

TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER



A RETREAT WEEKEND FOCUSING
ON GROUP BUILDING AND OPEN
SHARING FOR GRIEVING YOUTH

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Prefatory Statement of Need + Intent

TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER

A RETREAT WEEKEND FOCUSING ON GROUP BUILDING AND OPEN SHARING FOR GRIEVING YOUTH

Youth who grieve are at particular risk for not being able to find compatible support from their peers. Many factors lead to this enhanced risk, primarily the disadvantage of having to depend on others to get them from place to place.

By providing an outside group based experience for grieving youth we can isolate and eradicate a primary factor keeping kids from gaining support from each other when they need it the most.

The program focuses on building group dynamics so trust can be established and then providing challenging and critical questions and scenarios to work on together. Through the process of group building and focused effort the vulnerability necessary for mending amid grief will emerge.

The sessions will be a blend of verbal and non-verbal therapeutic modalities.

SESSIONS WILL INCLUDE:

- ☐ What are my favorite things
- ☐ When do I grow the most as a person
- ☐ Who do I depend on
- ☐ How would I describe my loved one who died
- ☐ When does it hurt the most
- ☐ What am I gonna do to mend
- ☐ What supports are around for me

These sessions will be introduced with some verbal communication from the staff leading the retreat and then facilitated and guided by those staff so that the youth may find their way through the topics and grow. Activities will be woven into the program that will support and prompt the work being done.

This program will be a complete manual for the implementation and facilitation of the retreat. The sponsoring staff will need to train themselves on the program manual and gather the needed supplies for running the retreat, as well as obtaining the space and contracts necessary to make it all happen.

Together We Are Stronger



TJM

INTRODUCTION

“Together We Are Stronger” is not only a title for a weekend retreat for grieving youth, but an aphorism for living. It is true that we are stronger when we are with others; when we collectively join our forces.

The truth that we are stronger is not only an outward show of strength or force; like in a group we are able to defeat our enemy. We are also able to garner some interior strength, some inner stamina, and grit when we are in the presence of others. We have an inner power in groups.

It is even truer when we are in a group of people that share some very strong common connecting value or ideal. In such a group one can find unity and empowerment. A group of people who have lost someone they love is a place where a mourner can go and find not only acceptance and understanding, but endurance and camaraderie.

The purpose of this retreat and the material collected is to impart and instill some common ideals and core values in the group that is present (both the youth who attend and staff): strength, force, stamina, grit, unity, empowerment, acceptance, understanding, endurance, and camaraderie.

These values are instilled in everyone by the thoughtful and purposeful collecting around them others who have lost someone, and by allowing this group the opportunity to share their loss, their vulnerability, and a piece of who they are. This is no small matter or any easy task. It takes deliberation from everyone involved: leadership and youth.

Providing a space for connections to take place is a critical theme the facilitator must be attentive to throughout the retreat. The materials presented here will help you to bring together a series of activities, scenarios, work sessions and games that can help elicit the critical material that is locked within. But, it must all happen in an open and gentle environment. You will always be about the task of guarding the integrity and freedom of the group.

Making sure everyone feels safe will also be important. You may have to redirect some strong emotions so they are not directed at other group participants. There are a lot of emotions just below the surface of any human being. But, many of those emotions are rubbed raw in a grieving person – they feel them particularly strongly.

Not only do they feel these emotions strongly, but they feel very isolated (because they have been left by the one who has died, and we have a hard time finding people who understand our pain). Just like the above comic identifies, grieving people feel like no one else gets it or understands.

Using this perception will help your group to utilize the understanding that other mourners have. This retreat will

be a time away with a group of people THAT DOES UNDERSTAND.

This retreat will be POWERFUL. Each and every attendee has something vital and unique to offer every person who attends. This also means you. You will receive something from this retreat – if you remain open. You will also impart something to attendees of this retreat.

The program for the retreat that you hold in your hands is chocked full of materials. You will be hard-pressed to use everything that is in here. It is purposefully over-stuffed. We want you to have enough material to run the retreat.

It is up to you, and the team of grief + bereavement specialists that you work with to determine which of the activities will stay and which of the activities will go. We also want you to have enough material for follow-up activities.

You will - throughout the material here presented - be given a choice of one activity over another activity. Just because you do not use one of the activities does not mean you cannot come back to that activity at some other point during the retreat or at a future bereavement gathering.

Our aim is to add value to the work you do in the grief and bereavement community. We hope this collection of activities will enhance that work and enrich the skill with which you empower those who grieve to mourn and heal.

Another element - to hold in contention with what has already been said - is that we are not only here to impart and instill. This would imply that there are no core and central values present in the youth already. We also plan to identify and illuminate things that are already being done in the lives of mourners that could be a support or help to others who are also mourning.

This additional element is identification/illumination. We should turn our hearts and minds toward the notion that we will be identifying/illuminating (or drawing attention to) ways in which the participants are already attempting to mend in their grief.

I firmly believe that there is a natural desire in all people to heal and grow. I believe this desire helps them to grow toward health – just as a plant turns (heliotropism) toward the light of the sun.

What do I mean by this? I mean that when you hear a participant say that they have been writing in a journal, or having dreams about loss, or have developed a new friendship, you are to draw attention to this movement. This is movement toward the light – to use the tropism metaphor. This is an attempt to heal and it needs to be identified/illuminated (pointed out) to the others. Tell them “this is an inner attempt to integrate the loss and to mend.” Then, draw the others in by asking: “Has anyone else found this to be true?” Or, ask this, “Has anyone else done something similar?”

Eventually, everyone in the retreat will realize that something is going on (no matter how small) in their healing process. When we grieve, we tend to feel like we cannot do anything right or cannot find any water in the desert that is all around us. We as grief specialists need to help folks feel that there is a process of healing going on – perhaps ever so slightly – all around and within us.

It will be important for you to plant some leaders in your group who have some understanding of group process so that you can get a sense – as leaders – where the group is heading and how it is forming. Choose your co-facilitators well.

There are many resources available. I have received permission to use the information found at the website: www.teamworkandteamplay.com/biography.html Dr. Jim Cain has allowed me to use this 8-page article on the 5 stages of the group process. There are other models, but this one is full of great examples and activities that encourage and support the stages.

This article and this website will add a ton of resources to your toolbox for working with youth in the grieving process. You may even want to use some of these activities in place of others listed in this program. Please visit his site www.teamworkandteamplay.com.

The article follows:

Exploring The Five Stages of Group Formation Using Adventure-Based and Active-Learning Techniques

Forming

Storming

Norming

Performing

Transforming

During a new corporate project, your project team is likely to encounter most if not all of the stages of group formation, commonly referred to as forming, storming, norming, performing and finally, transforming. While entire graduate dissertations, college and management classes and seminars, and numerous journal articles have been written on this subject, this brief article 'opens the door' to explaining and experiencing the stages of group formation, and building some of the skills necessary to successfully navigate each stage. This introduction to the stages of group formation is suitable for a two to three hour staff training program. Additional resources and references are provided at the end of the article for those interested in a more detailed explanation of these stages, and techniques for exploring them with your business community.

The stages of group development come from research by Tuckman and Jenson.
For more information about this work, review the following historical articles:

Tuckman, Bruce, 1965, "Developmental sequence of small groups," Psychological Bulletin, Volume 63, Number 6, p384-399.

Tuckman, Bruce & Jenson, Mary Ann, 1977, "Stages of small group development revisited," Group and Organizational Studies, Number 2, p419-427.

Tuckman, Bruce, 2001, "Developmental Sequence in Small Groups," Group Facilitation, Number 3, Spring, p66-81. A review of the original work, 35 years later.

You can find additional information related to the stages of group formation and group learning, in the Johnson & Johnson book, *Joining Together*, on page 469. See references at the end of this article.

A downloadable version of this article is available in PDF format from the Teamwork & Teamplay website at: www.teamworkandteamplay.com and also appeared in the May/June 2003 issue of *Camping Magazine* (www.acacamps.org) and the Spring 2003 issue of *Horizons Magazine* (UK) (www.outdoor-learning.org).

Consider the five stages of group formation shown above. The following information details how a typical corporate project team might progress through these stages, and provides activities for exploring each stage of group formation with the members of your team.

The Forming Stage

This is the polite, opening, get acquainted, ice breaking stage of group formation. This process begins at the moment new project team members begin to assemble for the first time. The opening meeting, the general welcome comments from the manager, the facility orientation session, and even the informal discussions after the initial gathering are all part of the forming stage. At this point, members of the group are just trying to identify who's who, and possibly where they fit into that plan. This stage includes forming an atmosphere of safety and acceptance, avoiding controversy, and is filled with guidance and direction from the project team leader or manager.

Activities for the Forming Stage

Get acquainted and community building activities are used here to form the atmosphere of safety and acceptance. There are a few more activities suggested in this stage because it is important to build a strong foundation if the rest of the stages are to be successfully navigated.

