?

Alex: No I mean not all of it, but...

Sam: But if it won't last forever what's the point?

Alex: Yeah

Sam: None of us are going to last forever either, is there no point to our lives too?

Alex: You know that's not what I mean

Sam: It sounded like you took all of the positive times from this group and just threw them in the trash, and that makes me kind of upset. This group has meant a lot to me.

Alex: It's meant a lot to me too, that's why I'm upset. I didn't mean to dismiss the positive experiences we've shared; I just can't shake this fear of losing what we've built here. It's like trying to hold onto sand—you know, it's slipping away, no matter how tightly you grasp it.

Clinician: Alex, it sounds like you're feeling a sense of loss before we've even finished. Is there a way we can reframe this to focus on what we've gained?

Alex: I guess... I'm just scared of losing this sense of connection. It's been hard to find.

Sam: I get that. Maybe the point isn't that it lasts forever, but that it happened at all. Like a sunset—just there for a little bit, but still worth watching.

Clinician: Absolutely, and even after our sessions end, the impact of our time together can continue to shape how we navigate our lives.

Alex: Yeah, I guess I hadn't thought of it that way. It's just tough, you know?

Clinician: Change often is. But your growth and the bonds you've formed here won't disappear. They become part of your story.

Sam: And part of what shapes us moving forward.

Closing

Allowed time for closing / Planned for and conducted an effective close for the session

Clinician: In our last couple of minutes, I'd like for us to check in with how today went and how we're all feeling.

Summarized and highlighted the main points of the group

Clinician: As a summary, today we talked about positive moments from our week, role played some stressful situations that have happened recently, talked about what that experience was like and did a loving-kindness activity and talked about how we felt about that experience. We also had some intense moments between a couple of us at different points today. What are your takeaways from today?

Alex: Trying to reframe my thoughts about what I have gained instead of what I will lose was a really cool concept that I want to work on for this next week, especially as our group nears its end. I think that will be hard for me.

Sam: It'll be hard for me too, Alex. I think it'll be hard for all of us. As for this session, it was really helpful for me to roleplay that conversation with my friend with Alex. Having an opportunity to practice how it could go in real life helps my anxiety about the whole situation. I think I'll call her after group.

Mia: The roleplay with me and Ronald was really rough at first, that wasn't easy for me. But being able to kind of relive the situation and talk about what I was feeling in real time with people who care and are supportive. Your guys' support means a lot to me.

Ronald: I just want to say I'm sorry again, about being harsh in the roleplay to you Mia and not understanding your pronouns Sam. The loving kindness exercise really got me thinking. I do

really want you guys to be safe, happy, and healthy. I know this group isn't forever, but I hope you guys have a good life wherever it takes you next.

Reinforced commitments made by the members

Clinician: And that brings us to the end of session for today. I just want to remind you guys of the commitments you referenced in group today. Alex you are going to have the conversation with Rachel, Sam you are going to call your friend back, Ronald and Sam you both mentioned talking some more outside of group, and Mia you said you didn't want to let your anxiety hold you back. I'm looking forward to next week to hear how things are going with you guys again, we will take time to say goodbye to each other and wrap things up.