



Brief Group Module and Icebreaker Collection 1

Icebreaker – “Say Anything”

Directions: This is a way to generate spontaneous group discussion. The rules are as follows:

Someone in the group should volunteer to go first. That person should just say anything by making one statement of any kind* to the rest of the group. **Please no offensive or overtly controversial statements that may upset or hurt others or trigger unnecessary arguing. Rather it is better if it is a thought that can be built upon by others.*

Then the next person in the group should make a follow up statement to the group based on the first statement that was already said. When done, continue this through the group, allowing people to chain together thoughts.

At any point in the chain of statements, the counselor can “veto” a statement that drags down the process as the statements are supposed to build on one another.

At any point in the chain of statements, the counselor can call “Conclusion” – At that point the group should reflect on what was said and draw conclusions and make observations about the process of the discussion

Icebreaker – “Take Your Breath Away”

This is a simple but effective icebreaker question for discussion:

You have quite possibly heard the saying:

"It's not the number of breaths we take, but the number of moments that take our breath away."

Tell the group about an experience in your life that

"took your breath away"



This brief but stimulating ice breaker is doable in person or via telehealth – It's called "**Give it a Name**"

Read the following directions to group and encourage everyone to share:

Think about one of your own particular kinds of mood or feeling states. It could be a “mode” you get into sometimes or a state of mind or attitude that comes over you every now and then. Something that is perhaps unique to you as an individual

- Describe it
- Give it a name

Gimme Five - This is a quick activity to get some discussion going. The process is simple - Start with the counselor/group leader who picks someone in the group and starts a phrase with "Gimme Five..." and then add a request for a list of five things. Some examples below:

- Gimme five foods you would pick if you had to eat the same five meals for the rest of your life...
- Gimme five positive things in your life right now...
- Gimme five reasons why you are going to stay sober...

The person selected should give their five answers then pick a new person and a new "Gimme five" topic

This can be a fun way to get group feeling comfortable. The group leader may need to set some parameters for the group with regard to obscenities of anything of a potentially offensive nature

Say it with a Straight Face is easy - Everyone will need a pen and a scrap of paper if done in person. If this is done via telehealth just use the chat feature on the telehealth platform

The group leader should start by coming up with a silly line or phrase and then give it to one of the group participants. In person this would be done by passing a paper with the phrase written on it or else via telehealth send the phrase via the chat feature. The person receiving the phrase has to say it with a straight face to the rest of the group. Repeat with the person who shared then passing a silly phrase to another group member and continue this process until everyone gets a turn.

The sillier the phrases are, the better and they should be difficult to say with a straight face (but not offensive) - Some examples - 🤪

- "Sometimes I fantasize about what it would be like to have a head the size of a grapefruit"
- "My worst fear is being attacked by an army of elves throwing raw meatballs at me"
- "Last Tuesday I went out in a rainstorm with my socks on and did the Macarena in the moonlight"



This one does not need to be an icebreaker; it can also be a closer or used at any time in a group session - "Broccoli and Brussels Sprouts" is an engaging topic that can generate interesting discussion in just about any group session - Just read and discuss the following:

"Broccoli and Brussels Sprouts"

Most likely you have learned in life that there are many healthy things that may not be enjoyable at first, but you can really learn to develop a "taste" for them if you persist in trying them a few times. What is one healthy thing that you would consider adding to your life by persisting in trying it a few times?

(Some examples - 12 step meetings, praying, exercise, hobbies, marriage counseling, etc)

Thanos Snap

If you have seen the movie Avengers: Infinity War you know that Thanos, the villain uses the infinity gauntlet which gives him the power to snap his fingers and make anything happen. Evil Thanos decides to eradicate half of the universe with his finger "snap"

You don't need to see the movie to use this icebreaker, that is just a little background - The "Thanos Snap" activity works like this -

Read - *If you could just snap your fingers and make any one thing happen in the entire universe one time, what would you make happen?*

> Optional - You can let people give two answers if they want too - One funny answer first, then one serious answer - (Everyone in the group should be encouraged to give at least the one serious answer)

Examples -

Funny - *"With my Thanos snap I would make it make it so all dogs in the universe could talk like humans and then work as teachers in public schools"*

Serious- *"With my snap I would cure world hunger and make sure that everyone in the world has plenty of food growing nearby and clean water to drink"*

Your Life as a Movie - Icebreaker

READ - A talented director and producer wants to make a movie about your life, or at least a significant part of your life with you as the main consultant. Answer the following questions

- What genre of movie would you choose? (For example, Action, Drama, Romance, etc...)
- What part of your life would be the primary focus/the main story?
- What actor would you like to play you?



OPTIONAL FOLLOW UP - Real Life Story

Ask the group if anyone would like to share their real-life story, either in the group today or plan it for a future group

Taking the Escalator has a Life Story Outline for use in structuring a life story - Link in comments section below to [Life Story Outline](#) (Or it can be found on Group Activities By Topic page under heading Life Story)

Perfectly Peculiar... My Sweet Idiosyncrasy

Background - Read definition: **Idiosyncrasy** - *a characteristic, habit, mannerism, or the like, that is peculiar to an individual.*

Some examples to get everyone thinking - Can you think of an unusual way that you...Talk, eat, drive, count, dress, sleep, order food, cook, laugh, sneeze, run, stand, walk, smile, - ANYTHING THAT YOU DO UNUSUALLY SPECIAL TO BEING YOU

**Tell the group about one of your idiosyncrasies...
and... If you are up to the challenge: "Work your quirk" - If possible (and appropriate), show or demonstrate your uniquely peculiar way of doing something**

This is a two-part set of questions that can open up some good discussion in groups. The first part is specific to the COVID-19 pandemic and the second part is more open ended and imaginative and can be used anytime

"The Vaccine"

Part 1 - Read and Discuss: - We are all hoping that the Coronavirus vaccine will one day open up the world to some return to normalcy in our foreseeable future - Answer the following question - "If the vaccine helps the world return to some semblance of normalcy and increased social freedom, what is one thing you look forward to being able to do again in your life?"

Part 2 - Read and Discuss - On the topic of vaccines, suppose you could design a vaccine that would make people immune to anything that you choose - *ANYTHING at ALL*. This is more of a fantasy-based question so you can share any answer based on whatever your values are.

Examples -

"I would like to make a mandatory "rudeness vaccine" that would make it so people could no longer behave in a rude, obnoxious or arrogant manner"

"I would like to take a "road rage vaccine" so I could drive on the highway without getting stressed out any more by other people's bad driving"

Again, there are no wrong answers here, just creative self-expression



2020 vs 2021

This is a fun way to engage group in a discussion now that 2020 is almost over. As counselor/group leader you would just need a way for everyone in the group to be able to see pictures on the internet. On telehealth this can be done using the "screen share" function or in person you may need a device with a large enough screen for everyone to see. Group members would need internet access and a way to surf the net to participate

Directions: Give everyone in the group 5-10 minutes to surf the net and find two pictures, GIF's or very short videos. One picture would be their choice to represent the challenging year we have had in 2020 and the second picture would be something hopeful for 2021

Share and discuss everyone's 2020 vs 2021 pictures and allow group members to explain their choices.

This is a great segway into a group focused on goals for 2021. Taking the Escalator has a Goal Setting worksheet listed under "Goal Setting" on the Group Activities by Topic Page"- (Direct Link to Goal Setting worksheet in comments below)

My Own Personal Mt. Rushmore

The real Mount Rushmore in South Dakota, US, consists of sculptures of four US Presidents: Washington, Jefferson, Roosevelt and Lincoln. These men were probably chosen because of their influence on US history

If you were to be able to select four people for your own personal Mount Rushmore, who would you choose?

2 Versions

Version 1 – Deep and Serious – Choose four real people who have had the most positive influence in your life. Could be family members, teachers, close friend, sponsor, etc – Anyone who is part of your story of progress and success

Version 2 – Fun and Light – Choose four people from life areas you really like and admire – Could be sports stars, musicians, entertainers, fictional characters, etc....anything goes

Long Weekends: Primed to Persevere

This is a list of group discussion questions for surviving and thriving over the two consecutive long holiday weekends coming up in the next two weeks. (Counselor's choice which works best for your group)

→ What are three tools you are ready and willing to use to effectively manage your sobriety and mental health over the next several days?



