

# Running a Successful Group

Presented by

**Charlton Hall, LMFT/S, RPT-S, CHt**

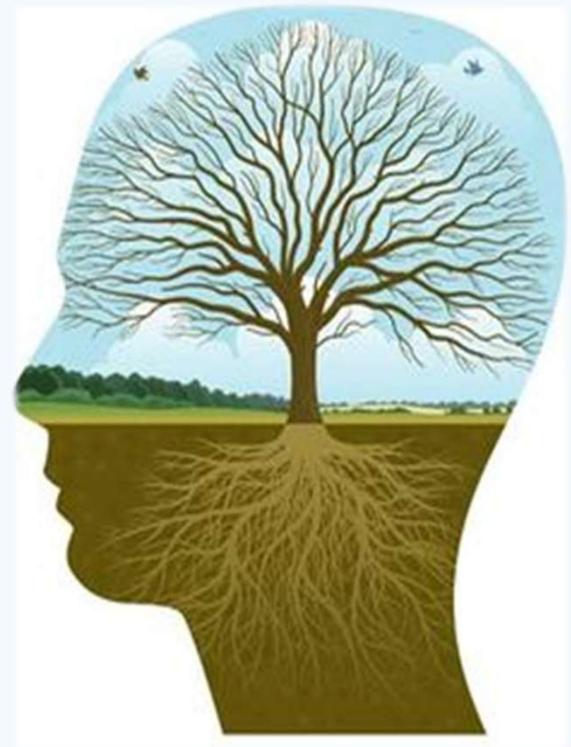
*Mindful Ecotherapy Center*

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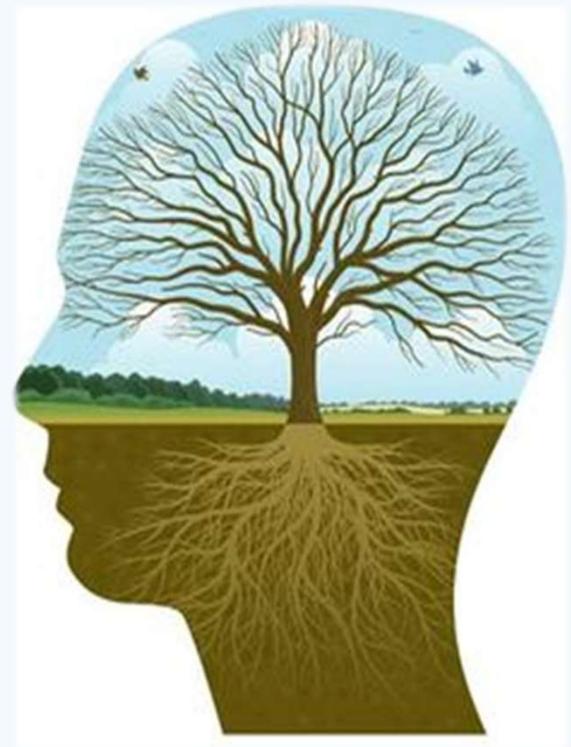
# Overview of Course

- **Part A** covers group dynamics and basics of running a successful group
- **Part B** covers content specific to the 12-week Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy Program



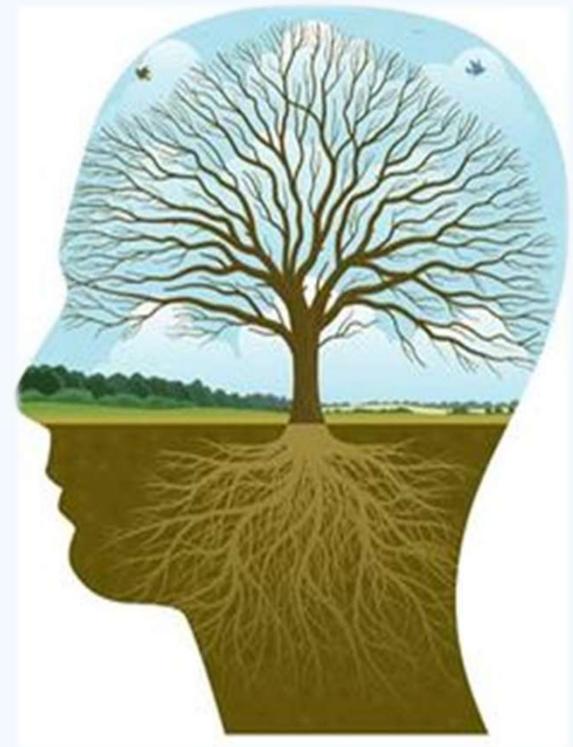
# Overview of Part A

- Defining Group Work
- Types of Groups
- Planning for Groups
- Group Facilitation