Believe it or Knot

Thanks to Mike Anderson of Learning Works for this excellent get acquainted activity. With the entire group holding a Raccoon Circle (a 15 foot long section of tubular climbing webbing tied with a knot, or, if webbing is not available, a 15 foot long rope knotted to form a circle), the knot is used as a pointer to identify the person talking. Begin by passing the knot to the right around the group. Someone in the group says "Stop!" the knot stops, and the person nearest to it has the opportunity to disclose some interesting fact about themselves, such as, "I can write computer programs in 4 different languages!" It is now the discussion and responsibility of the rest of the participants to decide whether they believe that this information is true or false. After some discussion, the group gives their opinion of the validity or falseness of the disclosure, and the person providing the comment can tell the real story. After a person has revealed the true nature of their comments (true or false), they say "left" or "right" and then "Stop!" and a new person has the opportunity to disclose something interesting or unusual to the group.

The level of disclosure to the group is often a measure of the closeness, unity and respect within the group. For example, a disclosure such as, "I have been with this company for 3 years," is a lower level of disclosure than "I need to be better at my job for this project to succeed." Depending on the group setting, and the purpose of this activity for your group, different levels of information or disclosure are appropriate. As the group becomes more unified, this activity can bring out greater disclosure between members of the project team ("I'm not sure if I have enough resources to complete my part of the project on time.")

Commonalities

Begin with partners for this activity. This conversational activity has the goal of identifying unique and sometimes unusual events, activities and life experiences that we have in common with other members of our group. The two partners need to identify three unique items that they have in common. Encourage participants to dig deep for these items. For example, they may discover that they both like dogs, but under closer examination, they may also discover that they like the same breed of dog. Additionally, they may discover that they both enjoy reading, but by digging a bit deeper, they may discover that they have read the same book in the past 6 months or perhaps enjoy the same author.

After identifying three attributes that they have in common, these two partners raise their hands, and find another group of two ready to form a group of four. Now the challenge is to identify 2 items that they have in common. Again, look deep, and no fair using any of the attributes already identified.

Finally, after this group of four finds out what they have in common, they raise their hands and join another group of four, for a total of eight. The goal for these eight is to find ONE unusual event, interest or activity that they have in common. Have each of these groups of eight tell the other groups what they have in common. Again, the more unique and unusual, the better (or at least the more interesting!)

Which Side of the Road are You On?

Possibly one of the greatest needs within a group is to identify what unites the members of the group. To this end, the goal here is to identify some commonalities shared by various members of the group. In this case, the more job related, the better.

Which Side of the Road are You On requires a central gathering place, and two boundary lines, which can be made using masking tape, string, rope, a hallway or sidewalk. Have participants begin by 'standing in the middle of the road.' As the first company truck comes barreling down the road, loaded with information for your project, team members must decide which side of the road they should be on. Some of the following decisions are fairly easy and the information content doesn't have severe consequences. Others may make or break the entire project. After choosing sides, give project team members a minute to see who is on the same side of the road with them, and to discuss why they chose this particular side.

PC		Macintosh
Loud		Quiet
Running	the	Walking
Save Money	middle	Spend Money
Fixed Schedule	of the	Flex Time
Sky Diving	road	Deep Sea Diving
Problem Solver		Problem Maker
Hamburgers or Hotdogs		Chicken or Salad

From the Teamwork & Teamplay Website at www.teamworkandteamplay.com

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The object here is to find interests, activities, choices and decisions that project team members have in common. Obviously team members can be on 'different sides of the road,' but don't focus on what is different, but rather who is on the same side with you. Alliances can be important. Be careful to choose topics appropriately for the audience that you are serving. This activity can be used with even large project teams, provided the folks in the middle of the road can hear when the truck is coming!

This activity also provides the opportunity for a bit of group discussion throughout the process. For example, were some folks left 'in the middle of the road' and only saved by another person pulling them to safety as the information truck came speeding towards them? Or did they become 'corporate roadkill?' Did some folks change their minds during a particular decision, and then change sides? Is there always a right and wrong side of the road, or more appropriately, two possible choices, both of which have merit? Does the entire project team need to be on the same side of a particular issue for the team to move forward successfully? How would you go about trying to get everyone on the team on the same side of the road for a key project decision?

In the book *Good to Great*, Collins talks about 'getting the right people on the bus and the wrong people off the bus,' and then 'getting the right people into the right seats.' This activity be used to explore where some members of your project team choose to be on specific team or management issues, but you might want to wait for the 'storming' stage of group formation to bring this up, rather than here in the safe environment of the 'forming' stage.

The Storming Stage

This second stage of group formation introduces conflict and competition into the formerly safe and pleasant work environment. In many corporate settings, this stage typically is encountered around week two. Why week two? Because that is when most project team members have had the weekend to think about the resources and requirements of the job ahead. Suddenly those things which didn't seem to matter, begin to matter, and conflicts arise. Staff behavior ranges from silence to domination in this environment, and a project leader or manager needs to demonstrate coaching to successfully move through this stage.

Activities for the Storming Stage

While some project team members would rather avoid the conflict of this stage, it is important to build skills and show them how to cope and deal with the storming stage. The activities in this section, therefore, contain just a bit of stress (so that the door may be 'opened' to discuss what is really going on). The following activities are very challenging, and need to have a suitable amount of time after each one for discussion within the group.

Photo Finish

Thanks to Sam Sikes for this seemingly simple but yet complex activity. You can find this and other activities in his book, *Executive Marbles* (1-888-622-4203).

Photo Finish (or the Finish Line) requires a straight line, made from masking tape or string. The task is for the ALL project team members to cross the line at exactly the same time. You can additionally "stress" the group by minimizing the available space that they have to plan prior to crossing the finish line. For example, if you place the masking tape finish line 3 feet away from a wall or fence, then the project team will have minimal space to work and communicate effectively - which in itself will lead to more mistakes by team members breaking the boundary.

Tell the group that they have 15 minutes to make 5 attempts to cross the finish line at exactly the same time. This is a great opportunity to use a digital camera for instant feedback. Every time someone breaks the plane of the finish line, the facilitator yells, "Click!" even for the occasionally careless mistake.



This activity involves planning, communication, timing and occasionally the ability to deal with frustration. Discussion topics after the completion of this activity include: What was difficult about the work environment? What could have been done to improve this situation? Who is in charge here that could have made the decision to improve the work environment? How did the group treat the team members that made unplanned mistakes? Could this task have been completed with zero mistakes? What do we as a project team need to do to cut down on the number of mistakes we make in the future on this project? In the end,

the task was completed, but how do the members of the team feel about their participation?

Conventional corporate wisdom says that in order for a team to be successful, they need a combination of three components: a worthwhile task, an opportunity for growth and advancement, and a chance to form working relationships with the members of the team. In this activity, would you say that the team completed a worthy task? How about having an opportunity to learn, grow or advanced? How about improving the working relationships between team members? If any of these components was less than satisfactory, what could be done to improve them?

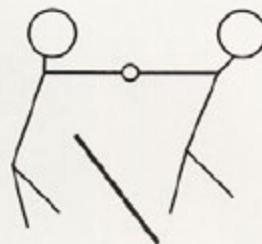
Cross the Line

This activity requires a single straight line. With half of the group on one side of the line and standing about 6 feet (2 meters) behind the line, and the other half of the team on the other side, the scene is set for a moment of conflict (of "us" vs. "them"). Make no mistake, this activity is a bit higher level than most, but it is excellent for setting the stage to talk about conflict, negotiation and win/win, win/lose, and lose/lose scenarios.

Tom Heck calls this activity, "Their Ain't No Flies On Me!", and begins this activity by having one side say, "There ain't no flies on me, there ain't no flies on me, there might be flies on you (point to folks on the other side), but there ain't no flies on me!", and then boldly taking a step towards the line (with just the right amount of attitude). The other side now replies, "there ain't no flies on me, there ain't no flies on me, there might be flies on you (pointing at the other folks), but there ain't no flies on me!", and takes a step towards the line. The first side now repeats with twice the attitude, and moves to the line, followed by the second side repeating their lines, and stepping face to face with the other side.

The facilitator now says, "you have 3 seconds to get the person across the line from you onto your side of the line. GO!"

Typically, this phrasing results in a rather quick tug of war between partners, and usually a physical solution (for one person at least) to the challenge. This provides an excellent opportunity to open the door for discussion on conflict, challenges, attitude, negotiation, and how to resolve differences between people. For example, you can ask, "how many partner teams ended up in a win/lose scenario, where one member obtained what they wanted (getting their partner to their side), but the other member did not?" "What about a lose/lose scenario, where both members struggled, but neither one obtained their goal?" And finally, "were there any teams that achieved a win/win solution, where both partners changed sides?" "What is it about our corporate culture that so many members of our team end up in win/lose or lose/lose scenarios, rather than a win/win solution?" "How can we fix this situation?" The next time you are in a 'cross the line' situation, what is the first thing you will do to avoid a win/lose or lose/lose scenario?



