

# Operation Snowball, Inc.

## Staff Manual



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This manual is meant to be a tool to assist you in becoming a more effective staff member and discussion group facilitator. It is a guide to your role as an Operation Snowball staff member. It is designed to meet several goals:

1. to clarify your role as volunteer staff for O.S.,
2. to discuss communication techniques that will help you in your role as a facilitator, and
3. to teach activities which you may want to use in your small group.

This handbook was written to assist you in the task of group facilitation. Please take some time after staff training to read it and use it. What you read in the following pages may give you ideas to make your small group time a more rewarding experience. Small groups are the most memorable part of the Snowball/Snowflake experience for most participants. In the large group presentations listening and learning new information is the goal.

However, small group is the real heart and soul of Snowball/Snowflake. This is where participants are allowed and encouraged to share their feelings. Small group truly belongs to the participants. A major emphasis should be to encourage the group to support each other. Snowball/Snowflake is a peer to peer program and the small group is where teens learn to help other teens as well as accept help from others.

Treat people as if they were what they ought to be, and help them to become what they are capable of becoming.

-Goethe

# **OPERATION SNOWBALL PHILOSOPHY & PURPOSE**

## **STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY:**

Operation Snowball is an ongoing youth and adult cooperative process, focusing on prevention, and founded on the belief that every person has the capacity to make sound decisions regarding life and behavior, based on accurate information and an understanding of self, attitudes and motivations. This process is designed to promote personal and interpersonal growth, leadership skills and healthy decision-making, regarding a broad range of life concerns. Operation Snowball is a PREVENTION program and does not provide individual or group treatment.

## **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:**

Operation Snowball shall be an ongoing support system for youth and adults, providing community-based prevention and health promotion activities with an emphasis on youth involvement. Such activities should include: staff development/training, experiential events, leadership skills training and follow-up educational and support programs for communities. Such activities should be designed and delivered by youth and adults together in response to community needs.

# Operation Snowball Staff Polices and Procedures

Operation Snowball's goal is to provide as much support and encouragement as possible to all volunteer staff, to reduce the stress and uncomfortableness that staff sometimes experience and to do everything humanly possible to see that volunteer staff have a positive personal and professional experience at an OS event. In order to accomplish this, the following roles have been defined.

## **Co-Facilitator Role**

Co-facilitators facilitate. This word comes from the Latin word, *facil*, which means "to make easy." At an OS event, this means helping the group become "unstuck," providing security for the group by developing ground rules, and stressing confidentiality except in cases of abuse.

Co-facilitators perform the following functions:

- Follow OS curriculum for each discussion group
- Provide icebreakers
- Prepare for each session
- Divide responsibilities with other co-facilitators
- Finish on time
- Keep in mind that this is not a therapy group
- Sit with discussion group during general sessions and take attendance
- Be a role model

## **Co-Director Role**

Co-directors are given the authority to lead staff and participants and keeping the program running on time. Co-directors set the tone, make announcement, give directions, introduce presenters and in this way, provide leadership, fun and stability. Co-directors must be visible to participants and "take charge" every time when everyone is together. It is very important that the co-directors do their job in a visible way and avoid being invisible to participants and staff when possible.

Co-directors are given the authority to listen to, nurture and lead staff meetings, making every attempt to come up with solutions to problems they identify. In this role, co-directors work with staff consultants and call on other members of the Leadership Team for help.

Co-directors monitor all general sessions and entertainment, and intervene if the session becomes inappropriate. A problem could arise in any general session. If neither co-director can be present for the session, then the co-directors ask a staff consultant to step into their role if a problem arises, the session ends early, runs late, etc.

Co-directors may approve changes in the general session content if presenters discuss the changes with them and the staff consultants ahead of time. Presenters must provide an outline for what they intend to present and clearly demonstrate they will cover all of the points included in the session's goals and objectives.

Co-directors are involved in participant issues, including the following:

1. Giving permission to telephone home and ensuring the call is monitored. Giving permission to participants to leave early.
2. Disciplining participants who are late, not where they are supposed to be, or otherwise problematic. Co-directors write down the names of the participants who are disciplined and give this list to the participant consultants for the log, so that we collect as much information as quickly as possible on "bad actors" who are likely to be identified by several staff throughout the day. If the situation involves sending the participant home, the co-directors work with the participant consultant in removing the participant from the event.

When a participant or staff person needs to leave the event, the co-directors talk with all staff who need to be informed-giving them only the information they need to know and direction as to what is to be said "publicly." They also make arrangements to get the participants possessions, isolate him/her, and makes sure the administrative coordinator removes the participant's name from rosters and counts. Car keys and medications are returned to the participant or staff member. The co-facilitators are informed that the participant or staff member is leaving.