→ Tell the group how you are going to feel when you come back next week having successfully survived the challenges of the long weekend – How can this motivate you to stay on the right course over the next several days?

→ List 4 reasons why it is worth it for you to stay sober and stable over the next several days – Think MOTIVATION!

→ Specifically, what do you plan to do if you come across any haters, shamers, Karen's, or other negative or ignorant people who purposely (or perhaps unknowingly) try to stumble your progress or stir your emotions in a bad direction over the next several days?

→ If you find yourself alone with negative thoughts, one way to refocus is to imagine your brain like a television and then pick up the remote and "change the channel" from negative thoughts to the "Gratitude Channel" (Thoughts about what you are grateful for right now in your life) – What good things in your life can you focus on when you switch your brain to the "Gratitude Channel"?

My Phrase for the Next 360 Days - This is a simple but valuable discussion point for group therapy - The directions are simple: After checking in or checking out or at another relevant point in the group session - **Ask everyone to make up a short motivational/inspirational phrase for 2021.**

It's great if people can make up their own phrase but if anyone feels like they are struggling with being creative it is okay to instead use a song lyric, a line from a movie, or an existing phrase you already know. What is important that it is something that you feel applies to you personally and that can inspire you all year round

OPTIONAL FOLLOW UP ACTIVITY - As an expressive art activity, everyone in the group should write their phrase down on paper and decorate it to make a nice inspirational poster with their phrase on it

What's Required for My Recovery

This is a brief recovery module that can be used at any point in a therapy group. These questions apply to substance use, mental health and co-occurring recovery issues.

Directions - Review and discuss the following:

- **Required - adjective - "Necessary for a particular purpose"**

As a group discuss the following questions about what you believe is required for your recovery:

- **What is required for you to feel self-confident?**
- **What is required for you to stay motivated?**
- **What is required for you to stay on a positive path to progress? (relapse prevention)**
- **What is required for you to succeed for today? (short term)**
- **What is required for you to succeed with your long-term goals?**



How are You Managing?

Intro - To "manage" by definition means: to bring about or succeed in accomplishing, sometimes despite difficulty or hardship - to take charge or care of

Group questions: *How are you managing?*

... Your substance use recovery?

... Your emotional and mental health?

... Your overall life goals, progress and purpose?

Are You an Anchor or an Oar?

This is a brief group module that can open up discussion of behaviors and attitudes that hurt and that help the group process as a whole.

Read and discuss the following as a group:

Consider this group to be a large boat that everyone is traveling on together. In this illustration each person on the boat can choose to be one of two things: **An Anchor or an Oar** -

An Anchor slows the group down and can even stop it from moving forward in a positive direction. As a group: Discuss what behaviors and attitudes would fit into this "Anchor" category

Some examples -

- o Coming to group high or intoxicated*
- o Lying about how you are really doing (wasting group time with untrue stories)*
- o Disrupting group with side talk (in person) or on telehealth disconnecting, not paying attention or doing things in the background that distract the flow of the discussion*

An Oar helps "row" the group forward by cooperating with the group process and goals in order to help things keep moving forward in a positive direction. Discuss what types of behaviors and attitudes would make someone an Oar -

Some examples -

- o Sharing openly and honestly while listening to and supporting others who share*
- o Participating a good amount but also making sure not to take over the group by not letting others share*
- o Getting real about what is going on in your life by being honest and also sharing your true thoughts and feelings and taking risks to open up*

Closing question - What specifically can I work on to make sure to be an Oar and not an Anchor in this group?



The Little Things Can Mean So Much

As an icebreaker share something about your life that is going on right now that you wouldn't necessarily share with the general public or post on social media, but it was still a relevant part of your life this past week. (Something that may not seem like a big deal to people who don't know your situation, but it was meaningful to you, even if just a little)

Some examples:

- Last week I finally went to the dentist to take care of the dental work I was neglecting when I was using
- My kid got sick in school and I had to go pick him up, but it was nice to be there for him when he needed me
- I applied for some jobs online and it feels satisfying to know that I am going to pass the drug test if there is one as part of the interview process

Follow up question - How does it feel to be making these small but meaningful steps forward in your life and your recovery?

Monday Monday!

Just as the title says, these simple but introspective questions are designed to prepare and empower group members for the week ahead in a positive manner, especially with regard to goals:

- **What are two or three things that you can start to do today to get this week moving forward on the right note?**
 - **What is one thing that you can commit to this week that is above and beyond what you usually do, so that you can make this an extra successful week of progress and growth?**
 - **What could be a phrase or saying that you could remember and repeat to stay motivated and inspired all week long in order to do what's right and stay on a positive course all week long?**
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Listen and Learn

What is one thing that you wish you had listened to...

...as a young child?

...as a teen/young adult?

...in the past few months?

What is needed for a person to have the right attitude to be able to consistently listen and learn from good advice?

The Free Pass - A mysterious person hands you a ticket and says "You can cash this ticket in anywhere in the world for to either get out of one situation for good with no questions asked (like a court date or a bad relationship) or instead you can use the ticket to get into one place for free, no questions asked for one day every year (like a concert, a movie set, an exclusive hotel or a sporting event)

Discuss - What do you do with your ticket?

Coping Skills Video shares some easy-to-use mental health coping skills that are great for anyone who needs to increase insight and motivation and make progress toward goals. Great for group therapy discussion, featuring entrepreneur/motivational speaker Henry Eisenstein and Therapist Ken Pecoraro LCSW, LCADC - Link to video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Az1i95DRom0&feature=youtu.be>

Skills Reviewed - With Group Discussion Questions

> ***"Be a True Friend to Your Future Self"*** -

How can you apply this idea of treating your future self like a friend, in your own life?

What can you start doing today that will benefit your future self- (Short term in the next few weeks or months...Long term over the course of the next year or longer?)

> ***Applying Some "Extra Time"***

What is one or two life areas where you can unselfishly apply a little extra time and focus each day to help make improvements in?

>***Using Introspection, Self-Awareness and Self Analysis***

What is at least one or two areas of personal growth that you need to stay aware of so you can measure your progress daily?

Deep thinking - What areas do you need to make sure to be honest with yourself about?

What do you need in life to be where you want to be and how do you plan to attain what you need?



Unpopular Opinion

This can be an icebreaker or for closing out group, or useful for at any time in group to encourage some interesting discussion and exchange of thoughts. **The only rule is to avoid potentially controversial topics or views that may offend or insult others.** Otherwise, the process is simple: Everyone in group is encouraged to **take turns sharing an unpopular opinion with the group.** Perhaps it may be something you like or dislike or something you've done or never done, that goes against popular or mainstream trends

Some examples:

"I actually think Nutella is way overrated"

"I have never watched a single episode of (popular show) and I have no interest in ever trying"

"I honestly think that mayonnaise is better on French Fries than ketchup"

"I secretly think (unattractive celebrity) is actually kind of hot"

"I think that (unpopular song or singer) is actually pretty good"

Hopefully, everyone gets the gist. Take turns sharing some of your unpopular opinions as a group and discuss them respectfully (no arguing or insulting please) Have fun with it!

The Speech

The Speech - (Read) - You have the world's attention for 5 minutes – Your 5-minute speech is going to be played on every television station, every radio station and on all internet live feeds and posted on all forms of social media. The president, congress and the leaders of almost every country will hear it and it will be played at the United Nations as well. You have the world's collective ear for 5 minutes to say whatever you want

What do you choose to talk about?

(After everyone shares in the group to the first question above, discuss these follow up questions)

What does your choice for the speech say about what is important to you (Your values)?

How do your values impact you today and your progress toward your treatment goals (substance use, mental health recovery, etc.)?



Shut Up

Saying “**shut up**” is considered to be rude in the public domain which makes sense, because it is not nice thing to say. No one likes to be told to shut up. However, when it comes to ourselves, often the consequences of *not shutting up* in certain situations can be devastating. Think about the last time that you wished that you had just shut up and not spoke your mind (only to regret it later) - It may not have been too long ago, right?

