

Establishing and Sustaining a Parent Support Group

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Agenda for today's meeting

- Introductions
- Facilitation skills
- Communication skills
- Types of support groups
- Stages of group formations
- Setting the meeting
- Challenges for the facilitator
- Walking the line
- Questions



What is facilitation?

- Plan, guide, and manage a group event.
- Guiding a group process.
- Making the process easier
- The art of leading people through processes towards agreed-upon objectives in a manner that encourages participation, ownership, and creativity from all involved.
- Geared toward taking action.



Role of Facilitator

- Design and plan the group with input from the members
- Create a safe environment
- Honor the process.
- Keep the group on task and following the agenda.



SKILLS

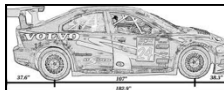
- Strong leadership skills
- Effective communication skills
- Strong organizational skills
- Understanding of group dynamics
- Has ability to share the spotlight (team player)



Needed:

CHARACTERISTICS

- Friendly and warm
- Confident
- Trusting and honest
- Strength-based/positive
- Ability to think on your feet
- Assertive (not aggressive)
- Enthusiastic
- Flexible
- Humorous



Design and Plan

1. Is this an open discussion event or structured process?
2. What might the agenda look like?
 - Agenda should have a beginning, middle and end.
3. Setting ground rules.
 - Who should establish the ground rules?
4. Meeting location—how should you structure the room for optimum participation?
5. Do you need any supplies for this meeting?

Create A Safe Environment



- Why is a safe environment important?
- What can you do to create a safe environment for your group?
- How can you engage your group in helping to ensure the safety?

Honor the Process

- Group process is more important than your own personal needs.
- Values the contributions of all members.
- Seeks balance in between all members. (quiet vs. dominate participants)
- Sees all interaction as relevant to the group.
- Takes time to do well.



Keep the group on task



- Does your group ever go on a tangent?
- Is going on a tangent okay?
 - If no, why isn't it okay?
 - If yes, when is it okay?
- What strategies do you use to keep the group focused?

Verbal Techniques

- Asking questions
- Redirecting
- Referencing back/bridging
- Paraphrasing
- Humor
- Positive reinforcement
- Obtain examples
- Unity and diversity
- Metacommunication



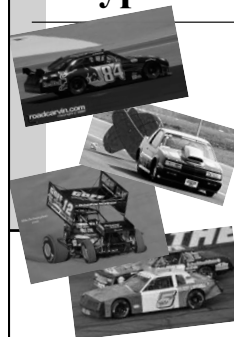
Non-verbal Techniques

- Active listening
 - Eye contact
 - Nodding
 - Open posture
 - Relaxed
- Tone of voice
- Facial expressions
- Silence



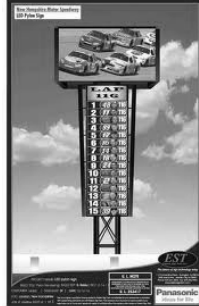
Types of Support Groups

- Frustration venting group
- Mutual support group
- Service group
- Advocacy group



Stages of group formation

1. Forming
2. Storming
3. Norming
4. Performing



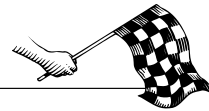
In the beginning

- Publicize the group
- Establish an agenda
- Set up location
- Welcome members with a smile
- Have a sign in sheet and confidentiality sheet
- Introduce yourself and your role
- Get to know each other for other group members to get to know each other—make this easy so as not to scare new members.



.....in the middle

- Caring and sharing
- Training topic
- Issue discussion
- Planning for future events
- Develop a work plan to complete tasks identified by the group; the group OWNS the group and should take ownership by helping with tasks and work



..at the end.


- Ensure that everyone that wanted to talk had an opportunity to talk.
- Ask someone to share a joke or inspiring story
- Make sure members have your contact information as the facilitator
- Let members help set the agenda for the next meeting
- Give members the date and time of the next meeting.
- Make sure members know what their task, if any, is to be completed by the next meeting.

What are challenges you might face as a facilitator?



Small group work

1. Count off 1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3, etc.
2. Get into groups: 1's, 2's, and 3's.
3. Read the scenario for your group.
4. As the facilitator, how will you handle the challenging behavior from the group?
5. Record your ideas on chart paper.
6. Be ready to share with the large group.

Challenging Behaviors	WHY?	STRATEGIES 

What are boundaries?



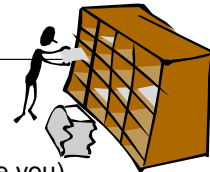
- A boundary is like a border or a limit between us and others.
- Boundaries can be physical, mental, emotional or spiritual.
- We can think of a boundary as being like a wall around us. A desirable wall might be made of bricks and have good windows and a gate with a good lock controlled by us. We can then decide who and what to let in or lock out.

■ By Judy Saltarelli, M.A. <http://www.soulselfhelp.on.ca/boundaries.html>

Why do we need boundaries?

- Keep us safe and keeps others safe
- Protects our own integrity
- Respects others while still respecting myself.
- Boundaries are tools you can use to overcome oppression, to resist the negative messages so persistent in our culture, and to take in support and nurturing from others.
- There is a feedback loop between healthy boundaries and self-esteem: self-esteem enables us to have strong boundaries, and strong boundaries in turn enhance self-esteem.

What are examples of Personal Boundaries?



- Defining who you are (not letting others define you)
- Being honest about your own needs, expectations, etc.
- Making choices that respect who you are that reflect your needs
- Personal values—value sort activity

Tightrope Walking: Walking that fine line as a parent leader!

Parent leader boundaries are about:

- Respecting the values of the parents you are leading (*listening and understanding*),
- Protecting the rights of the parents you are leading (*confidentiality*),
- Recognizing and ACCEPTING their individual strengths and vulnerabilities (*supporting*), and
- Modeling appropriate boundaries.

Scenarios for discussion



Scenario #1: You need a babysitter for your eight year old with ADHD. The teenage daughter of a support group member lives near you and has offered to baby sit for you. Can you accept the offer? Why or why not? Positives and negatives?

Scenarios for discussion

Scenario #2: While at Walmart you run into a family from your support group. She asks how another family from your support group is doing? What can you say? What is the best way to handle this?



Scenarios for discussion



Scenario #3: A parent from your support group uses physical discipline with his children. He spansks but does not leave marks on his child. When other parents are sharing, this one parent recommends that if they only spanked their child.... How do you help the group handle this? What is your role as the parent leader?

Scenarios for discussion

Scenario #4: A parent from your support group often calls you at home for support. This parent will call you at nights and on weekends when you are having family time. How do you handle this? What is your role as the parent leader?

Scenarios for discussion

Scenario #5: You are co-leading the support group with another parent from your region. Each month you are doing most of the work and the co-leader says they are in crisis and will help more next month. This happens each month. How do you handle this? Who can you talk to about this?



Who can you talk to regarding these issues/concerns?

- Talk to other parent support group leader
- Talk to Family Liaison

- Do not use names when talking to the other person unless he/she is also trained on confidentiality. You can discuss the situation though.

What else?



References:

- www.mindtools.com/pages/article/RoleofAFacilitator.htm
- preventiontraining.samhsa.gov/CTW12/mod3tr.htm#11
- wateroutreach.uwex.edu/education/Facilitation.cfm
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