

LIFE LIVED BETTER

AN 8-WEEK ROADMAP FOR HELPING STUDENTS

HIGH SCHOOL EDITION

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An 8-Week Roadmap
for Helping Students



Created by

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life lived better

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Click title below to navigate directly to each lesson.

- Pg 4 - [Theoretical Approach](#)
- Pg 5 - [Common Techniques/Questions](#)
- Pg 6 - [Curriculum Design](#)
- Pg 7 - [To the Group Leader](#)
- Pg 9 - [Lesson 1: Introduction to the Group](#)
- Pg 16 - [Lesson 2: Challenges, Challenges](#)
- Pg 23 - [Lesson 3: Personal Resources](#)
- Pg 29 - [Lesson 4: The Whole Person](#)
- Pg 36 - [Lesson 5: Life at School](#)
- Pg 44 - [Lesson 6: Ups and Downs of Life](#)
- Pg 52 - [Lesson 7: The Wizard](#)
- Pg 57 - [Lesson 8: The Bus Ride](#)

THEORETICAL APPROACH

The Teen Lifeline Support System curriculum is an 8-week program designed to help students. The lessons are based on principles and practices of Solution-focused Therapy as developed by Insoo Kim Berg and Steve de Shazer. There are several principles that are important to consider:

- Rather than focus on risk and pathology, the focus is on strengths, resources, and resiliencies.
- Problems do not happen all the time; there are always exceptions. It is the exceptions we focus on rather than the problem. What is different when the exceptions are occurring? Who notices?
- The focus is on the present and future and not on the past except as it relates to how the person was able to overcome problems and challenges.
- The group leader works in collaboration with the group members rather than being an authority figure.
- Change is built on doing what works, and, if it doesn't work, doing something different.
- The group member is the expert on his or her problem; the leader is the expert on asking good questions and focusing on strengths.
- The focus is on building a desired future rather than solving problems.
- Little changes can lead to big changes, so little changes may be all that is needed and should be encouraged.

COMMON TECHNIQUES/QUESTIONS:

Scaling: Ask “On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest, where do you think you are on this _____?” Scaling questions can include, but are not limited to progress, motivation, skill, personal opinions, and anything else.

Setting Goals: 1) Ask the scaling question and then “what would it take to move up just one point?” 2) Ask the Miracle Question: “Suppose that you go to sleep tonight and while you are sleeping a miracle happens. The miracle is that the problem that brought you here today is solved. However, because you were sleeping, you didn’t know the miracle had happened. What will be the first thing you will notice that is different when you wake up in the morning?”

Searching for Strengths and Exceptions: “When things are going well, what is different?” “What is different when the problem is not happening?”

Coping: When things are difficult, people often cannot think of exceptions, so ask, “How have you managed to cope with this situation?” “How have you managed to get here today?”

For more information, refer to the Solution-Focused Treatment Manual at

<http://www.sfbta.org/research.pdf>

CURRICULUM DESIGN

While each lesson is designed to achieve a certain result, the overall curriculum follows a consistent format. The format is as follows:



1. **Group check-up** – Begin each session with a brief recap of the previous week and time for the students to discuss how they applied the previous lesson. Except for the first lesson, check-ups are quite similar and build on the previous session.



2. **Self-evaluation** – Have the students complete the weekly evaluation. This gives a comparison of the students' progress from week to week. It gauges mood and emotions and provides opportunity for specific follow up.



3. **Group Activity** – Spend the bulk of the session conducting a group activity, which will change from week to week. Activities may have options that depend on the leader, group members, and time. All options are just that: options. However, this also assures the leader will have enough to do to fill the allotted time.



4. **Group Processing** – Follow each activity by asking the questions provided. It is vital to allow the students to process their thoughts and feelings after completing the activity. The goal of processing is for students to focus on the things they can control in their lives and what they can do differently to reach their goals, thus moving from the lesson in the small group to application in real-life situations.



5. **Wrap-up** – Before the group ends, recap the lesson and give an assignment for the students to focus on during the week.

TO THE GROUP LEADER . . .

1. Begin all groups with:

- *What is said in here stays in here.*
- *If you say something that would indicate you might harm yourself or others, I would need to get us help, so everyone could feel safe.*
- *You get out of group what you put into it.*

2. Before group each week, review your notes and be prepared to ask the students the action question from the previous week. Be prepared! Study the lesson, and be ready to lead it.

3. Listen to the students. Teens and preteens long for adults to listen to them. Let them talk. Ask open-ended questions. Avoid asking “why” questions, as this implies judgment. The best rule of thumb is to begin with “how” and “what” questions.

4. Resist the temptation to lecture and correct. Today’s teens receive too many lectures and have learned to tune them out. Your task is to create an open space for communication to test their ideas. Just because you allow them to comment without correction doesn’t mean you are agreeing with them.

TO THE GROUP LEADER . . . (continued)

5. **Try to include everyone but don't force anyone to participate. Each person has the right to pass.**
6. **Participate in the activities yourself. This will encourage the students to participate.**
7. **Acquire a co-facilitator. Group leaders are encouraged to have a co-leader. Co-leaders help to keep the group focused and notice the details happening in group. Be sure to sit across from the co-leader in order to better watch the different group members.**
8. **This curriculum is designed for high school students and is recommended for use with this age group.**
9. **Build relationships. The end-goal of this group is to show the students how life is intended to be lived - in community with peers and mentors. This group is intended to cultivate a longing for similar community. It is the relationship that heals.**

LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION TO GROUP

GROUP CHECK-UP:



Have everyone in the group introduce themselves. Explain the purpose and intent of the group meeting. Tell the students this is their group. To create a sense of ownership, brainstorm rules for the group. (EXAMPLE: No cell phone use, respect others, be encouraging.)



NOTE:

Include a rule stating that anything said in the group stays in the group.

(The only exception is if one of the students talks about hurting themselves or someone else. That information must be reported.)

SELF-EVALUATION:



Say, “Describe what it’s like to meet other people. When has it been a good experience? What are your fears about coming to this group? What do you hope to get out of a group like this?”

LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION TO GROUP (continued)

GROUP ACTIVITY:



Option 1:

(Using masking tape, tape a 10-foot straight line to the floor. Beginning on the left side, number from 1 to 10, with 10 being on the far right. Leave equal space between the numbers.)