Ask yourself the following questions for introspection and increased self-awareness:

When are some situations in my life when I should just shut up?

How can I better understand ahead of time, when it is time to shut up (before it's too late)?

What can I say to myself, in my own head, to get myself to shut up, when I need to shut up?

What kinds of emotions, increase the likelihood of me talking when I really should just shut up?

In conclusion, what is my plan going forward, to get myself to shut up, when I need to shut up?



Brief Group Module and Icebreaker Collection 2

Brief Therapy Module – “Later”

READ and DISCUSS:

What exactly is this mythical concept that we refer to as “Later”?

People so often say “I’ll do it later” – But when you think about it: When exactly is “Later”?

Is later in an hour?... in a day?...in a week?... in a month? - Ever?... Or perhaps NEVER? - How often does later actually ever actually become now?

The truth is that later is so often a lie or at least a form of self-denial because often when we say “Later”, we really just mean “NOT NOW” and that’s it.

For change to really start happening, saying “later” often has to stop and NOW has to start. How soon is now? Now is now and its definitely not later.

As a group discuss what you just read and answer the following:

- What are some things you find yourself saying “later” about?
- What is one constructive or positive thing that you think you can stop putting off until later and start doing NOW?

Brief Therapy Module – “Remembering Me”

What are two or three descriptive words or phrases you would want people to say about you after your gone?

What are two or three descriptive words you would never want people to say about you

How can you strive to live a life now that will make this positive impression and lasting legacy?

Icebreaker – “Drop and Run”

Directions: Each person in the group should take turns making a statement and just leaving it there for the group to listen too with no comments, no judgement or anything. Just drop the statement and move on,

**Keep in mind this is supposed to be fun and interesting so anything overly controversial, provocative or potentially offensive or insulting should be avoided. Politics is one to stay away from*



Icebreaker – “Confidence”

Confidence - a feeling of self-assurance arising from one's appreciation of one's own abilities or qualities

What is one thing you can say about yourself with confidence today?

What is one thing that you are confident you are doing right at this point in your life?

What is one positive thing you can say about your future with confidence today?

Brief Discussion Module – “Lessons Learned from COVID-19”

READL Due in a large part to the vaccine, in many places, COVID-19 restrictions are being lifted and things are opening up publicly. No one alive at this time will ever forget the COVID-19 pandemic, however it is important to make sure to remember any lessons we have learned at this time. One of the benefits of experiencing adversity is that we can learn and grow from our response to negative experiences. (For this exercise, please keep comments based on personal and individual experiences and lessons learned rather than opening up political debate) - With that said, as a group, discuss the following questions:

- What is one thing that you think that you will never forget about the COVID-19 pandemic?
 - How can you use your memory of this to change your behavior or make better choices for the future?
 - What have the lessons learned from this pandemic made you more grateful for?
 - How can you use that increased gratitude to make ongoing self-improvements?
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Brief Module: “Tough Topics Discussed Openly and Honestly”

Directions: As a group try to answer these potentially challenging questions as openly and honestly as possible:

- Keeping it as real as possible: Why are you here?
 - What is one fear that you might even be afraid to admit out loud?
 - What is one area of your life that you see as a potential weakness or limitation that you need to strengthen or build up?
 - What is an outcome of your current situation that you want to avoid at all costs? (What is something you definitely do not want to lose?)
 - Shifting to the positive: What is at least one thing (or more) that you are doing right these days to avoid a negative outcome and to help assure yourself positive success with your goals?
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Icebreaker – “Dad Jokes”

Sharing and telling some Dad jokes can be a fun way to get the group opening up and in a good mood. Read the following Dad jokes as a group then invite the group to share some of their own favorite Dad jokes as a fun icebreaker.

"I'm afraid for the calendar. Its days are numbered."

"What did the janitor say when he jumped out of the closet?" - "Supplies!"

"How do you follow Will Smith in the snow?" - "You follow the fresh prints."

"What do you call a dear with no eyes?" – “No eye deer (read out loud)”

"I'm reading a book about anti-gravity. It's impossible to put down!"

"Why can't you finish eating a watch?" - “It's too time-consuming”

"I used to hate facial hair, but then it grew on me.”

"What do you call a pencil with two erasers? Pointless”

“The first time I used an elevator it was an uplifting experience, the second time it let me down”



Brief Group Module and Icebreaker Collection 3

Brief Discussion - "I Promise"

Read and Discuss: *10 promises that are too often broken: (Have you ever heard any of these?)*

1. "I promise if you let me speak, I'll definitely keep it brief"
2. "I promise I'll only take one"
3. "I promise I'll just have a small bite of your food"
4. "I promise, I just want to cuddle, that's it"
5. "I promise I'll be right there"
6. "I promise I will definitely keep in touch"
7. "I promise I won't tell anyone"
8. "I promise I'll pay you right back as soon as I can"
9. "I promise, I'm telling the truth this time"
10. "I promise, I'll quit tomorrow"

Open Discussion: What is needed to live the kind of life where you are able to keep your promises to others, and to yourself?

Coping Skills Brief Discussion - "Rough Day Ahead"

Discussion: There are days when you wake up and you know ahead of time that "today is potentially going to be a rough day". For example, maybe you have to work late, or perhaps you have a court date or a dentist appointment. Whatever it is, discuss how you cope in the morning and throughout the day when you know that challenges are ahead of you

- Example: *"When I wake up knowing that I am facing a long or challenging day, I make sure to envision the time at the end of the day when I will be driving home feeling satisfied that I got through it all and I focus on how good I will feel at that time."*

GROUP DISCUSSION - What do you do in the morning to prepare and strengthen yourself to endure a potentially difficult or long day that may be ahead of you?



Brief Module – “Risk”

Directions: First read and discuss the following brief poem by Anais Nin. ***What does it mean to you?*** - Then review the closing discussion questions at the end:

Risk
And then the day came,
when the risk
to remain tight
in a bud
was more painful
than the risk
it took
to blossom.

- What are some healthy risks you are taking or considering taking in order to change and grow for the better?
 - Who and what can help you build and sustain the encouragement, strength and inspiration to successfully “blossom” in your life?
-

Brief Group Module: “My Reality”

Background: There are many unrealistic things that happen in movies quite often which rarely (or never) seem to happen in day-to-day life. Consider some examples:

- *"People are up in the morning with enough time to have a home-cooked breakfast, casual family conversation, just relaxing and taking their time, even on a school day!"*
- *"One line of clever or thoughtful dialogue or a spontaneous kiss somehow changes everything and makes it all OK."*
- *"No one has to wait for anything: People phone or email back in time, taxis arrive, the results come back in time to catch the bad guys, perfect parking spaces are always available"*

In reality there is often a lot of red tape, waiting, obstacles, etc. but yet in reality, we still get through it all.

As a group discuss the following:

- ❖ Tell the group about one or more things specific to your reality that you have to contend with from time to time
 - ❖ Reflecting on the positive – What helps you to successfully survive and thrive in spite of the some of the stresses and obstacles you face in your life?
-



Group Close Out Activity - Explaining the Answer

Directions: This can be a fun way to close out group at the end of the session. Someone in the group should volunteer to go first. That person should come up with a word or phrase. There are no limitations except that the word or phrase chosen should not be overly obscure or controversial (or offensive)

Then each person in the group should come up with personal explanation for the first person's phrase. For example:

First group member chooses the phrase: ***"Migraine headaches"***

Second group member adds personal explanation to the answer: ***"What talking to stupid people gives me"***

Third group member says: ***"What I experience whenever I have to listen to country music"***

Next group member says: ***"The reason I became addicted to pain medication"***

Next group member says: ***"Something I gratefully have never experienced"***

Next person says: ***"What this game is giving me right now...ha-ha-ha"***

Continue going around the group until it gets back to the first group member who can go last by providing his or her personal explanation for their own answer.

Then the second person should come up with a brand-new phrase as the answer for the rest of the group. Then as a group go around in a circle again the same exact way providing personal explanations for this new phrase as the answer. Continue with this pattern until the group has had enough.