### **The Participant Consultant Role**

Participant Consultants make themselves available to (and actively seek out) staff regarding participant concerns. They assess participants who are identified by co-facilitators as possibly suicidal, abusing alcohol or other drugs, violating rules or otherwise not participating appropriately, because these youth may be inappropriate for the duration of the event. If the participant consultant has even the slightest doubt about the participant's appropriateness, the co-directors must be informed about the participant.

Participant consultants work with a four-hour rule for homesick or potentially inappropriate youth. This means that from the time that a participant says to the participant consultant, "I think I want to go home," until the participant decides either to stay or to go, the time lapse shall be no more than four hours. In most cases, the participant consultant discusses the situation with the co-directors within four hours.

Sometimes four hours may be too long to wait to decide that a participant is inappropriate because phone calls to parents requesting they pick up their child should be made by 6:00 p.m. If a parent refuses to pick up a participant, the co-directors help the participant consultant and nurse explore other options (mental health crisis team, DCFS custody for parental neglect, or keeping the participant overnight in a room under the participant consultant's supervision). OS is not a treatment program and we must err on the side of

caution when staff members have a “gut feeling” there is something wrong with a participant and the participant must go home.

Participant consultants deal with participant problems, such as helping to “pack-up” early leavers and carrying out participant-related activities.

Participant consultants also provide referral information so that co-facilitators can refer youth to various services after the event. Even these informal referrals need to be documented since there is a potential that a parent could call later and ask why the young person was given the referral. Participant consultants document all the work they do in relation to each participant problem, and consult with each other any time they need to “shift” responsibility for managing a problem participant.

Participant consultants work with the administrative coordinator to check to see who is missing from mini-workshops and small groups. As a general rule of thumb, if only one participant is missing from one mini-workshop or small group and there is no evidence of that participant being a problem, figure out when the next check-in time is and make sure he/she turns up there – talk with the participant to find out where he/she was when attendance was taken. On the other hand, if the missing participant is someone who has been identified as homesick, inappropriate, etc., participant consultants get help from other staff to look for the participant.

### **The Staff Consultant Role**

The Staff Consultant actively seek out staff and make themselves available to all staff who have questions or concerns. The staff consultants work to identify staff members who are having difficulty carrying out the group exercises, managing their group or who appear to be experiencing personal problems or behaving inappropriately.

The staff consultants also work with staff members who are experiencing emotional problems during the event. If a staff consultant does not have extensive counseling experience, he/she refers staff with emotional problems to another staff member who has clinical experience. Staff consultants inform the co-directors immediately about any staff member who they believe may be behaving inappropriately.

Staff consultants also document staff complaints about “language” used by presenters or other staff, complaints about the program schedule or other issues which might be addressed during the session, prior to the next session or at least before next year’s event.

Staff consultants and co-directors share responsibility for changes in program content. Mini-workshop presenters who want to present something that is significantly different from the content described in the outline need to provide a revised outline to the staff consultant. This way mini-workshop outlines can be improved and staff consultants have the ability to intervene and say “no” to outlines which are inadequate or inappropriate.

Staff consultants are asked to record ideas for changes in the mini-workshop or general session outlines by writing those changes and giving to the co-directors.

Staff consultants provide helpful program hints at staff meetings, help set the tone, and answer questions about group exercises. Staff consultants help presenters get their handouts or other supplies and visit all of the mini-workshops to identify improvements that need to be made in the resource materials and manuals.

### **The Activity Coordinator Role**

The Activity Coordinators develop plans for free time, the dance, Sunrise Sharing, Quiet Thoughts and sleeping supervision. They also coordinate activities and games to supervise/entertain early arrivers and late leavers.

### **The Administrative Coordinator Role**

The Administrative Coordinator is primarily responsible for keeping track of who is at the event, in what group, identifying missing participants, maintaining the log and master rosters and managing the office with supplies for presenters.

The administrative coordinator assists as a backup with participant problems, such as helping to “pack up” early leavers, and carrying out participant-related activities when the participant consultants and/or nurse are occupied with multiple problems at once.

The administrative coordinator maintains supplies, makes extra copies, packing/unpacking materials, distributing t-shirts and registration. The administrative coordinator organizes, distributes and collects office supplies, workshop materials, handouts and flipcharts. Additionally, he/she helps by tabulating and organizing mini-workshop sign-up sheets, assisting with attendance taking, and providing speakers with room locations. They also run messages and shop for supplies when necessary.

The administrative coordinator is responsible for collecting audio/visual needs from staff, preparing a list and making arrangements for equipment needs.