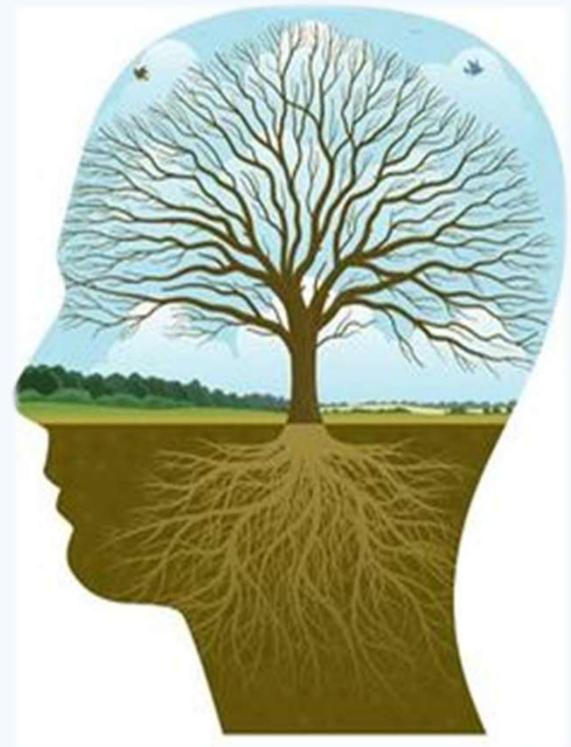
# Overview of Part B

- Session 1: Mindful Awareness
- Session 2: Radical Acceptance
- Session 3: Wise Mind and Wise Body
- Session 4: Letting Go
- Session 5: Living in the Now
- Session 6: Centering
- Session 7: Connecting
- Session 8: Nature as Metaphor
- Session 9: Nature as Teacher
- Session 10: Nature as Nurture
- Session 11: Nature as Healer
- Session 12: Living in True Self



# Overview of Part B

- PART B, *Running a Successful Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy Group*, is contained within the separate pdf booklet you downloaded with the course materials





# **Part A: Working with Groups**

# Defining Group Work

- An activity with small groups of people that has specifically defined goals and objectives
- Goals are directed at meeting specific psychosocial objectives and are keyed towards accomplishing goal-driven tasks
- Led by a trained group facilitator competent in the subject material
- Activity is directed to individual members of a group and to the group as a whole within a specified system of service delivery

(modified from Toseland & Rivas, p. 12)

# Defining Group Work

- Groups have become increasingly utilized for treatment because they are cost-effective; i.e. less expensive than individual therapy
- Groups also allow for mutual support among group members for those who have “been there, done that” and for normalizing what members may be experiencing
- Groups allow members to join forces to bring about change

# Defining Group Work

- This joining of forces occurs in several ways:
  - Members support each other in pursuing personal change goals by offering suggestions and constructive criticism (key word: “constructive”)
  - Members learn from each other’s ways of coping and dealing with challenging situations
  - Members feel less isolated or stigmatized because they see similar people in similar situation
  - Members are able to openly express and discuss feelings without fear of repercussion
  - People in the “same boat” are able to respond more quickly to each other’s needs

# Defining Group Work

- Members of the group understand one another more 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 within the context of the group
- Members often learn through simulations (role plays) of real life situations
- Members have the opportunity to “give back” by being a helper and not the one always needing help

# Defining Group Work

- The opportunity to help themselves by helping others increases feelings of self-efficacy and self-confidence
- By encouraging each other, group members create an environment for positive change rather than for negative ruminations
- Each member, in a successful group, has the opportunity to compare themselves to others in a positive way, recognizing their own strengths while helping others to grow stronger

# Types of Groups

- Support Groups
- Intervention Groups
- Prevention Groups
- Motivational Groups
- Social Change Groups
- Task Oriented Groups
- Common Interest Groups

# Support Groups

- These groups unite persons with a common need, a common experience, or a common interest
  - Common need: Addiction recovery, grief support, trauma support, etc.
  - Common experience: LGBT-Q, natural disaster survivors, family members of people with addictions, etc.
  - Common interest: Ecotherapy, mental health support, parenting, etc.