9/2/21 -- Icebreaker - Songs that Inspire

"Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery.

None but ourselves can free our minds."

— Bob Marley

"Don't criticize what you can't understand."

— Bob Dylan

"All you need is love."

— John Lennon

Directions: As a group discuss a song or song lyric or verse that you have found to be motivational or inspirational (or both)

Icebreaker: Amazing Phrases

Directions - If possible, text someone you know who you think will respond and ask them: *"What is a phrase that describes me?"* - If you do not have someone available to text or if no one responds to your text then just come up with your own phrase about yourself

Share and discuss your phrases as a group



Brief Discussion Module – Ugliness and Beauty

Discuss the following as group (while respecting views and thoughts of others):

- **Ugly** – *adj. - disagreeable; unpleasant; objectionable: morally revolting:*
 1. What behaviors or actions do you feel are ugly?
 2. What types of attitudes and viewpoints are ugly in your opinion?
 3. What is ugly in this world?
- **Beauty** - *the quality present in a thing or person that gives intense pleasure or deep satisfaction to the mind*
 1. What is something beautiful that you have either heard about, seen or witnessed?
 2. Complete the following: A beautiful thing that someone can do for others is: _____
 3. What do you find to be beautiful in this world?

Closing Discussion

- **How can you decrease ugliness and increase beauty in your own world?**
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Icebreaker - "Peaceful Place"

Almost everyone has a "peaceful place". Your peaceful place is that special location where you can naturally escape anxiety and stress even if it's just for a little while. As a group, discuss the following points about your peaceful place:

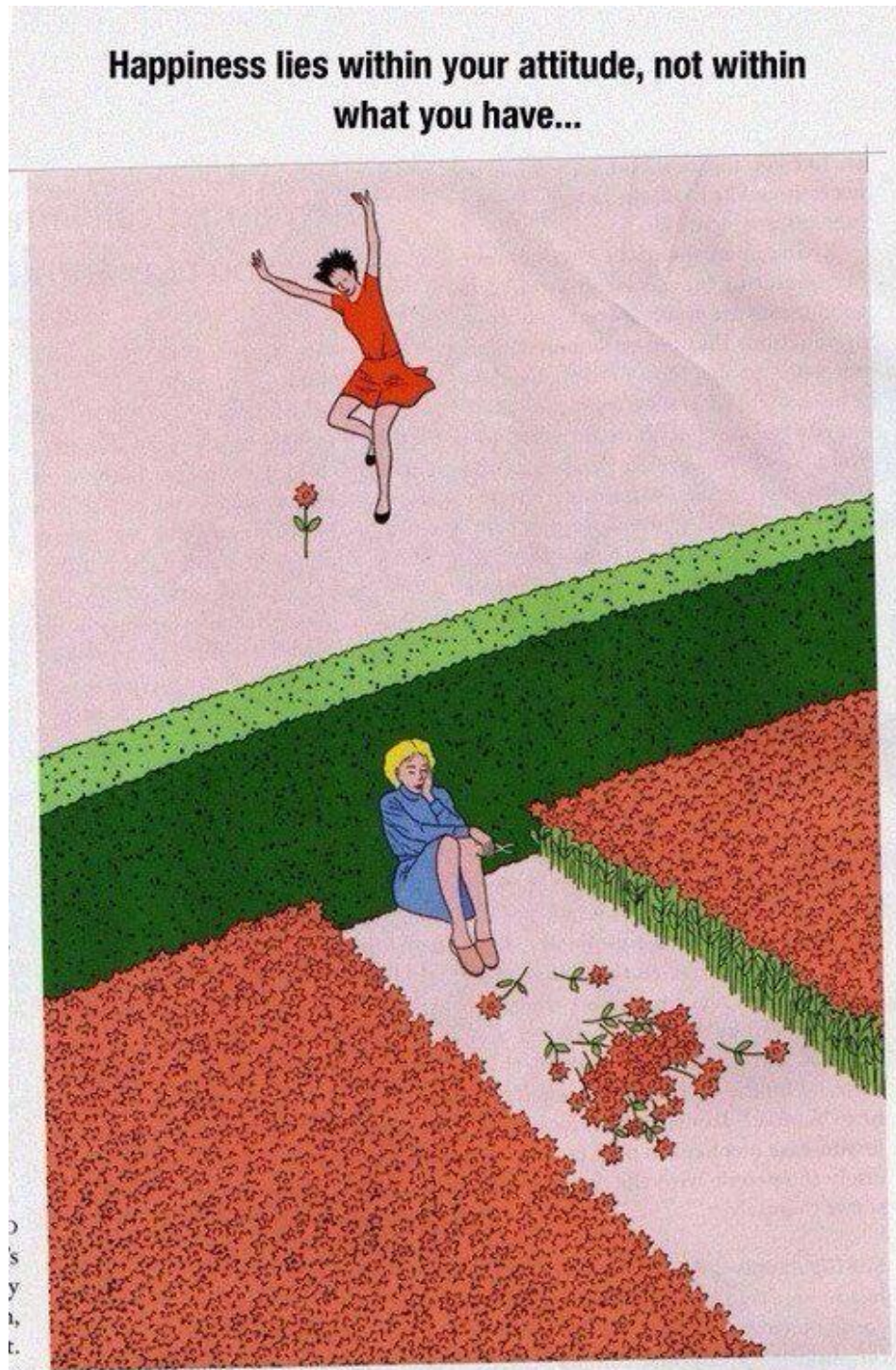
1 - Describe your peaceful place with the group including where it is, when the last time you went there and when you plan on going back - Also, what is the feeling of peace like for you when you are there?

2 - How can you replicate the feeling you get from your peaceful place, even when you are not there? - There is a concept of taking "two-minute vacations" where you use your imagination to "travel" somewhere relaxing in your own mind in order to get a healthy escape for a few minutes. - What can you do in order to find a few minutes of peace when you need it each day?



Picture Icebreaker and Discussion - "Perspective, Gratitude and Attitude"

- View the picture below as a group. Openly discuss: "What is one positive change you can make with your attitude that will increase your happiness and inner peace?"





Icebreaker – Filinda Blanx

Directions: Select one or more of the "Fill in the Blanks" sentences and share your answer out loud with the rest of the group:

1. If _____(Person) would just _____(Action), then I would finally feel _____ (Feeling)
 2. When I finally learn to _____(Action) then my life will stop being _____ (Adjective) and I can start feeling _____ (Feeling)
 3. When you have too many _____ (Plural Noun) then eventually you will _____ (Action) which will leave you feeling _____ (Descriptive adjective)
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Discussion Article: "6 Little Tips for a Happier Life"

The following article (link below) is very simple and easy to read and discuss in group therapy. In addition, the material is practical and easy to understand. Simply read each of the six points as a group and discuss.

A simple follow up discussion question for each of the six points could be: *"How can you specifically apply this in your own life?"*

LINK TO ARTICLE: [6 Little Tips for a Happier Life](#) - (By Lifehack.org)

Brief Group Module – “Weird”

- *Weird* – adj: strange, odd, bizarre

Discuss the following questions:

1. What is something you think is weird in the world today?
 2. What is something that you think is weird about life?
 3. Is there something about yourself that you would say is weird, in a good way? (Something that makes you special or unique)
-



Icebreaker - "6 Dimensions of Wellness Game"

Directions: One 6-sided die is needed. Below is a picture of the "6 Dimensions of Wellness" (Copied from <https://www.clark.edu/tlc/healthy-penguin/wellness-dimensions.php>)

Group members should take turns rolling the die and then discuss one thing that you can do to make improvement in the dimension of wellness that corresponds to your die roll (1-6)





Brief Motivational Story for Group Discussion - "The Elephant Rope"

Directions: Click the following link to the brief but thought provoking and motivational story "The Elephant Rope" then discuss as a group. (Make application to substance use and mental health)

LINK TO "THE ELEPHANT ROPE" - <https://medium.com/motivationapp/the-elephant-rope-c22ee790a226>

"Same and Changing" Icebreaker

Complete these four sentences about things that seem to stay the same and things that change:

One thing that always seems to stay the same is...