Blind Square

In a safe environment (large open carpeted room with no obstacles, or perhaps a flat grassy outdoor space) blindfold the entire group, and allow them to search as a group and find a nearby piece of rope (about 100 feet long). After finding the rope, instruct the group that their goal, while still blindfolded, is to create a perfect square with the rope. You might continue and remind the group that a square geometrically consists of a closed shape with four equal length sides, and four 90 degree corners. Participants are allowed to slide along the length of the rope, but cannot let go, change sides, or move around another participant.

This simple to explain but extremely difficult and time consuming to complete activity works best with a group of about a 10-15 participants. You can choose to invite one person to 'observe' the group, but not assist them in the completion of their task, and then to share their observations when the group has finished. The storming stage of this activity will be very obvious. Communication breakdowns, leadership abilities, directions, power issues and resource constraints all contribute to team member frustration and often make what appears to be a simple task infinitely more difficult. If establishing realistic scheduling goals is appropriate for this project team, then ask them to estimate a 'time till completion' for creating this rope square. If establishing quality standards, or work performance standards is realistic, then ask them to establish (while blindfolded), the performance criteria on how they will measure the outcome of this rope square project. If team members are likely to encounter limitations in technology, wrong or misleading information, or confusion during their project work, consider tying one end of the rope permanently to a tree, fence, car or other non-moving object. Or tie a knot or two in the rope (but not at a distance that is likely to correspond with a corner).

After the group has reached the end (notice, I didn't say 'completed' the activity), here are a few ideas to discuss: Was the time estimate reasonable given the task? What was most of the time spent doing? What was the 'breakthrough' point in this activity? Were all members of the group equally engaged in the activity? Did some members of the group have more 'power' than others? If the group was asked to create another shape blindfolded, do you think you could be more efficient? Quicker? Accurate? This stage of group formation is called the Storming stage. What types of team behaviors did you notice during this activity that tells you the group was storming? What skills do you have now that you can use in the workplace when tasks become frustrating or difficult?

The Norming Stage

This third stage of group formation is typically a welcome breath of fresh air after the storming stage. Although the project team is not yet at the high performing stage, some of the bugs are beginning to be worked out within the group, and good things are beginning to happen. This stage of group formation includes cohesion, sharing and trust building, creativity and skill acquisition. The project leader or program manager demonstrates support during this stage.

Activities for the Norming Stage

Sharing, trust building, and skill building activities are used in the Norming stage. In addition to those shown here, check out additional activities in the '52 Staff Meetings' section of this book.

Inside Out

This is a great initial problem solving activity. Begin with a Raccoon Circle (15 foot long rope, tied into a circle) on the floor. Have the entire group step inside the circle. The task now is for the entire group to go from the inside of the circle to the outside, by going underneath the Raccoon Circle, without anyone in the group using their arms, shoulders, or hands.

What is important in this activity, is to stress the group problem solving process. In order for other members of the group to assist in the completion of the task, they need to know the plan, and what their part is in the solution.

To this end, encourage the group to "plan their work" and then "work their plan." This means that prior to ANY action, the group will need to plan their approach to solving this problem, and making sure that everyone in the group knows their part of the plan.

After completing the task, debriefing questions include asking the group if they had a plan, and did they change the plan during the completion of the activity, and if so, why? As a second part to this activity, you can also ask the group to go Outside In, again without using their hands, arms or shoulders.... and see if they "plan their work" before "working their plan."



Finally, Inside Out can be used to explore ethical behavior in the workplace. At a time when corporate responsibility and financial accounting irregularities both make the business headlines, ethical behavior is certainly important. Once the group has returned into the circle, ask if they "followed the rules." Most will likely nod their heads yes. Then ask if anyone used their arms, shoulders or hands to complete the task. For example, to crawl on their hands and knees (see picture). Or to assist another member of their group, by holding them up. Suddenly some folks will realize that they interpreted the rules to mean, "not to touch the Raccoon Circle with our arms, shoulders or hands." This is an excellent opportunity to discuss the public's perception of this group's ability to follow rules, corporate guidelines, policies, civil ordinances or federal mandates.



Not Knots

In this activity, which can be accomplished with only a single piece of webbing (in a straight line, without a water knot), a "doodle" is constructed (see example below) and the group is given the choice of whether this doodle will create a KNOT or NOT A KNOT, when the ends of the webbing are pulled.

The object here is to provide the group with some tools to use when they cannot easily form a consensus. Typically, upon analysis, about half of the group thinks the doodle will form a knot, and the other half a 'straight line'. If this is the case, ask participants to partner with another person that has a different viewpoint (i.e. one partner from the KNOT side, and one partner from the NOT A KNOT side). By learning how to listen to a person with a different viewpoint, group members learn how to cooperate. After this discussion, ask participants to choose sides, with the KNOT decision folks on one side of the knot doodle, and the NOT A KNOT folks on the other side.

At this point, it is likely that there will still not be a complete consensus within the group. Prior to slowly pulling the ends of the knot doodle, let the members of the group know that you will pull the knot doodle slowly, and that they can change sides at any time during the unraveling of the knot doodle (this illustrates the ability to make an initial decision, but still be flexible as more information becomes available). This is also a good time to discuss 'risk taking' on the job, and what the risk is of choosing what might be the wrong side.



The Blind Trust Drive

Participants are asked to choose a partner for this activity that is approximately the same height. This activity should be conducted in a flat open space with no obstacles. One person stands in front, arms extended like they are holding onto the steering wheel of a car (the driver). Their partner stands behind them, with their hands on the shoulders of the person in front (the backseat driver). The 'blind' driver now closes their eyes, while the sighted 'backseat' driver safely steers them around the playing area. Remember, this is not a demolition derby or bumper cars, and a facilitator may act as the local law enforcement officer if necessary! Halfway through the activity, partners switch roles, and continue. At the completion of the activity, partners can provide feedback to their backseat drivers, and tell them what they liked about working with their partner, or what they would change about the guidance offered during the activity.

The Performing Stage

The fourth stage of group formation provides a feeling of unity, group identity, interdependence and independence. It is the most highly productive stage. Leadership from the project leader or program manager comes in the form of delegation. The team has all the skills, resources and talent needed to complete the task.

Activities for the Performing Stage



This stage is best explored using challenging activities that require advanced skills, but which can be successfully accomplished by the group. Activities that build enthusiasm are also helpful here. Large group projects such as tower building (using Tinkertoys®, uncooked spaghetti and marshmallows, newspaper and masking tape, or even PVC tubing), and challenge courses (low and high ropes activities) are useful. In the photograph, a group is completing a PVC tubing network which has plenty of connections, but no holes for anything to 'leak' out of the network. These Teamplay Tubes and other teambuilding props are available from Training Wheels Inc. at 1-888-553-0147 or www.training-wheels.com.

Grand Prix Racing

Turn the Raccoon Circle into a complete circle or loop using a water knot, and you are ready for the ultimate in sport racing. Thanks to Tom Heck for not only the idea for this activity, but also the enthusiasm to lead it effectively. This activity will boost the enthusiasm of your audience, and provide some moderate competition in the process.

Begin by spreading several Raccoon Circles around the available space, in close proximity to each other. Ask participants to join one of the "racing teams", picking their favorite color team in the process. Approximately 5 to 10 participants per Raccoon Circle. Have participants hold the Raccoon Circle with both hands in front of them.

"Ladies and Gentlemen! It is summertime, and that means one thing in this part of the world - Grand Prix Racing! Now I know that you are such die-hard race fans that just the thought of a race makes your heart beat faster. So this race comes in three parts. First, when I say that "we're going to have a race", your response is loud, "Yahoo!!!!!" Next I'll say, start your engines! and I want to hear your best race car sounds (audience practices making race car revving engine, shifting gears and braking sounds).

Finally, with so many cars on the track today, it will be difficult to see just which group finishes their race first, so we'll need a sign indicating when your group is finished. That sign is to raise your hands (and the Raccoon Circle) above your heads and yell "Yessssssss!"

Logistically, Grand Prix involves having the group transfer the knot around the group as quickly as possible, using only their hands. This activity can even be performed for a seated audience. To begin, you'll need a "start / finish" line, which can be the person that was born the farthest distance away from the present location. The race begins at this location, and ends when the knot is passed around the circle, and returns to this same location (Yessssssss!)

Typically in Raccoon Circle Grand Prix racing, there are three qualifying rounds or races. The first race is a single lap race to the right, with the knot traveling once around the inside of the circle to the right (counterclockwise). The second race is a multi-lap race (two or three laps) to the left (clockwise) around the circle. And the final race of the series, is a "winner take all" championship race, with one lap to the right (counterclockwise) followed by one lap to the left (clockwise).

Incidentally, after this activity, the group will not only be energized, but perhaps in a slightly competitive mood. From a sequencing standpoint, you can either continue this atmosphere (with more competitive challenges - such as a volleyball game, or corporate olympics) or introduce a bit of counterpoint, by following this activity with one that requires the group working together in a collaborative manner.

The Transforming Stage

The final stage of group formation is the other bookend to the initial forming stage. The Transforming stage allows the group to regroup, thank the participants and move on at the completion of the project or task. This stage is marked by recognition by the project leader, conclusion and disengagement by the team members.

