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National Center for Training, Support, and Technical Assistance (NCTSTA)
1126 Dickinson Street
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**About the National Center for Training, Support, and Technical Assistance (NCTSTA), at PROCEED, Inc.**

PROCEED, Inc.’s NCTSTA stands as a leader in the field of organizational infrastructure development and prevention interventions for agencies working with minority populations at high risk for HIV, STDs, and substance abuse. PROCEED’s mandate to implement a broad spectrum of federal and state programs reflects the reputation and confidence the organization has earned to deliver its services with excellence and a high level of consistency and cultural competency.

PROCEED, Inc.’s Mission Statement: To provide community-based and human services organizations with the tools, knowledge, and skills necessary to enhance, maximize, and sustain their organizational infrastructure and intervention services.

PROCEED, Inc. is committed to providing our constituent organizations with the resources and tools to support and strengthen their respective operational frameworks and enhance their HIV prevention interventions.
About the Group Facilitation Manual:

The Group Facilitation Manual provides a foundation for working with groups, including: skills for facilitating groups; steps to planning groups; and, steps for evaluating groups. These steps can be especially useful if you have little or no experience facilitating groups, or can serve as a refresher or resource if you are currently conducting or planning to conduct groups. The Diffusion of Effective Behavioral Interventions (DEBI) project lists several interventions that are either group based or contain group-based components, such as:

- Healthy Relationships (HR)
- Holistic Health Recovery Program (HHRP)
- Many Men, Many Voices (3MV)
- Safety Counts
- Street Smart
- Together Learning Choices (TLC)
- Voices/VOCES

If you plan to implement one of the evidenced based interventions, refer to the DEBI website for specific information on the implementation of the group-based intervention. Included for the majority of these interventions are implementation logic models; agency assessment readiness checklists; fact sheets; and, procedural guidelines. Visit http://www.effectiveinterventions.org/go/interventions for further details.
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Overview of Groups

Defining Group Work:

Group work:

Goal-directed activity with small groups of people aimed at meeting socioeconomic needs and accomplishing tasks *(led by trained group facilitators)*⁴. The activity is directed to individual members of a group and to the group as a whole within a system of service delivery (modified from Toseland & Rivas, p. 12).

In recent years, group work has become a primary method of service delivery in psychosocial and behavioral health oriented programs. Groups are particularly useful in working with people who have experienced a sense of isolation because of a defined issue or problem; allowing individuals to connect with others with similar experiences. A well-facilitated group can serve as a simulation of relations in life outside of the group with the intent that the group will model real-world relationships and help people transfer the skills they learn in the group to their actual relational experiences with others outside the group. Groups enable people to join forces in bringing about change in their service agency, in the community, and in the larger society.

Group work in HIV prevention can provide the following for group members:

- Members support each other in pursuing personal change goals;
- Members learn from each other’s ways of coping and dealing with challenging situations;
- Members feel less isolated or stigmatized, and are able to express and discuss feelings - People in the “same boat” often more quickly

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1 Words in italics are not quoted in Toseland & Rivas’s original definition.
understand one another than people who do not share common problems and experiences;

- Members learn new ways of being in relationships by developing healthy communication styles and learning - often learning through opportunities in the group to create simulations (role plays) of real life situations; and,
- Members have the opportunity to “give back” – to be a helper and not the one always being helped.

**Types of Groups:**

There are several types of groups. In general, groups have been used for the following purposes:

A. Support – Mutual Aid Groups
B. Intervention Specific Groups
C. Prevention Focused Groups
D. Motivational Groups
E. Social Change Groups
F. Task-oriented Groups (such as planning groups, etc.)

**A. Support – Mutual Aid Groups** provide a support system for individuals who have similar experiences and needs. These groups can be thought of as modeling ways that individuals can help each other because others in the group may have had similar experiences. The group dynamic helps to empower group members, by giving them an opportunity to give back by helping others. Popular types of mutual aid groups include self-help programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous and other 12-step programs; or HIV support groups. Mutual aid groups are often identified as non-structured or loosely structured because these groups are based on what individuals want to talk about or deal with on any given day. Many self-help oriented groups are considered open-ended groups because members come
and go – meaning there is no set number of sessions, or there is a rolling admission based on dropout rates, waiting lists, etc.

Example: In HIV programs, these groups are generally specific to identified populations, such as women’s support groups or support groups for gay men. These groups are sometimes facilitated by someone with a similar experience, who positively models ways of living with HIV.

B. Intervention Specific Groups usually are based on an established program manual/curriculum or group model. Many of the evidence based practices have incorporated group-based components. These groups are structured to incorporate various program activities to help individuals work toward change or development. It is important for group facilitators to understand the various elements of the intervention model in order to adapt it to the needs of their group. This requires time for facilitators to learn about the intervention before the group begins. Facilitators should refer to http://www.effectiveinterventions.org/go/interventions for a review of nationally recognized prevention interventions endorsed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Example: The Safety Counts intervention is specifically designed for people who are using illicit drugs and who have not indicated readiness for change towards stopping their drug use. The intervention is designed to assist individuals in understanding the relationship of their drug use to risk factors for HIV infection, and to assist them in developing a plan for risk reduction. Safety Counts uses individual and group level methods to reach these goals. Two group sessions are planned to identify individuals’ HIV risks and current stage of change. In these sessions, individuals learn from hearing successful risk-reduction stories, set personal goals, and identify first steps to reducing HIV risk. In addition to the structured group sessions, the intervention requires that two (or more) group social events be planned for members to socialize and receive reinforcement for risk reduction. Planned HIV related risk reduction activities are integrated into
In the context of these social events, such as playing a game that reinforces HIV related skills learned in the sessions.

C. Prevention–focused Groups often serve the purpose of motivating individuals to change, to adopt a particular health practice, or to develop other focused goals. In HIV programs, prevention groups are similar to intervention groups because they tend to follow a prescribed method or model (see example above). Non evidenced based prevention groups often provide sessions with similar topics as those from curriculums in manual format, such as identifying risk, and negotiating condom use.

D. Motivational Groups are established to promote healthy practices when people are not well motivated to engage in such practices. These can vary depending on the type of intervention or program model being used. Mutual aid groups can be motivational offering individuals a chance to learn from others through hearing their stories of recovery and change. The Safety Counts intervention is a motivational group, as its focus is to reinforce and promote change based on individuals’ stage of readiness.

E. Social Change Groups are groups that focus on changing a policy, procedure, or practice of concern within either an organization or the community at large. These groups are usually focused on some type of educational or advocacy related issue such as housing tenant group meetings. These groups can have a powerful impact on empowering individuals to create social change. Group process may require a lot of “mental energy”, especially for “consumers” wanting to effect systemic change or contend with bureaucratic barriers. A facilitator running these groups should have some understanding of community organizing principles to manage group process.

F. Task-oriented groups are essentially work groups. Members usually have a specific set of tasks for the group to accomplish by the end of the group’s designated time frame, such as planning for an event, advising an organization on issues and concerns, planning a conference, etc.
Example: In HIV work, task-oriented groups include HIV community planning groups. Often in these groups, people living with HIV and community members with very little group experience are asked to represent their populations by participating in these groups. Their input is valuable and necessary. Careful consideration of members’ skills and experiences should be considered. Orientation on the group’s process and goals is highly recommended for new members or for individuals not having served on boards and committees to encourage their active participation in these groups.

**Summary:**

*Group work consists of goal directed activities conducted by trained facilitators.*

*Group work allows members to learn from and support each other.*

*Group work activities can simulate real life experiences.*

*There are different types of groups, which serve different purposes and require subsequent planning.*
Chapter Two

Planning for Groups

No matter what type of group is being planned, using an “organizational and environmental” group framework allows for an inclusion of diverse practice procedures as indicated by the purpose or purposes of the group, and serves to determine ways in which members will experience the group and, ultimately, ways in which the facilitator works with the group (Garvin, 1997). Using this framework, allows for a more adaptive process for group work, allowing the group to evolve and integrate change throughout the process, based on the experiences of the group. Steps to an organizational and environmental framework are provided in this section to prepare organizations and programs for the planning of groups.

Note: Having buy-in from the organization is necessary to begin planning for a group. Once the organization is on board, time should be negotiated so the facilitators and/or planners can develop a written plan incorporating the steps below. If planning to implement one of the endorsed Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) evidenced based interventions, on the CDC DEBI website, know that many of these interventions provide an “Agency Readiness Assessment” for organizations to use as a guide to assess the capacity of the organization to conduct the intervention. Use that assessment along with the information collected from the planning steps to assess the agency’s capacity.

Steps for Planning:

Step 1: Defining the Group’s Purpose and Goals

Step 2: Planning the group
   A. Deciding on the structure of the group
   B. Deciding Group Composition
   C. Deciding Location for the Group
D. Choosing a time for group meetings
E. Proposing a group preparing an organization for a group
F. Planning for Incentives

Step 3: Getting people to the group: Recruiting and Interviewing Members for the Group

Step 1: Defining the Group’s Purpose and Goals

Planning a group begins with defining a statement about the purpose of the group.

Example: This will be a group for women living with HIV who are seeking ways to negotiate intimate relationships.

Next, a list of objectives should be developed to meet the group’s purpose or goal.

Example: Women living with HIV will learn from other women and from the group intervention methods and activities how to be in healthy relationships; women will learn about sexual relations and ways to be sexual while living with HIV; and, women will learn ways to cope when experiencing challenging situations from relationships.

If following a prevention or intervention model that has already been established or that has been described as an evidence based practice, it is critical to understand the intervention model.

Questions to consider in examining the intervention:

- What are the core elements of the model or evidenced based intervention?
- What populations have used this model or evidenced based intervention?
- Does the intervention provide a curriculum in a manual format?
• Does the curriculum allow for choosing when session topics can be discussed?
  ○ Example: Can the group decide to talk about safer sex in session 3 versus session 5?
• How would this model be useful with the target population?