MATERIALS:

- Masking tape
- Marker



LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION TO GROUP (continued)

GROUP ACTIVITY:



Option 2:

Note:

If you are using blank sheets, draw lines to look like the handout (H1) on page 15.

Instructions (for both Option 1 and Option 2):

1. Say, “On a scale of 1 to 10, stand by (or mark - if using the worksheet) the number that shows how you feel right now.”
2. Give them a few moments to place themselves (or mark the worksheet).

Follow the same procedure for each of the following questions:

- How close do you feel to another person (mom, dad, caregiver, siblings, friends, etc.)?
- How good do you feel about yourself?
- How much do you feel others care about you?
- How comfortable are you saying “no” when someone crosses your boundaries?
- How much good are you doing for others?
- How motivated are you to do more?

MATERIALS:

- Handout (H1), p. 15
- Pencil



LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION TO GROUP (continued)

In leading the following discussion, explain that it is normal to feel very close to someone on a given day and not as close on another day. This doesn't mean levels of love change – just that the closeness of relationships can change.

- After you ask all the scaling questions, ask someone to talk about how they marked one or two of the questions.
- Ask the person who is standing on a lower number (or who marked a low number) what it might be like to have a higher number. How do you think the person with the higher number is feeling?
- What would help you have a higher number?

LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION TO GROUP (continued)

GROUP PROCESSING:



Ask the following questions:

1. How do the things we have discussed affect your everyday life?
2. When are the times you play a significant role to those in your life? Describe times when things wouldn't go as smoothly if you weren't there.
3. What groups are you a part of (groups can be as large as a classroom or as small as two people)? At school, home, church? What are some things you do well that other people might not do as well, that make your role more essential?
4. What are some things you can improve? Be specific.
5. Let's say it is a year from now, and you are walking down the street and run into a friend that you made in this group. The friend starts talking about the things that are better since he/she was in the group and then asks you, "What's better for you because you were in the group?"

LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION TO GROUP (continued)

WRAP-UP:



The emphasis is on the fact that the students play an important role not only in this group but other groups as well. We are important in the roles we play, and we make decisions about those roles.

Pre-Test (For closed groups only)

Before you finish your group, pass out the pre-test to all of the students. Have them fill out both sides. Remind the students this information will be kept confidential and will not be traced back to them. To do this have them write the last three digits of their school student ID # where it is indicated in the top-right. Before you finish your group, pass out the pre-test to all of the students. Have them fill out both sides. Remind the students this information will be kept confidential and will not be traced back to them. To do this have them write the last three digits of their school student ID # where it is indicated in the top-right.

[CLICK FOR THE HANDOUT TO THE PRE-EVALUATION](#)



REMINDER FOR NEXT WEEK:

Ask them to notice during the next week how they play a role in certain groups and think about what they might do to feel better about those roles.

LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION TO GROUP (continued)

Handout #1 (H1)



[CLICK TO PRINT PDF](#)

LESSON 2: CHALLENGES, CHALLENGES

GROUP CHECK-UP:



Ask the students if anything significant happened over the last week. Ask how the students' relationships have been this week with family, teachers, friends, etc.



NOTE:

Allow the students to discuss a role they play in a group.

Encourage them to think about how their role is significant and what they did to feel better about that role.

SELF-EVALUATION:



In Lesson 2 only, the self-evaluation and group activities are combined.

LESSON 2: CHALLENGES, CHALLENGES (continued)

GROUP ACTIVITY:



Option 1: Challenge Sculpture

MATERIALS:

- Play-Doh



Instructions:

Instruct the students to separate one small ball of play-doh and set it to the side.

Ask the students to create a tower or other object that represents the challenges they are facing right now with the remaining play-doh (The idea is to relate the amount or kind of stress they are feeling using the play-doh sculpture.) They should build the sculpture higher or larger if they are facing major challenges, and shorter or smaller if their life is relatively free of stress.

Discuss the different play-doh sculptures. Note similarities between situations/feelings when they emerge.

Using the play-doh set aside at the beginning; have the students craft an addition to their sculpture, something that enhances the original work of art. Ask how their original sculpture is improved by this addition.

Relating this to their life, ask what one thing they could do differently to make their life better.

LESSON 2: CHALLENGES, CHALLENGES (continued)

GROUP ACTIVITY:



Option 2: Heavy Load

MATERIALS:

- 2 rocks
- Markers
- Cloth bag



Instructions:

Tell the group, “Sometimes, it is difficult to carry our load, because it just seems so heavy. We are going to talk about some of the things that make our load so heavy and what might make our challenges easier to handle.”

Ask each student to write on the surface of one of his or her rocks a problem or challenge they have been facing recently. If the student has more than one significant issue, encourage that student to write on the other rock as well.

Have everyone stand in a circle and pass the bag around, with everyone placing both of their rocks in the bag. Once the last rock has been placed in the bag, continue to pass the bag around so everyone can feel the weight of the bag.

(Another option is to have one student stand at the front of class with the bag held out at shoulder level. The group leader places the rocks one by one into the bag, allowing the student to feel the weight of the rocks. The other students could take turns holding the bag during the discussion.)

LESSON 2: CHALLENGES, CHALLENGES (continued)

Instructions (continued):

Ask the following questions:

- **What happens when we try to carry our problems and the problems of other people at the same time?**
- **What does it feel like?**
- **What are you thinking about when you carry the load?**

What are some things you could do to lighten the load of these rocks? (Possible answers: share them, ask others for help, decide which ones you can control and which ones you have to take out of the bag because you have no control over them).

Let everyone get their rock back out of the bag. Have the students share the burden they wrote on their rock. Allow the group members to give input as to how they can handle this burden more effectively.

Have the students choose one thing they can do to help them with the specific challenge they wrote on the rock. Ask them to turn the rock over and write this on the back. (Answers will vary but could include: share problems with others, pray, ask for help, prioritize activities, listen to music, etc.)

LESSON 2: CHALLENGES, CHALLENGES (continued)

GROUP ACTIVITY:



Option 3: Combination

(this option allows a similar experience without the use of rocks or play-doh).

MATERIALS:

- blank paper
- Pens
- Pencils



Instructions:

Give each student a piece of paper and pen or pencil. Have them write on one side of the paper the things they have been dealing with over the past weeks and months. Ask, “How did these things happen?” or “What caused this to happen?” Also ask, “Did you do anything that may have caused this to happen, or did it just happen because of other things you couldn’t control?”