Activities for the Transforming Stage

Allow for the completion and conclusion of the group process. Feelings of celebration and affirmation are suitable. Different team members may experience this final stage at different rates. Don't rush for closure. For some team members, this project may have been the highlight of their career to date. The first activity, A Circle of Kindness, involves appropriate contact between team members, and for many teams (nurses, primary care givers, teachers and other 'hands-on' professionals) this style is fine. The second activity, Virtual Slideshow, has no contact between team members, is largely verbal, and may be used in settings where less contact is desired.

A Circle of Kindness

Form a double circle with all group members, with one partner facing the center of the circle, and their partner behind them (also facing the center, with their hands on the shoulders of the inner circle person). The inner circle is asked to close their eyes, and only reply 'thank you' or keep silent. The outer circle is asked to quietly talk into the ear of the inner circle participants, mentioning something important that they learned from them or appreciated about them during the project, or a pleasant memory, or any other positive comment. The outer group then moves one person to the right, and continues. When the outer group has completed the circle, they are asked to become the center group, and the process begins again for a second round.

Virtual Slideshow

With all participants seated in a close space, an imaginary slide projector 'clicker' is passed around the group. Group members are asked to 'show' an imaginary slide or photograph from the project, illustrating a perfect moment, or perhaps a moment from the future, that will be different because that person had the opportunity to work as part of this team. If you would like a non-imaginary virtual slideshow clicker, you can order one from Training Wheels at 888-553-0147 or www.training-wheels.com. This company carries a variety of conversation, group discussion & debriefing aids that help bring all the voices to your corporate discussions.

References and Resources

- Teamwork & Teamplay**, by Jim Cain and Barry Jolliff, 1998, Kendall Hunt Publishers, Dubuque, IA Phone (800) 228-0810 ISBN 0-7872-4532-1 417 pages of activities, like those shown in this article.
- The Book on Raccoon Circles**, by Jim Cain and Tom Smith, 2002, Learning Unlimited, Tulsa, OK, USA Phone (888) 622-4203 www.learningunlimited.com ISBN 0-9646541-6-4 Hundreds of activities for creating community, that you can present with minimal props. 272 pages of ideas.
- A Teachable Moment – A Facilitator's Guide to Activities for Processing, Debriefing, Reviewing and Reflection**, by Jim Cain, Michelle Cummings and Jennifer Stanchfield, Kendall Hunt Publishers, Dubuque, IA Phone (800) 228-0810 ISBN 0-7575-1782-X Over 130 different ways to review with a group.
- Teambuilding Puzzles** by Jim Cain, Mike Anderson, Chris Cavet and Tom Heck. FUNDoing Publications. ISBN 0-9746442-0-X Over 100 puzzles and challenges for teams. Available from ACA, 1-800-428-CAMP.
- Developmental Sequence of Small Groups**, by B. Tuckman, 1965, Psychological Bulletin, Number 63, pages 384-399. The 'original' article on the stages of group formation.
- Stages of Small Group Development Revisited**, B. Tuckman and M. Jensen, 1977, Group and Organizational Studies, Number 2, pages 419-427. The revised and updated article.
- Good to Great - Why Some Companies Make the Leap...and Others Don't**, Jim Collins, 2001, Harper Collins, New York, NY USA ISBN 0-0666-2099-6
- Exploring the Five Stages of Group Formation Using Adventure-Based Activities**, by Jim Cain, 2003, from the Teamwork & Teamplay website at: www.teamworkandteamplay.com
- Joining Together - Group Theory and Group Skills** by David W. Johnson and Frank P. Johnson, 1994, Allyn and Bacon, Boston, MA ISBN 0-205-15846-3. Although set in the business world, this book is applicable to academic fields, social organizations and camping programs as well.

You can download a collection of adventure-based team building activities using simple props at:
www.teamworkandteamplay.com/raccooncircles.html

Keep in mind that no matter which of the models of group process and growth that you use (Lawrence Schulman or Scott Peck offer two other models – among the many) that the movement recognized is the same. People move from being individuals toward being unified individuals or a group. The introduction of tasks and projects aid or detract in this process, as does the addition or subtraction of the amount of time the group meets and over the span of time that it endures a group.

There may be some sort of confusing stages in the process where people either refuse to bond or resist bonding or do not want to be about the task of bonding. This is normal and comes right before the group makes some major leap in growth.

This stage is about the group deciding if it is worth it to risk. It is a part of all of our relationships. At some point, in all relationships, we will choose whether we are going to trust others.

In short-term activities, people often are willing to trust because they know that the activity will end soon. They sense that if they make the wrong choice, the activity will be over and they can move on without too many ramifications.

All groups of people work through a process when in proximity to each other. The health and status of a group is based on its receptivity to unity and the tasks it chooses to work on together (contracts).

This is why it is important at the outset of groups to identify why they are getting together. Then to introduce each activity in the group as a step toward this contracted goal.

If you do not have any formal training in “group process”, or if no one else in your leadership team does, I would consider getting this training first, before endeavoring to lead a bereavement support retreat or group. Grief groups pose a second layer of complication to the normal group process. All of the leadership team should understand this before entering into a healing relationship as facilitators.

We hope your time together is full of growth toward health and that the materials here may support that growth. Please remember that you are in charge of your bereavement retreat and the outline here is a merely a tool to get you organized and focused. You are expected to add and subtract things from this program to tailor it to the specific needs and skill sets of the youth attending and the staff facilitating.

The Author
Cresco, PA
January 2009

The work in this program was developed by the author for the Lighthouse Foundation of New Jersey through a grant with the expressed intent of distribution to hospices for their use. All liability for its use lies with the implementing hospices which are required to provide their own accredited bereavement therapists to implement the program.

AGENDA

FRIDAY EVENING

- Arrival and Registration
- Welcome Session
- Snack
- Evening Games
- Lights Out

FRIDAY EVENING

REGISTRATION

Have a registration table set up in a central area. You need to have the parents of the youth fill out and sign the attached form. You will also need to have a health form of some sort available for the parents to fill out, listing any meds the children need to take – along with times to administer and permission to administer, allergies, special instructions, insurance policy numbers and other liability waivers for the parents to sign.

This table may also have some sodas, snacks, or special materials available for parents to purchase for the youth for their retreat or perhaps materials to take home with them. Perhaps you will have camp shirts or hats available to purchase.

Be sure to have instructions and times for pick up available for parents. Also, find out who will be picking them up. Have the parents sign a drop-off sheet that says who they dropped off and who will pick them up. This is to be used on pick-up also. Make sure the parents sign the sheet after they pick up their child.

REGISTRATION FORM

Name:

Address:

Age:

Date of Birth:

Phone Number:

Parent/Guardian:

Emergency Contact Name:

Emergency Contact Number:

Emergency Contact Cell Number:

WELCOME SESSION

INTRODUCTION:

Start by introducing yourself and the team that is with you. Talk about the program that is ahead for the weekend. Explain the goal of the weekend, and the types of things you will be doing to accomplish that goal.

Make it clear to all who are in attendance that the goal of the weekend is for everyone to feel like there are other people who have gone through similar losses, and that being with each other will make you all stronger: ***Together We Are Stronger.***

This is the time to hand out the packets of information that you want the kids to have. I would suggest purchasing a binder for each of the participants and fill it ahead of time with all of the materials from this program that you wish them to have. Include some notebook paper.

You may want to have a set of markers for each participant, as well as pens and pencils. If there are other things that you want the attendees to have, give them out now.

It would be worth your while to do some gathering before the retreat. Go around to local businesses and ask for donations for the weekend. Let them know what you are doing and tell them you need:

- A backpack or tote for each participant
- Binders
- Markers
- Pens
- Small package of tissues
- Small poncho or umbrella
- Legal pads or doodle books
- Some board games

Be sure that you fill each tote or backpack with all of the things you collect. You may want to include a book or two on grief and healing, depending on your budget and resources.

A good book to include is Healing After Loss. It is a book of daily readings on grief.

Be sure to go through the tote and identify everything that is in it so that the attendees know what they have available to them. Make sure that everyone has all of the items before you go ahead with the introduction.

Make sure that you go through the binders with the attendees. Show them where everything is, and make sure they all have what they need before you continue.

Ask if there are any questions about the materials or about the weekend ahead of them. Make sure to allow other members from the team to help you answer the questions or to review the materials. This helps the participants to feel comfortable with all of the team.

Since it is the first session, it must be remembered that people still do not know each other and there will be some natural barriers to them wanting to share intimate details and emotions. We should not expect too much from the attendees, but should allow them the opportunity to share if they are able.

This means we have to develop connections between group members this session. We can do this by having some ice breaking activities. It will be helpful to have ice breakers at every meeting to help people loosen up and focus on the work ahead of them.

First meetings of groups need to also contain some contracting work. Somehow the group needs to talk about why it is gathering, what its goals are and what parameters it operates under. This will require you to make up a list of group purposes, group goals, and group rules. It should be simple and it should be printed.