Facilitators and planners should read about the challenges and limitations of the intervention approach. Articles prepared by the researchers and developers in designing the intervention may discuss limitations to the study. Access to this information is available on the DEBI website for each intervention. Unfortunately, group process and interactions have not been adequately measured in most studies. Talking with others that have used the model or curriculum will provide equally valuable feedback of the potential issues that may arise in the group.

If the group does not follow a prescribed curriculum or an evidenced based intervention, it is still important to have clear core elements for the group being proposed.

Example: If planning a HIV prevention group, do an internet search of HIV prevention groups or techniques to learn about important issues that should be addressed; learn about activities that can be used to help the members learn skills; learn about methods to encourage dialogue; and, learn about ways to effectively manage potential group challenges.

Once an understanding of the group’s model and or purpose has been clearly defined, begin planning the other elements of groups, such as deciding on the group’s structure, composition (facilitator’s factors, size/number of group members, sameness vs. differences among members, e.g., ethnicity, gender); location of group; and, recruitment and interviewing of members.
Step 2: Planning the Group

A. Deciding on the Structure of the Group

• **Structured vs. Non-Structured Groups**

Some groups follow a set of procedures that have been determined in advance, such as in a manual. Others build sessions around issues brought up by the members. Neither type should be conducted in a rigid fashion. Even when using a prescribed manual, facilitators consider issues that arise in the group as experienced by members; otherwise, members can become bored and consider the group ineffective to their concerns. *However, remember to adhere to the core elements and the intervention design if planning to use an evidenced based intervention. Should adaptations be made, particularly to meet the needs of a cultural group being targeted, remember to document these adaptations and provide a justification of why the adaptations are warranted for the particular group.*

Unstructured groups should develop an agenda for sessions and should feel free to introduce structured exercises when they are needed. It is not recommended for facilitators to begin each session by saying: *“What should we talk about today?”* and, subsequently, engage listlessly in a discussion with members that lacks any clear sense of why they are participating in the group and what they are trying to accomplish.

• **Open-Ended versus Close-Ended Groups**

Some groups begin with a set of members who continue throughout the life of the group (close-ended groups). Other groups add members or members drop out from time to time and then return (open-ended groups). The decision of which type of group to create depends on:

• The type of organization - how people enter or leave the organization’s service;
• The elements of the intervention (if using a curriculum or evidenced based practice);
• The purpose and objective of the group; and,
• Member agreements of how the group will be conducted.

As noted earlier, if the group is an open-ended group, the facilitator, at each session, should highlight the purpose and guidelines developed by the members. An agenda is useful in clarifying the goals of the session, helping to “better” manage the group process and focus the discussion.

B. Deciding Group Composition
There are various considerations to be discussed in deciding on compositional elements. This section takes the facilitators and planners through some of the key elements and steps in determining group composition. In considering composition, remember to keep in mind the purpose and goals of the group. Some of the evidence based interventions associated with the DEBI project have specific criteria for composition.

Composition of Facilitators
Compositional factors are important when selecting facilitators for the group. Questions to consider:

• Should the group facilitator have similar characteristics to the group members? How could that be effective?
Inexperienced facilitators sometimes tend to focus on the “sameness” which could result in them being inattentive to the “untold stories” behind members’ experiences. They may overlook the unique qualities that individuals bring to the collective experience. However, this can be the case when the group facilitators are not the "same" as the members.

• What are some of the communicational differences for your cultural group versus those of the proposed group?
• What are some cultural factors that may foster understanding during problems or issues?
Example: If facilitating a group with African Americans, issues about distrust of the system may emerge, such as a discussion on what causes AIDS; or of the Tuskegee experiment (when Black men with syphilis were not told of their diagnosis and were denied treatment in order to make them subjects in a long-term experiment). A facilitator who is African American may be able to relate to these experiences and move the group beyond this discussion to the present impact of AIDS in the African American community.

The above example does not imply that facilitators with cultural ethnicities other than the group members cannot facilitate these processes. Again, awareness prepares the facilitator to manage these discussions. Approach these concerns diplomatically, acknowledge the concerns and re-direct the discussion (unless the intent of the group is to discuss discrimination). If not, the result could be a group discussion on issues of discrimination instead of the group’s goals towards risk reduction.

**Number of Members for the Group**

Deciding on group composition is based on the group’s purposes and goals. If the group’s purpose involves members developing close relationships, plan for a small group: 5 -7 members. Recruit at least 10 people for these smaller groups, to maximize the likelihood of at least seven people “sticking” with the group. This assures a good number of members for discussion at each session, especially if some members are absent due to other life events. Try to avoid the chance that there will be 2-3 people showing up each week for group.

Larger groups can be effective, depending on the group’s purpose. To facilitate intimate discussions in larger groups, members can be divided into smaller subgroups. This allows opportunity for all participants to speak. The smaller subgroups can then report back to the larger group, so that all members can hear a summary of responses. Larger groups could present a challenge if only one
facilitator is available to facilitate the group. There may be too many competing processes that the facilitator needs to attune to in larger groups.

**Homogeneous vs. Heterogeneous Groups**
The other element of composition relates to sameness versus difference (or homogeneity vs. heterogeneity) in groups.

- **Gender:** Experienced group facilitators have written about the effects of gender composition in groups. For instance, studies have shown that women may talk more in all women’s groups or that men tend to dominate in groups where there are women. Think about the following: What is the target population and what are some of their needs?

  *Example: If planning a group on safer sex and prevention issues, the group’s purpose may dictate that a women’s only group would maximize opportunities to talk openly about intimate details such as sex, sexuality, trauma, and victimization. However, in a group targeting heterosexuals, a mixed group of men and women could offer a different perspective. Men and women can role-play negotiation skills with members of the opposite gender, which might prove to be a beneficial and effective learning strategy for both the men and women, and provide a more realistic simulation of negotiation that can be practiced outside of group.*

- **Ethnicity** should be taken into consideration. Again, the group’s purpose should guide this process - who will attend the group? For example, if the group is being planned for Latinas, incorporate questions and concerns specific to the needs of that population in planning for the group.

  *Example: If individuals are monolingual Spanish speaking, have a translator if it is a mixed group with English only speakers. A translator who speaks the dialect of the individuals in the group is better equipped for translating in these circumstances. This is equally important to consider if there are written materials*
that have to be translated for the group members. Imagine what this might look like – for example, will simultaneous translation (Spanish and English) occurring during the group session alienate or confuse members? Will the facilitator be able to manage the competing conversations that are taking place in the room during translation, and still be attuned to the group’s dynamics?

• **There should not be “only one”:** In all cases, one rule of thumb regarding group composition is that there should not be an “only one”. Social comparison usually occurs with group members. When the group composition consists of “only one member from another group”, certain processes can result:

  o Social Comparisons: In some cases, members can feel that they can relate to other members’ experiences because they are from similar backgrounds or have experienced similar issues. They can develop the stance: “I am not the only one, at least six other people feel the same way I do”.

  o Downward Comparisons: Members can engage in downward comparisons (which can have an equally powerful impact), for example: “I thought I had it bad, so and so’s issues are much worse.” Alternatively: “I will never be able to have the success that she has because we come from different backgrounds and I have not had her opportunities”. On the other hand, members could make an upward comparison in a positive way: “If she can do it after all that she went through, I can do it too”.

Social Comparisons can be self-protective mechanisms that further aid in the development of the “We’re in the same boat phenomenon”, but can have the opposite effect when there is an “only one”.

Example: If planning a group for women, there should not be six White women and one African American woman in the group; or one heterosexual male in a
group of seven gay men. Such a composition can make the “sole” member feel isolated and unsupported. He or she may be put in an awkward position of being seen as a spokesperson for an entire group (e.g., “How do gay people see this?” asked to the sole gay group member).

Increase the likelihood of cohesion by maximizing on factors that make the group more cohesive.

- **Other demographic composition elements, such as: age of members, social class of members, educational levels of members, and languages of members.** When picturing the group process and the composition of the group, consider the issues and challenges that could arise. Consider challenges that could surface if group members are dichotomous: middle class vs. poor. If the facilitators plan on a mixed composition, know in advance ways to aid members to manage concerns about their differences should they come up during the group. They usually come up, but the facilitator can use the communication skills such as mediation and neutrality, to promote and encourage other ways of understanding difference.

- **Group members knowing each other outside of group.** Will the group members know each other? If group members know each other, facilitators might want to consider how outside environmental factors can be brought into the group and how this will affect the group. Facilitators can get an assessment prior to interviewing if they know the individuals who will be in the group. This is not usually the case in prevention interventions as the purpose may be to target individuals who have not been previously served. A better assessment could be made when the facilitators interview the potential members.

*Example:* A group where some members knew each other from having been in prison during the same time. This was a good experience in the group because these members did not experience isolation or stigma of being the “only ones”
with an incarceration history. Yet, there were times when issues were brought up that the other member did not want divulged about his past life experiences, such as rumors that he shared a cell with a known “gay male” during prison and performed sexual favors to get favors in return. The member said he was a heterosexual male and did not want these stories divulged in the group.

Example: Group members who were coupled prior to the group. This provided challenges to the group as it was not a group for couples. It was challenging for the individuals in the coupled relationship to separate their individual experiences from that of being in an intimate relationship as a couple. In addition, the couple did not feel comfortable discussing their intimate experiences in the group. Some groups make a rule that they will not knowingly accept a couple into a group, which is not intentionally designed for couples.

Summary:
If the facilitators and planners know the group’s purpose and have established goals and objectives, planning should inevitably consider all of the elements of structure and group composition.

C. Choosing a Time for Group Meetings
Plan for meeting times that work best for the group, the organization, and the facilitators. Having an idea of the composition will better help the facilitators plan for meeting times.

