



Group Close-Out Ideas – Many group therapy programs run for longer intervals (Such as in Intensive Outpatient Programs – IOP). On some days, that last 45 minutes to an hour of group therapy can be really tough on everyone every now and then. The group may be feeling worn out or tired, and the counselor may feel the same. Below is a list of some quick (but still therapeutic and helpful) ideas to use on days when the group may be dragging a little bit at the end of the day:

- ✦ **Share Ball** – Simply get a ball of some kind – (If no ball available improvise and just crush up a piece of paper or use a small pillow or anything people can throw without hurting each other). Then simply close out the day by playing “Share Ball” – The rule is that only the person with the ball can talk and the person with the ball can prompt others to share by asking a question to someone else in the group and then throwing the ball that person’s way for them to catch and answer. Continue onward. The counselor should participate to help keep the flow moving and to add ideas and suggestions.
- ✦ **Google Show and Tell** – This can be done if everyone in the group has access to a smart phone or tablet. If not this can be done if clients are willing to share their devices. Each person should get about 5 minutes to use Google to gather information on any topic that interests them. It can be a hobby, a news story, something from history, science, people, animals, entertainment, sports, or anything at all that they find personally interesting and would want to share with others. After the 5 minute preparation period, each group member gets another 5 minute “Show and Tell” time period to present to the group about their topic of choice. In larger groups this can be done in pairs
- ✦ **Topic Draw** – This easy activity is just what the name sounds like – Pick a topic and have everyone draw what comes to mind for them about the topic. Paper and pencils/pens or other basic art supplies are needed. Larger paper is better if available, so each person can clearly see others work. Simply have everyone freely draw what comes to mind for that topic and then when everyone is ready, take turns having each person show their picture and talk about it with the rest of the group. The counselor can ask questions and open up questions to the group. Use the [Suggested Topic List](#) for ideas or your own.
- ✦ **Journaling** – This is the same as Topic Draw but instead group members should write in a journal. The [Suggested Topic List](#) can also be used for journal assignments.
- ✦ **Life Story** – Having someone in the group volunteer to do their life story can be a good way to close out a group. Use the [Life Story Outline](#) to help the speaker organize their thoughts and you can also use the [Discussion Outline](#) for other group members to gather their thoughts, takes notes and organize some relevant questions for discussion.
- ✦ **End of the Day Review** – Group members can complete the [End of the Day Review](#) form and then discuss it. Another option is to just review and discuss the points on the [End of the Day Review](#) form orally together as a group
- ✦ **Recovery Charades** – Some groups may be too shy to play charades but when a group is willing to do it, playing charades can be a great way to bond and it is a lot of fun. A **Substance Use/Mental Health Word List** is available at the end of this paper for some ideas
- ✦ **Recovery Scategories** – Scategories involves making teams, then picking a topic, then picking a letter in the alphabet and then setting a timer for 3 minutes. At the end of 3 minutes, the team with the most acceptable answers (that are original – no other team came up with) that begin with the chosen letter for the category wins the round. Some suggested topics (or use your own)-

Withdrawal Symptoms	Relapse Triggers	Movies that have Addiction
Famous Problem Substance Users	Coping Skills	Types of Drugs of Abuse
Feelings and Emotions	Ways Addiction Can Ruin Lives	Things People Keep Hidden
Positive Substance Free Activities	Personality Traits	Signs Someone is Making Progress
Things You Do In Treatment	Positive Life Goals	Mistakes to Avoid in Life



