

Interpersonal Process Group

How to Make the Most Out of Group

- **Be yourself** – start from where you are, not where you think others want you to be.
- **Define goals** – what do you want to get out of group? However, be flexible about the potential for goals to change.
- **Recognize and respect yours and others' pace for getting involved in the group** – some will always be ready to disclose their thoughts or feelings; others need more time to gain feelings of trust and security.
- **Take time for yourself** – you have the right to take group time to talk about yourself.
- **Focus on what is most important to you** – try to focus on the main ideas, thoughts, or feelings.
- **Recognize and express reactions and feelings** – if you have difficulty with this, ask the group to help you.
- **Be aware of censored thoughts and feelings** – try and take the risk to let yourself be emotionally available to and vulnerable with others.
- **Give and receive feedback** – both positive and negative, as soon as possible.
 - Specific and concrete
 - Representative of your own thoughts and feelings
 - Request it
- **Avoid giving advice** – sometimes giving advice prevents an individual from being heard.
- **Take risks** – experiment with different ways of behaving and expressing yourself to figure out what works and doesn't work for you.
- **Ask questions** – seek clarification when needed to avoid making assumptions.
- **Become aware of distancing behaviors** – it is likely that your distancing behaviors have been adaptive in the past, but are they preventing you from getting what you want now?
- **Try to be as direct as possible and be open to the responses of others** – aim for dialogue that fosters an understanding of your experiences.
- **Remember that how people talk is as important as what they say** – pay attention to non-verbal behaviors and be willing to express your observations.
- **Focus on the relationships you have with the group** – focus on what is happening to make you feel closer to or more distance to the group.
- **Work outside the group** – work to build your awareness and try new things you are taking away from group in other areas of your life.
- **Be patient with yourself** – growth takes time and effort.
- **Give the group time to develop** – make a commitment to attend at least three group sessions before deciding if group is right for you or not.
- **Maintain confidentiality** – what is said in group stays in group.

The Group as a Laboratory

Group is a great space to take risks and “experiment” with new ways of interacting with others to see how that can result in a different outcome. In the column on the left you will find behaviors that may be contributing to difficulties in your relationships or functioning. The column on the right has suggestions of behaviors that you could challenge yourself to try out during the group.

If you relate to people by:	You might experiment with:
Complying, giving in, being self-effacing	Saying no
Resisting suggestions; holding back	Taking a risk; trying something new
Always talking; filling any silence with words because you feel uncomfortable	Being silent for a minute; getting in touch with uncomfortable feelings; talking about those feelings
Waiting for someone to say something, then reacting	Initiating something yourself, for someone else to react to
Always smiling, even when annoyed or angry	Talking without smiling
Explaining	Simply responding with what you feel (e.g., " I have an impulse to explain")
Trying to get people to stop feeling a certain way	Simply accepting the way they feel; at the same time exploring your impulses and feelings
Being polite; not showing anger or judgment	Connecting with your thoughts and emotions, and sharing them frankly and respectfully
Expressing anger easily	Checking to see what feelings are underneath the anger
Deflecting praise	Accepting praise and noticing your internal reactions and reflexes
Feeling bored but being too polite to say anything about it	Respectfully talking about your feelings of boredom
When attacked, defending yourself	Not saying anything in rebuttal-but exploring the feelings you have
Being afraid-and hiding your fear	Being openly afraid; letting everyone know it
Always complimenting others	Providing more complete and rounded feedback
Trying to get everybody to approve of you	Being what you are and not giving a damn what they think
Giving advice	Practice active listening; ask the other person how they would like to be supported
Always helping other people	Asking for help, letting yourself be helped
Always asking for help	Helping someone else
Controlling your feelings and suppressing them	Experiencing your feelings and exploring them
Keeping things secret	Disclosing something about yourself that is hard to say
Playing it safe	Taking a few risks