You will also want individuals to chime in about their own personal senses of the purpose, goals and rules to the group. Some of them may be individual ideas that are just for them to hold on to throughout the process. Still others may be great ideas that you may have forgotten in your listing – and you should add these to the sheets and update them for the next meeting.

TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER

PURPOSE:

❖ The purpose of our group is to give everyone a safe and neutral space in which to allow their feelings of grief and loss to come out.

❖ It is also our purpose to connect with other individuals who have experienced deep loss so we can feel normal and connected to people who do understand.

❖ It is also our purpose that we will be available to help people resolve and solve issues when they are ready and ask for help.

❖ It is also our purpose to allow people to try new forms of expression. These forms include (but are not limited to) games, activities, handouts, sharing, and personal time.

HANDOUT

TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER

GOALS:

- ☐ To enable people to express what is going on inside
- ☐ To enable people to feel they are being heard
- ☐ To enable people to connect and engage
- ☐ To enable people to heal amid their grief and loss
- ☐ To provide a routine and safe environment for
mourners

RULES:

- ☐ We begin and end on time
- ☐ One person speaks at a time
- ☐ We do not try to solve anyone's issues unless asked
- ☐ We do not monopolize a conversation or session
- ☐ We are allowed to pass in discussions if we are not
able to share

HANDOUT

Once the preliminaries are finished, now it is time to get down to the fun. You will begin with two introductory games that help people get familiar.

Play both of these name games.

NAME GAMES:

There are many different name games you can play with the participants that will help them to learn the names of the others in the group. They can also help everyone to learn a bit about the others. I am listing two here.

1. Go around the circle, one at a time, and introduce yourself. State your name and then tell about where you live. The second person must say their name and where they are from, and then say, “This is _____.” (Introducing the person who went before them – just their name is enough, not where they are from). Then the third person introduces himself and then the first two people. This goes all the way around the circle. If someone is unable to do it, he/she may introduce himself/herself and then say, “PASS”.
2. Divide the young people into pairs. Ask them to take three minutes to interview each other. Each interviewer has to find three interesting facts about

their partner. Bring everyone back to together and ask everyone to present the three facts about their partner to the rest of the group. Watch the time on this one; keep it moving along. You don't want to take too much time. www.insight.typepad.co.uk

Take a Break for Snack. Designate a specific time for re-gathering.

Games:

“FFEACH”

This might be one of the best games of all times! FFEACH is a charades race and the categories are **F**ast **F**oods, **E**lectrical **A**ppliances, and **C**artoon **H**eroes. Teams compete against each other to complete a predetermined list of items. We use the term "compete" loosely, as it is a *charades* race, after all....

1. Divide the group into 2 or more teams.
2. Have the group spread out so that they cannot overhear the next team's answers.
3. Ask one member from each team to come to you.
4. Whisper the first word into the ears of the volunteers, and release them to their groups at the same time.
5. Once a member of the group guesses the word correctly, someone new runs to the instructor for the next word. Advise the group when you are giving instructions that no one can come up for a word twice until everyone has gone up once. This helps ensure that everyone participates. The group is to guess the word based on the charades

- “acting out” of clues done by the person who was told the word. They may not give verbal clues.
6. The new team member must tell the instructor what word their team just guessed, and the instructor tells the new volunteer the next word on the list. So, they will want to keep the guessing volume low so the other team does not get their answers from them.
 7. The object of the game is to complete the entire list without cheating.

Here is a sample list - you can change the list as you see fit, based on participant age, interests, etc.

FFEACH LIST

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Superman | 11. Fruit Juicer |
| 2. Curly Fries | 12. Scooby Doo |
| 3. Spongebob Square Pants | 13. Batman |
| 4. Curling Iron | 14. Portable CD Player |
| 5. Remote Control | 15. Bacon Double Cheeseburger |
| 6. Pepperoni Pizza | 16. Defribulator |
| 7. Incredible Hulk | 17. Papa Smurf |
| 8. Microwave | 18. Blender |
| 10. McNuggets | 19. Wonder Woman |
| | 20. Onion Rings |

from:

www.ultimatecampresource.com

“NEVER HAVE I EVER”

Hold out 5 fingers (well, 4 and your thumb) Go around the circle and one at a time, each person announces something that they have never done, beginning the sentence with the phrase "Never have I ever..." For example, a person could say, "Never have I ever been to Europe." For each

statement that is said, all the other players drop a finger if they have done that statement. Therefore, if three other people have been to Europe before, those three people must put down a finger, leaving them with 4 fingers. The goal is to stay in the game the longest (to be the last person with fingers remaining).

To win it is a good strategy to say statements that most people have done but you have not. Be creative and silly (but not rude, of course).

from:

www.youthgroupgames.com.au/games

“CONVERSATIONS”

Everyone in the room is given a sheet of paper with a series of instructions to follow. This is a good introduction game or conversation starter as everyone in the group must speak to everyone else. For example:

- Count the number of brown eyed boys in the room
- Find out who has traveled the farthest to get here
- Who has the most unusual hobby
- Find the weirdest thing anyone has eaten
- Who has had the most embarrassing experience

from:

www.insight.typepad.co.uk

Closing

When you have played an ample amount of games to get you close enough to bedtime, gather and welcome them again. Thank them for coming to the retreat and making an effort this evening to get to know each other. Let them know what time lights out will be and go over any room accommodation issues and morning breakfast/routine issues that they will need to know. Let them know tomorrow will begin with some more activities to help people get to know each other and we will also be sharing some our losses with each other. Ask for questions and then dismiss everyone when there are no more.

AGENDA

SATURDAY

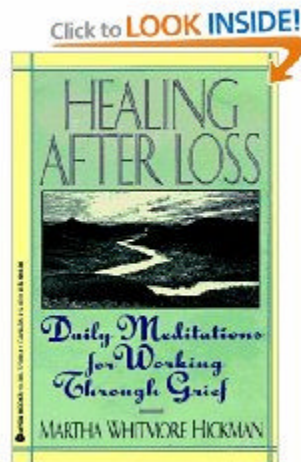
- Morning Gathering
- Breakfast
- Morning Session
- Break
- Lunch
- Afternoon Session
- Break
- Dinner
- Evening Session
- Snack
- Evening Games

HANDOUT

Morning Gathering

This get together is for 5 – 10 minutes only. It is to get folks together, remind them of the task before them: They are here to find ways to be strong with others who have shared some similar experiences in loss.

Then, do a reading to focus everyone. I would suggest the book, Healing After Loss. A sensational tool, it should be in your toolkit of things to use in working with the bereaved.



http://www.amazon.com/gp/reader/0380773384/ref=sib_dp_pt#reader-link

After the reading, dismiss for Breakfast and then let folks know where and when the morning session will be. Remind folks what to bring to the session.

Breakfast

Morning Session –

This morning's session is going to focus on a few themes:

- What are some of my favorite things to do
- What kind of things make me feel like I am growing as a person
- Who do I depend on the most

These are clearly going to move the group into a working phase. There will be some resistance at first to getting started so we will begin with an icebreaker. It will get us right into the discussion at hand. It is sort of a jump start some difficult work. Before you start the icebreaker, let the group know the three things we are looking at.

Always try to lay out the groundwork for the upcoming session at the beginning of the session. It is an informal way of contracting with the group on what it will be doing. It also sets the tone. Ask folks if they understand the themes or goals and answer any questions that arise.

THESE ARE A FEW OF MY FAVORITE THINGS

This game is rather straightforward. Have all of the members of the group fill out the following worksheet. Then, they have to find as many people as they can, that have or share the same interest or favorite thing. The easiest way for them to do this, is to go around the room and share their list with each person - one at a time - and then have the other person sign their name next to or under the item they share in common. See how many signatures you can get. This is not to be competitive it is to build connectivity.

➤ Favorite Ice Cream Flavor:

➤ Favorite Movie:

➤ Favorite Book:

➤ Favorite Music Group:

➤ Favorite Color:

HANDOUT

Be sure to end the activity by decompressing afterwards. Ask the group if they found anybody with all of the same likes on their list. Ask if the group found at least one. Ask the group if they could tell that a person in the group had their same “favorites” even before they officially found out – could they guess or sense that someone was like them.

Now that we have shared some more details about ourselves, we can move ahead with some more vital information gathering and opening up. We want to talk about things that make us feel whole; things that make us feel like we are growing. This will require one of the leaders to share one or two things that they do to grow or feel as if they are growing.

Here are some examples:

- Reading
- I write in a journal
- I get together with friends
- Listen to Music
- Pray
- Walk
- Run
- Dance
- Do Yoga
- Meditate

Take some time to write out what it is that makes you grow or feel like you are growing:

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-

HANDOUT

Now it is time to go around the room and share the things that make people feel like they are growing. In traditional group work, this kind of sharing goes best in groups of 8 – 12, so if your retreat is huge, break down into smaller cell groups for sharing.

Before doing this, and in order to set the stage again and model behavior, have another one of the leadership share the things they wrote down on their list. Then go to the group or groups for them to share.

This final portion of the morning session is going to be a vulnerable one. We would like people to go around their group and share “who it is they depend on in life”, and “who it is that they lost most recently – who has died”.