Discuss what ways they have handled these problems. Ask, “What are some other ways you could handle these challenges?”

Allow the group to brainstorm more effective ways to handle these challenges. After discussing these ideas have them write one or two on the back of their sheet to try over the next week.

LESSON 2: CHALLENGES, CHALLENGES (continued)

GROUP PROCESSING:



Ask the following questions:

- As we discussed, what are some things we can do when we have challenges in our lives?
- Assuming some of these are new ideas, which ones are you willing to try in your specific situation?
- What can we do about problems we can't solve?

LESSON 2: CHALLENGES, CHALLENGES (continued)

WRAP-UP:



Share the following with the group:

All of us have burdens in our life. Some of these burdens are caused by our actions, and others are just part of normal life. There are things we can do to help us handle our challenges in positive ways.



REMINDER FOR NEXT WEEK:

Over the next week, notice those things that help you get through some of your challenges in life or that help you cope. It may be a picture, a song, a hobby, or something else you find useful. When you come next time, bring an example of something that helps you through tough situations.

LESSON 3: PERSONAL RESOURCES

GROUP CHECK-UP:



Say to the students, “Last week we asked each of you to bring an example of something that helps you get through difficult times.”

Have the students share what they brought. If they did not bring anything, have them talk about something they may do. (Be sure to connect members who have similar ideas by stating something like, “You and James both use music. Does anyone else use music?”)

If some students thought of individuals who help them cope, emphasize that as one of the main resources we have - each other.

LESSON 3: PERSONAL RESOURCES (continued)

SELF-EVALUATION:



Instructions:

Explain to the students that you will ask them to shade in the portion of the gingerbread person related to how they feel about four areas of their lives. They will shade in a portion of the gingerbread person that represents the degree to which they feel connected, courageous, capable and valuable.

Say to the students:

“Color in how close you feel you are to other people.” (*connected*)

“Color in how good you feel you are at doing things.” (*capable*)

“Color in how much you feel you can depend on the people in your life.” (*count*)

“Color in how willing you are to face up to problems and challenges in your life.” (*courage*)

Let’s assume you would like to be more connected and capable, as well as having more courage and feeling more valuable. What is something you could do to help you feel this way in each area? Have the students write ideas on the correlating figures.

Ask if anyone would like to share how they would help their men have more color in each of the areas.

MATERIALS:

- Paper
- Pencil
- Markers
- Handout
(H2), p. 28
4 pages per student



LESSON 3: PERSONAL RESOURCES (continued)

GROUP ACTIVITY:



Instructions:

Remove 3 to 5 pieces and conceal them in a separate bag. Divide the remaining pieces equally into bags based on the number of students in the group.

Ask students to work together, using the puzzle pieces, to complete the puzzle.

When the students discover the puzzle is missing pieces, ask them if they have checked all their resources. When they find out you have the pieces, give the missing pieces to the students to complete the puzzle.

MATERIALS:

- A children's puzzle with 50 to 100 pieces.
- Enough small bags for each student, plus one



LESSON 3: PERSONAL RESOURCES (continued)

GROUP PROCESSING:



Ask the following:

- What are some things we can learn from this activity?
- What does it mean that I (the leader) had some of the pieces? (Possible answers: the need to think of all resources, sometimes adults have some tools, or friends have resources, that can complement the tools you already possess).
- What does this say about our need for others and their support?

LESSON 3: PERSONAL RESOURCES (continued)

WRAP-UP:



Share the following with the group:

Think about those closest to you. What is it that they bring to your life? How are they helpful to you?



REMINDER FOR NEXT WEEK:

Focus on those around you who have a positive impact on your life.

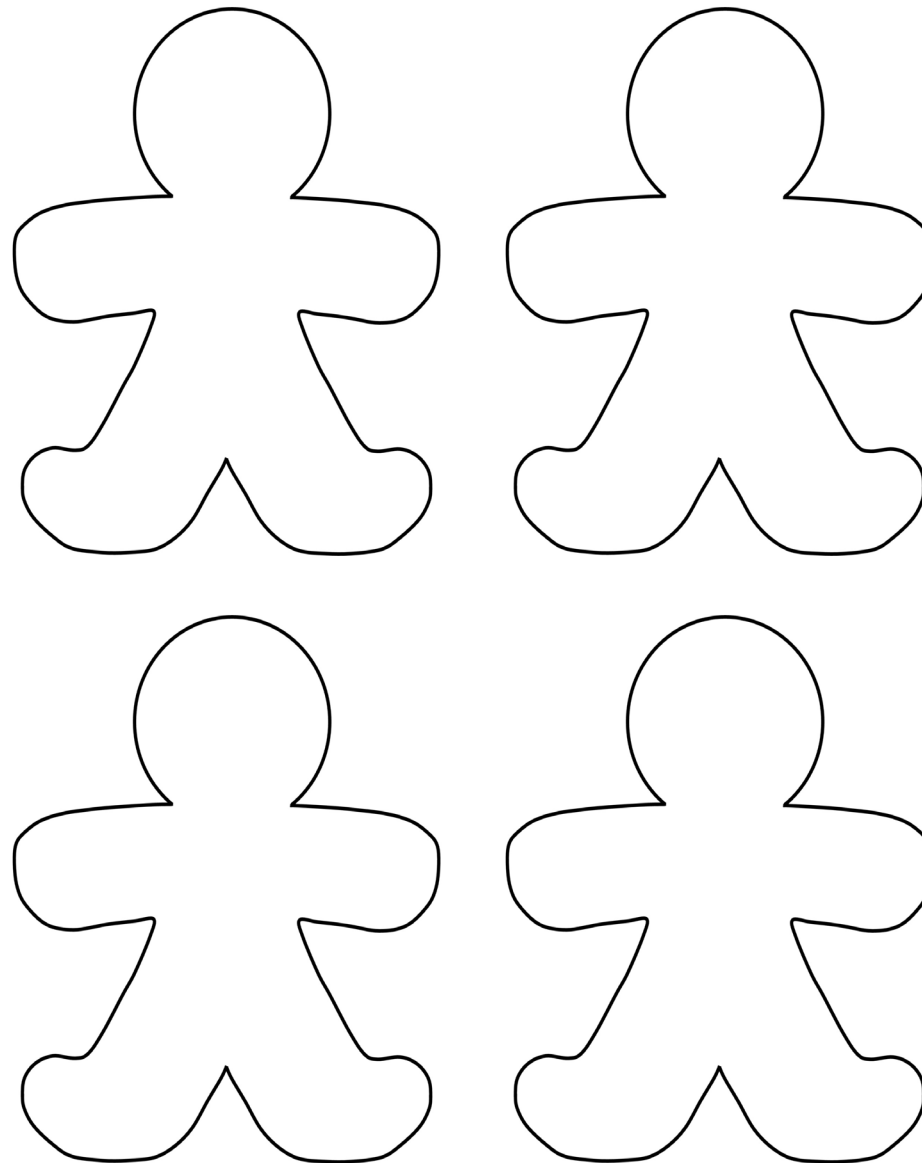
LESSON 3: PERSONAL RESOURCES (continued)