One thing that frequently seems to change is...

Something in my life that I want to stay the same is...

Something in my life that I want to change is...

Brief Group Module: Toxic Statements in Relationships (and Friendships)

Depending upon the context, the following statements are potentially very manipulative and dangerous in relationships including friendships. Review and discuss the following list as a group and discuss if you ever heard any of these statements and what you did (or would do about it if you ever did hear something like this)

- ❖ **If you really love me (or if you truly are my friend), then you'll do it**
- ❖ **If you don't do what I ask I am going to cut you out of my life**
- ❖ **What's wrong with you, can't you take a joke?**
- ❖ **You won't be able to make it without me**
- ❖ **It is all your fault that I did this, not mine**
- ❖ **No one will believe you if you tell them what I did (or said)**

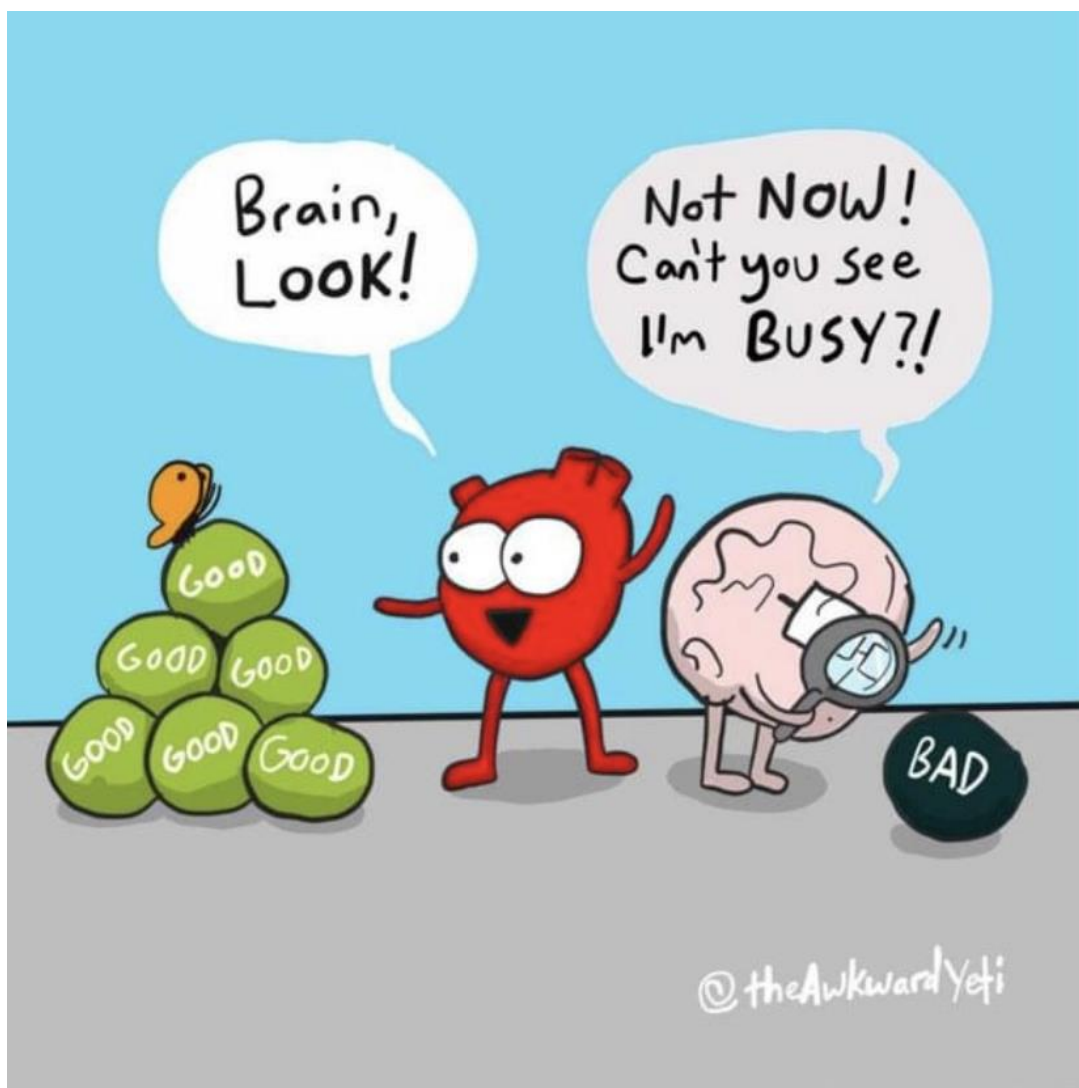
Closing questions:

1. Are there any other potentially toxic statements you have heard or could think of?
 2. *Discuss as a group:* What should be done when you sense someone may be trying to coerce or manipulate you to do something that you do not feel right about?
-



Visual Group Icebreaker - Refocusing the Brain

For this icebreaker simply display and discuss the following picture:



Some suggested questions:

What does this picture say?

Does this apply at times in your own life?

What can people do to change this kind of thinking?



Brief Therapy Module – Just Did It

Everyone is familiar with the famous slogan “Just Do It” which is a motivational phrase designed to inspire people to take action toward their goals. For this brief group module, the group will look at successes that already have been accomplished

Discuss:

1. What is one thing (even if it seems small or insignificant) that at one time in life was difficult or felt impossible for you that now you are able to do regularly or whenever needed? – Some examples:

a. *"When I was a kid, I was overweight and ate unhealthy but now I am in great shape and I eat right"*

b. *"I used to be so awkward socially but now I am pretty good at starting conversations with new people"*

c. *"When I was younger, I couldn't focus enough to read but now I read all of the time and I love it!"*

2. How did you get to where you are today? (Be specific and consider who or what helped, how did you build and sustain motivation, what kept you from giving up, etc.?)

3. Finally, when it comes to your current issues for being in this group, what positive lessons can you draw from this past accomplishment that you just discussed in questions 1 and 2?



Brief Group Module and Icebreaker Collection 4 \

"A Few Minutes of Amusement" (Icebreaker or Closer Material)

Sometimes you just need something easy to help the group relax and take their mind off of things for a few minutes. These two free websites provide an amusing escape from reality for a few minutes (and they do not disappoint!)

1- Eel Slap - <http://www.eelslap.com/>

2 - Pointer Pointer - <https://pointerpointer.com/>

Self Care Strategies List

Self Care Thoughts for This Time of Year

- GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION TO GO SLOW.
- DON'T FORGET TO BREATHE!
- TAKE YOURSELF OUT OF THE SITUATION IF YOU NEED TO. COME BACK WHEN READY.
- GET ENOUGH REST
- MAKE BETTER FOOD CHOICES + DRINK WATER!
- TAKE A WALK/GO OUTSIDE
- LOWER EXPECTATIONS /HAVE NONE!
- UNPLUG. SPEND TIME WITH FAMILY + FRIENDS WITHOUT SCREENS.
- ENGAGE ALL OF YOUR SENSES
- FOCUS ON MAKING GOOD MEMORIES
- STEAL TIME FOR YOURSELF!
and REFLECT on the past year.



Discussion - "A Wise Man" Short Story - Read and Discuss

A Wise Man Short Story

For years people have been coming to the wise man and complaining about the same problems every time. One day he told them a joke and everyone roared in laughter. After a couple of minutes, he told them the same joke and only a few of them smiled.

When he told the same joke for the third time no one laughed anymore.

The wise man smiled and said, "you can't laugh at the same joke over and over, so why are you always crying about the same problem?"

Author of the Wise Man: Unknown.

Brief Discussion Module - "Alone in the Quiet of the Night"

Everyone has those deep thoughts in the dark of the night when no one is around and its just you alone with the unfiltered wanderings of your mind. These moments of introspection and examination of the world and beyond can actually be helpful to our growth process as humans as it is important to ask ourselves some of the deep questions in life and let these questions inspire us to learn and explore more about ourselves and the world we live in and much more

For this exercise, everyone in the group should try to open up and share some "deep thoughts that come up in the quiet of the night" by answering and discussing the following:

When alone with your thoughts in the quiet of the night, what are some of your thoughts about....

