

CIRCLE GROUP PROGRAM OUTLINE (Syllabus)

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The [Guidebook's](#) are designed to be self-study that can be enhanced by being gone over as a family. For greater assimilation, within organizations of various types there are benefits of group discussions focused on particular readings in a succession of meetings. Conversational learning has been shown to be advantageous over the traditional lecture, note taking, and rote feedback through tests material the teacher identifies as important. Much of the resilience development and coping skills building information available in the *Guidebook* can be utilized differently by different persons. To maximize the benefits, a companion article, "[Circles of Change Intensify Assimilation of Guidebooks to Enhance Resilience](#)," summarizes the means for successful interchange to foster individual growth.

Fifteen sessions was determined to be a suitable chunking of the material for focused group discussions. While not set in concrete, it can be longer or shorter, it fits into a 15-week college semester. It could be beneficial to discuss the "Circles of Change ..." before beginning the syllabus. After a few sessions, it might be worthwhile to add a session to discuss how the group is proceeding.

Although the written material is designed to encapsulate the theory, methods, and self-evaluations, there is much to be gained by having minimally-directed group discussions. In some social, church, and other organizations, this method may provide a basis for ongoing focused discussions after the syllabus is completed. The *Guidebook* provides manageable readings that need to be read before the group meets, so everyone has a foundation in the subject at hand. This is not the place for chit-chat.

INITIAL GATHERING

1

Set the stage I (Introduction)

- | | |
|-------|--|
| Cover | Introduce the Four P's "-ings".Model (p. 10) |
| P. 1 | Promoting Human Resilience |
| P. 2 | Table of Contents |
| P. 3 | Guidebook Guidelines |
| P. 4 | Introduction |
| P. 5 | Develop Resilience |

If the group can extend beyond 15 weeks, it may be worth the effort to take more than one meeting to cover this introductory material.

Set the stage II (Theory: Stressor ~ Stress = F(Wellness ~ mental and physical health)

- | | |
|-------|--|
| P. 11 | Definitions |
| p. 12 | Cumulative Effect of Stressors |
| | Fill out the Holmes-Rahe scale (see p. 12; obtain a ©? copy from Internet) |
| p. 13 | From Stressors to Stress |
| p. 14 | Cognitive Processes Between Stressors and Stress |

Home preparation (for next session)

- | | |
|---------|---|
| P. 6 | The Hard and Rewarding Job of Living |
| P. 7 | Individuals in Family Systems |
| pp. 8-9 | Assessment of Family Interaction |
| p. 25 | Expressed Emotion in Families |
| | <i>Military Medicine</i> article |
| | Evaluate your family using the assessment |

SECOND GATHERING

2

Family benefit or bane

Home preparation (for third scheduled gathering)

- p. 15 Information Processing
P. 16-17 Perceptions
 Write your own bumper sticker
 Look up additional perception images on Internet
 Copy and bring one (some) into group that might stump the group

THIRD GATHERING

3

How we “see” the world

- Play with various perception
Share your bumper sticker (optional) with the group
Are you an optimist or a pessimist

Home preparation (for fourth scheduled gathering)

- p. 18 Optimists and Pessimists Think About the World Differently
 Read “Introduction” to Seligman’s Positive Psychology in *American Psychologist*
 (It can be found on the Internet or handed out)
 Evaluate yourself on comparisons chart on p. 18

FOURTH GATHERING

4

Positive psychology versus victim mentality

Home preparation (for fifth scheduled gathering)

- P. 19 Changing Our Thoughts
P, 20 The Great Cognitive Therapy Trio
P. 21 Resistance to Change
pp, 22-23 Centerfold

FIFTH GATHERING

5

Theories of how we change our cognition

Home preparation (for sixth scheduled gathering)

- P. 24 Social Support for Health & Adjustment
 List organization to which you participate
 List church activities that you’re involved with, including services
 What benefits do you *feel* you get from participation
 What additional events would you like to see the church provide?

Extra Process Discussion

if time allows

As many people are more comfortable with rote learning and concrete answers, this is a good point at which to break from the *Guidebook* material to discuss thoughts and feelings about the process.

SIXTH GATHERING

6

Our social support

Home preparation *(for seventh scheduled gathering)*

- p. 26 Mental and Physical Relaxation
- p, 27 Personal Health Assessment
- pp. 28-29 Health Symptoms Assessment
- Complete assessment
- List your activities that are relaxing diversions

SEVENTH GATHERING

7

Our health activities

Home preparation *(for eighth scheduled gathering)*

- p. 30 Focused Sharing Groups
- Think about this group and if it is helping you
- Have other groups provided you help with your living

EIGHTH GATHERING

8

Benefits of focused groups

Home preparation *(for ninth scheduled gathering)*

- p. 31 Expressive Writing
- Read Informer article on Vermont Police Association website
- Write for at least three times before next gathering
- If you like, edit before sharing with the group (optional)

NINTH GATHERING

9

Expressive writing sharing *(for tenth scheduled gathering)*

Home preparation

- pp. 32-33 Humor
- Who is your favorite comedian(s)? Why?
- Bring a funny (to you) comedy piece (cartoon, joke) to next gathering

TENTH GATHERING

10

Humor

Home preparation *(for eleventh scheduled gathering)*

- p. 34 Bereavement Theories and Beck's Cognitive Restructuring
 - How did you grieve on different occasions
 - Fill in the questions on bottom of page.
 - Identify your cognitive distortion(s)
-

ELEVENTH GATHERING

11

Update on bereavement and common cognitive distortions

Home preparation (for twelfth scheduled gathering)

- p. 35 Religion and Spirituality
Scripture reading – Pastor’s choice (I prefer Ecclesiastes)

TWELFTH GATHERING

12

Religion and spirituality

Home preparation (for thirteenth scheduled gathering)

- p. 36 Murray Bowen and Differentiation
p. 37 Hardiness and Resilience
pp. 38-39 Resilience • Hardiness • Differentiation
Use RHD instrument to evaluate present strengths

THIRTEENTH GATHERING

13

Resilience, Hardiness, and Differentiation

Home preparation (for fourteenth scheduled gathering)

- p. 40 Areas of Coping
Complete the boxes at the bottom of page
List some coping mechanisms you use and when
p. 41 Balance

FOURTEENTH GATHERING

14

Our coping menu

Home preparation (for fifteenth scheduled gathering)

- pp. 42-43 Mental Health Items to Consider
Do a self assessment of mental health
p. 44 Epilogue
IBC Can Do Attitude
BC Resources available

FIFTEENTH GATHERING

15

Conclusion and our mental health status

A party and open discussion

Postscript

Obviously, someone will have to take the lead and setup the group. *Yeoman* is a better term than leader or facilitator, in the spirit of Navy enlisted personnel, who do the work to keep organization shipshape, so officers, crew, and vessel operate harmoniously, while not having command authority.

Yeomen arrange the meeting, provide the “coffee,” but are egalitarian participants!