Handout #2

(H2)



[CLICK TO PRINT PDF](#)



LESSON 4: THE WHOLE PERSON

GROUP CHECK-UP:



Say to the group, “Last week we asked you to focus on others around you that affect you in a positive way. Please share the name of one person and how they can serve as a resource to you.”

Allow time for discussion, then say, “There is one other area of connection that can make a huge difference in our lives.”

LESSON 4: THE WHOLE PERSON (continued)

Instructions:

Have the students draw four concentric circles on a blank sheet of paper (or use Handout #3), with large spaces in between each circle. In the smallest (center) circle, have them write “me”.

In the space between “me” and the next ring, ask them to draw circles representing friends and family and others to whom they feel close. The closer they feel to the person, the closer that person’s circle is to their circle. Have them label each circle with a first name or initials.

In the space between the second and third ring, ask them to draw circles representing people they feel close to, but not as close as those in their inner circle. Have them label these circles with first names.

In the space between the third and fourth ring, ask them to write the names of other people they might use for support occasionally or who are just acquaintances.

MATERIALS:

- Paper
- Pencils
- Handout (H3), p. 35



Note: See Sample 1 for an example

LESSON 4: THE WHOLE PERSON (continued)

Have them draw another small circle on the sheet that represents the closeness they feel to God or a higher power. They will label it and place it on the sheet in relation to their circle.

Additionally, have the students draw arrows pointing towards the middle or towards the outside of the circle on each of the relationships (including the spiritual circle) indicating which way the relationship is moving (closer or farther away).

Ask the students:

- What do you do differently in the relationships that are close to you and those that are far away? (Answers for the closest relationships may include: talk more, hang out, spend time together, etc.)
- How could this relate to your relationship with a higher power as well?
- Who in the outer circles would you like to be closer to?
- What are some things you might do, so that you have a closer relationship with that person?

LESSON 4: THE WHOLE PERSON (continued)

GROUP ACTIVITY:



Say, “We all feel certain spiritual connections with God or a higher power, regardless of our belief system. Some of you feel close, and others aren’t sure about God or what to believe about spiritual things. We’re going to talk about how spirituality plays a part in our lives, whether good or bad.”

Instructions:

Give each person in the group several (up to 3) index cards.

Say, “On each card, write one question you have about God, a higher power, or anything spiritual. Also write any questions you might have about the other relationships you placed within the circle. You do not have to put your name on the card. When you are finished, place the card in the hat. After everyone completes their cards, we are going to mix up the cards and draw them randomly and talk about them. We may not get through all of the cards, but maybe we will be able to discuss some of the questions you have written.”

Once the students have had time to write down questions, pass the hat around and allow student to place their cards inside.

MATERIALS:

- 3 x 5 index cards
- Pencil
- Pens
- Hat or container



LESSON 4: THE WHOLE PERSON (continued)

GROUP PROCESSING:



Pass the hat (full of the cards) around the circle again and have a student draw a card and read the question aloud.

With each card, lead the group in a discussion using some of the following questions:

- How would you answer this question?
- How does this apply to our lives today? If we knew the answer, how might we be different?
- What information or beliefs do you have that might help to answer this question?
- What can you do to find out answers to this question?
- Is there an answer to be found, or is this a question that can't really be answered?
- How do you think your parents (grandparents, teachers) might answer this question? How do they affect your belief system?
- Who can you talk to about spiritual things?

LESSON 4: THE WHOLE PERSON (continued)

WRAP-UP:



Share the following with the group:

Think about the things we have discussed today. What role would you like spirituality to play in your life? How would you go about moving what you believe about a higher power closer to your center circle?

“We are all in different places in regard to our spirituality. Hopefully, you realize there are people in your life who can help answer spiritual questions. “



REMINDER FOR NEXT WEEK:

