Small Groups for Middle School

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Session Overview

• Logistics of Small Groups
• Academic Small Groups
• Social/Emotional Small Groups
• Career Small Groups
• Small Group Resources
Format Considerations

**Number of Sessions:**
- Typically 6 to 8

**Length of Sessions will depend on:**
- Developmental level/attention span of participants
- Schedule of the School
- Flexibility of students’ schedules

**Factors to consider when scheduling groups:**
- Consult with classroom teachers to establish times for groups
- Consider school activities students may miss, such as lunch
- Minimize classroom interruptions

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Small Group Options

• One session a day for # consecutive days.
• One session on a certain day for a certain # of weeks per group. Rotate groups over the course of the school year.
• Group sessions before school. (Transportation)
• Group sessions after school. (Transportation)
• Group sessions at all times of the school day, but stagger so students do not miss same class period.
  (Session 1: 1st Period; Session 2: 2nd Period; Session 3: 3rd Period etc.)
• Group sessions during lunch.
Group Offerings

• Review Data

• Needs Assessment

• Counselor Comfort Level

• Three Domains

• School Climate...What’s Happening in the School?

• Based on counseling standards
Group Composition

• **Heterogeneous groups:**
  • Participants have different needs/problems or characteristics
  • Develop more slowly and tend to be less cohesive

• **Homogeneous groups**
  • Participants have same or similar needs/problems or characteristics
  • Develop more quickly and tend to be more cohesive

• **Group Size**
  • Recommended group size ranges from 4-10 participants, depending on age of participants and space available. Twelve is maximum I would take.
Communication

Communicating Offerings

• Newsletter to Parents
• During Counselor Introductions
• Teacher Referral
• Self-Referral
• Your website

They’re in…
Now let’s get them to attend.

• Email distribution list
• Provide students in advance a list of dates & the times
• Remind (a text messaging system)
• Passes the day before
• Passes the morning of
• Provide teachers with a list of students who should be attending.
To Screen or Not to Screen

• Tell student about group

• Ask student about his or her level of interest/commitment to expectations of group

• Pick participants (consider role models, maturity, diversity, gender, compatibility)

• Options to screening:
  • Rely heavily on teacher’s recommendation
  • Students who you may see in your office about a topic that will be covered in group
  • Offer multiple groups of same topic (allows more to participate)
  • Have students write a summary of why they feel this group would be a good fit for them. What do they hope to gain?

Rosemarie Smead
To Seek Permission or Not

What to Include in Letter:

- How was interest expressed
- Group Dates
- Group Times
- Group Description
- Voluntary
- Will be confidential
- Sign and return
- Just inform if not participating
- Contact Information
Typical Agenda

• Introductory Icebreaker
• Group Norms
• Review last session
• Content
• Activity
• Discussion
• Summarize
• Follow Up Activity
• Preview next session

SETTING GROUP NORMS

• starting and finishing on time
• coming prepared
• listening to others without interruptions
• participating
• saying when you don’t understand
• when anyone is speaking, addressing the whole group and not just the teacher
• switching off mobile phones
• treating others’ contributions with respect
• keeping personal issues out of the session
• maintaining confidentiality within the group.
Follow Ups

Session Follow-up

• You can send a follow up to parents/teachers after each group session, midway through or end of session to keep these individuals informed of student’s progress in the group.

• Include if there is a follow up activity, next session, summary or goal of session

Post Group Follow Up

• Questions posed to students
• Likes/Dislikes
• Goals they plan to implement/have implemented
• Suggestions for future groups
• Have students rank how they felt before group and after group
• Follow up with student either individually or in group setting 4-6 weeks after last meeting
Evaluating Groups

- Pre and Post survey related to topic of group perceived improvement
- School data related to attendance, behavior, etc. before and after the group
- Number of referrals
- Group sign-in sheets verifying attendance
- Number of groups held
- Number of participations in groups
- Teacher surveys indicating student improvements
ACADEMIC SMALL GROUPS

Helps students succeed academically
Academic Support

- Retained Students
- Organizational Support (Extreme Makeover: Academic Edition)
- Attendance Matters
- Study Skills
- Push Until Grades Improve (for students who are failing academic classes)
- Building Skills for Academic Success
SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL SMALL GROUPS

- Recognize and manage their emotions (Anger Management)
- Demonstrate caring and concern for others (Friendship)
  - Establish positive relationships (Friendship)
  - Make responsible decisions (Behavior related)
- Constructively handle challenging social situations (Bystander, Conflict Resolution)
• Peer Relationships (activities)
• Social Emotional Activities Workbook
• Family Changes (divorce, grief, etc.)
• Girl Power
• Relational Aggression in Girls
• Raise Boys (Relational Aggression)
• Stress Management
• Character Traits (sign up to receive free resources)
• Choices
Book Club for Students

Students are given the opportunity to practice fluency, character, plot, and other literary skills while also learning life lessons.

SELECTED PARTICIPANTS:
1. Mixture of Reading Levels
2. Depending on theme of book and those who frequent your office based on that theme
Book Club Jobs

- **Page Tracker** - Writes the page number we end on each week
- **Timeline Tracker** - Allows us to track the story events of the plot
- **Character Tracker** - Keeps a running list of our characters in the book
- **Character Traits/Setting Tracker** - Keeps a running list of setting locations and character traits displayed in the book.
- **Chapter Summarizer** - Writes a two or three sentence summary of the chapters Pick two students for this one so they can alternate.

Book Club Logistics

- Number of students = number of books needed
- Read/Discuss/Activity or Read/Discuss
- Incorporating Literacy with reading strategies you may employ
- Student booklet to jot down happenings and illustrations
- Create bookmarks for place holders as well as with dates/times

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CAREER
SMALL GROUPS

Career awareness and motivational activities that empower participants in developing an educational plan with short-term and long-term academic goals.
• College Awareness
• College Board Session Guides
• College Awareness Activities
• Career Exploration Activities
• Leadership Group (Team Building)
• 17 Cluster Specific Groups...Focus on the pathways that your high school offers when determining what cluster to conduct group
Sample Units with Lesson Plans

- More Career Lesson Plans
- Additional Career Lesson Plans
- Career Plan Project Workbook
- Career Exploration Modules
SMALL GROUP Resources
Additional Resources

- **Group Lessons**

- **Interactive Activities**

- **Icebreakers**

- **40 Icebreakers for Small Groups**

- **Self-Esteem Resources**

- **Small Group Unit Lesson Plans**

NEW RESOURCE ADDED AFTER WEBINAR RECORDING
This webinar will discuss how school counselors can best support ELL students in their academics to help them succeed and eventually transition from high school.
THE END
THANKS FOR WATCHING
ANY QUESTIONS??