# Support Groups

- Categories can overlap; a person with an interest in ecotherapy might also have experienced trauma or might be struggling with addiction
- Groups can fall into all of the categories mentioned simultaneously, or focus on a particular category or need

# Support Groups

- Common types of support group include 12-Step programs like Alcoholics Anonymous or AIDS support groups
- Most support groups have open enrollment; i.e., there is no set number of sessions and members are allowed to join or exit the group at any time
- Although some support groups may be led by a mental health professional, most are led by a peer who has had a similar experience (e.g. sponsors in AA who are in recovery themselves)

# Intervention Groups

- Intervention groups are usually organized to address a particular issue or implement a particular type of treatment or program
- Intervention groups tend to implement more evidence-based strategies than support groups; that is, the curriculum used is based on research
- Facilitators for intervention groups usually have more extensive training than for support groups

# Intervention Groups

- Facilitators for intervention groups are usually mental health professionals or at least peer support specialists
- For such groups, the facilitator, at a minimum, should be extensively trained in the particular model being used
- Intervention groups can be either open-enrollment or for a set period of sessions, depending on the model being used
- Examples of intervention groups include anger management groups and DUI driver safety training groups

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# Prevention Groups

- Prevention Groups are generally behavior modification groups that focus on helping participants change a maladaptive behavior or adapt a behavior or series of behaviors that improve mental and/or physical health
- Prevention groups are similar to intervention groups in that they usually follow a scripted agenda or prevention model
- Examples of prevention groups include EAP-sponsored health care groups and anger management groups

# Motivational Groups

- Motivational Groups are designed to increase a person's motivation to engage in a given behavior
- These groups are similar to Prevention Groups as they are designed to promote healthy behaviors and discourage harmful behaviors, but different from Prevention Groups in that they take the participant's motivation for change into consideration
- Motivational Groups allow individuals a chance to learn from others who have been through similar situations
- Motivational Groups utilize the Stages of Change (to be covered later in this presentation) to enhance motivation

# Social Change Groups

- Social Change Groups focus on changing a policy, procedure, or practice of concern within either an organization or the community at large
- Usually focused on some type of educational or advocacy-related issue such as AIDS awareness, human rights, or mental health issues
- Such groups work to empower individuals for making change in society
- Facilitators organizing such groups usually have an in-depth understanding of community organization, activism, local, state, and federal laws, and motivational speaking

# Task-Oriented Groups

- Task-oriented groups are essentially work groups
- Such groups come together for a set period of time to accomplish a common goal
- Examples of task-oriented groups include planning for an event, advising an organization on issues and concerns, planning a conference, or organizing a political campaign

# Common Interest Groups

- Common Interest Groups are groups that cater to an interest in a particular topic or activity
- Participants share their knowledge and skills on the chosen topic with other members
- Examples of Common Interest Groups include mindful meditation groups, hiking groups, ecotherapy groups, and outdoor sports groups

# Summary

- Group work consists of goal directed activities usually conducted by trained group facilitators
- Group work allows members to learn from and support each other
- Group work activities can simulate real life experiences through role playing
- There are different types of groups, which serve different purposes and require subsequent planning

# Summary

- When planning a group, some factors to be considered are:
  - The type of group being offered
  - The target audience of the group
  - The level of skill of participants in the group
  - The training of the facilitator(s)
  - The motivational stage of change of members of the group

# Planning for Groups

## 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

**Step 3:** Recruiting and Interviewing Members for the Group

# Planning for Groups

## Step 1

Create a statement of purpose/mission statement for the group.

Example: This will be a group for trauma survivors to learn mindfulness and ecotherapy techniques as a coping strategy



# Planning for Groups

## Step 1

What are the group's goals?

Example: This will be a group that teaches participants how to use mindfulness and ecotherapy to overcome trauma

(Helpful to list particular techniques being used)



# Planning for Groups

## Step 1

What are the group's goals?

**NOTE:** If you are using a particular model or manual it is critical that facilitators be well-versed in the model and its techniques



# Planning for Groups

## Questions to consider when selecting a model or program:

- Is the model evidence-based?
- What are the model's core skills/elements?
- What populations have used this model or evidenced-based intervention?
- What populations have benefitted from this model or evidence-based intervention?
- What diagnoses have benefitted from this model or evidence-based intervention?

# Planning for Groups

## Questions to consider when selecting a model or program:

- Does the intervention provide a curriculum in a manual format, or will one have to be created?
- Does the curriculum allow for flexibility in choosing when session topics can be discussed?
- Example: Can the group decide to talk about trauma in session 3 versus session 5?
- How would this model be useful with the target population?

# Planning for Groups

## Questions to consider when selecting a model or program:

- What are the challenges or limitations of the model being considered?
- Example: Ecotherapy is outdoors (usually) and privacy is a concern; also, mobility may be a concern for the handicapped in areas with rough terrain

# Planning for Groups

**Questions to consider when selecting a model or program:**

- Even if the group doesn't use a core curriculum or evidence-based model, is there still a clear and concise list of core elements the group will focus on?

# Planning for Groups

## Questions to consider when selecting a model or program:

- Example: If planning an ecotherapy group, do an internet search 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; be familiar with ecotherapy topics and lingo, and learn about ways to effectively manage potential group challenges.