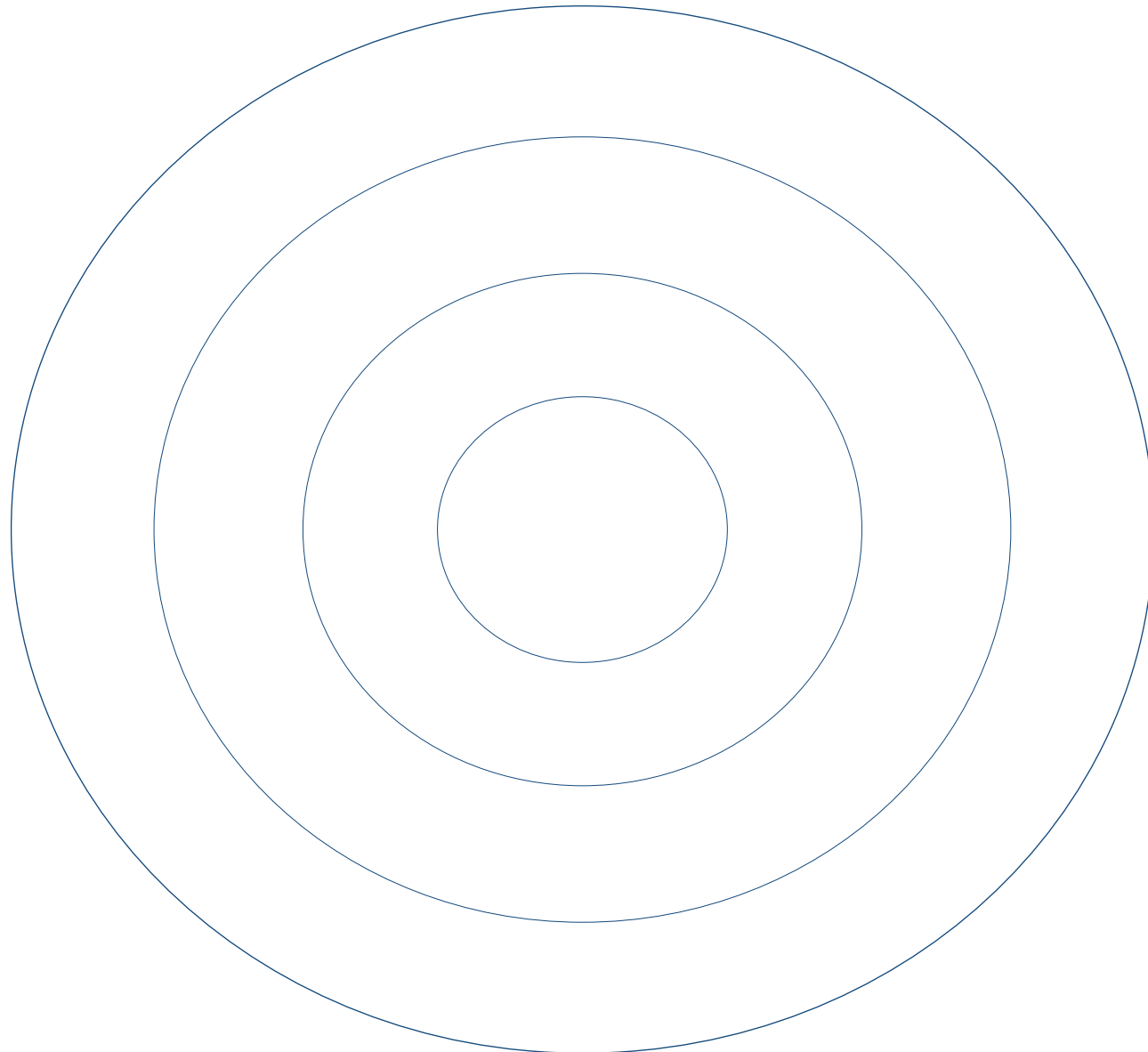
Look for ways this week to get closer to God or a higher power.
Try at least one thing to place more emphasis on your spirituality.

LESSON 4: THE WHOLE PERSON (continued)

Handout #3 (H3)



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LESSON 5: LIFE AT SCHOOL

GROUP CHECK-UP:



Ask:

- “What is something you did in the last week to get closer to God or a higher power?”
- or
- “What is something you did this last week to place more of an emphasis on spiritual things in your life?”

“Last week we talked about the importance of our relationship with a higher power and how that relationship is vital to the balance we need in our life. Today, we will discuss how you feel about school. This will give you an opportunity to talk about what things go well or what makes it stressful. We will talk about classes, friends, teachers, or anything else at school that you want to talk about.”

LESSON 5: LIFE AT SCHOOL (continued)

SELF-EVALUATION



MATERIALS:

- Blank paper
- Pens



Instructions:

Pass out a sheet of paper to each student. Have them list or draw pictures representing all the things they have to deal with on a weekly basis.

Encourage them to list as many as they can. Have them turn the page over and list the ones from the front that they have control over. Use this to begin a discussion about how they can only control themselves and how they handle the situations they face.

LESSON 5: LIFE AT SCHOOL (continued)

GROUP ACTIVITY:



OPTION 1: Facebook - A Modified, Therapeutic Approach

Instructions:

Using the Modified Facebook Handout (Handout #4),

- Ask students to fill in the basic personal information on the left side.
- Ask students to fill in the names or draw pictures of people in their lives with whom they have a relationship.
- Ask group members to write a comment about what is on their mind in the space provided.

Using the people they identified at the top of the page,

- Ask members to draw or write the person's name and complete what he or she thinks the person might say in response to what the group member wrote.
- If appropriate, ask people to play the parts of the different Facebook friends and read the script, as in a play.

MATERIALS:

- Pencils
- Pens
- Handout (H4), p. 44



LESSON 5: LIFE AT SCHOOL (continued)

GROUP ACTIVITY:



OPTION 2: Cell Phone Text

Depending on the preference of the group you can use the framework of Option 1 in a text messaging format. This activity is for groups who would rather use a text message format instead of Facebook.

MATERIALS:

- Pencils
- Pens
- Cell Phone Text Handout (H5), p. 45



Instructions:

Using the Cell Phone Text Handout (Handout #5), ask students:

- “What is on your mind right now? Write that in the first text box.”
- “We are going to pretend we are texting, so choose one or two people you feel close to and write their names in the lines above the text boxes.”
- “Pretend you are texting to these people. What would each of them say in response to what you wrote? Write that in the text box under each of the names.”

After they have completed the text boxes, ask if anyone would like to share. (It is OK to pass.) The leader might share his/her comments to help people feel comfortable to share.

LESSON 5: LIFE AT SCHOOL (continued)

GROUP ACTIVITY:



OPTION 3

Say, “Some of you talked about resources you have that may help you. Pick one of those resources, either at school, home, or within yourself you think would be helpful to you.”

Pass out a blank piece of paper to each student. Have them list things they could do to make their lives better at school. Have them circle the one that appeals the most to them. Take some time to let the students share what they circled.

MATERIALS:

- Pencils
- Pens
- Blank sheet of paper



LESSON 5: LIFE AT SCHOOL (continued)

GROUP PROCESSING: (for Option 1 &2)



Ask the following:

“Who do you think responded best to your concerns?”

“Whose advice are you more likely to hear? What makes it easier to hear advice from him/her?”

“Of those that you wrote their responses, who would you be most likely to talk to about your comments?”

“What else would you want people to say? How would you want the person to respond? Is there anything you can do in the relationship to get the response you are looking for?”

“What would others in the group say about your status?”

Ask the members:

“What would you say in response to the concern/comment?”

LESSON 5: LIFE AT SCHOOL (continued)

GROUP PROCESSING: (for Option 3)



Ask the following:

“How could it change your school life if you did this one thing?”

“When might be the best time to do this? (day of the week, mornings, afternoons, evenings, after school, during school, etc.)”