# **Your Role as a Facilitator**

We are here on staff to help participants go through a very special program. In order to effectively bring participants through this program we must be sure to:

## **1. Prepare**

Part of your responsibility as a staff member and group facilitator is to spend time before the training experience getting to know your co-facilitator and planning your discussion group. This includes learning about your co-facilitator's strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes and facilitation style. It will be a disservice to your discussion group if you as co-facilitators come into the training experience unorganized and unprepared.

## **2. Keep your focus**

As staff, we need to make sure we spend as much time with the participants as possible and spend time searching out students that are off by themselves. This will mean that we won't get to spend as much time with old friends and other staff, but we can always catch up on that later. Also, if you have personal issues that come up throughout the training experience, it is best to share them with your co-facilitator or with your Chapter's staff support system. This doesn't mean that you can't share or show emotion in group. All we ask is that you be a healthy role model, which includes using the appropriate resources to deal with personal issues.

## **3. Be a good role model**

Someone is watching us ALL the time. It is not fair for us to do things as staff that we tell the participants they shouldn't do. For example, it is very important that you attend all general sessions and as many of the mini-workshops as possible. This is true even if you have heard the speaker before. We can all use a refresher course and many speakers change their material periodically.

**Operation Snowball's philosophy is  
to learn  
and have fun at the same time!!!**

# Role of the Facilitator

## Registration

- Carry out your assigned “job” and don’t leave your “post” without checking with the event director.
- Assist participants with registration, making them feel comfortable.
- Spot “loners” and try to introduce them to other participants.
- Mingle
- Watch for anything that needs to be done, and pitch-in!

## General Sessions

- Be a role model, by sitting with the participants, by listening to the presenter, by thinking about how to reinforce the session in group discussions, by watching your discussion group to see who is tired or who are bothered by issues raised in the session, by being on time, and by not bringing food to the session.
- Supervise participants seated near you—no sleeping, talking and so on.
- Follow the instructions for group activities (if any).

## Meals

- Be a role model, by attending.
- Sit with participants and talk with them.
- Answer questions and initiate discussion.
- Remind participants to clean up after themselves.

## Entertainment/Free Time

- Be available to support whatever activities are planned.
- Feel free to share your talents.
- Be on the lookout for rule violators and “loners.”
- Be available and approachable to participants, BUT if you are not assigned specific responsibilities, you may take care of “you” be it resting, taking time alone, reading or otherwise doing what you need to do to rest and recharge—pace yourself.

## Small Group Sessions

- Review the small group agendas.
- Follow all mandatory directions in the small group agendas.
- Use suggested activities where needed.
- Practice all those fantastic facilitator skills you learned at the staff training.
- Be creative and have fun!

# What we mean by Facilitation

When we use the term facilitation we are referring to the ability to *lead a group that has no leader!* The art of group facilitation is designed to help groups perform more effectively by soliciting the leadership skills and potential of all group members. Facilitation, as we describe it, works best when certain concepts are accepted and practiced not only by the facilitator, but by the entire group. These concepts are the basis behind which the O.S. discussion group is designed. As facilitator, it is your responsibility not only to demonstrate these concepts in your own behavior, but to foster them in the group you are facilitating.

## 1. Democracy

Each person has the opportunity to participate in the group. The agenda for each discussion group meeting should be designed to meet both the objectives of the training experience itself, and the needs of the participants. Allow the participants the opportunity to decide how the group is run.

## 2. Egalitarianism

Each person is unique and has something to share. Each person is equal in the discussion group, and each should be given a fair opportunity to contribute. This concept applies to youth and adults, group facilitators and participants, female/male and people of different cultures (that means all of us).

## 3. Responsibility

Every person is responsible for his or her own life, behavior and experiences. As a facilitator you should attempt to get the participants to own the discussion group. They are responsible for it and the group facilitators can't and shouldn't do it all. Remember the old line, "You'll only get out of the experience what you are willing to put into it."

## 4. Cooperation

The facilitator and the participants work together to achieve their collective goals. One might say that leadership is something you do TO people, facilitation is something you do WITH people.

## 5. Honesty

A discussion group will only succeed if the members are honest with each other and with themselves. As a facilitator, you should represent honestly your own values, feelings, concerns and priorities in working with the group. You must set the tone with an expectation of honesty from all of the participants. In addition, you must represent yourself fairly and not go beyond your capabilities as a group facilitator.

## 6. Respect

Obviously, not all participants have the same values and opinions, and that is normal. All values and opinions of individuals should be respected. Please remember that it is possible to agree to disagree – you can respect another person and his or her opinions without implying that you agree with those opinions. (The example that follows demonstrates this concept.)