# Planning for Groups

Once a group description has been created and a model for intervention has been selected, plan other elements of the group, including:

- The group's structure
- Composition
- Location
- Recruitment of members
- Signing up members

# Planning for Groups

Factors influencing these decisions include:

- Facilitator to participant ratio (how many facilitators are needed?)
- Maximum and minimum number of members for the group
- Facility selection (will available facilities accommodate group size?)
- Individual group member characteristics
  - Same sex/gender?
  - Co-ed?
  - People with a particular diagnosis (e.g. all people with addiction issues)?
  - People with a particular life experience (e.g. divorcees)
  - Is ethnicity a factor?

# Planning for Groups

- Is the chosen location easily accessible to all members?
- Is there sufficient media presence to get the word out about the group?
- Insurance factors, safety issues, etc. for chosen location?
- Cost of facilities?

# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

Planning the Group

### **Deciding on the Structure of the Group:**

Will your group be structured or non-structured?



# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### **Structured Groups:**

Some structured groups follow a manual or a set curriculum. Others have a flexible outline that can change as long as all key points are covered.

More structured groups are easier for less experienced facilitators.



# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

Planning the Group

### **Structured Groups:**

Facilitators should try not to be too rigid in application of curriculum, or members will get bored and leave the group. Leave room for interaction within the group.



# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

Planning the Group

### **Non-structured Groups:**

Non-structured groups are more 'seat of the pants;' where group members raise a particular issue and then the group and facilitator address that issue.



# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### **Non-structured Groups:**

With a non-structured group, the facilitator will need more training and/or experience in order to keep the group focused.



# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### **Non-structured Groups:**

With a non-structured group, the facilitator will need more training and/or experience in order to keep the group focused.



# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### **Open-ended versus Closed-ended Groups:**

Open-ended groups have no set start/end date. Closed-ended groups start and end within a specified time frame.



# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### **Open-ended versus Closed-ended Groups:**

Open-ended groups have no set number of members; members are free to join or leave at any time.



# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### **Open-ended versus Closed-ended Groups:**

If an open-ended group, the facilitator should briefly state the purpose of the group at the beginning of each meeting.



# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### **Open-ended versus Closed-ended Groups:**

If an closed-ended group, members should have an agenda or an outline of the purpose of each session.



# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### **Open-ended versus Closed-ended Groups:**

Closed-ended groups start and end with a specific number of participants who must all be enrolled prior to the first group meeting.



# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

Whether or not a group is closed or open depends on:

- Type of organization
- If using a set curriculum or model
- Objective of the group
- Member agreements of how the group will be conducted



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# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### Homogeneous vs. Heterogeneous Groups

- Homogeneous groups: Restricted to members having one or more characteristics in common
- Heterogeneous Groups: Open to anyone



# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### Homogeneous vs. Heterogeneous Groups

- Example of a homogeneous group: Group where all members are the same sex
- Rationale: 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.



# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### Homogeneous vs. Heterogeneous Groups

- When deciding whether to make the group homogeneous or heterogeneous, think about what the target population needs
- Example: A rape survivors group might work better as all same sex

(Not that men don't get raped too, but studies show that such groups are better when homogeneous based on the sex of the victim)



# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### Homogeneous vs. Heterogeneous Groups

- Sometimes the needs of the target group's population might be better met in a heterogeneous group
- Example: In a heterosexual group on relationships, a mixed group of men and women can with members of the opposite gender
- This might prove to be an effective learning strategy for both the men and women
- Would provide a more realistic simulation of negotiation that can be practiced outside of group



# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### Homogeneous vs. Heterogeneous Groups

- If you cannot avoid an 'only one' situation, as facilitator work to make the 'only one' feel welcome
- Encourage sharing and interaction between the sole individual and the rest of the group



# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### Homogeneous vs. Heterogeneous Groups

- Try to avoid having 'only one' member of a group with a distinguishing characteristic
- Example: The only woman in an all-male group, or the only African-American in a group of Caucasians
- Such a situation makes the 'only one' feel isolated and detached



# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### Other Group Composition Factors

- Age of members
- Socioeconomic status of members
- Religion of members
- Political Affiliation of members
- Sexual orientation of members



# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### Other Group Composition Factors

- Education level of members
- Native language of members
- Health of members (healthy vs. handicapped or chronically ill)
- Marital status of members



# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### Number of members for the group

- If you want your group to develop tight bonds with each other, restrict group size to between 5 and 7 members
- Try to have no more than a dozen members per facilitator



# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### Number of members for the group

- Groups larger than 12 tend to splinter and start forming their own coalitions, driving the group away from topic and purpose
- Larger groups can be successful, but just make sure to keep the facilitator/participant ratio at 1 to 12



# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### Number of members for the group

