Managing Difficult Situations in Group Settings
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I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did,
but people will never forget how you made them feel.

~ Maya Angelou
Group Facilitator Responsibility

To ensure the safety and well-being of individual group members, as well as the group as a whole.

Emphasis on safety as perceived by mom

- Structure & consistency
- Trustworthiness & transparency of leadership
- Collaboration & mutuality with participants
- Make no assumptions
- Inclusive of cultural, historical & gender issues
- Ask permission
- Empowerment: giving voice & allowing choice
- Willingness to apologize & be accountable

Trust is not given. It is earned.

Primary strategy to manage difficult situations

1. Consistent group structure
2. Clearly stated guidelines at every session
3. Upholding guidelines
4. Co-facilitation
5. Hold role of facilitator – do not become savior, therapist or problem solver
6. Prepare crisis protocols in advance
Challenging Personalities

- Over talker/under talker
- Chronic advice giver
- Chronically late and disruptive
- Mom in crisis
- Borderline Personality Disorder
- A mom with psychosis

Challenging Situations

- Mom in crisis
- Group member discloses something potentially dangerous or disturbing
- Group member challenging my authority
- Group members violating confidentiality or other group guidelines
- Group member triggering other group members
- Overtalking, interrupting, cross talking, giving advice
- Chronic lateness and disruption
- Mandated reporting

Managing our own triggers and peeves What feelings come up for us?

- Fear of losing control
- Fear of confrontation and conflict
- Fear of not being liked
- Fear of being perceived as an authority figure
- Anxiety about handling the situation perfectly for everyone
- Anxiety about mom’s or child’s safety
- Anxiety that group members may not feel safe
- Anxiety that group members may not return
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Managing difficult situations

Challenging situation: Over-talker
Goal for group member: Mom gets to express herself fully
Goal for group: Every member gets equal air time

Option 1: Let mom talk as much as she needs to
• Possible outcome for mom: mom will feel relieved and heard
• Possible outcome for group: group members will feel frustrated
• Group members will feel facilitator is not in control of group

Option 2: Ask mom to wrap up check in
• Possible outcome for mom: mom will feel hurt and angry
• Possible outcome for group: group members will feel that facilitator is considering their needs too

Option 3: Speak to her after group about limiting her sharing
Possible outcomes

Option 4: Speak to mom privately and assess if she may need additional support
Possible outcomes

Option 5: Emphasize in Guidelines about limiting sharing so that all can have equal time
Possible outcomes

Option 6: Timed Check in
Possible outcomes
Small Group Practicum

Questions?

Please contact us!

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