# What do You See ?



- Some people see a young lady while others see an elderly one.
- If you look closely you can see them both.
- Can't see it, look at the next page.



\* People see things from their own perspective. Remind participants that we will not always see things from the same point of view as others, and need to respect other's points of view.

\* Even when we can not see the other person's point of view, we can "agree to disagree agreeably".

## **7. Listening**

As a group facilitator it is your job to listen, but not give advice. Good listening habits are based on the philosophy that by listening we can help people find words for their feelings. The act of verbalizing feelings about a problem can be the first step in the solution of the problem. As a role model, you should encourage participants to listen to each other.

## **8. Confidentiality**

A major responsibility of every group member is to maintain trust and promote the “Community of Caring” concept. Maintaining confidentiality applies to staff as well.

Exceptions to confidentiality:

- If someone is going to harm themselves
- If someone is going to harm another
- If someone discloses child abuse or neglect

The process for reporting these cases should be explained by your director or chapter advisor!

# Code of Ethics

## 1. “De-Mystify”

Most people are accustomed to participating in groups where one person acts as the leader and is treated as someone important, with special power and wisdom. Unless the group understands your role, they will probably perceive you to be an authority figure and allow you to influence them unduly. It is important for you as a facilitator to come down off your pedestal and allow the group to see you as human.

## 2. Dependence

Even though you make a conscience effort to de-mystify your position, you may find that the participants want or try to depend on you. **This is probably your strongest test of your own values – whether you accept and use this power, of you reflect back to the group their need to take responsibility for decisions and definitions.** The temptation to use the power delegated to you to fill your own needs (increased self-esteem, manipulation of a situation for your own benefit, etc.) will be strong. The fact that the group delegated the power to you is no excuse. **It is your responsibility not to use facilitation techniques to control a group.**

## 3. Limitations

Being a facilitator does not mean that you are qualified to be a psychotherapist, either with a group of people or in a one-on-one situation. Participants have a tendency to see the facilitator as an expert who can help them deal with personal issues. This training cannot possibly qualify you to deal with alcohol and drug abuse situations, physical, emotional or sexual abuse, suicide or depression. In situations such as these, be honest with the participant about your own limits, and encourage them to come with you to talk to one of the directors or other designated adult support staff.

## 4. You are there for the group

You, as facilitator, cannot expect that you will meet your own emotional needs working with groups. If you are using your position as group facilitator to meet your own needs, you are not doing a good job of meeting the group’s needs. Remember, the magic of Snowball is making sure that your small group has the best experience possible.

## 5. Stay away from personal attractions

If you become romantically involved with one participant, most of your time and energy are spent in that relationship. Participants will see you as playing favorites and neglecting others in your group. If you discover an attraction to someone, follow it up on your own time.

# Foundations for Small Groups

*As you begin your small group you will have to come up with some guidelines. These guidelines will set the standard for what is expected of the group. Each group should come up with their own guidelines, which may include the following. Everyone has the right to...*

## **1. Begin On Time**

This is very important, since time for group discussion is usually very limited. People who are late hold up the entire group

## **2. Be Recognized (and Recognizable)**

Participants are responsible for having their folders/packets with them and their OWN nametag on at all times.

## **3. Confidentiality**

What is said here stays here, with the exception of situations involving child abuse or neglect, or a desire to harm themselves or another. Discussion group is meant to be a safety zone, and what is said or done should not become table talk at dinner or dorm room gossip at bedtime. Also, discourage the use of real names when sharing situations that have occurred in the past. It is not fair to the person who isn't present to discuss an issue related specifically to them.

## **4. Respected**

Put-downs (even stated in a joking or sarcastic manner) can tear down trust that has been built in your group and hurt individuals.

## **5. An Opinion**

Participants should be encouraged to share their opinions and ideas without the threat of being put down or criticized.

## **6. Be Heard**

This should be modeled by giving everyone a chance to speak. A gentle and subtle approach is usually enough to shut off the monopolizer. If not, then seek them out and discuss the situation outside of group. (Another option is to use a koosh ball or bean bag, which can be passed to the person talking, allowing only that person to have the floor.)

## **7. Pass**

Everyone has the right to pass on a topic of activity if they so choose. This will help create a safe atmosphere and help people feel respected.

## **8. Show Emotion**

Participants should understand that showing emotion or crying is okay.

## **9. Be Normal**

Participants should understand that it is okay to not have problems. It is quite possible for participants who come from strong families and backgrounds to feel guilty if others in the group are disclosing personal issues. These participants with few problems should not be left out or made to feel uncomfortable. Encourage the group to discuss openly, explaining that we can all grow and learn from each other.