..."**The Big Picture**" (Life, death, purpose, meaning, time, existence...etc.)

..."**The World We Live in**" (People, society, the future)

..."**Our Own "World"**" (Family, loved ones, hopes and dreams for life for ourselves and those whom we care about)

..."**Our "Selves"**" (What have you learned about yourself by really looking inside yourself and asking some of the difficult questions?)



Brief Group Discussion: Repeat Performance

READ: This may require some thought so take a few minutes to think of something that you did well in your life. It can be from anytime in your life as early as childhood up until today. It could be a time when you hit a home run, nailed the audition, got the job, gave the speech, won the contest, etc. Or it may be a memory of yours where you are just happy with how you performed or something in your experience that turned out well for you based on your actions and choices (not just based on sheer luck) It does not need to be dramatic, just something that is meaningful to you personally

First, as a group take turns sharing your experience

Then discuss the following: What can skills and ideas can you draw from that event for today? Be open minded: Sure, you may never repeat that exact event again today but what about your mindset, your preparation, your choices, your focus, etc... from that performance **can you still use today?**

Time Machine Icebreaker

For this group discussion imagine that the group had access to a time machine however this time machine can only send you on trips forward or backward in time for only 5 minute trips. With this in mind, as a group discuss what you would do if you had a 5 minute mission to go back or forward in time for the following intervals:

What would you do if you had 5 minutes to observe or try to intervene in something....

- **5 years ago?**
- **10 years ago?**
- **20 years ago?**
- **Yesterday?**
- **Tomorrow?**
- **5 years in the future?**
- **10 years in the future?**



Discussion Article - Recognizing Holiday Triggers of Trauma - SAMHSA

This is a great article to review with clients and groups coping with potential trauma triggers related to the holidays.

DIRECT LINK: <https://www.samhsa.gov/homelessness-programs-resources/hpr-resources/recognizing-holiday-triggers>

Brief Group Activity - Survey "5 Questions on Addiction"

If you have time in your group it would be great if you could administer this brief survey but sharing this link with group members. It is just 5 questions focused on some thoughts about addiction

Then if you would like invite the group to discuss some of the topics

SURVEY LINK (THANK YOU) - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XCFQNFK>

Gratitude Word Cloud Generator

Directions:

Share this link with the group - <https://www.menti.com/moggf3emkz>

Everyone in the group should use their smart phone to enter some things they are grateful for which will be uploaded to the Word Cloud

To view the group's word cloud live as it is being generated click this link -

<https://www.mentimeter.com/s/9fa815e21e6aefe3f17dc55913f32a95>



Random Thoughts Icebreaker

Directions – Everyone write down a random thought or opinion on a small piece of paper (Or if doing this via telehealth, everyone should send a thought to the group leader via chat).

Then mix the random thoughts up and have everyone in the group take turns having group members read a random thought and then respond on their thoughts on the original thought. If done via telehealth just number, the list and have group members pick a thought by number

Example - Group member picks the random thought that says: *"I think that the Yankees are the greatest team in all sports"* – This group member gives their thought on that thought by saying: *"I feel like I lack the patience and concentration to sit still and watch baseball, so I prefer football and I think the Green Bay Packers are the best team of all time"*

- Continue this process going around the group giving everyone a chance to pick a random thought and respond

For both questions and responses: Anything goes as long as it is not offensive or hurtful. Keep it brief and to the point but have fun with it!

Icebreaker - "No Regrets...I'm Glad!"

Directions: Sometimes we think about things in the past that we wish we would have done differently. (It's only natural) - For this exercise we are going to focus on things we did right and that we feel happy with our past decisions and outcomes.

Read each life area below and try to come up with some real life POSITIVE examples of decisions from the past that turned out well. (*Please try to keep it positive and avoid angry or resentful answers such as "I am glad I beat up my next door neighbor"*)

- FAMILY - Example: "I am so glad that I had my daughter, even though she came along at a tough time in my past, she brings so much joy to my life today"

FAMILY

CAREER

RELATIONSHIPS

FINANCIAL/MONEY

SUBSTANCE USE

EMOTIONS/MENTAL HEALTH

End with **"WILD CARD"** - Anything goes....



Fun Group Close-Out Exercise: "Chained Expression"

This is a fun way to end group if there is leftover time. The rules are as follows:

1. Someone in the group should agree to make a **brief one sentence statement** about their thoughts or feelings about something (can be anything as long as it is group-appropriate)
2. The next person in the group on the right should provide a follow up statement but **STARTING WITH THE LAST LETTER OF THE FIRST STATEMENT**
3. Continue this process until the group hits a dead end and then start again with a new statement.

An example is provided here. Notice the last letter in each statement that is used to start the next statement:

- Group Member 1 - *Sometimes I just feel like I can't take iT*
- Group Member 2 - *That's because this world has gone off the railS*
- Group Member 3 - *So what am I supposed to do about thaT...*
- Group Member 4 - *Try moving to Sweden?*
- Etc...

Perspectives and Preferences Icebreaker

Directions: Review and discuss the following as a group. Everyone should try to answer. Feel free to discuss the rationale for your choices:

1. Which do you enjoy more: Making someone else laugh or someone else makes you laugh?
2. Which one feels worse: Someone you care about to makes you cry or you do something to make someone you care about cry?
3. Would you rather go a month without feeling annoyed, frustrated or angry or go a month without feeling any anxiety or worry?
4. What is more important to you: To feel a sense of freedom or to feel a sense of security in life?
5. Would you prefer to live a life that is simple, steady and stable but satisfying or a live a life that is enjoyable, entertaining and exciting and but erratic (*uncertain and unpredictable*)



Visual Discussion Tool: "The Anger Iceberg"

The "Anger Iceberg" illustration and concept was developed by the Gottman Institute. Use the following illustration to discuss some of the feelings "beneath" anger (as anger is often a "secondary emotion" with a deeper emotion underneath the anger)

[Click for downloadable PDF of The Anger Iceberg](#)





Brief Module - "Healthy Choices"

Which would you choose more often:

- Chips or Veggies (Carrot/celery sticks, etc)?
- Candy or Fruit?
- Soft Drink (Soda, Iced Tea, etc.) or Water?
- Go to sleep or Channel Surf?

What are some healthy choices in life that you need to work on?

What are some healthy choices that you are doing well with?

How can you make progress with healthy choices? (*What helps and works for you?*)

Brief Module: Positive Lessons from Childhood"

Discuss positive things we have learned from childhood by completing these sentences:

- Something positive that I learned in childhood that I want to keep with me is...
- Something that I did not understand when I was a child but I do now is...
- Something I used to think as a child that I have matured and moved on from is....
- One thing that adults can learn from young children is....
- I stay "young at heart" today by...

Brief Video Discussion - An Inside Look at Fentanyl

***Directions:* As a group view this brief (8 minute) video on fentanyl production and distribution and discuss as a group**

VIDEO LINK: <https://youtu.be/wdoRAjilrhs>

Some suggested group questions:

- > What stood out to you about this video?
- > Has this video changed your view on fentanyl production and distribution?
- > When you consider the prevalence of fentanyl, what do you think about the dangers of using illegal drugs today?
- > What were your thoughts about some of the responses given by people making fentanyl in the video when they were asked about the overdose deaths associated with fentanyl?
- > How can you personally stay safe from overdose risk?



Group Discussion: Brene Brown on Shame

You can use this brief (less than 3 minute) clip of Brene Brown on the Oprah Winfrey Show to open up a discussion about coping with Shame

- **Here is the video clip link - <https://youtu.be/TdtabNt4S7E>**

The take-aways from this clip on how to stop a shame spiral:

1. Know your shame triggers and reality check them
2. Talk to yourself like you talk to someone you love
3. Reach out to someone you trust
4. Tell your story

Brief Discussion - "I Promise"

Read and Discuss: 10 promises that are too often broken: (Have you ever heard any of these?)

