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Understanding My Child's Group Goal

Every child/adolescent/young adult that attends the Social Skills/Self-Esteem Groups must have an individual, measurable, and recognizable goal. The purpose of this goal is to help group members identify the reason they are in group. The goal will also assist him/her to focus on a specific and measurable event that they can then use to assess their own progress, as well as identify issues to bring up in group sessions.

The group goal should be discussed between the parent/guardian and the client. Please note that some clients use the group to help them focus and identify a goal, after they are in group for a period of time. Parents and group members should set a goal that is measurable and can help the client feel success when they are putting forth effort toward their goal area. If the client is not being successful in their goal area, the purpose of group then becomes a venue for the client to bring up issues in group as they relate to hurdles/obstacles which inhibit his/her success.

Parents and group members should try to pick a goal that is attainable with small steps and make efforts to resist the urge to have multiple goals. Multiple goals usually frustrate the group member, since there are too many things to focus on at once. However, be aware that many group members do have two goals that they are working on.

Group members may also change their goal as they progress through group. When a group member is achieving 9 and 10 on their goal on a consistent basis, it is time to update their goal and to work towards something new that they desire to work on. Please note that when they finish group, we usually do a "celebration session" to recognize their efforts and conclude in a positive way.

At each group session, the Parent Feedback Forms are read to the group. Be aware that anything that is written, other than the last portion, "Information that I want Dr. Berk to know", is read to the group, unless you mark differently. The purpose of this process is to help group members focus on their goal and receive feedback bi-monthly. If a group member is doing well, they will receive positive feedback from their peers. If they are not doing well, group members are assisted by peers to try to ascertain what the difficulty is in obtaining their goal and to look at venues that would be more successful in terms of achieving it. Negative criticism is not allowed in group. However constructive feedback is a part of the process.

When scoring the goal sheet, the purpose of having two scores is that the child/adolescent may see the situation one way while the parent may see it in a totally different way. Be aware that this is "ok" and in fact this is the reason that there are two scores on the sheet. Although approximately 95% of the children/adolescents/young adults that are in group choose to come on their own accord, there are some group members who are made to

come to group by the parents. These group members are often resistant to setting a goal. In this instance, it is my suggestion that the parents set a goal for them and that this goal can be discussed in the group process.

Examples of group goals might include the following:

- Turn acquaintance friends into closer friends
- Manage anger more appropriately
- Reduce impulsivity (“Think before I act or talk”)
- Make better and have longer conversations
- Be successful socially in the workplace
- Be better accepted in playground/gym activities
- Deal with bullies more effectively
- Reduce anxiety in new social situations
- Deal more effectively with family members, i.e. siblings or parents

The aforementioned goals are common goals that might be heard in group. Please feel free to utilize one of these goals or to create your own. Should you desire more information, please feel free to contact me at the office. However, I am hopeful that this information will assist you in the goal setting process.

I do request that you make sure a Parent Feedback Form is completed for **EVERY** group session and turned in at **EVERY** group session. This is my direct feedback from you. I need to know if you feel your son or daughter is progressing. If they are not, please note this on their sheet. As well, if they are not participating in group or are not using group effectively, you will hear from me directly regarding the fact that we need to meet to review their progress. Of course, at any time you feel the need, we can also meet to review and discuss in their treatment goals in a family "check in" session..

Sincerely,
Jay H. Berk, Ph.D.
Psychologist