Example: If you are working with members who have day time jobs, consider evening hours. If working with people in an urban area who rely on public transportation or walk, consider a time that will be safe for them to wait on the street corners for the buses or hours that are safe for walking in the neighborhood. Consider things like parking, and how much time it might take to find a parking space. Consider a time that will work for both facilitators. If facilitating a meeting shortly after another session or appointment, schedule enough time to get to the location to make sure the room is prepared.
In considering time, think about “how much time is needed for the group?” A standard time is 1.5 - 2 hours for groups. These decisions should be based on the purpose, goals, and size of the group. Additional time is suggested for larger groups to maximize participation (15 people or more). Whatever time is chosen, stick to the time. Start and end each session on time.

Example: Organizations that use the Many Men, Many Voices (3MV) (an intervention for African American gay and bisexual men) recommended having 7 sessions of 2 to 3 hours each rather than 12 sessions of 1.5 hours each or to have a weekend marathon session. The developers suggest that organizations conduct a formative evaluation to assess what might work best for the men who will be attending the intervention.

D. Deciding Location for the Group
Deciding on a location is important especially for recruitment of members. Once the facilitators and planners have an idea of group composition, plan for a meeting location that would make the potential members feel comfortable and welcomed.

- Choose a meeting space that works best in facilitating group discussions. Too large of a room for a small group, makes it difficult to experience closeness. On the other hand, a small room for a larger group could make the space seem confining or even claustrophobic. Meeting space should consider seating arrangements. Some groups use a U-Shape seating arrangement, others use a circle. Both of the seating arrangements allow members to face each other and for the facilitator to better observe group processes. The circle takes the focus off the facilitator as the lead.

- Choose a neutral location, if possible, outside of the service organization. Find out if there are costs, or if there could be an interagency agreement. Going to an outside agency could present as a challenge. Persons within the
community location may have stigmatizing perceptions about the members or about HIV. While this is a way to educate the community, doing so at the emotional expense of the members is not appropriate.

Example: One of the groups conducted was held at a community center. The group liked meeting there versus at the HIV agency. Some individuals noted that they wanted to meet in a more “neutral” location, instead of at the HIV agency because of fear of being stigmatized. However, members experienced challenges getting to the community center due to the location. Getting there involved taking two buses for many participants. Based on consensus, the group decided to move back to the agency, until another option became available.

- Assess transportation barriers, safety, and accessibility.
- Check Availability - make sure the space will be available on the dates and times when the group plans to meet.

E. Preparing an Organization for a Group

When the organization is prepared for a group, it is important that group members feel welcomed from the time they first come to the organization for the interview, and then later to begin the group. Staff should know of the groups being offered, the name of the facilitators, and the location of the meetings. This will reduce frustrations experienced by some members who show up and are not aware of the name or location of the group. From a cultural perspective, some cultural groups may perceive a “negative reception” as “they don’t want us here”.

F. Planning for Incentives

If incentives for group members are needed, it might be helpful to submit a one page proposal to the organization requesting space, supplies for activities, light refreshments, stipends, bus tokens, etc. Facilitators can be creative and solicit resources from other organizations or groups or from local businesses. If the organization has the resources, these types of incentives are a great way to get people to the group. When known ahead of time, facilitators can decide whether
or not to inform potential recruits of the incentives to further promote the group and recruit members.

**Step 3: Getting People to the Group: Recruiting and Interviewing Members for the Group**

All that has been discussed in Step 2 related to planning and composition factors should be considered in developing recruitment and interviewing strategies. Questions to consider:

- Will recruitment come largely from within the organization?
- Will recruitment take place in the community? If so, where and how will members from the community find out about the group (e.g., at local hair salons; churches or other faith based organizations; social service agencies; or, shooting galleries)?
- How will the group be advertised? Will promotional flyers be developed? If so, consider the elements that will attract rather than label individuals.
- Will others be utilized to assist with recruitment? Peers (people living with or affected by HIV) or former group members are an excellent resource because they can speak from personal experiences about the benefits of the group.

Interviewing members is important so that facilitators can have the opportunity to explain the purpose of the group and get a basic assessment of potential members’ experiences with groups. Facilitators can get “first impressions” which might be useful (but not the only indicator) in deciding on whether an individual will be an appropriate candidate for the group. A brief interview questionnaire has been developed to assess:

- Interest in the group;
- Topics candidates might want to discuss in the group;
- Previous group experience;
- Whether candidates have discussed personal topics in previous groups;
• Characteristics of members—how are they likely to behave; and,
• Availability to attend the group.

At the interview, the facilitators should inform the candidates of the time and day when the group will commence. Individuals can then more adequately assess their availability. In addition, facilitators might want to assess if there are other concerns that would prevent full attendance in the group sessions, such as child care, transportation difficulties, or conflicts with clinic or other appointments. These have been cited as top reasons for lack of participation in groups.

[See APPENDIX 1: Questions to Ask during the Interview].

Once facilitators have made decisions of who will be in the group, a suggestion is to call or send individuals an official invitation to the group. Be sure to state: the time, date, and location of the group. Add contact information (such as, a telephone number for the facilitator and the organization) on the invite. Sometimes it is even desirable to contact individuals the day before the meeting to remind them of the meeting and find out if they will attend.

Some individuals may not have access to phones or stable mailing addresses. If this is the case, and the facilitators want these individuals in the group, plan to schedule a time to meet with and inform the individuals. Make arrangements for notifying them. This may include for instance, contacting the person’s case manager if he or she is more likely to see the member. If making contact with anyone outside of the organization, have a consent form signed by the individual, which gives the facilitator written permission to contact his or her case manager.

**Summary:**

*Groups require planning and begin with identifying the purpose(s) and goals.*

*Planning involves several steps including: identifying structure, composition of members, size, location, and time of the group.*
Composition requires that the facilitator be aware of the various cultural and environmental factors that could potentially influence group process.

Interviewing members prior to the group provides key information to the facilitators as they decide on group membership.
Chapter Three

Overview of Group Facilitation

“I have always viewed my role as a sort of ambassador or bridge between groups to help provide a dialog” (Joichi Ito).

Defining Group Facilitation

Group facilitators:

1) Promote processes that will help the group obtain its goals;
2) Introduce activities that promote goal attainment;
3) Ensure that the groups’ culture, norms, structures, and relationships in the environment are conducive to the attainment of the group’s goals; and,
4) Facilitate group process and take action about the status of the circumstances of individuals and the group.

To paraphrase group experts, Toseland and Rivas (1984), when facilitating groups facilitators “should direct their attention to individual members, the group as a whole, and the environment in which the group functions” (p. 4). In terms of individuals, groups can assist individual members in developing personal goals. These are goals set by individuals during the group process. The goal of the facilitator is to help the group develop as a “functioning group” so members assist each other and the group in carrying out the group’s purposes and goals. Attention to the group as a whole is necessary; otherwise, the group members serve no particular function.

Facilitating Individual Change in Groups

There are several ways of achieving individual change in groups. One approach considers the following:
• One-to-One Interactions;
• Group Interventions on Behalf of Individuals; and,
• Environmental Interactions.

One to One interactions can help group members experience change and learn from others in the group by observing how others react and respond to issues raised in the group. The facilitator’s role is to promote this action through her or his discussions with the members.

Group Interventions on Behalf of Individuals. The facilitator can stimulate discussions among members designed to enable change in a particular member. This includes asking members to make suggestions to each other, give each other feedback about individual actions, or share ways that they have dealt with particular situations.

Environmental Interactions. The facilitator may advocate for a member with other agencies and organizations, may meet with other family members, or may seek to promote policy changes in other systems.

Example: The Safety Counts intervention uses all of these levels of interactions in both individual and group-based sessions. In Safety Counts, through the group sessions (two structured sessions) group members help each other by reinforcing individuals’ personal goals for reducing risk, further adding a level of accountability to themselves and to the group. Individual counseling sessions (one or more) are then provided to discuss and refine the individual’s goals and steps towards meeting those goals. Referrals are offered, if needed, for HIV counseling and testing services, medical services, social services, and or substance abuse services. Follow-up sessions (2 or more) are provided to review the individual’s progress, discuss barriers or challenges to progress, identify additional steps and solutions to barriers, and refer clients to services (if needed).
Skills for Group Facilitators

To facilitate individual change in groups, the facilitator’s role in groups is active, rather than passive. Familiarity with communication helps “bring forth” or increase dialogue as well as action among group members. Facilitation requires a balancing act, as the facilitator’s goal is to promote communication among the group and to model effective communication so that the group members can take on these skills over time within the group.

Group work experts have identified several communication related skills that can be useful in facilitating group process and promoting goal directed action:

- Communication skills that aid in mutual understanding;
- Affective skills – skills in dealing with emotions in the group;
- Cohesion building skills; and,
- Problem solving skills (Brandler & Roman, 1999).

The inventory of skills (described below) was developed by Brandler & Roman (1999). These skills can be used throughout the various phases of group work. The inventory has been slightly modified for this manual, for use by facilitators working with groups in HIV programs and interventions.

[Notes for understanding the section that follows: The skill is italicized. Suggestions for the facilitator are listed below the skill. For example: “Clarifying” – The skill for the facilitator is “clarifying”. The suggestion for “clarifying” is then listed. Thus, a suggestion of how a facilitator can “clarify” in a group context would be: “Are you saying _______? “. ]

Inventory of Skills

Communication Skills: Skills to Aid in Mutual Understanding.

These skills are strategies for promoting group understanding of individual and or group level responses. Use of the strategies, ultimately assists the facilitator to effectively manage and facilitate the group process. Essentially these are active
listening skills that require the facilitator to pay attention to both individual and group level verbal and non verbal responses.

1. **Clarifying**  
   Facilitator: *Are you saying _______*?

   [Facilitator repeats what the group member has said. This is a useful active listening skill which allows the group members to hear “in their own words”, and the facilitator can get clarification from the members. The facilitator can also use the rephrasing skill for clarification.]

2. **Rephrasing**  
   Facilitator: *So what you are saying is _______*?