## **10. Experience the Process**

Second timers go slowly. Participants who have been to a Snowball or Snowflake should try not to rush the group process and create “instant trust”. This kind never lasts. It is the right of every participant; old and new, to experience Operation Snowball as it was meant to be. Don’t rush the group process!

\* There is nothing mystical about facilitating a discussion group. Most of the work involves using common sense – following the concepts and values listed previously in this guide, and trusting your instincts. You can be a successful group facilitator because you already possess the necessary qualities to accomplish the task at hand. If you did not possess these skills, you would not have been chosen as a staff member!

# Stages in Group Development

## 1. Getting Acquainted

The purpose of this stage is to get to know one another, learn each other's names, ease tension, be silly and laugh. Activities, at this level, should be low-impact, non-threatening, and all-inclusive. It may be necessary to use this type of activity at the beginning of each group meeting to get things started and create the right atmosphere.

## 2. Trust-Building

At this stage group members begin to express individual values, accept others thoughts, and work together cooperatively. Activities should focus on allowing individuals to assert their personal beliefs.

## 3. Team-Building

Group members learn to share a bond of caring that calls forth the unique qualities of each individual. In this stage, group members begin to realize their potential for working as a team. Thus, participants may feel able to reveal more personal experiences and/or feelings. Activities should promote and enhance the teamwork concept.

## 4. Closure

At this stage members realize the group as it currently exists is ending, and they must choose how they will take what they have gained at Snowball with them. It is important to allow time for group members to share how they have felt about the group and begin saying good-byes. However, good-byes, should not be the focus of the entire last session. The activities should focus on how they can take what they shared and learned "back home". This type of focus will help the group to see the last session not as the end, but as a segue – a transition from one place or thought to another place or thought.

\* In addition it is important to bring closure to each small group session. (This may be done through a group cheer or group hug.)

# Small Group Activities

*Activities are an integral part of the small group experience. As you plan and facilitate these activities it is important to remember their purpose.*

- Each group will have its own unique personality and will progress through the stages of development in its own way. Some groups never progress to the self-disclosure stage. **THIS IS OKAY!!!** Don't try to drag the group through the stages. You will waste your time and energy as a facilitator, and will not be able to meet the needs of the group.
- Do not be concerned if you do not get to all of the exercises that you planned. The purpose of activities is to get your group to talk and interact. Your goal is not to go through as many exercises as you can.
- Activities can be useful after the group has been dealing with heavy topics and needs lightening up.

# Processing Activities

*After the participants have been interacting for a while, the interaction is stopped and the members “process” what has been taking place – that is, they try to examine the nature of the interaction.*

## **The Key:**

The key to processing is to take the experience of the activity and see what we can learn from it. We then want to take the lessons learned in the activity and relate them to real life.

## **Processing Cycle Overview:**

- Experience – Discuss what happened  
(At this phase you want to get people thinking and talking about what is going on.)
- Share – Discuss how it felt  
(At this stage you want people to think and talk about what they are feeling.)
- Interpret – Discuss what the experience meant  
(Here you want to encourage the group to think about what the activity meant, and what can be learned for the experience.)
- Generalize – Discuss how it fits in the scheme of things  
(Now you want to encourage the group to identify some general lessons that can be taken from the activity.)
- Apply – Discuss how it can be applied in real life  
(Encourage participants to identify ways they can apply the general knowledge gained into their life.)

## Processing Questions For Each Phase

- Experience Phase:

What is going on?  
Would you be willing to try?  
Will you be more specific?  
Can you say more about that?

- Sharing and Interpreting Phase:

How did you feel about that?  
Who else had the same experience?  
What surprises were there for you?  
What did you observe?  
What does that mean to you?  
How was that significant?

- Generalizing Phase:

What might we conclude from that?  
What did you learn?  
Does this remind you of anything?  
How does this relate to other experiences?  
What do you associate with that?