Essentially, we are looking for the kids to list other people in their lives that they depend on. They may have to list the person they lost in this list. If so, we would ask them to identify that one of the people they depend on is the person they lost.

Give them some time to fill out the handout sheet. Let them know they are only going to have to share whom they depend on in their lives, they do not have to share who has died, but we would like them to.

There are some other questions on the sheet. They do not have to share the answers to those questions unless they feel they would like to.

As with the other sessions, we would ask that a leadership member model this behavior in front of the whole group. Then, break up into your small groups (or one larger one) and share around the circle.

Keep in mind that how you set the tone will be what the group accepts as normal and the expectation for communicating. You will want to include in your list of “people you depend on in life” the name of someone who has died in your life – someone you grieve.

The groups are looking to you to see how you express these things. It sets a standard for how they can do it, what is normal, and things that they themselves may wish to be able to attain someday.

People I depend on:

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-

Someone who has died:

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-

How did I depend on the person who died

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-
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HANDOUT

Read a selection from Healing After Loss.

This has been a lot of sharing. Make sure that there is a clear sense coming from you that you understand how much work this is and how hard it is to share. Remind them that the whole point of sharing this is to connect with other kids who have dealt with a death, with a loss. Close this portion with a THANK YOU, for being so open, honest, and caring enough to listen to what others have to offer.

Make sure that people know where and when lunch is happening. Also, let them know what time the afternoon session is and where.

Break

Lunch

Afternoon Session

This afternoons' session will deal with:

- Talking about the loved one who has died
- Talking about where they kids are at on this journey of loss
- Describing things that people have done to help them

Always try to lay out the groundwork for the upcoming session at the beginning of the session. It is an informal way of contracting with the group on what it will be doing. It also sets the tone. Ask folks if they understand the themes or goals and answer any questions that arise.

It will be hard to talk about some of these things for some of the kids; there are a number of reasons for this. Some may still be early on in the loss and they may not be out of shock yet. Others may never have been real verbal kids. Some kids are hard pressed to do “the group thing” and just really do not look like they are connected to the process (do not be fooled). Others may be resisting because they feel they were made to do this. You can add your own reasons, too.

What is important to take away from this is that no one should be forced to share. If kids want to pass and just listen, that is ok. You do not have to announce this repeatedly. Just simply state it to the kids who are looking like it is too hard to share at this activity. They may go ahead and share after you give them the opportunity to pass. If someone passes often, it is appropriate to ask them to give it a try. If they still are resistant, tell them to pass.

Group work is a fine balance between allowing freedom for people to respond out of comfort and nudging just a bit to get folks out of their comfort zone and into a growth mode. That is why it is good to have some previous experience in the process before this retreat. You will need to recognize when it is right to pass and when a nudge would be helpful.

How would you describe the person who has died?

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Where are you at on this journey of grief?

What have people done or said to help you?

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HANDOUT

Have the group pause and fill out the above handouts. Again, as you have before, have one member of the team share their responses to the questions with the whole group before the group fills them out on their own. Then have another member share just before the group/groups go around the circle to share. Modeling is everything.

Keep in mind that everyone can sense genuineness. The team members, who are facilitating this, need to have done some processing of their own grief and loss. This may mean that you have to do the whole work of the retreat together, as a team before you go on the retreat.

This is not a dry run. This would be you as team members working the process for yourselves so you can help work it for others. It is a serious business, and you should have a chance to process some of your own grief, separately.

Now it is time for a skit! YEAH!

SKIT

This skit is going to involve the leaders. Take two or three leaders. One of them is to be the person who just had a death. They should look sad. (Remember, this should be playful and exaggerated. It is ok for it to be WAY TOO DRAMATIC.).

The other one or two people are going to be trying to offer condolences. You can actually have as many people give

condolences, as you are able to make “statements”. Make it look like a receiving line at a funeral or wake, if you like.

Have each person come up and shake the grieving persons hand or hug them and then say their “statement”.

Something like, “Well, at least she is in a better place”, or, “It’s time to put all this behind you now.”

At least one person has to come up to the mourner and simply hug them and say, “I am really sorry for your loss.” This should feel deep and genuine.

Once you have everyone in the team offer his or her condolences, then it is time to decompress from the skit. Make a list of crazy things that people say here, and then sort out which ones you are going to use. Then, do the skit for the kids.

“Statements People Make”:

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I want to include a piece I wrote for an 8-week bereavement group program. This piece is an introduction to the fifth module for the program. The full 8-week program is in two parts:

<http://www.lighthousehospice.net/articles/2008%20Foundation%20Grant%20-%20The%20Art%20of%20Grief%20part%20I.pdf>

and part the second portion:

<http://www.lighthousehospice.net/articles/2008%20Foundation%20Grant%20-%20The%20Art%20of%20Grief%20part%20II.pdf>

You may want to read this as a team to get a flavor for this portion of the retreat. You may want to read pieces of it to all of the kids to point them in a common direction for the discussion.

The full program is available for you to use as you wish. Perhaps it may aid you in setting up a grief support group.

THE ART OF GRIEF

MODULE 5:

“People Who Try to Help”

Introduction to Module:

Throughout the process of grief, people all about us try to help. It is a natural response that people have as they connect with us because of the pain they see or assume that we are experiencing. It begins long before the death itself – when the death is known of in advance. People begin the support process as soon as a loved one is diagnosed with a terminal illness.

There are many stages or phases to the grief process that occurs for us before, during, and after loss. The stages and phases exist for us as we are losing someone or something, but they also exist for the people who come to offer support.

People who offer support are doing so out of their own connection to loss and grief. Some of the people will be helpful because they have processed their own grief and loss to a greater extent than others – who will be less helpful. Because the two processes are not running on the same time table, it gets very complicated.

Some things that people do or say will feel appropriate to them because they fit in with where they are at in processing their grief. But those things will feel or seem horrendous to us or the person who is currently in the midst of the loss. They will not match up to

the experience of the one who is sitting in the middle of a fresh loss.

This dissonance is sometimes harsh and painful for people. One of the best ways for people to begin to move beyond the dissonance and get back to healing amid grief is for them to acknowledge to themselves the things people have done or said. They should also acknowledge how this has hurt.

Having a group to acknowledge these hurts in is vital and can help the griever to understand that not everyone will say the wrong thing. People in the support group will be more likely to understand what they are feeling most immediately.

People in the group will also be at different places in the process, but they will more readily understand how seemingly meaningful gestures can hurt. An image that may help is the image of two gears turning. When they are in sync with one another, the gears interlock and move toward their intended goal. But, when they do not fit, they cannot work toward one end.

After you do the skit. Stop and decompress. Find out from the group some of the things that people have done or said to them to be helpful after a loss. Ask them how they felt after people said or did these things.

Remember to model in the decompression by sharing some things that have been done or said to you, first. You can have another staff member share too before you open it up to the group.

The point of this is not to rant about the stupidity of things that people do or say, although there is an undercurrent of humor in the skit. It is to identify that there are some things that people do or say that are meant to help, but just don't feel right.

We want kids to get the sense that they can take or leave what is said to them. If it is helpful, they can take what is said. If it is not helpful, they can leave it. People are not genuinely setting out to hurt them. They just do not know how to communicate to them in their pain.

Tell the kids that these people just never had the right things modeled for them.

Redo the skit. This time, model for the kids some appropriate things that people can say and do for them.

List of possible responses for the second run of the skit:

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-
-

Wrap up this session by thanking the kids for their input in this session and tell them the skits' actors will be signing shirts and programs up front for 20.00 each.

Let the kids know what time the break is over and where and when they are to meet for dinner.

Break

During this break time, I recommend that you play a game of volleyball, Newcomb, or foursquare.

Volleyball you already know.

Rules for "Newcomb": taken from Wikipedia

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newcomb_ball#The_game

The game

Baer published an official set of [rules](#) in 1910. These listed 22 separate rules and 16 [fouls](#), with the major objective still being to score touch-downs by throwing the ball so that it hit the ground or floor on the opponent's side of the court. The game was to be played with an official "Newcomb [Ball](#)" (size 1 for grammar grades and size 2 for high schools and colleges).

The court

The playing area was divided by a "Division Line" into two equal [halves](#). The [height](#) of the [rope](#) defining the Division

Line varied from three to seven [feet](#), according to the age of the players. Neutral zones called "Bases" were marked across the entire court, six to seven feet from the Division Line . The space between the Base and the end of the playing area was called the "Court".