   [Facilitator paraphrases what the member has said. This skill is useful when trying to get to the meaning of what the member has said. Clarifying is useful, yet rephrasing uncovers the crux of a response, as it helps members know whether they “understand” the member’s response in the same way. Rephrasing is useful if another member misunderstands and then takes the discussion in a different direction. The facilitator can use rephrasing to reengage the member in clarifying his or her point and re-focus the discussion.]

3. **Framing**  
   Facilitator: *I think the larger issue this group has identified is...*

   [Facilitator sums up the responses to explain to the group how their ideas relate to a “larger idea” or concept. Framing provides a “picture” for the group to experience and understand how knowledge is developed, by expanding on the ideas generated from the group members.]

4. **Focusing**  
   Facilitator: *Wait a minute. We seem to be losing what we were talking about...*

   [Focusing the group and re-focusing will have to be done periodically throughout the group process. Facilitator(s) should keep note of when they need to focus – *is it during the discussion of certain issues?* This can be useful]
information for the facilitator and aid her or him in thinking of alternative ways to approach topics.]

5. **Reflecting**
   Facilitator: *It sounds as if you are saying...*

[Reflecting sounds similar to rephrasing. However, reflecting challenges the member to think, explore, and reflect on what has been said – often aided by the facilitator’s coaching.]

6. **Reality Testing**
   Facilitator: *What are other people hearing Maria say?*

[Reality testing allows members to “reflect”, “frame”, “clarify”, “interpret”, and “explore” what the group member has said. This skill will get others in the group to share and add to the discussion.]

7. **Confronting**
   Facilitator: *Every time we talk about using condoms, Joe, you change the topic.*

[Confronting is not a negative process, but rather a skill of “addressing head-on” what the issue appears to be. Confronting can be used when the facilitator notices behaviors being repeated in the group that she wants to draw attention towards. Confronting holds the members accountable for their actions and behaviors, and is particularly useful in identifying how the behaviors might be influencing the other group members.]

8. **Interpreting**
   Facilitator: *It seems that group members are saying...*

[Interpreting is used to “explain or interpret” what the facilitator believes is being said in the group. It is similar to framing, but is not based on interpreting to frame the group members’ ideas to a larger picture.]

9. **Setting Limits**
   Facilitator: *We are not allowed to ... Or, “I want us to feel safe and respected in the group, we agreed that we would not (for example, share “war stories”),*
because they trigger some individuals in the group.

[Having established guidelines at the beginning of the group allows the facilitator to return to the guidelines and remind members of their responsibility and commitment to the group.]

10. Exploration
   Facilitator: Could you tell us more about that?

   [Exploration allows the facilitator to aid the member in providing more explanation of the meaning of the member's comment. The facilitator can ask the member to provide a story or to share an example so that the group can get a sense of what she or he means.]

Affective Skills: Skills used by the facilitator to aid members in exploring affect. Building on the general communication skills described above, affective skills are used by the facilitator to effectively aid members in exploring, interpreting, reflecting, etc. on individual and group affect. Explanations, if different from those already mentioned, are offered for facilitator’s use of the affective skills. However, many of them are self-explanatory as they are essentially building blocks of the communication skills.

1. Reaching for and exploring feelings
   Facilitator: How has the week been for you?

   More specifically, reaching for and exploring feelings in a Safety Counts Intervention could involve, for example:

   Facilitator: You mentioned that you did not abstain last week, was there something about last week that made it a challenge?

2. Reaching for feedback
   Facilitator: What are others in the group feeling about this?

   Facilitating and encouraging members to give feedback is a key component of group work. The facilitator should emphasize the importance of reaching for
feedback when he or she clarifies the roles, and purpose of the group to the members.

3. **Scanning**
Facilitator: *Maria and Joe, I see that you both were nodding your heads to Cheryl’s comment. Is that because you are in agreement with Cheryl?*

[Facilitator looks at individual members during the group interaction, a part of active listening. Scanning allows the facilitator to look for nonverbal cues as well as verbal cues. The facilitator may or may not verbalize all scans; it depends on the purpose of informing the group about this information. In the above example, the facilitator wanted to know if Maria and Joe were in agreement because they had not spoken during the session. The skill discussed below is similar.]

4. **Identifying nonverbal clues**
Facilitator: *I noticed that we are all very quiet today.*

5. **Identifying resistance**
Facilitator: *I think it is hard for us to talk about this.*

[The facilitator through scanning of the group will be able to assess the group’s pulse. In the beginning of a group, this may be more challenging to assess. Therefore, the facilitator may want to take a “wait and see approach”.]

6. **Staying with the resistance**
Facilitator: *I know it is difficult, but let us try to talk about this a little bit longer.*

7. **Connecting behavior to feelings**
Facilitator: *Whenever we talk about...*

8. **Validation of feelings**
Facilitator: *It must be very rough for you.*

[Validation of members' feelings acknowledges that the facilitator is attuning to individual and group needs.]
9. **Listening, identifying conflict and feelings**
   Facilitator: *It seems people want to tell Joe something but are having difficulty – is that what I am sensing?*

10. **Confronting affect**
    Facilitator: *I wonder what’s so funny, Or, I see that Joe’s comment made us all laugh even though he is talking about a serious topic, is there a reason why we are laughing?*

11. **Identifying specific feelings**
    Facilitator: *You seem very sad.*

    [The facilitator through scanning can identify specific feelings and emotions of individuals in the group. If an individual is behaving differently, the facilitator should acknowledge the change in behavior. If the facilitator is uncertain, asking rather than making a statement about the person’s affect might engage the person in the discussion, so that the group can assist the member in exploring the feeling.]

12. **Active listening**
    A group member expresses her anger at her father.
    Facilitator: *So you’re saying you’re angry with him.*

    [Use this approach carefully if it appears obvious or the member may react negatively to the facilitator’s rephrasing.]

13. **Staying with the feeling**
    Facilitator: *I know this is very difficult, but let us try to explore it a little more. So you’re really sad.*

    The facilitator may want to add:

    Facilitator: *Others might be experiencing similar feelings and if we can stay with the feeling, I think it could be useful to all of us.*

14. **Translating the message**
    Facilitator: *I think that what George is trying to tell you is that he is very angry*
with this group...

[At times, the facilitator will need to call out what she thinks is the affect. Doing so in the example above, she will probably get responses from both George and the other group members.]

**Cohesion Building Skills:** Skills to build connections among group members with the purpose of uniting the group - helping them to learn how to be in groups and to learn and share their experiences in groups.

[The first five skills (1-5) mentioned in this section are established at the beginning of groups. Facilitators can reinforce the skills by reminding members of the guidelines that they agreed upon at the beginning of the group. In groups where new members join each week, facilitators may want to briefly list the guidelines set by the group and discuss the role, purpose, and agenda of the group each week.]

1. **Limit setting**
   Facilitator: *People need to come on time.*

2. **Establishing structure**
   Facilitator: *So, we will be meeting every Tuesday at 4:00?*

3. **Establishing purpose and goals**
   Facilitator: *I think we’ve decided we’re here to…*

4. **Clarification of needs**
   Facilitator: *So, we’ve agreed you want to get X, Y, and Z out of this group?*

5. **Definition of roles**
   Facilitator: *My job will be to keep things safe in here and to move the discussion forward with your assistance, and you will take responsibility for bringing up the issues that are important to you as well as share with and/or provide feedback to other members.*
6. **Reaching for consensus**  
Facilitator: *Are we all in agreement that...?*

[Facilitator should note that unless engaging in decision making with the group, reaching consensus in groups is not a regular activity. For example, when developing guidelines consensus among group members is necessary; or when making decisions about changing meeting times or deciding on a topic. The facilitator should be clear about what he or she means by consensus and make this process known to the group members.]

7. **Identifying process**  
Facilitator: *The group seems quiet whenever the subject of the group’s ending comes up.*

8. **Making connections**  
Facilitator: *What John is saying is a lot like what you’re saying, Sally.*

[Group members may feel less isolated when there are others in the group who share similar thoughts and feelings. The facilitator should verbalize these connections when they take place.]

9. **Reaching for commonality**  
Facilitator: *I guess we can all relate to that.*

Alternatively, the facilitator could pose this as a question to the group:

Facilitator: *Can others relate to that?*

10. **Recognition of difference**  
Facilitator: *That sounds similar, except...*

[At times, the facilitator will need to clarify that a member’s comment may actually have different elements that need to be discussed, rather than reaching immediately for commonality. The member is then encouraged to clarify or further explore and explain their feelings to the group.]
11. **Summarizing**
   Facilitator: *So, today we talked about several things...*

   [Summarizing reminds people of all the work that occurred during the group process for that session. Members may not have tied together all of the points, since they were actively involved in the process.]

12. **Bridging**
   Facilitator: *It sounds as if you’re saying something like what we spoke about last week.*

   Bridge together common themes throughout the sessions. The facilitator can ask a question:

   Facilitator: *Does this relate to other topics discussed in previous sessions?*

13. **Using words of inclusion**
   Facilitator: *“We” are saying “our group” feels...*

   [Remember to focus on the “we” in group. Group members will feel connected and will more likely contribute when they feel the group is their group.]

14. **Making the problem a group issue**
   Facilitator: *It seems this is not only Ida’s problem, but the group’s problem as well.*

15. **Mobilizing the group as a therapeutic (or “change”) agent**
   Facilitator: *How can we help Dahlia with her problem?*

16. **Holding the group responsible for sharing information**
   Facilitator: *Is there anyone who has any additional information that needs to be shared?*

17. **Making a member a part of the group**
   Facilitator: *Alice, we haven’t heard from you. What do you think?*
[In this example, Alice may not want to participate. Scanning is important because the facilitator can watch Alice for nonverbal cues before calling her out to talk in the group.]

**Problem Solving Skills:** Skills used by the facilitator to discuss and explore problems experienced on the individual as well as the group level.