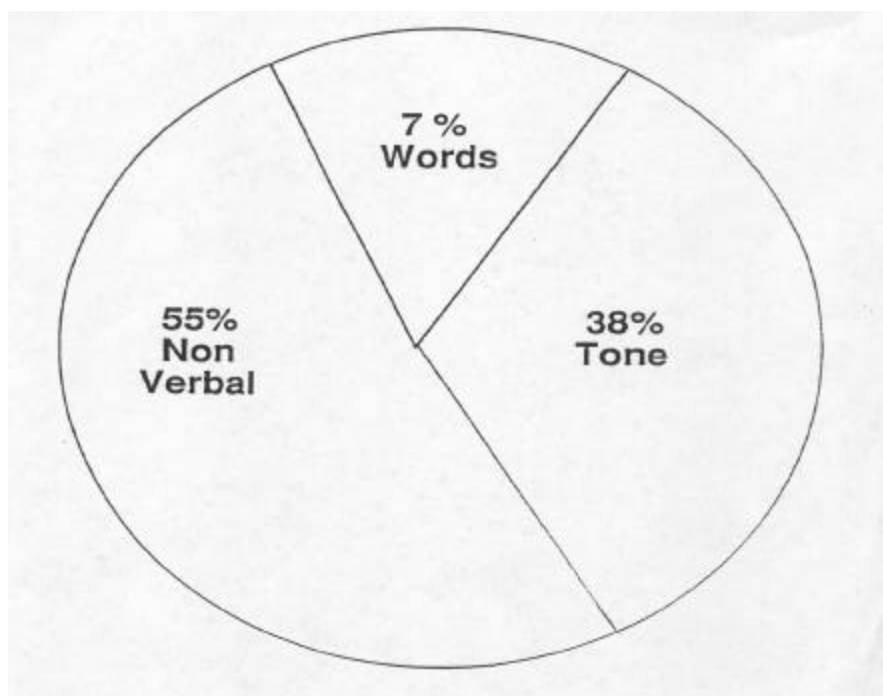
- Applying Phase:

How might you apply that to your situation?  
What will you do with that information?  
What are your options?  
How could you make that better?  
What would be the consequences of doing that?  
How can you use what you have learned?

# Communication

*Communication is the essential ingredient of the small group. It is like the cement that holds the individual bricks together. However, the words you speak, account for only 7% of what you communicate. Let's look at some other aspects of communication...*

- **Words:** the things you say
  
- **Tone:** the way you say it
  
- **Non-Verbal:**
  - Eye Contact
  - Body Posture
  - Fidgeting
  - Body Proximity
  - Facial Expressions
  - Body Movement



# Listening & Responding Appropriately

***Listening** is often taken for granted, but to be an effective listener it requires work. It is important to concentrate on what the person is saying and how they are saying it. Some tips to really listening...*

1. Be interested and show it
2. Hold your fire – Much of the time we aren't listening, but are thinking about what we are going to say next.
3. Look for main ideas
4. Watch for feelings
5. Notice non-verbal language

***Responding** appropriately after someone shares with us can greatly influence the dynamics of the group. If we respond appropriately we create an environment that encourages people to continue to share.*

- Mirror Statements: reflect what the other person is saying and can help acquire the clarity the individual is seeking.
  - Could it be that...?
  - I wonder if...
  - Is it possible that...?
  - You seem to be feeling...
  - I'm not sure if I'm with you, but...
  - Could you tell me more about...?
- Sensitivity: It is important that the person be ready to hear what you have to say before you offer it. As the speaker begins to share more delicate and vulnerable feelings, your response should become more tentative, so that the person has a way out if he or she wants to take it.

# Principles for Effective Discussion

- **Open Ended Questions**

These questions require more than a one-word answer. We can usually gather more information and keep the conversation flowing comfortably by using this technique.

Example:

“Did you like or dislike the presentation?” (closed ended)

“What did you think about the presentation?” (open ended)

- **Avoid Leading Questions**

These questions assume, and give too much direction. If the assumption is incorrect it puts the person in an awkward spot.

Example:

“You liked the presentation, didn’t you?” (leading)

“What did you think of the presentation?” (not leading)

- **“I” Statements**

An I-message describes how you feel when another person does or says a specific thing. It gives information about the effect of another person’s behavior on you without giving orders or criticism.

Example:

“You always ignore me!” (not an I-message)

“I feel unimportant when you look away from me while I am talking, because it seems like you are not interested in what I have to say.” (I-message)

- **Avoid Other Roadblocks such as**

Ordering – Advising – Arguing – Dismissing – Criticizing – Praising – Name-Calling – Analyzing – Sympathizing and Interrogating.

(In certain situations, some of the responses listed above are appropriate. However, as a facilitator trying to encourage others to talk freely about their thoughts, beliefs and feelings, these responses may have a negative effect.)