“How will it help your relationships at school if you do this one thing?”

“If you could do this one thing successfully, how would you feel about yourself?”

LESSON 5: LIFE AT SCHOOL (continued)

WRAP-UP:



Share the following with the group:

“During this next week, I want you to do an experiment. I want you to do one thing you talked about today that would be helpful to you at school and then come back and let us know how the experiment worked. Remember, this is just an experiment, so when you try it, you might discover something. Look for what was different, who noticed, or what was helpful. Next week, we will talk about what you found out. Only you can decide to try it.”



REMINDER FOR NEXT WEEK:

We will discuss the following questions:

- “What did you do differently?”
- “What was helpful?”
- “Who noticed?”
- “What did they say?”

LESSON 5: LIFE AT SCHOOL (continued)

Handout #4 (H4)



CLICK TO PRINT PDF

GROUP FACEBOOK

ME	IMPORTANT PEOPLE				



**A
B
O
U
T

M
E**

ON MY MIND ...

AGE: _____

GENDER: _____

SCHOOL: _____

LIKES:

LESSON 5: LIFE AT SCHOOL (continued)

Handout #5 (H5)



CLICK TO PRINT PDF

ME

TEXT

Q	W	E	R	T	Y	U	I	O	P
A	S	D	F	G	H	J	K	L	
↑	Z	X	C	V	B	N	M	←	😊

LESSON 6: UPS AND DOWNS OF LIFE

GROUP CHECK-UP:



Say, “Last time, we talked about doing an experiment where you do one thing that would be helpful to you at school.”

Using a small toy or ball, each member states his or her name and one thing you did that helped you at school, then tosses the ball to someone else. The person who receives the ball repeats what the person who tossed the ball to them said and then answers the same question. This continues until all members have had the opportunity to participate.

LESSON 6: UPS AND DOWNS OF LIFE (continued)

SELF EVALUATION:



Instructions:

Pass out a piece of paper and a pen or pencil to each student.

Give them the following instructions: “On the far left side of your paper, write or draw something that represents the lowest time of your life. On the far right side of the paper, write or draw something that represents the best time of your life. In the center of the paper, write or draw something that describes how you feel right now.”

MATERIALS:

- Blank paper
- Pens
- Markers



LESSON 6: UPS AND DOWNS OF LIFE (continued)

GROUP ACTIVITY: UPS AND DOWNS OF LIFE



State: “We all have ups and downs in our lives. Now that we have thought about the best and worst times, we are going to focus specifically on the time since our group started meeting.”

Instructions: (See Sample on p. 53)

Draw a line lengthwise through the middle of your piece of butcher paper (or use Handout #6). Draw lines to divide the paper into 8 equal sections. Each section represents a different age/life stage.

Number the paper from 1 to 10 on one side from the bottom (1) to the top (10). The number 5 should label the line they drew through the middle.

MATERIALS:

- 3-foot long strips of butcher paper, or individual pieces of paper
- Pencils
- Pens
- Handout (H6), p. 52



LESSON 6: UPS AND DOWNS OF LIFE (continued)

Label each section on the bottom of the paper. Begin on the left with age 3, then age 6, age 9, age 12, age 15, age 20, and age 30. Where appropriate, have the group members place a line and label it “Today.”

Say to the group, “In our previous activity you drew a picture describing how you feel right now. Thinking of that picture, make a dot in the section representing today, placing it up or down on the sheet based on if it is a good or bad feeling. “

Say to the group, “Beginning at age 3, think of at least five different life turns’ or events that have happened to you after which nothing was ever the same.” These do not necessarily have to be negative, e.g., birth of a sibling, a significant transition, a disappointment, a success, a moment of clarity.

“Now, take time to envision some positive life turns as you approach ages 20 and 30.” These don’t have to be marked exactly at ages 20 and 30, but they should reflect two distinct positive turns the students want to see happen.

Say to the group, “Using a marker, connect the dots between each event. Your line should look something like a heartbeat.”

LESSON 6: UPS AND DOWNS OF LIFE (continued)

GROUP PROCESSING:



The focus in this processing is not on how things went wrong or that the students were not always on top. The focus is on the students' ability to:

- Get back up when things were bad.
- Cope when things were/are not going so well.
- Do other things that may have been good, though circumstances were not so good at the time.

Discussion Questions:

“What did you do that helped you get back up when things weren't going well?”

“Who helped you?”

“What did you learn about yourself that might help you next time?”

“What strengths did you discover you had during that time?”

“Who noticed when you were doing well? When you weren't doing well?”

“What similarities do you see in everyone's timelines?”

LESSON 6: UPS AND DOWNS OF LIFE (continued)

WRAP-UP:

