

Introduction

Purpose of this Book and Topics Covered

Get Your Group On: Multi Topic Small Group Counseling Guides Volume I provides counselors/leaders with a blueprint for planning and facilitating three topic-based psycho-educational groups. Readers will learn various strategies and activities that they can use in their own group sessions, as well as techniques for continuing to support group members after the group ends. This book will also address how to compile group data to advocate for future groups with campus stakeholders. The following counseling topic guides are included in this volume:

Girl World

Girl Empowerment,
Leadership, Friendship,
and Conflict Resolution

Boys' Voice

Boy Empowerment,
Leadership, Friendship
and Conflict Resolution

Be Cool!

Anger Management
Goal Achievement

[Note that reproducible activities for each session can be found at the end of each session plan and on the CD. Also, note that items identified as being in the Appendix can be found on the CD.]

What is a Psycho-Educational Group and Why Run One?

Psycho-educational counseling groups are an amazing tool to support children and teach them the skills that they need to thrive. This type of group helps members to gain information and develop skills for challenging situations through education-based techniques. In psycho-educational groups, the emphasis is on teaching and learning, the group activities are structured, and the content is group specific. During group sessions, the counselor usually facilitates discussions of the material while the members build skills to overcome problems, share coping skills, and develop behaviors to successfully navigate new or difficult situations. The benefits of running a counseling group are invaluable – resulting in decreased symptoms of anxiety/depression, a better quality of life, increased knowledge of mental health issues, better access to community resources, and improved self-esteem (Lukens, 2004; Corey & Corey, 2006). For all of these reasons, I love running counseling groups and am always looking for something new to learn about and to try out in group counseling sessions. As a result, I have spent many years compiling and creating extensive, best-practice group counseling resources. It is my wish to share these resources with you in this book.

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GIRL WORLD

Session One: Finding Commonalities

Topic Overview

The group member will:

- » Make introductions with other group members
- » Identify the purpose of the group
- » Discuss group rules/norms
- » Identify some commonalities with other group members

Materials

- » Reproducible: *Stand Up for Y-O-U!*
- » Pencils
- » Your selected items from the Appendix on the CD

Procedures

1. Take attendance on the Group Notes sheet (included in Appendix).
2. Ask group members what they think they will learn about in this group and guide them to the idea that the purpose of the group is to support each other to become strong leaders, to build friendships, and to calmly handle interpersonal conflicts. Show the rules poster (included in Appendix), and have each group member read a rule aloud and share what she thinks the rule means. Remember to always remind group members that they can say “pass” if they do not want to read aloud.
3. Have each group member introduce herself by stating her name and something she’s looking forward to. The group leader should go first to model this for group members.
4. Hand out the pretest (included in Appendix), and read aloud as group members fill in Yes/No for each statement. Collect and save these pretests until the last group session.
5. Tell the group that they will do an activity called *Stand Up for Y-O-U!* Read the series of statements on the *Stand Up for Y-O-U!* sheet to the group members. If they agree with the statement, they should stand. If they disagree, they should stay seated. The group leader can model this first with the first two statements in order to clarify directions. After all the statements have been read, discuss the *Stand Up for Y-O-U!* questions with the group.
6. Optional Homework Activity: Tell group members the following, “As you are hanging out with your friends over the next week, notice what qualities they have in common. For example, when I think of my friends, I notice that most of them are outgoing and funny, so those are two qualities that most of my friends have in common. We will talk about this next session.”

7. Complete the group evaluation (included in Appendix). To do this, the group leader reads each evaluation statement aloud, and group members hold up fingers to indicate whether they agree/disagree/feel “sort of” about each statement. The group leader tallies group members’ responses in each Agree/Sort of/Disagree column on the Group Notes sheet (included in Appendix) for use in planning the next session.
8. Sometimes this initial session can run a bit short, especially if the girls are feeling shy as new group members and if conversation is sparse. If you have extra time, the Friendship Collage from the Additional Activities (included in Appendix) is a wonderful way to wrap up this session.

Discussion Questions

- » How did you feel while doing the Stand Up for Y-O-U activity? What did you like most and least about the activity? Explain.
- » What are you most excited about learning or doing in this group? Explain.
- » What are you most nervous about learning or doing in this group? Explain.

Supplemental Forms and Handouts for Session One (In Appendix on CD)

- » Parent Permission Letter
- » Group Notes
- » Group Evaluation
- » Pre/Post Test
- » Group Rules & Consequences
- » Group Pass Examples
- » Data Analysis
- » Additional Activities



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Stand Up for Y-O-U!

In this activity, group members should stand up when they agree with the statements below and sit down when they don't agree with them.

My favorite color is green.

I like school.

I have a pet.

I have traveled on an airplane.

I have traveled outside of the state we live in.

I love math.

I hate math.

I have a sister

I have no brothers or sisters.

My parents are divorced.

I have heard a rumor or gossip about me before.

I love pizza.

I have a best friend.

I have ended a friendship.

Someone has betrayed my trust.

Sometimes I get really jealous.

I think it's okay for tweens to date.

I think I am a leader.

I know someone who thinks about suicide.

I worry about my weight.

I know someone who has been a victim of child abuse.

I like the way I look.

I have had a secret crush on someone.

I made a new friend this year.

I am excited about being a part of this group.

I have seen something mean about me on the Internet, a computer, or a smartphone.

Someone in my family drinks alcohol too much or uses drugs.

{Discussion Questions}

1. What question did you like the best?
2. What question did you like the least?
3. Did any questions make you uncomfortable? Why?
4. Were you surprised by others' answers? Why?
5. Do you feel like you have some things in common with the girls of this group?
6. What were some of the questions where most of us stood up?
7. What did you like best and least about this activity?