1. **Identifying need for a decision and assisting implementation**
   Facilitator: *We need to figure out what we want to do for the last day of group. Do you have any ideas on how we can celebrate our ending?*

   Facilitator could use this skill to identify community resources that might be known to the group members. For example,

   Facilitator: *Several people mentioned that they are new to the area and are looking for addiction recovery groups that might be appropriate. Can anyone help us identify resources that might be useful?*

2. **Clarifying**
   Facilitator: *The issues on the table seem to be...*

3. **Suggesting alternatives**
   Facilitator: *We might try...*

   [The facilitator can suggest alternative options especially when he or she thinks the current approach being used is not working.]

   Example: *In the Safety Counts intervention, you are using recovery success stories on video and group members, for some reason, do not relate or do not “buy in” to the stories. If you know of a peer in recovery that can talk about his or her recovery success story, you could offer that approach as an alternative so that people can hear and interact with the peer.*

4. **Asking for feedback**
   Facilitator: *What do others think?*
5. **Focusing**  
Facilitator: *Can we get back to business?*

6. **Demand for work**  
Facilitator: *We have to address this problem.*

7. **Partializing and prioritizing**  
Facilitator: *What’s the most important part of this problem, the thing we should focus on?*

Alternatively, the facilitator could say,

Facilitator: *You mentioned all of these concerns related to your partner, and little about yourself. What do you think is the most important issue to focus on during the group session?*

8. **Mediating**  
Facilitator: *Let’s see if we can look at both sides that are being expressed here.*

[Facilitator remains neutral by suggesting to the group that there are other ways of looking at issues. This will allow alternate thoughts to be explored.]

9. **Negotiating**  
Facilitator: *Do you think you could agree to...?*

[The facilitator wants to foster action among individual group members so they can transfer those skills to the real world. Assisting the member in identifying and negotiating what they can “actually do” is useful, rather than setting them up for goals that might be too challenging to meet by the next session.]

10. **Identifying areas for work**  
Facilitator: *It sounds like we need to further discuss how social stigmas make it challenging to stay sober. It seems that several people keep addressing the issue, but we have only glossed over the topic.*
11. Confronting the problem
Facilitator: *Like it or not, the reality is...*

Another way to confront is to state:

Facilitator: *You have a situation that needs to be addressed sooner rather than later. How can we plan to deal with this today?*

The more the facilitator uses these skills, the more the skills will become a natural way of relating with the group. As the facilitator becomes more experienced with conducting groups, she or he can adapt these skills to her or his own style and personality – the combination is what makes a good facilitator! Overtime, group members will model the facilitator and develop new ways of communicating and participating in groups. Group members overtime, will take a more active lead in using these skills to address other members and assist in facilitating the group process.

In summary, below are some additional tips that are useful suggestions for facilitators, based on those previously described:

- Be very clear about your role: your behavior more than your words will convey that you are not the teacher but, rather, a fellow learner.
- Be aware of your eyes: maintain eye contact with participants.
- Be aware of your voice: try not to talk too loudly, too softly, or too much.
- Be aware of your "body language": consider where you sit or stand and other ways in which you may unconsciously exercise inappropriate authority.
- Be aware of your responsibility: make sure everyone has a chance to be heard and be treated equally; encourage differences of opinion but discourage argument; curb those who dominate; and, draw in those who are hesitant.
- Be aware when structure is needed: explain and summarize when necessary; decide when to extend a discussion and when to go on to the
next topic; and, call attention to group members when they get off the subject.

- Be aware of your power and share it: ask others to take on responsibilities whenever possible (e.g., taking notes, keeping time, and, ideally, leading discussion) (Human Rights Resource Center, 2000).

Common Problems in Groups

“The greater the loyalty of a group toward the group, the greater is the motivation among the members to achieve the goals of the group, and the greater the probability that the group will achieve its goals.” (Rensis Likert)

In this section, problems and challenges typical to groups are discussed using examples to highlight skills for facilitators. The facilitator should be aware of certain patterns, particularly, in the beginning formation of groups. However, these patterns can apply to processes throughout the group process. Facilitators should process their group sessions after each group session to explore what is working and what is not working. Potential problems include: conflicts about purpose; conflicts among members; no initial commitment to group; and, facilitator focused on individual rather than group process.

**Conflicts about purpose:** How might the facilitator know that there is a conflict about the group’s purpose?

*Example: Terry interrupts Paul who is sharing “war stories” from the days when he used drugs. The group decided in the first meeting that when sharing stories they would not go into detail about the act of using drugs – meaning they could not describe shooting up, or acts associated with using the drug. Terry is outraged and says that she is being triggered and that this is not the purpose of the group. The facilitator can “wait this out and see” if other group members chime in or ask other members to speak about this concern [skill: reaching for feedback]. However, this can be easily solved by going back to the ground rules/guidelines established in the beginning. If the rules are on the wall in the meeting room, encourage members to look at them and modify or make additions based on the group’s decisions [refer to skills: limit setting; establishing structure; establishing purpose and goals; and, clarification of needs].*
Conflicts among members: Conflicts among members should be expected because individuals come to the group with their own set of values, experiences, and communications skills. The above example also represents conflict among members.

Example: The facilitator notices that Sherrie is acting rude to Sheila during the discussion. She is rolling her eyes and sucking her teeth every time that Sheila speaks [skill: scanning]. What the facilitator does not know is that Shelia borrowed money from Sherrie to get lunch and to pay for her taxi. Sheila promised Sherrie that she would return the money two meetings ago. The facilitator may not know about this situation because the transaction occurred outside of the meeting. However, the situation is influencing their behavior in the group. The facilitator should survey the room to see if others are noticing these behaviors. The facilitator could directly challenge Sherrie by asking: “What’s happening here?” [skill: confronting] If you use this approach, be ready to follow up. Sherrie could ask the facilitator: “Why do you ask?” Point out that she appears to be uncomfortable or even frustrated [skills: confronting affect and identifying specific feelings]. The better alternative is to wait it out a bit and see if another group member talks about the issue. Depending on the severity and the impact this situation has on the group, decide to speak with Sherrie and Sheila after the group; or, wait until the following week to see if it continues. Of course, addressing conflict is best if dealt with early on, because the behaviors might continue or escalate. However, remember that the facilitator is there to assist the members in mastering relationships. Reach for feedback from other group members to see if they have suggestions on how the group can manage the issue.

No beginning commitment to the group: The lack of initial group commitment is a concern that can be approached by contracting with members at the start of the group. The facilitator’s role is to aid members in adhering to the guidelines that were set by the group regarding attendance. The absence of commitment could refer to the member’s lack of involvement in the group process, such as in determining group purpose or group activities. To counteract this, the facilitator
can use creative ways to include the individual in the discussion by encouraging the member to assist someone else in the group.

At the beginning of groups, the facilitator may not have an understanding of the individual or group dynamics. The facilitator will have to rely on hunches or “first impressions” and refer back to the person’s interview responses.

- Was the person reluctant about the group?
- How did the person describe her or his style for being in a group?

[See Chapter 2: Planning a Group – Interviewing Potential Members; and APPENDIX 1: Questions for Interviewing Group Members]

Example: David came to a training group for peer facilitators. From day one, he was “grumpy” [skill: scanning and awareness of affect]. He complained a lot about the lack of organization of the group. He appeared not to be committed to the group process. Every time he was asked to participate, he would, but did so reluctantly. The facilitators chose to take a wait and see approach. They based their reasons for doing so on their noticing that in the group the other group members seemed to connect with David at the start of each meeting. Moreover, David was always the first one in the room waiting for the group to start. At the next session, the facilitators decided to present a written document of the agenda for the next 6 sessions, explaining that the agenda was only to be used as a guide and that some changes may be made based on the groups’ process [skills: clarifying purpose and establishing structure]. Because this was a structured group, the members appreciated having an agenda that they could take home. David stopped complaining about the group’s structure. He eventually shared that he is grumpy because he does not get a lot of sleep at night. After sharing this information with the group, David appeared more relaxed, shared his experiences, and offered feedback to other members in the group throughout the remaining sessions.

**Facilitator focused on individual rather than group process:** Focusing on the group process is a skill that all group facilitators have to manage. This is a challenge
particularly for inexperienced group leaders. If the discussion and/or questions are directed only toward the facilitator throughout the group sessions, this is a problem [skill: reaching for feedback]. An ongoing mantra for facilitators might be: "bring it back to the group". The goal of the group is to create dialogue among its members and for the group to be viewed as a collective resource. Facilitators should use the facilitation skills to aid the group members’ development of mutability in providing assistance.

Co-Facilitation

The final topic in this chapter is related to co-facilitation: its benefits and potential pitfalls. Groups can be conducted either by a single facilitator or with two facilitators who serve as co-facilitators. Decisions about whether to use co-facilitation will depend on the needs, purpose, and objectives of the group. For community-based organizations, in terms of financial costs, having one facilitator may be less costly. However, costs should be weighed with the benefits that two facilitators can offer to a group.

Benefits of Co-facilitation:

- Co-facilitators can complement each others’ strengths and “weaknesses”;
- Co-facilitators can both observe the non-verbal cues of group members, and watch for things such as body language and facial expressions, that might get overlooked with just one facilitator;
- Co-facilitators can provide a model of an effective partnership, of two people working symbiotically together;
- Co-facilitators can offer a sense of stability, allowing the group to continue if one facilitator is not able to attend a meeting. This should be planned, however, so members know what to expect from facilitators and can trust the commitment of each facilitator to the group;
- Co-facilitators can teach each other – a new facilitator can observe the skills and learn from an experienced facilitator; and, equally important are the skills of the new facilitator, who may offer fresh insight to what is going on in the group; and,
• Co-facilitators can provide support to each other. Conducting groups can be challenging especially in groups with diverse issues or many concerns. Having someone to work in partnership with to process the experiences of the group is beneficial. It helps both facilitators to become more effective in moving the group towards meeting its goals.