1. "I promise if you let me speak, I'll definitely keep it brief"
2. "I promise I'll only take one"
3. "I promise I'll just have a small bite of your food"
4. "I promise, I just want to cuddle, that's it"
5. "I promise I'll be right there"
6. "I promise I will definitely keep in touch"
7. "I promise I won't tell anyone"
8. "I promise I'll pay you right back as soon as I can"
9. "I promise, I'm telling the truth this time"
10. "I promise, I'll quit tomorrow"

Discussion: What is needed to live the kind of life where you are able to keep your promises to others, and to yourself?



Coping Skills Brief Discussion - "Rough Day Ahead"

Discussion: There are days when you wake up and you know ahead of time that "today is potentially going to be a rough day". For example, maybe you have to work late, or perhaps you have a court date or a dentist appointment. Whatever it is, discuss how you cope in the morning and throughout the day when you know that challenges are ahead of you

- Example: *"When I wake up knowing that I am facing a long or challenging day, I make sure to envision the time at the end of the day when I will be driving home feeling satisfied that I got through it all and I focus on how good I will feel at that time."*

What do you do in the morning to prepare and strengthen yourself to endure a potentially difficult or long day that may be ahead of you?

Brief Module – "Risk"

Directions: First read and discuss the following brief poem by Anais Nin. ***What does it mean to you?*** - Then review the closing discussion questions at the end:

Risk

**And then the day came,
when the risk
to remain tight
in a bud
was more painful
than the risk
it took
to blossom.**

- **What are some healthy risks you are taking or considering taking in order to change and grow for the better?**
- **Who and what can help you build and sustain the encouragement, strength and inspiration to successfully "blossom" in your life?**



Brief Group Module: “My Reality”

Background: There are many unrealistic things that happen in movies quite often which rarely (or never) seem to happen in day-to-day life. Consider some examples:

- ***“People are up in the morning with enough time to have a home-cooked breakfast, casual family conversation, just relaxing and taking their time, even on a school day!”***
- ***“One line of clever or thoughtful dialogue or a spontaneous kiss somehow changes everything and makes it all OK.”***
- ***“No one has to wait for anything: People phone or email back in time, taxis arrive, the results come back in time to catch the bad guys, perfect parking spaces are always available”***

In reality, there is often a lot of red tape, waiting, obstacles, etc. but yet in reality, we still get through it all .

As a group discuss the following:

→ **Tell the group about one or more things specific to your reality that you have to contend with from time to time**

→ **Reflecting on the positive – What helps you to successfully survive and thrive in spite of the some of the stresses and obstacles you face in your life?**



Group Close Out Activity - Explaining the Answer

Directions: This can be a fun way to close out group at the end of the session. Someone in the group should volunteer to go first. That person should come up with a word or phrase. There are no limitations except that the word or phrase chosen should not be overly obscure or controversial (or offensive)

Then each person in the group should come up with personal explanation for the first person's phrase. For example:

First group member chooses the phrase: "***Migraine headaches***"

- Second group member adds personal explanation to the answer: "***What talking to stupid people gives me***"
- Third group member says: "***What I experience whenever I have to listen to country music***"
- Next group member says: "***The reason I became addicted to pain medication***"
- Next group member says: "***Something I gratefully have never experienced***"
- Next person says: "***What this game is giving me right now...ha-ha-ha***"

Continue going around the group until it gets back to the first group member who can go last by providing his or her personal explanation for their own answer.

Then the second person should come up with a brand new phrase as the answer for the rest of the group. Then as a group go around in a circle again the same exact way way providing personal explanations for this new phrase as the answer. Continue with this pattern until the group has had enough.

Icebreaker - Songs that Inspire

*"Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery.
None but ourselves can free our minds."
— Bob Marley*

*"Don't criticize what you can't understand."
— Bob Dylan*

*"All you need is love."
— John Lennon*

Directions: As a group discuss a song or song lyric or verse that you have found to be motivational or inspirational (or both)



Brief Group Module and Icebreaker Collection 5

Group Discussion: "Gratitude Moment: I Thought I Would Never But I Did!"

For this brief group exercise, everyone in the group should share at least one positive life achievement that has exceeded past expectations. This would be something that you may have never imagined you would do, but you have now done (Positive answers only)

- *Example - "I never ever thought I would speak in front of a crowd but now I have told my story to a room of dozens of people"*

When everyone has shared, an additional follow up question is:

What is one more thing that you want to achieve in your future that exceeds your past expectations?

- *Example - "One day I want to publish my own original book"*

Icebreaker – “Against the Grain”

As you know, to "go against the grain" means to choose a path that does not go with the flow of society. This icebreaker is about *innocent** ways that we all go against the grain in our own unique way

**The only rule is to keep discussion innocent (harmless) and light. This is not an opportunity to brag about behaviors that would be considered dangerous, aggressive illegal or “anti-social”*

Examples:

- “I put ketchup on my hot dogs and my steak even though most of society frowns upon that”
- “Most people work out in the morning but I don’t start my exercise routine until about 10:00 at night”

Share and discuss your own unique ways of going against the grain



Icebreaker - "Not Again"

Discuss some things you would not do again based on some of your life experiences, using the following list of topics

- Movies (For example a movie you saw that you would never ever watch again)
- Vacations
- Jobs
- Food
- Car
- Clothes
- Relationship
- Other? - Any topic of something you did but would not do again

Icebreaker - "Showtime"

You get the chance to go on stage to entertain a huge crowd at an event of your choice for up to 5 minutes. You can do anything: Tell jokes, sing, play an instrument, read poetry, show artwork, monologue, act . You have a year to prepare in any way that you want to with a \$25,000 budget for a trainer or lessons, What event to you pick and what is your act?

Icebreaker - "Unforgettably Strange"

This simple icebreaker just requires everyone to share a simple but strange occurrence in their life that they will never forget. Keep in mind that the objective is simple and strange rather than sharing anything deep and meaningful. Some examples are provided below to get it started"

- "I remember one time my sister threw my gym bag at me from across the room and somehow it landed perfectly over my head"
- "I was in New York City in a crowded store and I looked behind me on the checkout line and there behind me was my childhood best friend. We hadn't see each other in years and both moved away but somehow recognized each other in a city of millions"
- "One time I burned my toast and the image on it looked exactly like Kermit the Frog"



Icebreaker: "Fantasy Slices"

All of us have had fantasies when we were younger that we eventually learned in adulthood would not be a reality. For example, perhaps at one point in your life you dreamed of being a professional baseball player, a rock star or a movie actor. Maybe your dreams are still alive. However if not, sometimes it can be helpful to keep a "slice" of your fantasy alive in your life today. Consider some examples:

"I wanted to be a rock star but to this day I still play my guitar as a hobby and I am a huge music enthusiast catching concerts whenever I can"

"I thought I was going to be an architect but to this day I still take trips to the city to study and admire the beautiful buildings"

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTION -How have you (or if you haven't, then how could you) maintain a "slice" of a fantasy alive in your life?

Brief Discussion Module: "Spring into Action"

For most, Spring is a time when people think about positive change. The cold Winter comes to an end and Springtime brings with it a lot of potential for growth. With that said, discuss the following questions as group:

1. What is one short term goal that you can focus on during the upcoming Spring season?
2. How can you do a "Spring Cleaning" in your life this season and get rid of some things that you have been meaning to get rid of?
3. What are some emotional goals for this season (How do you hope to feel as you make progress over the next few months and what is your plan to get there?)

Icebreaker: Simple, Strange or Special Gifts

Everyone has unique talents that we just seem to be born with. There are just some things that come naturally as "gifts" in life every now and then. Share one or two of your "gifts"

Examples:

- > I can parallel park a car like a pro for some reason
- > I just have an amazing knack for video games and I excel very quickly at them
- > I am ambidextrous
- > For as long as I can remember I have an amazing sense of direction\

Share your own as a group



Interesting Moral and Ethical Dilemmas

This website provides some really thought-provoking moral and ethical dilemmas for group discussion. Take a look and discuss as a group:

<https://icebreakerideas.com/moral-dilemma-questions/?fbclid=IwAR1qOcqc2ulaqwe5tVfRrk4yc5zJ4aQTjw8yPFmD-0TVW0ulnqbl-ss42ZI>

Icebreaker – “It’s a Good Thing That...”