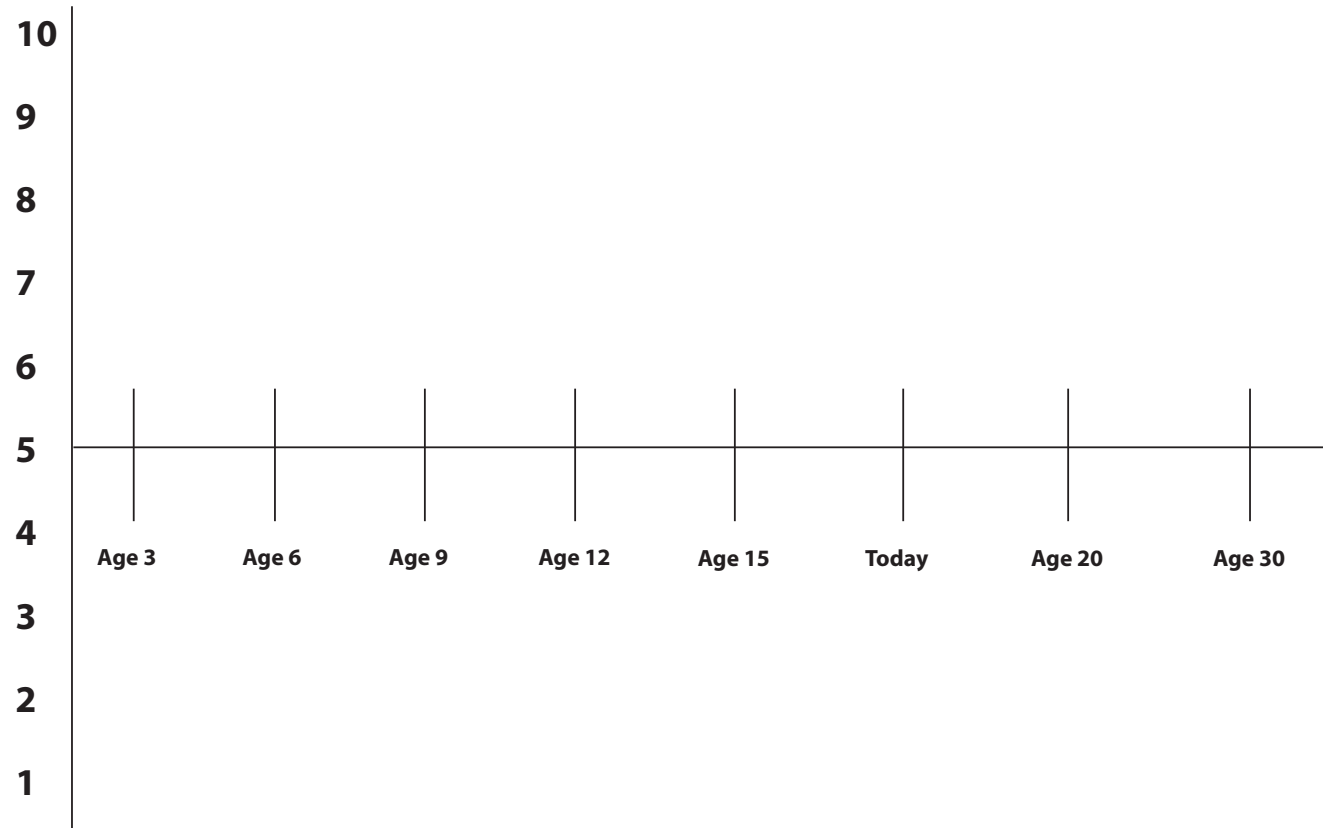


Share the following with the group:

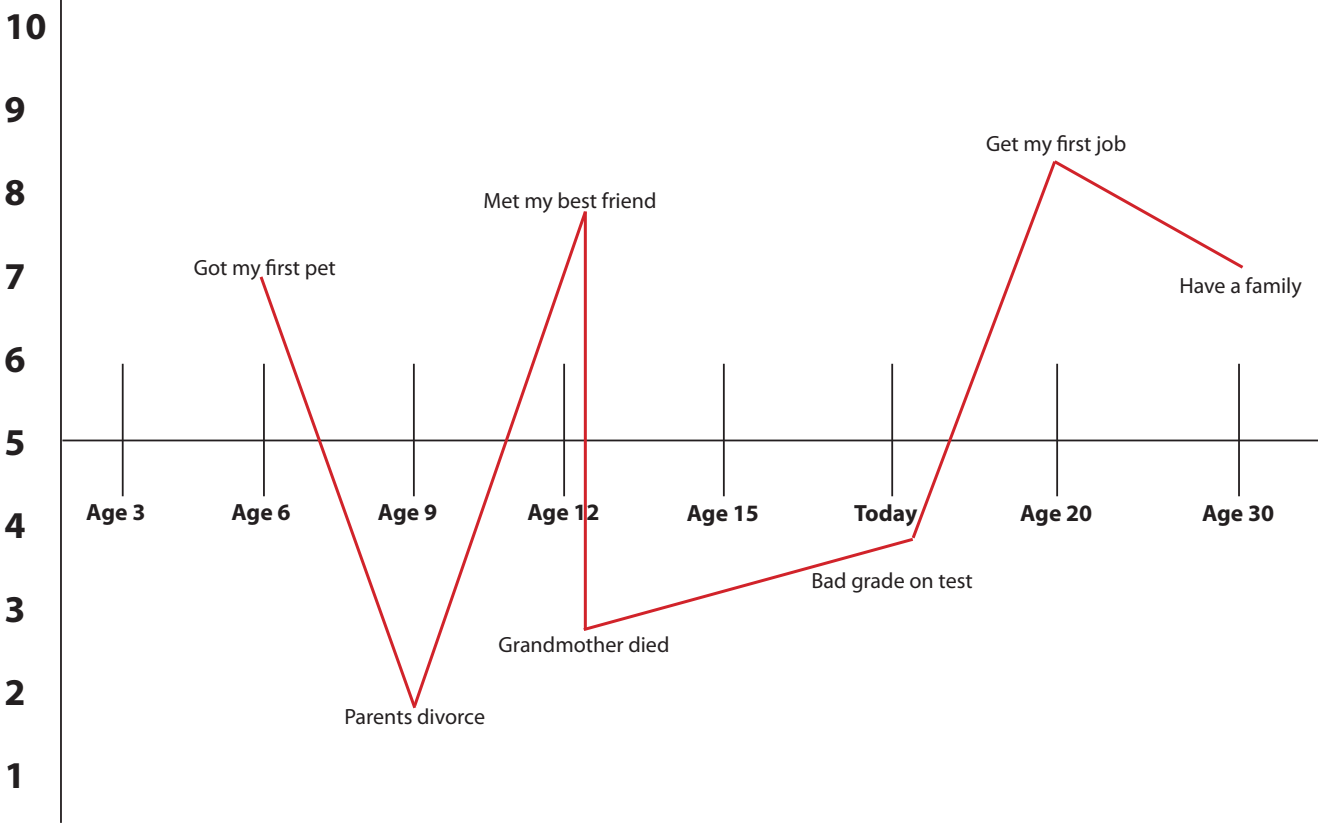
“Go back to your timeline and rank where you hope you will be next week. What can you do to end up where you want to be? What is one thing you might do to use your strengths and resources so your dot might be closer to 10?”

Point out to the students, “Everyone has ups and downs. Life would be mundane if we were always ‘up’ or ‘down.’ The ups and downs help us grow and keep life interesting.”

Handout #6 (H6)



Sample #1



LESSON 7: THE WIZARD

GROUP CHECK-UP:



Say, “Think about the timeline we completed last week. Where did your dot end up for this week? Was it where you had hoped it would be? What was different? Who noticed? What would your (mom, dad, friend) say is different?”

LESSON 7: THE WIZARD (continued)

SELF-EVALUATION:

Instructions:

Spread the figures out on a table.