Set aside time for co-facilitators to work jointly in planning, organizing, processing, and evaluating the group. A recommendation is to meet between group sessions to work on some of these tasks. This time provides an opportunity for co-facilitators to learn about each other and from each other – helping them to develop a more positive and genuine relationship and to model to the group how relationships grow and develop.

**Possible pitfalls to co-facilitation:**
There can be some disadvantages to co-facilitation when co-facilitators do not “mesh”. When facilitators are not getting along, group members will notice this energy, whether overt or covert. This could even lead to group members siding with a particular facilitator and developing a dysfunctional dynamic in the group. This is likened to a member “splitting”, that is seeing one facilitator as good and the other as bad. If co-facilitation is done effectively, members should be able to see the synergy between the facilitators.

If group leadership changes through the process, co-facilitators should prepare the members for this transition, as they will be losing a facilitator, while at the same time learning to relate to a new facilitator.

**Summary:**

*Facilitators promote processes within the group to aid the group towards obtaining its goals.*

*Facilitators promote individual change in groups through one to one interactions; group Interventions on behalf of individuals; and, environmental interactions.*
Facilitators utilize various skills throughout the group process to promote individual and group change:

- Communication skills: Skills to aid in mutual understanding;
- Affective skills;
- Cohesion building skills; and,
- Problem solving skills.

Skills when used effectively and routinely by facilitators model effective communication skills for group members.

Co-facilitation has many benefits:

- a second set of eyes and ears to scan the group for verbal and non-verbal cues;
- two people can process group interactions more effectively to assess group dynamics, particularly what is working and what is not working; and,
- Facilitators each come with their own styles and experiences (both lived and professional), which make for a more interesting understanding and assessment of the group’s process.
Chapter Four

Conducting Groups

“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.”(Henry Ford)

A traditional view of groups posits that groups have a development component involving a minimum of three phases: Beginning; Middle; and, Ending (Garvin, 1997; Liebman, 2004; Brandler & Roman, 1999).

Group Development Phases:

- **Beginning**
  - Group begins to form
  - Group leader directs the group
  - Group may feel uncertain

- **Middle**
  - Group begins to function
  - Group leader helps the group clarify its goals
  - Group begins to work together

- **Ending**
  - Group reflects on its experiences
  - Group plans for its future
  - Group celebrates its accomplishments

The processes throughout the group experience are not static, especially if facilitating open-ended groups. Some of the evidenced based interventions only require one or two group sessions. The phases are not likely to apply to these groups because the goal is not for the groups to develop group cohesion. This chapter includes a brief overview and suggestions for conducting groups based on the developmental phases.
**Beginning Phase**

- Group meets and starts its activity.
- Group dependent on Facilitator to direct the group at this stage.

The beginning phase of groups can be likened to engagement. Group members are learning about each other and the facilitator and developing new ways of relating to each other.

Prior to the first meeting, both the facilitators and the group members may have already generated a list of hopes and concerns about starting the group. New facilitators may wonder:

- If members will show up for the meeting?
- Are they prepared enough to lead the group?
- Are they experienced to conduct the group?
- Will they connect to the members?
- How will they connect with the group members and motivate them in the first meeting to keep them coming?

The group members are probably having similar thoughts:

- Is this the right group for me?
- Will I connect with others in the group?
- Can I really commit to the group?

These thoughts are natural to have at the beginning of groups.

**Things to remember at the beginning phase of the group:**

*Clarifying and establishing the group’s purpose.*

Setting the tone in the beginning phase is vital.

- Explain the purpose of the group and the format for meetings and discussions.
- Provide some predetermined guidelines and expectations for how the group will be facilitated.
• Inform members of facilitator’s style and approach to group facilitation.
• Explain the role of group members. Get members in the group to share their hopes for the group – what do they want to get out of the group?

Establishing ground rules or guidelines for group participation.
• Have members come up with guidelines for the group. Begin this discussion by presenting a few guidelines to get people thinking.
• Write guidelines on a large piece of paper and tack the paper to the wall each week until the members have developed norms about the group process. There should be space on the paper for modifications and additions.

Example: Please call if you are not able to attend the meeting; please do not cross talk; show general respect when people are talking; etc.

If there is a member that suggests a guideline and others are not in agreement, for instance: “no leaving to go the bathroom during a group meeting”; the facilitator’s role in this instance, would be to try to reach consensus and negotiate with the group the best way to accommodate the request. The facilitator begins to use some of the skills that were discussed in Chapter 3. Prior to consensus building, redirect the discussion back to the group, and ask the members who disagree to offer reasons for why they disagree and then perhaps offer a suggestion that could work for all members. In the beginning phase, remember that members look to the facilitator for authority. However, begin to engage participation of group members in the discussion since this is important to group cohesion.

Contract with members (develop a working agreement).
It is recommended to develop a working agreement or contract. This is an agreement between the facilitator and the group member. The agreement can be developed prior to the first meeting. A suggestion for facilitators is to wait until the group guidelines are established by the members, and include these
guidelines (be sure to state that they may be modified) in the working agreement. Members can sign the agreement or contract at the second meeting.

[See APPENDIX 2: Sample Group Contract]

Note: Skills discussed in Chapter 3 can be used to aid in moving the group from the beginning to the middle phases of group development.

**Middle Phase**

- *Group finds its feet and develops clarity* of the group’s goals and purpose
- *Group develops cohesion*
- *More disclosure is likely*

This phase is often termed the “work” phase (Brandler & Roman, 1999). By this phase in the group’s development, the facilitator should notice that members are developing group cohesion. If for some reason, this does not occur, facilitator may want to explore issues in the beginning phase that were not dealt with successfully, such as: members may not have developed a sense of trust with the other group members. This is no fault of the facilitator.

Facilitator should continue to model skills and promote the modeling and use of these skills by the group members to move them from being cautious and feeling vulnerable to taking more action in the group. Group members for example, should begin to encourage other members to reflect and explore topics or confront members instead of depending on the facilitator to take action.

In the middle phase, group members appear to be more open and honest in sharing intimate details. Discussions between members are more direct, intimate, and sometimes confrontational. Conflict among group members is not a bad thing, but rather moves them closer towards the goal of addressing their “real feelings”.
Cues signaling the group’s “failure to thrive” have been described by Brandler and Roman (1999):

1. The facilitators own feelings of boredom and helplessness;
2. Group members’ verbal and non-verbal expressions of boredom;
3. A sense of lethargy in the group’s communication or activity;
4. Primarily content related discussion that is devoid of emotional material;
5. A pattern of absences and lateness; and,

Facilitators should be aware of these cues. Suggestions include:

- Asking group members for feedback on how to deal with these concerns;
- Scanning the group to notice when the cues are more likely to be present and using skills to move the group through this phase; and,
- Discussing these “cues” with supervisors and asking for feedback on ways to develop an action plan to deal with these concerns (Brandler & Roman, 1999).

**Facilitator’s can use the following tips to aid group members through this process:**

- *Reducing tension through relaxation.* Occasionally, the group may need to take a moment and do some relaxation exercises to help refocus. The facilitator may notice this either at the beginning or during the group. For instance, the facilitator may notice that when the members come in they appear to be frazzled, so much so that it takes a while to get the group started. The facilitator may want to start with a relaxation exercise to help members become centered, and ready for the group experience. The facilitator may notice that after a particular discussion, members appear tense or tired. Simple exercises can be introduced, such as:
• Having members stand up and stretch;
• Using meditation exercises – ask members to think about a peaceful setting and to go there and experience the setting;
• Take a five minute unscheduled break to re-focus.

• *Create simulations of reality.* Introduce role plays to allow participants to simulate real life experiences within a safe and caring environment. Role plays can be used to model how situations can be handled. Role plays can be used any time during the group process; it really depends on the purpose of the role play. Role plays are an effective method to get members to actualize the skills they are learning in the group.

*Example: John says that he is afraid of what his uncle may say to him when he discloses his HIV status. One suggestion is to ask John to either role play this with another member or ask him to watch as two members take on and act out the roles.*

• *Create support networks among members, often outside the group (e.g. Buddies).* Relationships are likely to form among members outside the group. This is usually a good thing especially if the members bonded around passions and hopes. It can also present a challenge because members may change the nature of the group if they allow their relationship to dominate the group. However, this would be a concern if anyone dominates the group. The point here is that the facilitator needs to be aware of the relationships forming in the group and to see if or how they are influencing the group interaction. In some groups, it might be helpful to develop a norm that relationships among members that emerge outside of the group be reported in the group.

*Example: Group members often develop relationships in the group that they continue once the group has ended. This is common in groups where individuals*
have experienced isolation because of stigma. These relationships can foster positive networks of support for the members.

- **Use activities and exercises to promote group purposes.** Activities can be a great way:
  - To promote dialogue,
  - To get people to open up and express themselves,
  - To help people move through issues;
  - To get members to participate around issues and concerns; and,
  - To help create subgroups or new relationships within the group.

Activities can be used at various phases of the group work process. Some of the evidence based interventions or curriculum based program models may have specific activities designed for each session. Many of these activities will incorporate role plays; dialogue; small or subgroup dialogue; art related activities; listening exercises; homework assignments; etc.

- **Use Icebreakers.** Icebreakers can be used throughout the group process, but should be used judiciously and should have a purpose. At times, facilitators may use icebreakers to break up the monotony in the group.

**Example:** Getting to know you icebreaker (often used at the beginning of the group): One icebreaker that can be used to help participants get to know each other involves asking members about some of their favorite things, such as: your favorite movie; your biggest accomplishments; your dream vacation; etc. The members are paired as partners, exchange information, and then reports back to the group.