- Rule of thumb: Figure on about 20% attrition
- If you want your group to have 7-8 members who stay, recruit about 10
- Almost all groups experience attrition



# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### Number of members for the group

- To facilitate discussion in larger groups, form 'breakout' groups of no more than 5 to 7 people each



# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### Selecting Facilitators

Questions to consider when selecting facilitators:

- Would it be effective for the facilitator to have similar character traits to the group members (e.g. a person recovering from addiction facilitating an addiction recovery group)

# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### Selecting Facilitators

Questions to consider when selecting facilitators:

- Are there any communication difficulties for the facilitator's cultural group, ethnicity, etc. vs. versus those of the proposed group? (e.g. a Christian facilitator leading a group composed largely of Muslims)

# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### Selecting Facilitators

Questions to consider when selecting facilitators:

- Are there any cultural or ethnic factors or commonalities that could help facilitators and group members achieve common ground?

# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### Selecting Facilitators

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).

# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### Selecting Facilitators

A facilitator who is African American may be able to better relate to these experiences and move the group beyond this discussion to the present impact of AIDS in the African American community.

# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### Selecting Facilitators

This doesn't imply that facilitators with cultural ethnicities other than the group members cannot facilitate these processes.

Awareness and sensitivity to cultural and ethnic differences prepares the facilitator to manage these discussions.

A good facilitator can acknowledge the concerns and re-direct the discussion back to the chosen topic.

If not, the result could be that the group discussion veers off-topic.

# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### Choosing a Time for Group Meetings

Try to arrange a time for group meetings that best serves the greatest number of group members

Example: If members work during the day, hold groups in the evening.

If in an urban area consider a time that will be safe for participants to wait for buses taxis (daylight hours). How much time might it take to find a parking space?

# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### Choosing a Time for Group Meetings

Factor in how much time would be needed for each group (groups average 1-2 hours). Don't forget to factor in Q&A time if needed. The larger the group, the more time you will need so everyone will have a chance to participate.

Start and stop on time. If you wait for stragglers, you will find yourself starting later and later each week.

# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### Selecting a location

Obviously if you're conducting an ecotherapy group you'd want to hold it outdoors if possible, but also have a contingency plan for bad weather (i.e., a nearby gazebo or picnic shelter, or other indoor building).

Also bear in mind any physical limitations or handicaps group participants might have.

# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

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Obviously if you're conducting an ecotherapy group you'd want to hold it outdoors if possible, but also have a contingency plan for bad weather (i.e., a nearby gazebo or picnic shelter, or other indoor building).

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# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### Selecting a location

Insurance concerns: Need to have, at minimum, a slip-and-fall policy; if outdoors, check with your insurance provider to see if there are any site-specific concerns (e.g., presence of wild animals, poisonous plants, dangerous terrain)

# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### Selecting a location

Location is key in recruiting members for groups. Accessibility and available public transportation (if needed) are concerns, as well as handicapped accessibility, parking, and facilities.

If outdoors, are there restrooms nearby? Will restaurants or other amenities be a concern?

# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### Selecting a location

Consider comfort of attendees. If outdoors, will certain months be too hot or too cold? What about prevailing weather patterns? Is frequent rain or other inclement weather a concern?

Are there places to sit? If using workbooks, are there tables that participants can use for writing?

# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### Selecting a location

If meeting indoors, is the space conducive to group interaction? Putting too many people into a small area can make the group feel claustrophobic, but putting a small group into a large area makes it hard for group closeness and interaction. Also be aware of local fire codes regarding occupancy restrictions and don't violate maximum occupancy for your location.

# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### Selecting a location

Consider seating arrangements as well. For didactic groups, rows facing the facilitator are preferred. If you want to foster more interaction, consider having people sit in a circle. A u-shaped seating arrangement is a good compromise between the two.

# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### Selecting a location

If an organization is sponsoring the group, try to choose a neutral location not in the organization's facilities if possible to avoid implied endorsement of the group's activities by the sponsoring organization.

Example: Holding a LGBT-Q support group in a church might make members unconsciously hesitant to speak out

# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### Selecting a location

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Example: Holding a LGBT-Q support group in a church might make members unconsciously hesitant to speak out

# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### Selecting a location

If it is not possible to select a neutral location, include a disclaimer either at the first group session or somewhere in the promotional materials stating that the opinions of the sponsoring organization are not necessarily the opinions of the group or the facilitator.

# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### Selecting a location

Check availability – is the chosen location going to be available for the group's chosen meeting times?

This is critical if using outdoor spaces. Check to see if other events are planned in the park/outdoor space for those dates. Try to avoid busy holiday times if possible.

# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### Selecting a time

Time for group meetings will depend on three major factors:

1. Times your facility is available
2. Times that are convenient for your potential group members
3. Times that facilitator(s) are available

# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### Selecting a time

While some groups choose to meet on weekends, not everyone is willing to give up weekend time for group activities.

If your group is largely composed of 9 to 5 workers, then a weekday evening might be better.

# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### Selecting a time

Know your audience; if you live in the Bible Belt, for example, Wednesday nights might be difficult since most churches hold services then.

Be aware of sports seasons and other special events as well (scheduling a group when Monday night football is on will probably eliminate football fans from your group)

# Planning for Groups

## Step 2

### Selecting a time

It may help to have group members vote on meeting times. Give them a list of possible times then let them select which time works best for them, then second best time, etc. with the understanding that the facilitator(s) have the final decision.

# Planning for Groups

## Step 3

### Recruiting and Interviewing Members for the Group

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 churches or other faith based organizations; social service agencies; or other community organizations)?

# Planning for Groups

## Step 3

### Recruiting Members for the Group

- How will the group be advertised?
  - Will promotional flyers be developed?
  - Social media?
  - Other advertising outlets?
- Will others be asked to assist with recruitment?
  - Peers or former group members are an excellent resource

# Planning for Groups

## Step 3

### Interviewing Members for the Group

- Interviewing ahead of time clears up any misconceptions about the group's purpose and allows facilitators to see if the person would be a good fit for the group
- Interviews can be conducted by telephone or face-to-face. Personal face-to-face interviews are better if that option is available, but telephone interviews are also acceptable.
- A questionnaire should be created outlining some basic interview topics

# Planning for Groups

## Step 3

### Interviewing Members for the Group

Questions to consider:

What is the person's interest in the group?

What topics would the person like to discuss in the group?

Has the candidate ever attended similar groups? If so, what was that experience like?

Is the candidate comfortable discussing personal issues in a group?

What does the person hope to get out of the group?

# Planning for Groups

## Step 3

### Interviewing Members for the Group

Questions to consider:

- Is child care a consideration?
- What about transportation difficulties, or conflicts with?
- What about conflicts with other appointments?

These have been cited as top reasons for lack of participation in groups.

# Group Facilitation

## Defining Group Facilitation

1. Facilitators promote processes that will help the group obtain its goals
2. Facilitators lead activities that promote goal attainment
3. Facilitators insure that the group's culture, norms, structures, and relationships are conducive to the attainment of the group's goals
4. Facilitators direct group process and take action about the status of the circumstances of individuals and the group

# Group Facilitation

## Defining Group Facilitation

According to Toseland and Rivas (2009), facilitators “should direct their attention to individual members, the group as a whole, and the environment in which the group functions”



# Group Facilitation

## Individual Members

Facilitators should consider the level of change of each member of the group and plan accordingly using the Transtheoretical Model (TTM) of Stages of Change:

1. Pre-contemplational
2. Contemplational
3. Preparation
4. Action
5. Maintenance

# Group Facilitation

## Individual Members

Precontemplational Stage = “I don’t have a problem”

- The ‘denial’ stage
- May blame others for their difficulties rather than accepting personal responsibility
- As facilitator should move such a person towards the Contemplational stage by developing discrepancies
- Gently challenge statements that lead to denial

# Group Facilitation

## Individual Members

Precontemplational Stage = “I don’t have a problem”

- Challenge by developing discrepancies
- “I don’t understand. You say you don’t have a problem with the way your life is going, yet you enrolled in this Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy program. Could you please explain what you hope to learn here?”
- For such individuals, developing discrepancies might include statements like, “How have you been living your life to this point, and are you happy with the results? How would you like your life to be different after completing this program?”

# Group Facilitation

## Individual Members

Contemplational Stage = “Okay, maybe I do have a problem”

- Person is willing to consider that there may be a problem
- As Facilitator with a person at this stage, you would move individuals towards Preparation by asking two questions:
  - a. If you did have a problem, what would be some signs that would tell you that there was a problem? What would it look like?
  - b. If you did not have a problem, what would that look like?
- Use the answers to these two questions to help determine which category applies to their current situation

# Group Facilitation

## Individual Members

Preparation Stage – “I definitely have a problem, and this is what I need to do about it”

- Person has admitted that there is a problem
- Facilitator helps the person to assess strengths and weaknesses, and to formulate a change plan that addresses needs
- Facilitator helps the student to execute the change plan by moving to the Action phase

# Group Facilitation

## Individual Members

Action Stage – “I’m now doing something to address the problem”

- Facilitator and the student work together to create change, guided by the student’s change plan
- The exercises are designed to facilitate motivation for change
- This motivation for change is analogous to the Performing stage of group dynamics (next section on “*Group as a Whole*”)