## **When we apply these principles effectively, we communicate...**

- **I understand what you are saying.**
- **I hear what you are feeling.**
- **I am interested and concerned.**
- **I accept you as a person.**
- **I respect your thoughts.**
- **I feel that you have a contribution to make.**
- **I am not trying to evaluate you.**

# **Students with Disabilities**

- **Encourage open communication**
- **Ask before you help**
- **Speak directly to the person**
- **Squat or sit at their level**
- **Don't assume they are sick**
- **Don't pity or patronize the person**
- **Remember that they are like anyone else**

# Challenging People

*Occasionally we will have a member of our group that is especially challenging. Here are some descriptions of people you might come across and suggestions on how to deal with them.*

## **1. Monopolizer**

These people talk and talk without giving others a chance to say anything. These people are starved for attention and are probably not aware that they are monopolizing the conversation. Other people talk a great deal out of nervousness. *(Try to: direct questions and ask the opinions of others in the group. Don't be rude, but try to gently cut them off. You may also try to sit next to them in the group. When they've said enough, you can often stop them by a simple touch and direct a question to someone else. If that doesn't work, talk to them privately before or after small group and diplomatically ask them to give others a chance to speak.)*

## **2. Interrupter**

*When a participant has a tendency to cut off the current speaker, diplomatically point this out to them. You could also use an object that is held only by the speaker. This is especially good in a heated discussion where people are eager to jump in. (A ball, stuffed animal or any other item would be suitable.)*

## **3. Wallflower**

Silent types are difficult to figure out. They may be scared and shy or overwhelmed. The silence may be due to pouting, if they are not really happy about being at a snowball or it may be that they are just naturally quiet. *Provide as many opportunities as possible for each participant to contribute. Make a special effort to ask the opinion of the apparent wallflower. You may want to show them a little extra interest and give them a bit of encouragement. If they are pouting you may want to talk to them outside of the group.*

## **4. Dumper**

This is the person who waits until near the end of the weekend and then “dumps” all their problems on the group. The dumper may be doing this as a way of getting sympathy and recognition. *The best thing to do is avoid the opportunity for the dumper. The last small group, like the first, should be very structured. Once the dumper starts, it is hard to stop them. Be empathetic and offer suggestions of resource people they could talk to.*

# Other Challenging Situations

*In addition to challenging people, you may face challenging situations. Here are some suggestions on how to handle them.*

## **1. Participants who don't get along**

When you sense that a problem exists, talk to the individuals about it. If they decide that they cannot resolve their differences and their hostility will harm the small group, then talk to the director. It is probably not a good idea to have people who hate each other try to resolve their differences in the small group. Do not allow their animosity to wreck the small group for everyone else.

## **2. Someone tries to do your job for you**

Do not give up your duties or responsibilities. The participants should own the group, however do not allow an individual to take over the group. If a personality clash occurs, talk to you co-facilitator and directors. Remember that you are the facilitator. You were chosen and trained for it.

## **3. Difficulty with adult leaders**

Sometimes adult participants take over a group out of habit since they are use to being in charge. Try approaching the adult outside the group. If this doesn't work, talk to your director.

## **4. Side conversations**

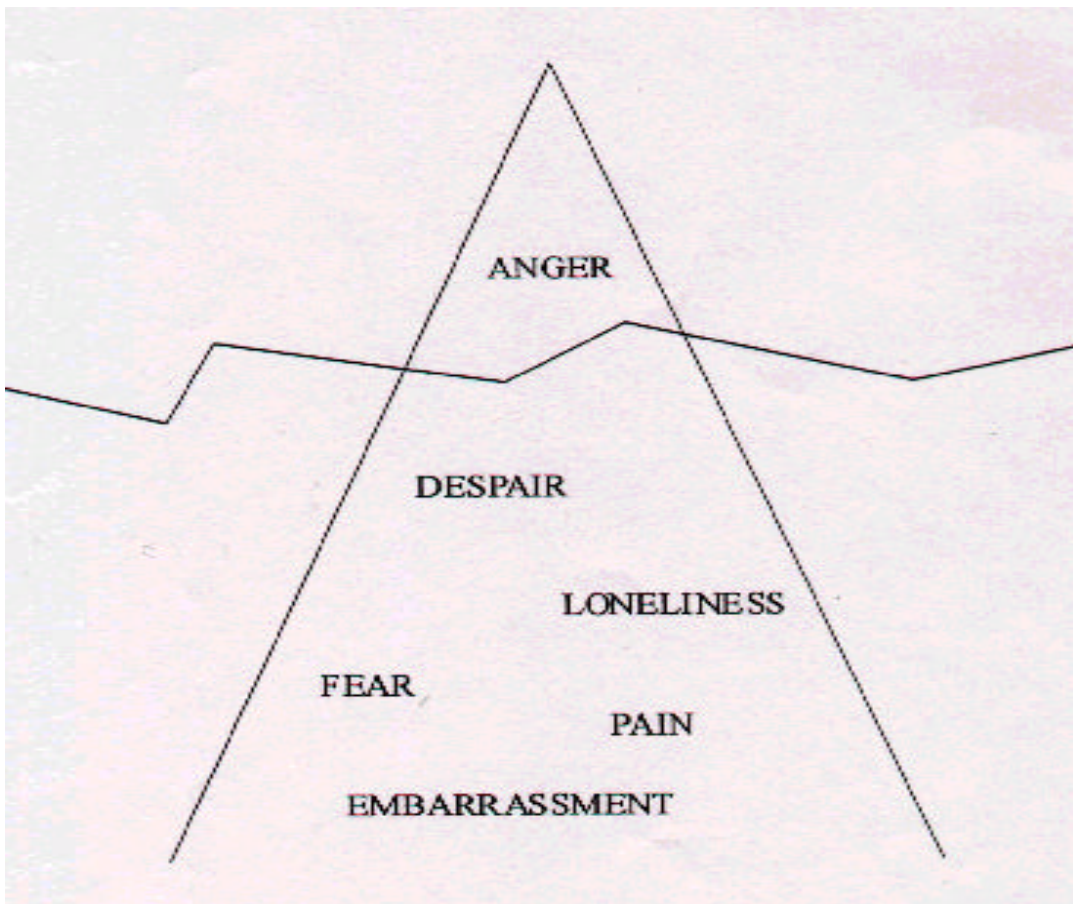
Participants take offense and feel rejected when they are speaking and a side conversation is going on. You can discourage side conversations by sitting between those who are causing this problem. Avoid confrontation and accusation. Direct your statement to the whole group that all should pay attention. If that doesn't work seek them out after the meeting