This is a way to get group talking and interacting. Start with a statement about something negative that may have happened. It is best to start with something commonplace and realistic. Then go around the group and make “It’s a good thing that” phrases by changing a few words

Example:

- Person 1 (Starts) – “**I lost my car keys yesterday**”
- Person 2 – It’s good thing you didn’t **lose your entire car** yesterday
- Person 3 – It’s a good thing that you didn’t **crash your car** yesterday

Etc...*(Keep going until it loses momentum and try a new phrase)*

2/26/22 - Brief Discussion - "No Talent Required"

Directions - Discuss the following as a group with group members encourage to identify areas of strength and areas that need work based on the list. Then after see if the group can add to the list by coming up with similar things that anyone with any talent level can accomplish with effort





Icebreaker - "Dude with a Sign"

Directions - This is simple and fun: As a group look at and discuss some of the signs put up by Seth "Dude with a Sign" - Link below

[DUDE WITH A SIGN](#)

Then as a group everyone should try to come up with at least one interesting or funny idea for a sign if you were the "Dude with a Sign"

Fun Icebreaker - "Me.com"

Directions - Everyone should describe what types of content (articles, pictures, links, videos merchandise, etc.) would be present on a website bearing their name. An example provided below:

Group Member: PAUL - *"On my website Paul.com there would be lots of pictures of me fishing off the pier which is my favorite hobby as well as a video stream of free superhero movies, which are my favorite and a section on the website to order Buffalo wings delivery (My favorite food) and also a picture of my kids"*

Alternate Version - Do the same as above but instead of group members doing their own websites, have the group come up with content on one another's imaginary website. The only rule is that this is supposed to be fun and expressive rather than uncomfortable or mean so insults or controversial answers should be excluded



Brief Reading and Discussion: Take that Leap.

(Taken from - <https://medium.com/the-post-grad-survival-guide/7-short-moral-stories-that-changed-my-life-162d91db7260> by Shuxin Lim)

There's an old riddle that says five frogs are sitting on a lily pad. One decides to jump off.

- *How many are left?*

If your answer is "four", thank your math teacher for your math skills. Unfortunately, this is not a test of your math abilities.

It's a life problem...

The correct answer is "five". Yes, all five are still sitting there on the lily pad but the one frog only decided to jump but hasn't.

As cliché as it seems 'The journey starts with a single step' — not by just by thinking about taking that step but by making a decision and then taking action

Moral: Be the frog who not only decides to jump off the lily pad but actually jumps –
Make a decision and take action to achieve your goals

Discussion: How can you apply this in your life by making an important decision and taking decisive action to achieve your goals?

Icebreaker: "5 Things That Rarely Yield Satisfying Results" - *Discuss*:

1. Surfing the TV, internet, or social media for "a little while longer" past your bedtime
2. Starting a conversation with anyone by complaining about your life
3. Arguing.... anytime...with just about anyone
4. Showing off or bragging
5. Repeatedly telling yourself "I'll just have one more then I'll stop..."

What can you add to this list that from your personal experience?

How can you avoid some of life's pitfalls that are simply "Not worth it"?



Discussion: "You Can Learn a Lot from a Dog"

Review and Discuss:

Positive traits that dogs often can do much better than humans on a consistent basis nowadays-

1. LOYALTY
2. FORGIVENESS
3. ENTHUSIASM
4. JOY
5. RESILIENCE
6. SELFLESSNESS
7. WARMTH
8. WELCOMING
9. AFFECTION
10. UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

Discussion Questions:

- **What are some traits on this list that you possess and are able to display on a regular basis?**
- **What traits from this list do you feel people need to work on?**
- **What traits do you need to work on?**
 - *For Pet Owners* - **What life lessons have you learned from owning a dog? (or another pet if you choose)**

Self Awareness Discussion - "Character Traits"

Directions - Print out or display the worksheet "**A List of Character Traits**" and have the group identify some traits on that list. Process group members answers. Below are some optional process questions

1. What are some of your best traits? How can you enhance or increase those traits?
2. How can you use these positive traits in your life...
 - To help yourself?
 - To help others?
3. If you chose any negative traits, how can you change those and make improvements? (Everyone can change for the better with patience, persistence and effort)



Icebreaker: "Average or Outlier"

Directions – Consider the average amount that a typical adult does certain behaviors. Have group members decide whether they personally fall into either of these categories:

“Average” – *Meaning that the amount that you do this behavior personally falls within the average range (or close to it)*

“Outlier” – *This means you are an exception to the rule: You do this behavior significantly less or significantly more than the average person*

Example –

Topic: Sleep

→ Group Member 1 – *“I am in average range and tend to get a solid 7 or 8 hours every night”*

→ Group Member 2 – *“I am an outlier as I consider myself lucky to get 4 hours a night*

→ Group Member 3 – *“I am an outlier the other way and I sleep way too much probably as I like to get 10-12 hours a day”*

Some suggested topics but feel free to come up with your own

- **Sleep** (Average range for adults is 7-9 hours)
- **Reading** – (Average American Adult reads about a book a month)
- **Work** – (Average amount an American adult male works about 41 hours/week and female 36)
- **TV** (Average American is about 4 hours/day)
- **Social Media** – (Average about 2 ½ hours/day)



Icebreaker - "Who Do You Think I Am?"

Warning - *This may be difficult for a newer group as there needs to be some degree of trust and comfort*

Directions - Select a brief scenario and read it to the group. Then ask the group to (honestly but kindly) share how they feel others would respond to this scenario. Explain to the group that mean or provocative answers should not be shared. Keep it light and fun

Example - The chosen scenario is:

- *"Kim Kardashian shows up in this group"*

Examples of group responses -

- *"I think Johnny would try to get her number"*
- *"Susan would probably go for a selfie with her"*
- *"Lawrence would probably just ignore her and act like she wasn't there"*

Now try it as a group. You can come up with your own scenarios but here are a few for ideas

- A famous person (select who) joins the group
- You come to group and other people are there talking but no counselor shows up
- You smell a really putrid scent in the room with the group but don't know where it came from
- A limo driver shows up with the most beautiful car you ever saw and just says "Get in, let's go" but doesn't give any other information

Article "100 Ways to Slightly Improve Your Life Without Really Trying"

This interesting list of simple but creative and helpful ideas for self improvement has something for everyone. For a brief group discussion, have group members look through the list for a few minutes and share a few ideas that stuck out to them

LINK - <https://amp-theguardian-com.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/amp.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2022/jan/01/marginal-gains-100-ways-to-improve-your-life-without-really-trying>



Brief Discussion Module: "Adulthood"

"Adulthood" is an informal term to describe behavior that is seen as responsible and grown-up, if mundane and unpleasant—like bills and chores.

People often say amusing thoughts about adulthood (or behaving like an adult). Read and discuss your thoughts about a few examples found publicly on Twitter:

- *"The older I get the more I understand why my mom was always saying "I'm going to lay down"*
- *"Sorry I gotta be up early for work" is the adult equivalent of "my mom said no"*
- *Getting older involves waking up every day wondering if you're coming down with a cold or if this is just how you wake up now*
- *Adulthood is making an involuntary grunt when you do anything that involves movement*
- *When you're a little kid, all adults seem they they are the same age and when you are an adult, all little kids seem like they're the same age*
- *Age 17: Sneaking out of a house to go to a party - Age 37: Sneak out of a party to go home*

DISCUSS:

What are some of your personal thoughts about life as an adult? (Or if you are not an adult what do you think that adulthood may be like?)

What do you wish they would have taught you about "adulthood" when you were still young enough to be prepared for it?

In all seriousness, how are you personally improving when it comes to accepting and completing adult goals and responsibilities?



Icebreaker "Good Old Days or Nowadays"

This is a simple but interesting icebreaker discussion for groups. Simply bring up various topics and allow the group to select which version of this topic they like better, **NOWADAYS** (*today's version of the topic*) or **GOOD OLD DAYS** (*the version of the topic from the past*)

Here are a few topics to get started:

Music (*Do you like the music of today better or the music of the past?*)

Sports

Television

Cars

People

Etc...Allow the group to choose some more and continue...