# Group Facilitation

## Individual Members

Maintenance Stage – “I’ve implemented my change plan, fine-tuned it by troubleshooting, and now I’m going to stay with the program”

- Plan for change has been formulated
- Facilitator has helped the students to troubleshoot the plan
- Student implements it
- If the plan is sound, then the Maintenance stage has been achieved
- Maintenance means that the student has created a change plan that works in the real world

# Group Facilitation

## Individual Members

### Maintenance Stage - continued

- If an unforeseen circumstance occurs that causes the student to relapse (i.e., to return to previous problem behaviors and modes of thinking), then he/she returns to the change plan, incorporates the new situation, and comes up with a potential solution to the unforeseen crisis

# Group Facilitation

## Individual Members

Maintenance Stage - continued

- **CAUTION:** As a facilitator, your goal is not to solve problems for your students. Your goal is to help them figure out how to solve their own problems. If you solve their problems for them, you will have created a situation of dependency. A good rule of thumb here is “Don’t work harder than your students.”

# **Group Facilitation**

## **The Group as a Whole**

The next major task of the facilitator is to address and work with the group as a whole. This requires different skills than working with individuals within a group.

Group work is aided by Bruce Tuckman's (1965) stages of the group process.

# Group Facilitation

## The Group as a Whole

Bruce Tuckman's (1965) stages of the group process:

1. Forming
2. Storming
3. Norming
4. Performing
5. Adjourning



# Group Facilitation

## The Group as a Whole

### Forming Stage

- Group is getting to know each other & learning the rules
- This applies to the unspoken rules as well as the stated group rules
- Group dynamics are arranging, and trust is being developed between group members and the facilitator(s)

# Group Facilitation

## The Group as a Whole

### Forming Stage

- At this stage, the facilitator's goal is to develop an atmosphere of trust and safety for all group members
- Be aware that many participants may be leery of sharing their thoughts and feelings with a group of strangers
- Be patient and gentle with them as you prepare them for the next stage

# Group Facilitation

## The Group as a Whole

### Storming Stage

- Group members have settled into the culture of the group, and jockeying for position has begun
- Group will try to establish a pecking order

# Group Facilitation

## The Group as a Whole

### Storming Stage

- Facilitator's task is to work to actively engage the withdrawn members of the group while preventing the stronger personalities from dominating each session
- One way to do this is to allow each person a turn to speak

# Group Facilitation

## The Group as a Whole

### Norming Stage

- Trust bonds have been established, the pecking order has been decided, and group members have settled into their roles
- Each member knows what the group's norms are, what's expected of them, what's expected of the facilitator, and how the group's culture works

# Group Facilitation

## The Group as a Whole

### Norming Stage

- Facilitator's goal is to work towards continuing to enforce the group's established norms in a solution-focused way so that all activities of the group are leading towards problem-solving rather than blaming, shaming, or guilt-tripping
- Be aware of the dangers of "groupthink"
- Groupthink occurs when a person or persons with good ideas keep those ideas to themselves because they perceive that such a recommendation might go against the group culture

# Group Facilitation

## The Group as a Whole

### Norming Stage

- Try to maintain an open and accepting culture so that all opinions are heard and evaluated, without letting one or two individuals dominate the conversation

# Group Facilitation

## The Group as a Whole

### Performing Stage

- Group members are actively engaged in discussion
- They support each other, turn in their homework, and demonstrate that they are motivated for change  
*(the Action phase of the Stages of Change above)*

# Group Facilitation

## The Group as a Whole

### Performing Stage

- Facilitator's goal is to keep all group members performing by continuing to work towards a solution-focused approach to problem-solving
- Facilitator should avoid the temptation to solve problems for group members
- Facilitator helps group members to learn to solve their own problems so that a state of dependence upon the facilitator is not created.
- This is done by soliciting suggestions for possible solutions from the group as a whole

# Group Facilitation

## The Group as a Whole

### Adjourning Stage

- Group is preparing to dissolve
- Time for celebrating successes and learning to use the skills on their own without having to rely on the group for support
- Facilitator's goal is to work towards successful transition planning
- This includes linking group members to needed community supports, discussing how to continue to successfully implement their change plans, and rewarding group members for their progress

# Group Facilitation

## The Group as a Whole

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# Group Facilitation

## Achieving Change in Groups

There are several ways of achieving change in groups:

- One-to-One Interactions
- Group Interventions on Behalf of Individuals
- Environmental Interactions



# **Group Facilitation**

## **Achieving Change in Groups**

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 Facilitation**

## **Achieving Change in Groups**

Group Interventions on Behalf of Individuals occur when the facilitator stimulates 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.

# **Group Facilitation**

## **Achieving Change in Groups**

Environmental Interactions when the facilitator advocates for a member with other agencies and organizations, meets with other family members, or seeks to promote policy changes in other systems.