During the middle phase, you may want to use icebreakers to help the group move forward.
Example: A fun way to get individuals to open up about their lives is to give them each a coin and ask them to look at the date on the coin and tell the group one “good” thing that happened during that year. This could be tricky if the person does not have any good memories for that year. However, the facilitator and group members can ask the member to think about one thing, even if it seems insignificant to the member. For example: One woman chose a coin dated, 1979. She shared that the year was awful for her because she was being abused, but yet she remembers her mother reading the dolphin story to her over and over again.

Using the coin activity, the facilitator could ask members to describe a situation, which they managed well.

Example: Shawn discussed that in 1976; she was 13 and found a group for others who had experienced sexual abuse. She talked about how she was able to find this group on her own without telling her family. The group acknowledged her strength and resilience. The group helped her realize that she continues to rely on herself only and does not allow others to help her.

**The Group and Endings**

- Members’ exhibit mixed emotions as the end draws near.
- Questions about next steps are raised.

**The Meaning of Endings**

“But all endings are also beginnings. We just don't know it at the time” (Mitch Albom).

Endings for some individuals may be likened to feelings of abandonment and loss; particularly in groups where individuals have invested their energy and shared intimate details of their lives. It will be important for facilitators to process their own experiences with endings as well as that of the group members. This will be a challenge for some facilitators. Facilitators and group members will often want to
avoid transition and termination and, instead, save farewells for the last day. Doing so, does not allow group members to experience healthy endings.

The facilitator’s role up until this point was to develop group cohesion and, at the same time, facilitate the process of personal growth and development through the group experience. The facilitator’s tasks related to endings are as follows:

- To evaluate the group in relationship to achievement of its goals;
- To understand and cope with their feelings regarding termination;
- To maintain the beneficial changes that have resulted from the group experience;
- To utilize skills, attitudes, and knowledge gained from the group in a variety of circumstances; and,
- To seek out resources and utilize services when this is appropriate (Garvin, 1987, p. 213)

**Endings in Structured Groups**

In structured groups, members have some clarity around the start and end date of the group. This alerts them that there will be an end to the group, and allows the facilitator to build in activities toward termination. Weeks before the group ends, the facilitator should remind the group of the ending date.

**Dealing with Ending Emotions**

Facilitators may notice that some individuals “behave” differently during this point in the group, depending on their experience in the group, their level of cohesion and loyalty to the group, and their experiences with endings. Some members may suddenly “hold back” in discussions. This is often a way for them to deny or avoid the issues related to leaving the group. Members could even act as if they cannot wait for the group to end. Some members may begin to appear needy and dependent on the group.
Facilitators should be aware of these typical emotions experienced in group endings and use their skills to explore these behaviors within the group or with individuals:

- Identify resistance;
- Ask for feedback from group members; and,
- Refocus individuals towards planning for the ending.

Facilitators should be open about their personal experiences in the group to help facilitate dialogue around endings. The facilitator should not shy away from discussing endings, but instead model ways of talking about endings, and more importantly, to model successful and healthy termination. This will allow members to learn to model similar experiences in their personal lives outside of group.

*Example:* The facilitator could say: “This experience has been amazing for me. I have learned a lot about each of you and about myself. It will be sad for the group to end, but I know I will forever remember this experience.”

**Reducing Group Cohesion**

The purpose of the facilitator at the ending phase is to reduce cohesion and reliance on the group rather than foster further dependence.

*Example:* If the group has 8 sessions, by weeks five and six, the facilitator can begin reducing group cohesions. Less group focused tasks, and goals that are more individual should be addressed within the group. For instance, use exercises and activities to promote an individual’s strengths, instead of doing group building exercises used earlier in the group formation process. The facilitator can promote dialogue around maintaining individual changes. Role plays are effective at helping individuals act out the ways in which they will maintain changes once the group has ended. Depending on the structure of the group, the facilitator may
want to schedule one-on-one meetings with members to discuss maintaining changes.

Identifying Resources for the Group Members
Facilitators should be aware of additional resources that can help the members once the group has ended. Discussions about resources are more useful when tailored to the group member’s goals and needs. It is useful to discuss resources in the group because some group members may be aware of resources unknown to the facilitator.

Celebrating Endings
The group members should be asked if they would like to plan a celebration of the group experience. The facilitator should provide examples of ways to celebrate endings. Here are some ideas for celebrations:

Example 1: Present group members with certificates for their participation and ask members to share what they have learned from the group experience and how they will use this information in their daily lives.

Example 2: Make or purchase a tray of brownies or an iced sheet cake. Distribute slices. Have each member state their strength and etch the first letter of the strength in their slice (for example, “C” for Courage). They will then be asked to eat the slice to represent internalizing their strengths.

Endings with Open-Ended Groups:
Since people come and go in open-ended or less structured groups, endings often may go unnoticed. Facilitators may want to design open-ended group sessions as a “one session or one time” group meeting; so that every meeting is designed with an ending. The agenda should be designed around discussion of an issue or topic and termination is facilitated by asking group members to provide a brief evaluation of what they got out of the session. Even in open-ended groups, it is recommended that facilitators ask group members to inform the group if they will
be leaving the group or if they will not be returning to the next session. That way termination can be addressed at that meeting.

**Special Termination Issues**

*Facilitator Leaves the Group*

When a facilitator leaves a group, it is important to notify and prepare the members for transition. If a new facilitator will be joining the group, please inform the members of the new facilitator and his or her experiences. Designate a session for the members to bid farewell to the facilitator leaving the group and to welcome the new facilitator. If at all possible, have the new facilitator attend a session with the exiting facilitator.

*Member Leaves the Group*

When members are leaving the group to relocate or for other issues, even including dissatisfaction with the group, the facilitator may want to request that members inform the group at least two weeks prior to their last day. This allows for termination to be addressed and for the individual and group to reinforce skills learned.

When the member leaves without notifying the group, the facilitator should allow the participants to address the absence in a group session (even if done briefly). This is important especially in groups where individuals contract that they will attend all sessions of the group. Often in groups when termination does not occur, members are left wondering what happened to the group member that is no longer attending the group. Even worse, if the person is not discussed or forgotten about, some members may think they are not valued and will not be remembered once they leave the group.

Some groups have had several experiences of loss as a result of violence, illness, death, and incarceration experiences within their communities. In cases of death or illness, members should address their concerns for the member by signing cards, creating a ritual, taking time out to discuss what they learned from this
person, etc. Individuals may experience a range of emotions including anger, denial, hurt, betrayal, acceptance, etc. In planning discussions around death, please be aware of members’ cultural and religious backgrounds.

Example: In a group with a diverse group of participants, when a member died, another member inquired about that member’s soul and asked if he was at peace with his maker. Some individuals were offended by the statement and the conversation flared into an argument. This was fueled because the members’ emotions were already heightened because of the loss. The facilitators responded immediately rather than waiting for the group members to take action. They redirected the conversation to discuss ways in which people or cultures deal with death or loss. Members were asked to provide an example of how their family or culture dealt with death.

Another special termination issue occurs when attendance declines in the group, leaving a small number of group members. If members are not attending (for whatever reasons) or if attendance is decreasing steadily below four members:

- Get feedback from group members as they might have an awareness of why members have not returned to group.
- Be sure to recognize members’ participation and steady attendance.

Depending on the group’s structure and purpose, the facilitator may want to discuss with the group the possibility of adding new members. This will be a challenge for closed ended structured groups unless attendance declines earlier in the group process.

**Summary**

Group work generally consists of three phases: Beginning, Middle and Ending.
Things to remember in group beginnings: clarifying and establishing the group’s purpose; establishing ground rules or guidelines for group participation; and contracting with members (developing a working agreement).

Things to remember in middle phases: assess the group’s ability to “thrive”; build cohesion and reduce tension (i.e., relaxation techniques or unscheduled breaks); create simulations of reality; create support networks among members (i.e., Buddies); and, use icebreakers, and activities to promote group purposes (i.e., to promote dialogue and to help people move through issues.)

Things to remember in endings: understand and cope with feelings regarding termination; evaluate the group in relationship to achievement of its goals; maintain the beneficial changes that have resulted from the group experience; and, seek out resources for the members when this is appropriate.

Remember to celebrate endings.
Chapter Five

Evaluating Groups

The Evaluation of Group Work Practice

“What we call results are beginnings” (Ralph Waldo Emerson).

The facilitators are responsible for evaluating and assessing individual changes in group members; changes in group conditions; and environmental changes. Evaluation is critical for several reasons:

- It allows the facilitators to have a sense of the process over time, and whether it’s working for the members;
- It allows for changes and modifications to be made to meet the needs of the members;
- It allows for individual members to feel that they are involved in the process and that their opinions matter – because it’s their group; and,
- It gives the facilitators an idea of whether or not participants are learning skills or meeting their goals.

Evaluating the group should occur throughout the group process – not just at the end. The results should be used to help the facilitators plan and modify future group sessions.

Evaluations of the group can be

- Self-reflective or group reflective;
- Formal, asking individuals to write responses to a set of questions about their experiences in the group; and,
• Skills based, assessing skills with either standardized or proven statistical measures or scales. If assessing skills or behavior change, having a pre-test at the beginning of the group with the same items is important to assess whether changes were made as a result of the group.

If requesting members to provide verbal feedback, be aware that members may not want to upset the facilitators. They may not disclose their thoughts about the group or directly about the facilitator. This should not be an issue if the facilitator has normalized evaluation as part of the group experience by preferably conducting evaluations at least three times within the duration of the group (beginning, middle, and end). Either way, facilitators should encourage participants to provide honest feedback.

Example: The facilitator may want to state the following: “It is important that you be as honest as possible. Do not be hesitant or fearful of providing feedback. Your feedback will be helpful to me for planning new groups.” When said this way, the members may view evaluation as a way of “giving back” to the facilitator and/or the group.