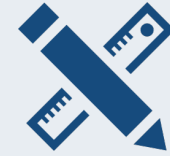
Tell the students to select one miniature that represents them and how they feel today.

Ask students:

- Why did you pick that specific miniature? How does it represent you?
- (in regards to the figure you chose) What makes it strong? What can this figure do to overcome challenges? What are some of its weaknesses?
- What is the connection between the strengths and weaknesses of this figure and yourself?

MATERIALS:

- Plastic miniature figures; including people, animals, reptiles, fish, etc. (these can be purchased at Wal-Mart), in large quantities.



LESSON 7: THE WIZARD (continued)

GROUP ACTIVITY:



Say, “It is usually easy for us to recognize our own weaknesses but not our strengths. Most of us have never received an award for overcoming the real challenges in life, but if someone was to give you an award for something you have overcome, what would the award be? What have you done to earn that award?”

VIDEO NEED:

YouTube Video of Wizard of OZ

<http://youtu.be/ky7DMCHQJZY>

Instructions:

Tell students this is their chance to create a certificate that shows what strength they want to be known for or what they want people to see in them.

Have them spend the next 10 to 20 minutes making something that represents a strength they are developing or want to develop. The focus should be on a quality they hope people will remember them for.

MATERIALS:

- A collection of art supplies such as stickers, construction paper, tape, glue, pictures, fastening pins, yarn, fabric scraps, note cards in different colors, hole-punchers, scissors, etc.



LESSON 7: THE WIZARD (continued)

GROUP PROCESSING:



Once everyone completes the activity, have each student share his/her creation with the group. Have them explain to the group why they want people to see this in them. Also, discuss what they can do to help make this happen. Ask, “What will you be doing differently?” and “What will your (mom, dad, friends, etc.) see you doing differently?”

Allow the other students to respond to their creation. Have them offer encouragement and ideas for how people can accomplish their goal as well as reinforcing what they already see in the person.

Take a picture of the group holding their creations.

LESSON 7: THE WIZARD (continued)

WRAP-UP:



Share the following with the group:

“How can our discussion help you this week? How will developing this strength or asset help you to be an encouragement to those around you?”

LESSON 8: THE BUS RIDE

This lesson is designed with consideration as to whether the group is a closed group (most members start and finish) or open group (members tend to change frequently throughout the life of the group). Each of the activities will be designated as appropriate for open, closed, or both groups.

GROUP CHECK-UP: (OPEN GROUP)



Using a small toy or ball, each member states his or her name and what was written on the certificate made last week and how the person used this strength during the week. Have the student pass the ball to another group member. The person who receives the ball repeats what the person who tossed the ball said and then answers the same question. This continues until all members have had the opportunity to participate.

LESSON 8: THE BUS RIDE (continued)

SELF-EVALUATION: (CLOSED GROUP)



Instructions:

Pass out new copies of the gingerbread people handout.

Lead the members through the self-evaluation activity from Lesson 3, where they evaluated their connection, courage, capability and value.

Give the members their gingerbread people from Lesson 3.

Ask the members to compare their two pages. Ask group members:

- “What is different now as compared to a few weeks ago?”
- “What changed?”
- “What might be different if we did this activity again in a month and/or a year?”

MATERIALS:

- Blank copies of the gingerbread handout (H2), p. 28
- shaded gingerbread handouts from week 3



LESSON 8: THE BUS RIDE (continued)

GROUP ACTIVITY FOR OPEN GROUPS (OPTION 1):



For this week, choose one of the favorite activities from the previous weeks.

GROUP ACTIVITY FOR OPEN GROUPS (OPTION 2):

Instructions:

Ask students to write on a notecard a topic/problem they would like to discuss. They do not have to put their name on the card. Take up the cards and shuffle them, so members cannot be identified. Draw one card, read it, and open it up to the group with such questions as:

“What do you think about this?”

“What do you think we can do to help?”

“Who else might be able to help?”

“What does this person need to answer the question?”

MATERIALS:

- Notecards
- Crayons
- Pencils



LESSON 8: THE BUS RIDE (continued)

GROUP ACTIVITY FOR CLOSED GROUPS:



Instructions:

Write everyone's name on a slip of paper and place them in a container from which they can be drawn.

Arrange the chairs in a circle (one chair per person in the group) with an additional chair on the outside of the circle, facing away from the others.

Say, "Today, we are going to pretend that we are riding a bus. As we "ride," one person at a time (after I draw their name) will go sit in the chair in the corner and remain silent. After the person leaves, the rest of us will have about 3 minutes each to talk about what this person has meant to the group and to each of us personally, as well as the strengths we see in the person, and other things any of you might want the person to know."

Draw the first name and have that person move to the chair outside the circle.

Invite the students to share positive comments about the student who just "stepped off the bus." Sometimes, the leader may have to begin the discussion, but it is best if the comments can come from the group members. Allow about 3 minutes for comments on each student.

When the person returns to the circle, ask, "What was it like to hear those things about yourself? How does that information help you to see yourself differently?"

MATERIALS:

- Slips of paper
- Pencil
- Pens
- Hat or container



LESSON 8: THE BUS RIDE (continued)

WRAP-UP:



“What would you say have been the most helpful things we have talked about in these last 8 weeks? How will you try to implement them in your situation? What are some things you might do differently because you came to group?”

FOR THE LEADER



If the students have discovered adults in their life in whom they can confide, encourage them to continue those relationships. If they have made a bond with someone in the group let them know it is okay to continue that relationship (unless this does not seem appropriate).

Finally, let them know you are available. Provide a way for group members to get in touch with you, but do not give out personal information such as phone number or address.

Post-Test (For closed groups only)

Administer the post test to the student and make sure they write in the last three digits of their school student ID #. Collect these documents and send the pre and post tests to Teen Lifeline either by mail or email.

[CLICK FOR THE HANDOUT TO THE POST-EVALUATION](#)

CONTRIBUTORS

At Teen Lifeline, Inc., we are excited to be able to work with teens and preteens. This curriculum was created through a process of researching alternatives and concluding that students need something new and fresh. We have spent several months discussing, editing, researching, and ultimately committing to something we felt would have a positive impact on the teenage population. We greatly appreciate the work that our group put in and the experience each person brought to the table.

Listed below are those involved in putting this curriculum together. We invite you to contact us should you need our assistance.

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