- ✚ **Pictionary** – Make teams, pick the topic, set the timer and see if your team can guess it. Repeat with the other team. You can use the **Substance Use/Mental Health Word and Phrase List** for ideas (The list is included at the end of this paper)
- ✚ **5 Minutes of Spotlight** – Group members take turns. When it is a person's turn, they are the group leader and the group is theirs for 5 minutes to do or say whatever (as long as it is appropriate – nothing mean, hurtful or insulting) Use the time to entertain, discuss a topic of choice, answer or ask questions or have the group work together to complete a brief task of choice – Be creative. Repeat with different leaders
- ✚ **Dyad Interviews** – Come up with a list of sample questions or a general theme. Divide the group into pairs and take some time for each pair to interview one another. When everyone is prepared, each person should do a short presentation about the person whom they just interviewed.
- ✚ **Weekend planning**- This can be done at the end of the week. Use the [Weekend Planning](#) form to come up with constructive ideas and strategies to get through the weekend without experiencing any setbacks or consequences of negative choices. Discuss
- ✚ **Focused Self-Expression** – Pick a word or phrase as a topic. One at a time allow each group member to share their personal expressions directly toward that topic as if the topic itself was personified. For example if the topic was “ANGER” each person should take turns talking directly to their anger as if it were a person to express their thoughts and feelings about the topic aloud
- ✚ **Mental Escape to Nature Group** – Have a group discussion with just one added rule – Do not talk focus on any topics that apply to humans or day to day human life. Try to just have a discussion about animals, plants and nature as a temporary positive escape from the stresses of life
- ✚ **Survivor** – Everyone comes up with an idea for the group that can be accomplished in a few minutes. Put all the ideas in a pile. Pick two ideas from the pile at random and read them. The group should vote which idea that they want to go with. (The counselor or group leader shouldn't vote except to break ties) The group should then follow the idea that won the vote for a few minutes. Return the idea that won to the group and throw away the idea that lost. Mix up the ideas, pick two and vote again the same way and again follow the winning idea. When done, again throw away the losing idea. Repeat until one idea is left as survivor or until the group is out of time. Examples of ideas:
 - *“I think that the group should just sit in silence for a few minutes”*
 - *“I think we should sit here and tell jokes”*
 - *“My idea is that everyone in the group should share a positive memory”*
 - *“I think we should all should do jumping jacks”*
- ✚ **Keep it in the Darkness Group** – Everyone involved must be on board with this one first. Some individuals with anxiety or trauma history may be uncomfortable with this idea in which case this concept shouldn't be used. Everyone must be comfortable and feel a degree of trust for the group. A key rule is that no one should touch one another or each other's belongings during this group and spacing out group members is a good idea if this is going to be attempted. The idea is to try to have an open group discussion in darkness by turning out the lights. The premise for this activity is that what is said in the darkness, stays in the darkness and is not to be discussed when the lights are back on (Unless of course there is a safety issue). When everyone is done and ready, turn on the lights and end the group.



✚ **Speaker/Movie Assignment and Discussion:** For the following suggestions you can use the outline:
Guest Speaker/Movie [Discussion Outline](#)

- **Guest Speaker-** This has to be arranged ahead of time but having guest speakers with good experiences can help close out a group session with good discussion. Using the [Discussion Outline](#) while the speaker is talking can help the group to collect their personal thoughts and it can help them focus and pay better attention by taking notes instead of letting their mind wander
- **Short Video:** Playing a short video to generate discussion can be helpful with a tired group at the end of the day. Sometimes rather than showing a one hour video it is better to view something shorter and then discuss it as a group in the last hour. Using the [Discussion Outline](#) can help generate questions and other points for discussion. One suggestion linked below:
 - **Johan Hari: “Everything You Think You Know About Addiction is Wrong”**
https://www.ted.com/talks/johann_hari_everything_you_think_you_know_about_addiction_is_wrong?language=en

Substance Use/Mental Health Word and Phrase List

Addiction	Relapse	Motivation	Insight	Detoxification
Withdrawal	Progress	Bipolar	Anxiety	Self Help
Support	Resentment	Disease	Pain	Inspiration
Consequence	Setback	Medication	Abstinence	Therapy
Treatment	Rehab	Depression	Recovery	Group
Attitude	Positive Thinking	Stimulant	Opioid	Prescription
PTSD	Drug Dealer	Legalization	Incarceration	DUI
Psychiatrist	IOP	Wellness	Mindfulness	Serenity
Paraphernalia	Hospitalization	Craving	Assessment	Sobriety
Empathy	Boundaries	Self Esteem	Panic Attack	Stress
Spirituality	Honesty	Symptoms	Responsibility	Risk Factor
Commitment	Self-Control	Acceptance	Forgiveness	OCD
Harm Reduction	ADHD	Self-Care	Tolerance	Values
Guilt	Obstacle	Insomnia	Resilience	Determination
Denial	Self-Awareness	Encouragement	Reality	Inner Strength