Evaluation methods can be informal:

• Having the members do thumbs up or thumbs down to express their likes or dislikes for the topic; or,
• Having people discuss every few weeks their experiences with the group. The facilitator can think of this process as a sort of “focus group”. Members can be asked:
  • How they feel about the group?
  • What they have accomplished?
  • How they feel about the facilitator?
  • How the group can be improved, what should be retained because it is working?
Evaluation methods can also be formal:

Forms or surveys can be developed or behavioral health measures can be used to
- Measure members’ levels of participation and involvement;
- Measure group process and effectiveness (functioning level); or,
- Assess specific behavioral changes or skills developed using standardized
  measures, for example: self-esteem; social inclusion; motivation; goal
  attainment; HIV knowledge; condom use; and, drug use.

In some cases, group members should be informed of the aggregate responses to
evaluation surveys so they can interpret the meaning of the data to provide
feedback for improvement of such groups.

[See APPENDIX 3: SAMPLE EVALUATION SURVEY]

 Depending on the type of survey and the purpose and intent for collecting the
data, the survey can be anonymous, meaning the individual does not include their
name or any identifying information on the form or survey.

Facilitators should consult with their organization regarding approval for
collecting identifiable information on surveys. Surveys can include identifiers,
using randomly assigned numbers (so the evaluators and researchers analyzing
data will not know the person’s name, but will have a number or code for data
identification purposes). However, at no time should the name of the individual
be listed in the same location as the identifier or code, except for the master data
sheet that is stored in a secured and locked cabinet.

Facilitators should be aware of educational and literacy levels when developing
surveys or selecting standardized measures. One suggestion is to allow the
members to take the form home, complete it, and return it at the next meeting.
Example: This approach has been used for example at a Methadone Clinic where many of the individuals in the group had low literacy or English was not their primary language. The majority of the group members (90%) returned the following session with their surveys completed. The facilitators did not have to acknowledge their need for assistance in completing the surveys.

Evaluating Attendance

Facilitators should remember to keep a record of group attendance at each session. Demographic information of participants should be recorded (facilitators should have collected this information on the Interview Form; such as spoken languages; written languages; ethnicity; age; gender; and, sexual/affectional orientation). It is important to monitor attendance in interventions to evaluate the impact of the intervention and to identify particular group patterns, such as what sessions might have attracted more members, and who attended the meetings (participant characteristics)? Knowing these factors might assist the facilitator and organization in determining future recruitment and retention methods.

Self-Evaluation for Facilitators

Facilitators should develop a way to evaluate their own experiences with the group [See APPENDIX 4: Sample Facilitator’s Process Form]. These forms can be used by the organization to have a record of the group facilitation process. More importantly, the information can be a useful learning tool for the developing facilitator. The SISTA intervention provides an excellent assessment form for facilitators. If implementing SISTA, use the recommended form.

New or experienced facilitators can use self-reflection questions to further assess their understanding of group work dynamics and group facilitation. [See APPENDIX 5: Self-Reflection Checklist for Facilitators]. After completing the self-
reflection checklist, consider areas that might need improvement, and refer to the manual for assistance in that area.

**Summary**

*Results of evaluations provide facilitators with information to assess the group process over time (i.e., whether the group is working for its members).*

*Evaluations can be informal (i.e., ask group members to assess the group informally in a discussion format).*

*Evaluations can be formal (i.e., use formal surveys to assess behavioral change).*

*Evaluations should include collecting demographic data and attendance.*

*Facilitators should consider doing self-evaluations of their performance with the goal of using the information to enhance individual skills and improve group process.*
Conclusion

Group work is a dynamic process which requires facilitators to learn, reflect, and put into practice what they have learned from session to session. The manual presented steps for starting a group, facilitating a group, and evaluating a group’s process and performance. Use the examples, summaries, and appendices as tools to guide you through the various steps. Facilitators will encounter “unexpected” lessons when conducting groups; however, through a process of learning, reflecting and practicing, facilitators can develop skills to work through any issue that may arise within groups.
APPENDIX 1: Questions for Interviewing Group Members (adapted from Garvin, p. 52)

1. Please indicate your interest in being in a group:
   ______ very interested
   ______ somewhat interested
   ______ not interested at all

2. Please list any areas that you might like to discuss in a group:
   ______ relationship to husband/wife/partner
   ______ relationship to person with whom you live (specify relationship)
   ______ relationship to friends
   ______ job concerns
   ______ feelings of discomfort (sadness, fears, worrying)
   ______ concerns about your future (job, schooling)
   ______ concerns about making an important decision (where you will live; going to school; leaving school or home)
   ______ concerns about stigma

3. Have you ever been in a group to discuss personal concerns?
   ______ Yes ______ No

4. If yes to question 3, what did you think of the experience?

5. Which of the following describes what you are like in groups? Check as many as apply.
   ______ I talk a lot.
   ______ I seldom say anything.
   ______ I make acquaintances easily.
   ______ It takes me a long time to get to know others.
   ______ My feelings get hurt easily.
   ______ I easily tell personal things about myself.
   ______ It’s very hard for me to tell personal things about myself.
   ______ I think I have a good idea of what others think of me.
   ______ I like to stay on the subject.
   ______ I have little influence on others.
   ______ I can influence other a great deal.

6. Which meeting times and days of the week might work best for you?
   ______ Mornings ______ Monday
   ______ Afternoons ______ Tuesday
   ______ Evenings ______ Wednesday
   ______ __ Thursday
   ______ __ Friday

7. What might be helpful to you to make sure that you can attend the meetings?

_______________________________________________________________________
8. Demographic information:
   Spoken languages: ____________________________
   Written languages: ____________________________
   Ethnicity: _________________________________
   Age: _________________________________
   Gender: _________________________________
   Sexual/Affectional Orientation: _______________
APPENDIX 2: Sample Group Contract (adapted from Toseland & Rivas, p.133)

As a group member, I agree to:

1. Attend all group sessions.
2. Arrive on time for each group session.
3. Refrain from repeating anything that is said during group session to anyone outside of the group meeting.
4. Complete any readings, exercises, treatment plans, or other obligations that I agree to in the group prior to the next group session.
5. Participate in exercises, role plays, demonstrations, and other simulations conducted during group meetings.

As the group leader, I agree to:

1. Be prepared for each group session.
2. Begin and end all group sessions on time.
3. Provide refreshments and program material needed for each session.
4. Discuss the group only with my colleagues at work and not outside of the work context.
5. Evaluate each group session to ensure that the group is helping all members to resolve their problems and is personally satisfying to all group members.
6. Provide members with agency and community resources, where appropriate to help them resolve their problems.

_________________________________________  ___________________________
Group member signature                      Date

_________________________________________  ___________________________
Group Facilitator(s) signature               Date
APPENDIX 3: Sample Participant Evaluation Form (adapted from Toseland & Rivas, p. 314)

Was the information presented about HIV prevention helpful to you in understanding your behavior?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Helpful</td>
<td>Somewhat Helpful</td>
<td>A little Helpful</td>
<td>Not at All Helpful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What information did you find the most helpful?
___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________

Rate the effectiveness of the leader in this group session.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Helpful</td>
<td>Somewhat Helpful</td>
<td>A little Helpful</td>
<td>Not at All Helpful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What did you find the most helpful about the group process during this session?
___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________

What did you find least helpful about the group?
___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________

Overall, rate your satisfaction with today’s group meeting?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td>Very Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional comments:
___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX 4: Sample Facilitator’s Process Form (adapted from Toseland & Rivas, p. 310)

Group name: ________________________  Beginning date: ________________________
Workers name: _____________________  Termination date: _____________________
Session number: ___________________  Date of session: _____________________

Members Present: __________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

Members absent: __________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

Purpose of the group: ______________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

Goals for this meeting: ____________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

Activities to meet these goals: _____________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

Worker’s analysis of the meeting: __________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

Plan for future meetings: __________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

Below are a number of statements related to group facilitation.

1. Consider the extent to which they are true for you and check one of the three options in each case.

2. Discuss your findings with a partner

3. In the light of your reflections, think of one or two areas where you’d like to develop in the future.

1. I believe in the learning value of group interaction.
   ___ True for me
   ___ Somewhat true for me
   ___ Not true for me

2. I use a rich variety of learning modes and formats in my facilitation.
   ___ True for me
   ___ Somewhat true for me
   ___ Not true for me

3. I am not afraid of silence and give my group members time to think and respond.
   ___ True for me
   ___ Somewhat true for me
   ___ Not true for me

4. When faced with a challenging situation, I spend some time clarifying what the problem is instead of jumping to a solution.
   ___ True for me
   ___ Somewhat true for me
   ___ Not true for me

5. I am aware of the way my learners (group members) see me and the effect I have on them.
   ___ True for me
   ___ Somewhat true for me
   ___ Not true for me

6. I am usually light-hearted and able to bring my sense of humor into the group session.
   ___ True for me
   ___ Somewhat true for me
7. I am usually observant and able to ‘read’ the feelings behind group member behavior.
   ____True for me
   ____Somewhat true for me
   ____Not true for me

8. I believe that observation is an important part of learning, and help my learners to become better observers.
   ____True for me
   ____Somewhat true for me
   ____Not true for me

9. I am open‐minded and strive to be non‐judgmental in my attitude towards group member learning.
   ____True for me
   ____Somewhat true for me
   ____Not true for me

10. I am sensitive to the changing energies in the group and have a number of strategies for influencing these energies so that they support group learning.
    ____True for me
    ____Somewhat true for me
    ____Not true for me

11. I regularly ask for and listen to group member feedback.
    ____True for me
    ____Somewhat true for me
    ____Not true for me

12. In a group session, I’m usually able to remember what everyone says.
    ____True for me
    ____Somewhat true for me
    ____Not true for me

13. I’m good at summarizing the main points of a discussion.
    ____True for me
    ____Somewhat true for me
    ____Not true for me

14. I am able to challenge student contributions in a sensitive way.
    ____True for me
    ____Somewhat true for me
    ____Not true for me
15. It is easy for me to be patient and encouraging with group members.
___True for me
___Somewhat true for me
___Not true for me

*Areas for further development:*

_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
Bibliography