# **Group Facilitation**

## **Achieving Change in Groups**

Environmental Interactions when the facilitator advocates for a member with other agencies and organizations, meets with other family members, or seeks to promote policy changes in other systems.

# **Group Facilitation**

## **Skills a Good Facilitator Needs**

As a Group Facilitator, you will need several skills:

1. Active listening
2. Connecting
3. Blocking
4. Summarizing
5. Positive Regard
6. Confronting
7. Inspiring

# **Group Facilitation**

## **Skills a Good Facilitator Needs**

### **Active Listening**

Paying attention not only to the words being spoken, but also to the tone and the body language. A good facilitator knows that it is possible to validate a person's feelings without necessarily having to agree with or condone those feelings or the behaviors they generate.



# **Group Facilitation**

## **Skills a Good Facilitator Needs**

### **Connecting**

Being able to help members overcome obstacles to connecting with each other so that the group can become a functioning, cohesive unit.

# **Group Facilitation**

## **Skills a Good Facilitator Needs**

### **Blocking**

Blocking involves keeping more aggressive members from taking over the group. A good facilitator will redirect less focused group members or otherwise move to prevent them from dominating the discussion or disrupting the group. Skill in blocking requires being firm without becoming confrontational or aggressive.

# **Group Facilitation**

## **Skills a Good Facilitator Needs**

### **Summarizing**

A good facilitator can review what has happened in a session and summarize it succinctly for all members of the group so that they are better able to integrate the events of a particular session.

# **Group Facilitation**

## **Skills a Good Facilitator Needs**

### **Positive Regard**

Possibly the most important facilitating skill, positive regard means keeping a person-focused attitude by allowing group members to set their own goals and outcomes. Positive regard also means validating the thoughts and feelings of all group members without necessarily having to agree with or condone those thoughts or feelings.

# **Group Facilitation**

## **Skills a Good Facilitator Needs**

### **Confronting**

A facilitator will be required to confront patterns of thought and behavior that lead to detrimental outcomes or disrupt the group. This is best accomplished by developing discrepancies between the group member's stated goals and their behavior.

# **Group Facilitation**

## **Skills a Good Facilitator Needs**

### **Confronting**

For example, if a group member's goal is to become responsible for his/her own personal journey, yet that individual continues to act in ways that demand that others be responsible for that individual's journey, then there is a discrepancy. A good facilitator can gently point out this discrepancy in a patient and kind manner so that change and growth may occur.

# **Group Facilitation**

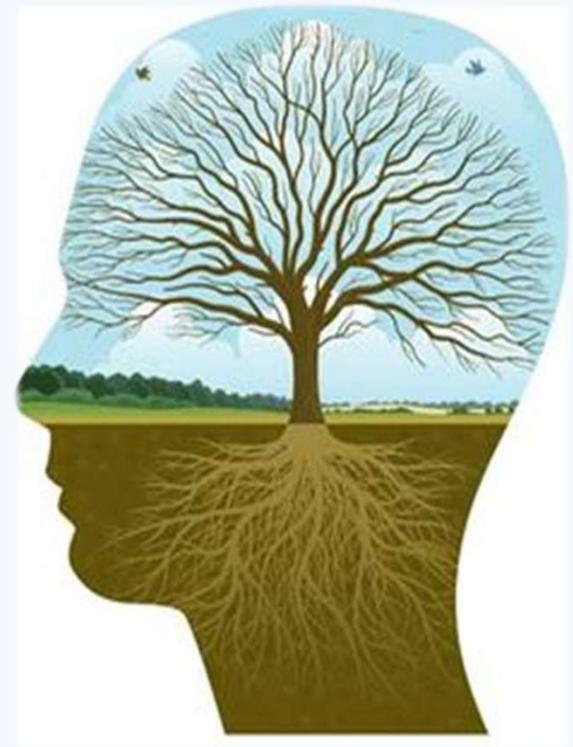
## **Skills a Good Facilitator Needs**

### **Inspiring**

A good facilitator is an inspiration to group members. Such a facilitator is able to see the good in everyone, and to help them see the good in themselves as well so that they may recognize their own strengths and live by them.

# Overview of Part B

- Session 1: Mindful Awareness
- Session 2: Radical Acceptance
- Session 3: Wise Mind and Wise Body
- Session 4: Letting Go
- Session 5: Living in the Now
- Session 6: Centering
- Session 7: Connecting
- Session 8: Nature as Metaphor
- Session 9: Nature as Teacher
- Session 10: Nature as Nurture
- Session 11: Nature as Healer
- Session 12: Living in True Self





**Part B: Running a Successful  
Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy Group**  
is in the separate pdf booklet you  
downloaded with the course materials