

Group #4

Taking Care of Ourselves and Our Vulnerabilities

This session has been designed to be run by a single facilitator. A group of individuals might choose to rotate who facilitates each session. The selected facilitator for a given may choose to do extra self-led learning prior to facilitating their topic.

Facilitator Overview

- 1. Check in- ask how the week has been for participants**
- 2. Review group norms & expectations for participation in exploration**
- 3. Facilitate group discussion asking questions and providing information from manual**
- 4. Deliver take home message(s)**
- 5. Set next meeting**

Group Expectations/Norms for Participation in Exploration

Confidentiality

All statements made by members in the group must be treated with the utmost respect and confidentiality. Specific group information will be shared with the treatment team; however, only general comments will be made to parents.

Norms will be read at the beginning of group for full understanding in order to create safety for each session.

Confidentiality is expected from all group members, members should not discuss group outside of group, please bring any issues/comments back to the next group.

Confidentiality creates a safe & trusting environment for the work of therapy. All cell phones/technology MUST be turned off.

What are the expectations of the group?

Arrive, and leave on time.

Group is voluntary. Group will be led by a different member each week. Can be on a rotation.

Sharing about yourself is necessary for you to benefit from group. This may feel difficult for some members initially however small disclosures build trust and safety within the group, which in turn will increase your comfort level when sharing. The premise is what you put into group is what you get out of group.

Note that we encourage balance sharing so that all members get the opportunity to share equally.

There is some structure to each session in that there will be themes for each week. Direct advice giving and discussion of superficial topics is not helpful in this group. Feedback is welcomed, as it connects the person giving and receiving and if non-blaming, constructive and relevant to what's occurring within the group it can be deeply meaningful.

Do not come to group under the influence of drugs/alcohol or other non prescribed medicine by your doctor.

Group offers the opportunity to learn more about how you relate to others. Group members are encouraged to ask questions, to wonder about things said or not said, to share associations and thoughts.

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Check in. Ask each member how their week has been. Was there more recognition of their emotions? Were they able to connect with their primary emotions?

Ask Question: Does anyone notice a difference in their emotion intensity if they are hungry? Sleepy? Sick? In pain?

Facilitate discussion, when appropriate provide some or all of the below information.

Answer: Everyone's physical needs effect their emotional state. This is Normal.

Ask Question: What physical things can we do to set the stage for better mental health?

Facilitate discussion, when appropriate provide some or all of the below information.

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Provide This Information: Consider the acronym PLEASE. these are skills that are foundational to self-care and attending to our body's needs. It sounds basic, but it's really important to regulating our emotions. If you don't have these things dialed in, you're going to be more vulnerable to emotion mind. PLEASE is the skill that fills your gas tank so you have the fuel to use other skills.

PLEASE is best used as a way to understand yourself, and assessing why your emotions might feel unbalanced today. By attending to these we can be more balanced, centered, and get more easily into wise mind. It gives us the most resources to work with.

Ask Questions: As I go through the PLEASE acronym do you have examples of how these pieces have effected their emotional state? How do you feel when these key pieces are taken care of?

PL- Physical illness

When you are sick and miserable it impacts your emotions negatively. When we don't feel well, we are in a state of misery and dread. You are not able to perform at your best, which impacts your emotions.

E- Eating

When you don't have proper nutrition you may feel sluggish and not have enough energy. Caffeine or sugar, for example can make you feel jittery and then crash later. 95% of your body's serotonin is produced in your intestines. Eating high fiber diets and avoiding processed foods will lead to a better hormonal balance throughout your body.

A- Avoid mood-altering drugs

This means non prescribed medications. Prescribed medication is managed and regulated to help you balance neurochemicals and there's nothing wrong with that. The key skill is properly take medication. Mood altering drugs such as alcohol, marijuana, street drugs and misusing prescriptions- substances used for self medication and not monitored by a

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professional. While it may feel as though these drugs help you regulate your emotions while they are in your system, they lead to *worse* emotional regulation the rest of the time.

S- Sleep

Aim for balanced sleep. Rad your body and by in tune with the amount of sleep you need. Adequate, restful sleep provides you with the energy needed to complete daily tasks and manage your emotions. Have you ever cried over nothing when you are exhausted? You're not alone. When we're tired its easy to get overwhelmed and have less patience or more anxiety. Yet, when we're adequately rested, we can readily manage those emotions.

E- Exercise

Exercise is crucial to our physical, emotional and mental well-being. Exercises can decrease negative emotions such as anxiety and depression. Not only can it alleviate these symptoms in the moment, but over time it can also help you build resilience to negative emotions. Don't forget that "exercise" doesn't have to mean high intensity cardio or other exercises that stress burning the most calories in the least amount of time. In most countries exercise looks very different. It's a walk to the grocery store, an evening bike ride with your family or an afternoon in the garden.

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Questions to ask group members to facilitate discussion

- *Do you attend to your body's needs? If yes, how? If no, what is the barriers?*
- *How can you incorporate these skills into your life now? (ie. Routine)*
- *What skills is going to be the hardest to attend to? Why?*
- *How will you use these skills over the next week?*

Deliver Take Home Messages:

When you feel emotionally dysregulated, try asking yourself “have I cared for myself? Are my basic needs met right now? What element of the PLEASE acronym am I missing today?”. As you improve these elements in your life you will find your emotional state will slowly improve as well.