## **5. Comparing this year to last year**

If you have participants who have been through the Snowball experience before they may say that this small group isn't as good as last years. This is common and shouldn't be taken personally. Remind them that no two Snowballs or small groups are ever alike. Old timers should not compare this year with last year's Snowball. Instead they should enjoy the uniqueness of this years event.

# The Iceberg of Anger

*People often display a feeling that is the easiest for them to express, but may not be exactly what they are experiencing. Often times when a person expresses anger they may be experiencing other emotions that aren't visible. Anger may be the "tip of the iceberg," while the real issues are just "under the surface".*



# Pre-Event Check List for Planning

Please use this list during staff training or shortly after to plan before the event. This checklist will help you divide up small group responsibilities with your co-leader. The Small Group Planning worksheet will be helpful if you use it during the event.

My Small Group Co-Leader is \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Work/School Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

We will get together to plan over all small group strategy on Day \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

Place \_\_\_\_\_

Check here when completed.

\_\_\_\_\_ We have discussed our views of small group and understand the roles we will play.

\_\_\_\_\_ We've decided on who will start the first small group and how we will cover small group expectations.

\_\_\_\_\_ We have picked out which ice breaking activity we'll use in the first small group.

\_\_\_\_\_ We have chosen the other warm-up exercises and games that we want to have on hand. (Remember it is better to plan too much.)

\_\_\_\_\_ We have decided who will be in charge of getting supplies and materials for games and activities.

Small Group #1: Day \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Must Do: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Activities: \_\_\_\_\_

Small Group #2: Day \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Must Do: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Activities: \_\_\_\_\_

Small Group #3: Day \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Must Do: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Activities: \_\_\_\_\_

Small Group #4: Day \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Must Do: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Activities: \_\_\_\_\_

Small Group #5: Day \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Must Do: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Activities: \_\_\_\_\_

Small Group #6: Day \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Must Do: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Activities: \_\_\_\_\_

Small Group #7: Day \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Must Do: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Activities: \_\_\_\_\_

Small Group #8: Day \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Must Do: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Activities: \_\_\_\_\_

Small Group #9: Day \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Must Do: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Activities: \_\_\_\_\_

Small Group #10: Day \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Must Do: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Activities: \_\_\_\_\_

Small Group #11: Day \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Must Do: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Activities: \_\_\_\_\_

Small Group #12: Day \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Must Do: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Activities: \_\_\_\_\_

Small Group #13: Day \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Must Do: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Activities: \_\_\_\_\_

Small Group #14: Day \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Must Do: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Activities: \_\_\_\_\_

**List any handouts or supplies you may need for your small group on this sheet. Be sure to turn this in by the end of training.**

**Leaders' names**

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**Supplies we will need are:**

**If you like an activity that requires photocopying of a hand-out for you small group, please attach or list below.**

InTouch PSA#5 adapted this manual, from the *Operation Snowball Staff Training Manual*. In order to use any of Operation Snowball, Inc.'s program names, logos, and models, your group must be an accredited Chapter. Programs of Operation Snowball, Inc. include Snowflurry, Snowflake, Snowball, Segue, Blizzard, and Snowcap. To obtain chapter accreditation or information on Snowbusiness Conferences contact:

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