The rules

The rules were defined as follows:[\[3\]](#)

1. A "touch-down" shall count for the side sending the ball
2. A foul shall add one point to the opponent's score.
3. A majority of points shall decide the game.
4. The team that secures the "toss-up" opens the game.
5. The players must stand within the Boundary Lines.
6. No players shall step over the lines except to secure an "out" ball, or when running for the "Toss-up".
7. A ball thrown by a player out of the Boundary Lines shall be counted a foul.
8. The ball must be thrown with one hand. It cannot be kicked.
9. No player shall catch or throw the ball while down. He must be standing.
10. The ball must clear the rope and touch the opposite court to constitute a "touch-down".
11. If a ball is batted into the neutral ground by a player receiving it, it shall constitute a foul against the side receiving the ball.
12. An "out" ball beyond the Boundary Lines shall not constitute a foul unless tapped by a player as it passes over the court, when it counts against the side

- receiving* the ball. it should be returned to play at the nearest point of its passage and exit from the court.
13. If, in passing the ball to another player on the same team, it should drop to the floor (ground) it shall constitute a foul.
 14. In the gymnasium, when the ball strikes any flat surface it may constitute a point.
 15. A ball striking the wall and bounding into the neutral ground shall constitute a foul for the team sending the ball.
 16. There shall be no protests, except by the Captain; no talking, no general disturbance of the game.
 17. The ball must not be thrown under the ropes nor between the Base Line.
 18. In match game, unavoidable loss of time shall be deducted.
 19. When the question arises between teams as to whose ball shall be used, each team may furnish the ball for one-half of the game.
 20. In match games, the length of each half must be determined before the game.
 21. In the absence of a regular instructor, the Captain shall decide the position of the players on the court.
 22. The teams shall change courts during the second half of the game.

Fouls

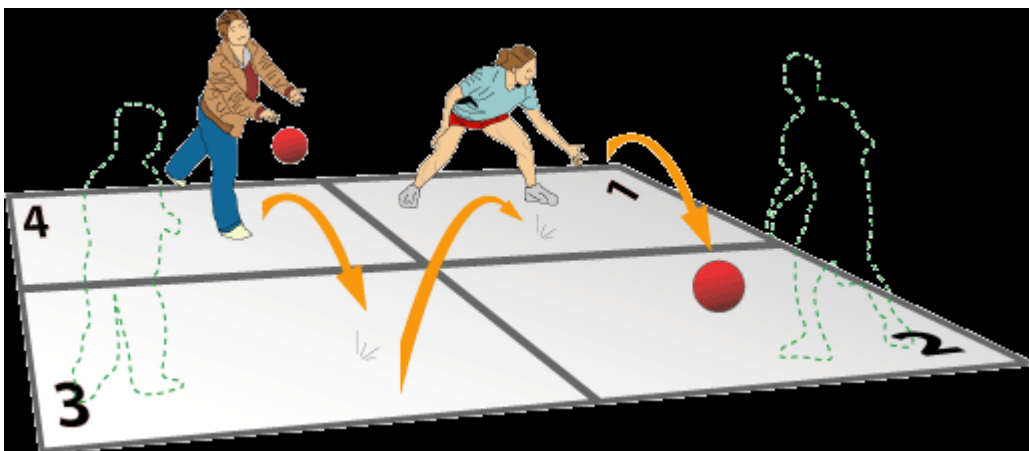
The following were defined as fouls:[\[3\]](#)

1. When the ball touches the rope.
2. When the ball passes under the rope.

3. When the ball falls into neutral ground - counts against side sending the ball.
4. Tapping the ball over the lines - counts against the side receiving the ball.
5. Striking a player with the ball.
6. Falling.
7. [Audible](#) signals.
8. Needlessly rough playing.
9. Unnecessary protests.
10. [Talking](#), or any disturbance of the game.
11. [Running](#) all over the court.
12. Stepping over, or on, the court.
13. Playing out of Boundary Lines.
14. Needlessly high balls.
15. Dropping the ball.
16. Any violation of the rules of the game.

“Rules for Foursquare”: taken from Wikipedia

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:4_square_gameplay_diagram.gif



Foursquare is played with a rubber ball on a court made of four adjacent squares.

Objective

The objective in foursquare is to advance to the highest square on the court by eliminating other players with a rubber ball.^[1] The ball is bounced from one square to another and players are eliminated for hitting the ball incorrectly, into the wrong square, playing out of turn, or by causing many other specific errors. Once at the highest ranking square, a player scores points and has the privilege of serving the ball to start each round. Any number of players may wait in a line outside the court for their turn to play.

Boundaries

Four square is played on a square court divided into four smaller squares of equal size. Different communities or groups use different size courts, ranging from 16 to 24 feet (7.3 m). Court sizes are often adjusted to be appropriate for age or skill level.

The outermost lines of the court are considered fair play and the ball may land on any portion of an outside line and still be in play. The inside lines are designated as out-of-bounds and balls landing on any portion of an inside line are in error. A popular abbreviation of these rules is known as 'inside out, outside in'. Balls landing outside the court are considered errors as well. [\[2\]](#)

Ball handling

Four square is played with an 8.5 inch rubber playground ball. [\[3\]](#) During regular game play, the ball may be legally hit with any part of a player's hands from wrist to finger tip. The hit may be open or closed-fisted, forehand or backhand. The ball may also be hit with one hand, or two hands at the same time, much like the rules of volleyball. At no time is a player allowed to carry, catch or hold the ball during play.

Regular gameplay

The player in the top square begins the game by serving the ball to the lowest square. Players allow the ball to bounce in their square once, and the occupant of that square must return the ball to any other player's square by hitting or striking the ball with their hands. Once the ball lands in a new player's square, that player must return it, and so forth, until a player makes an error and is eliminated. Eliminated players leave the court, remaining players advance into the open squares, and a new player joins the game in the lowest square. Gameplay continues like this until time runs out or a winner is determined through any number of methods.

Errors and elimination

Players may be eliminated for the following errors:

- A player hits the ball out of bounds.
- A player allows the ball to bounce more than once in their square.
- A player fails to hit the ball properly into another player's square.
- A player hits the ball more than once before returning it to another square.
- A player strikes the ball incorrectly, such as carrying or holding.
- A player violates one of the many special rules the players invent.

Eliminated players leave the court, all remaining players move up to the next highest square, and a new player joins in the lowest square.

Before dinner, let everyone know where and when the evening session will take place.

Dinner

Evening Session

In this session, we will be looking at:

- How the loss feels
- When it hurts the most

Always try to lay out the groundwork for the upcoming session at the beginning of the session. It is an informal way of contracting with the group on what it will be doing. It also sets the tone. Ask folks if they understand the themes or goals and answer any questions that arise.

We will start the session with a game.

BUCKET BALANCE

Materials: plastic bucket filled with confetti

Get 4 kids to lie down on their backs in a small circle with their legs sticking up in the air. So their feet should be touching at the top, making a kind of table. Put the full bucket of confetti on here.

The aim is for all of the kids to remove their shoes in the given time limit... so this will mean keeping the balance of

the bucket, while one or two players take a foot away and remove the shoe.

If you cannot find confetti, use the collected punches from a paper punch, or cut up a lot of newspaper or construction paper into small squares.

A variation of a game found at:

www.youthgroupgames.com.au/games/index.cfm

Emotions can be very confusing and somewhat difficult to figure out, so some of the work in this session may be less specific than in other sessions. It is a good idea to keep in mind that we can transfer our understandings of what we feel inside onto objects or ideas outside of ourselves.

For example, when we are working with the group in trying to assess how they feel about the loss, they may be able to answer, or they may not. If they are unable to answer, it is not only acceptable, but preferred to rephrase the question to “what color expresses how you feel” or “which animal expresses best how it feels inside”.

These transferences work for people. They work because some people are not well versed, nor verbal enough to formulate words to describe their feelings. Utilizing something they already know and associate with, (something with an undercurrent of emotion) like color or animal drives, will help them to formulate.

I will build them into the handout, but remember the progression. It is better if they are able to formulate their feelings into their own descriptors for their experience. If they are unable to do this, let them borrow from the color spectrum and the animal kingdom.

This will be a great area to model. Share how you feel about the loss and when it hurts the most before you go over what the handout is requesting. Make sure that once you have explained the handout and questions that another team member shares how they feel and when it hurts the most.

Check in for questions before you give them time to fill out the handout.

How do you feel right now about your loss?

-
-
-
-

If you do not know, what color would describe how you feel, or what animal?

-
-
-
-

When does the loss hurt the most?

-
-
-
-

If you do not know, when do you miss your loved one the most?

-
-
-

HANDOUT

At this point, we want to touch base with folks and find out what they have done to take care of themselves or mend. It is important for all of the folks to share in this session, so it would be good to try to nudge anyone who wants to pass.

The reason for this is that this portion of sharing is just giving lists of things that people have done to cope. Most of the things that people have done to cope have been passed onto them by others, (thus not their own ideas) or they will hearken back to things they do to grow (things they shared already).

The handout will pose the question in two ways. The first question will be asking them what they have done to cope. The second question will be asking them to suggest ways to cope to a friend.

Both of these questions are really about ways to cope. Sometimes people may be willing to suggest things to other people that they would not think of for themselves. This is very common and is really a very therapeutic tool in that it helps people to say something and then hopeful here the value in what they said. This is the therapeutic process.

Once you have shared, done the activity with the group, and shared as a group, it would be a good thing to share the above statement with the group. Let them know that sometimes they have the tools for coping with them; they just do not consider them as options for themselves because they are often too weak to look to themselves and enact things that they would suggest to others.

What do you do, or have you done to cope with your loss?

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

What would you suggest for others to do to cope?

-
-
-
-
-

HANDOUT

Let us end this session with some games.

CUPS AND DOWNS

Materials: cups

This game is best played with small groups.

Place 20 or more cups in the middle of the room. Place half of them upside down and the other half the right side up.

Divide the group (or each group) into 2 teams and give each team a name (ie ups or downs) - the 'up' team needs to turn as many cups *up* as possible, and the 'down' team needs to flip them upside *down*.

When 30 seconds is over, count all the cups. Whichever team has the most cups turned in their respective direction wins.

A variation of a game found at:

www.youthgroupgames.com.au/games/index.cfm

DESERT ISLAND

Announce, 'You've been exiled to a deserted island for a year. In addition to the essentials, you may take one piece of music, one book and one luxury item you can carry with you i.e. not a boat to leave the island! What would you take and why?' Allow a few minutes for the young people to draw up their list of three items, before sharing their choices with the rest of the group. As with most icebreakers and relationship building activities, it is good for the group leaders to join in too!

A variation of a game found at: www.insight.typepad.co.uk

What Would You Take + Why

1.

2.

3.

HANDOUT

Snack + Evening Games

Give the group a small break to go over to their dorm rooms and get some games that you brought with you. Let them divide-up how they want to and play the game of their choice. Have snack somewhere during the process.

You may also want to have a movie available for people to watch instead. Sometimes, with this much interactive contact and emotional reaching and strain, people need to unplug from interacting for a while.

Pick a movie that is a real treat and reward if you choose to get a movie - something light and funny.

AGENDA

SUNDAY

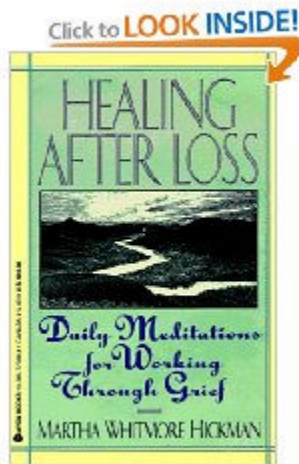
- Morning Gathering
- Breakfast
- Morning Session
- Break
- Lunch
- Afternoon Session

HANDOUT

Morning Gathering

This get together is for 5 – 10 minutes only. It is to get folks together, remind them of the task before them: They are here to find ways to be strong with other who have shared some similar experiences in loss.

Then, do a reading to focus everyone. I would suggest the book, Healing After Loss. A sensational tool, it should be in your toolkit of things to use in working with the bereaved.



http://www.amazon.com/gp/reader/0380773384/ref=sib_dp_pt#reader-link

After the reading, dismiss for Breakfast and then let folks know where and when the morning session will be. Remind folks what to bring to the session.

Breakfast

Morning Session

In this session, we will be looking at:

- What am I gonna do to mend

Always try to lay out the groundwork for the upcoming session at the beginning of the session. It is an informal way of contracting with the group on what it will be doing. It also sets the tone. Ask folks if they understand the themes or goals and answer any questions that arise.

The whole idea of having “something to do” in order mend or heal sort goes against the idea that healing is a natural and organic process. I would venture a guess to say that healing does happen over time – on its own – but it is also remediated by focusing on and making attempts at mending.

It is critical for your staff to focus on the ways that you each believe people mend after loss and then create a list to have on hand to help the youth make their own personal lists. Some of this should be done prior to the retreat and some of this can be added to while on the retreat. Taking information that you hear presented throughout the retreat sessions is a very personal way of building a list of things to do to mend.

Again, begin by sharing your own personal ways to mend. Then, let the kids share in either the large group or individual smaller groups.

What to do to mend (Leader's List):

- [illegible]

What are you already doing to take care of yourself after this loss?

-
-
-
-

What have you heard others say that sounds good or helpful?

-
-
-
-

What have you heard others say that sounds good or helpful?

-
-
-
-

HANDOUT

Break

During this break time, I recommend that you make something that the kids can take home to remind them of their time at camp.

Try this craft: Leaf Tee Shirts

All you need is a tee shirt, some leaves and some bleach.

http://parentingteens.about.com/od/craftsnature/ss/campingcraft2_2.htm

Used with permission from the publishers.

Camping and Outdoor Crafts - Leaf T-shirt

By [Denise Witmer](#), About.com

The Finished Project

1 of 6



This is a wonderful T-shirt project for camping trips and outdoor youth group activities. Older kids can handle doing much of this on their own, but preteens will need the help of an adult.

Step #1: Gather your supplies.

2 of 6



You will need:

- bleach in a spray bottle
- leaves
- dark colored T-shirt
- large bucket of cool water
- newspaper

Step #2: Make your design.

3 of 6



Put the newspaper in between the layers of the T-shirt. Spread your leaves out on the front of the T-shirt. Be creative!

Step #3: Spray with bleach.

4 of 6



Spray the front of the tee shirt with bleach. Try and spray as evenly as possible, covering both the leaves and the empty areas.

Step #4: Time the bleach.

5 of 6



Allow the bleach to stay on for about 5 minutes. You will start to see the color of the shirt fade.

Step #5: Rinse the shirt.

6 of 6



Rinse the shirt in the bucket of cool water. Rinse it well to get out the bleach. You are all done!

This About.com page has been optimized for print. To view this page in its original form, please visit:

http://parentingteens.about.com/od/craftsnature/ss/campingcraft2_2.htm

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Before having lunch, be sure to designate a meeting time and place for the afternoon session.

Lunch

Afternoon Session

In this session, we will be looking at:

- What supports are around for me

Always try to lay out the groundwork for the upcoming session at the beginning of the session. It is an informal way of contracting with the group on what it will be doing. It also sets the tone. Ask folks if they understand the themes or goals and answer any questions that arise.

As with the previous session you will want to be sure that the leaders meet ahead of time to discuss what resources you have in your area that should be made available to the kids. Be sure to go through all of your resources. Don't list only support groups. Get a smattering of support groups, websites, books, audio tapes, podcasts, and blogs together so that you are sampling a myriad of ways kids connect.

It will help you to keep lists from previous retreats and groups, it will also help to keep in mind that every kid is going to reach out for a different medium or means to find support. Some kids like music and others like to read. Make sure you collect a TON OF RESOURCES.

Once you have the list put together, your best bet is to make it kid friendly by making it into a separate book type handout. Get someone to make some comics or balloon letter headings so it looks jazzy and inviting for kids to look through. If you can't get them to look through it, you'll never get them to engage with the ideas.

Start your list on the following pages. And, use the handout to get the kids engaged in the process of talking about resources. Some of the most powerful resources will be the ones the kids offer to each other from their own inner lists of what they have found already.

Have this discussion around the handout in the larger group so you can pool all of the resources of the group.

Resource List (Leader's List):

- Websites:

- Books

- Groups

- Movies

- Music

- Blogs

- Podcasts

- OTHER

What resources have helped you:

-

HANDOUT

Closing

The closing of the retreat is very critical. There needs to be some outpouring and final offers before leaving. This needs to be modeled by the Leadership of the retreat. So, get everyone in a large circle, have a few leaders of the circle start off by sharing “how the retreat has been for them”. Then, go around the circle and let everyone share. Start out by saying that it is to be a short offering from their heart about how things went for them. As always, let them have the opportunity to pass.

I would suggest placing a small table in the center of the circle, with a lighted candle on it during the closing. I think it would also be helpful for one of the staff to choose a closing song that is a healing song. Play it on a CD player for everyone.

After this is over, one of the staff members needs to wind things up with a quick review of all the things that have happened and what the kids are taking home with them that will help them over the months ahead. Making numbers available to them for continued support is necessary.

You have opened them up and made them vulnerable, you and your team had better be prepared to help them sort out the issues that lie ahead. I would suggest printing up, in addition to your printed list of resources for the kids, a list of all the staffs contact information. You as a team will have to decide which contact information is appropriate for

the kids to have. Then, you will need to make sure that you have that information clearly accessible for the kids to take with them. It is also helpful to have follow up sessions planned for back at home. Come with a schedule of a few follow up meetings, times, places, and agendas to give the kids something to look forward to.

It is advised to give them some sort of way to collect numbers and emails from each other. You cannot assume kids will want to share this information, so don't you hand out all of the kid's info to each of them. Use the attached handout and let them collect them from willing kids themselves. Make sure to alter the handout to reflect what your team feels, or, agency states, are appropriate information.

You should conclude by handing out a certificate, a special camp shirt, or a book or CD for each camper at this point to. Make it into a ceremony if you are going to give something out. It is important for your team to decide how they want to praise the kids for making it through all of the hard work. But, a ceremony is highly suggested.

Great Job, TEAM!

Thanks for caring about kids that are mending from loss. Your efforts will give them the comfort of knowing that there are people all around them that do understand, and that **TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER.**

Camper Contact Sheet:

Collect or share only the information you feel comfortable with.

- Name:
Address:

email:
Phone:

- Name:
Address:

email:
Phone:

- Name:
Address:

email:
Phone:

HANDOUT