

GROUPS TO GO

Small Groups For Counselors On The Go

**18 Ready-To-Use Small-Group Counseling Plans
For Grades 3-5**

Two Groups For Each Topic:

Academic Improvement

At-Risk Behaviors

Decision Making

Divorce

Grief And Loss

Respect

Self-Confidence

Social Skills

Test Taking

**Written By
Arden Martenz**

Illustrated By Brian Dumm



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WELCOME TO

GROUPS TO GO

Small-group counseling is the backbone of elementary counseling.

It is the principal service no one in the school but a counselor is trained to provide. I once attended a seminar at which the speaker said, “Problems that originate in groups need to be addressed and solved in groups.” Most problems facing young children are rooted in one group or another—peer groups or family groups. Hence, the importance of small-group counseling is self-evident.

Time is always a factor during the school day. There is always more to do than time allows. So if students are going to be removed from their classrooms, the amount of time they miss has to be minimal. The sessions in *Groups To Go: Small Groups For Counselors On The Go* are designed to be completed in 30-40 minutes, so you will find very few paper and pencil tasks and more interactive activities. Small-group counseling is a child’s opportunity for expression and reflection. At first glance, the sessions may seem to be short. But once you and the children are involved in discussion, the time will pass quickly and productively.

The selected groups in *Groups To Go* have been used with children. Most have been adapted from issues of *PIC (Practical Ideas For Counselors)*, a counselor newsletter which was written by Mar*co staff and contributing counselors. Unless otherwise specified, the groups in this book were written and conducted in the school system by counselors who were members of Mar*co’s staff. They have been written to be as user-friendly as possible and include the techniques that proved most successful. However, each school is different. So is every child. Although each session includes step-by-step directions, you may find that you need to make adaptations to fit your particular situation. If necessary, adjust the sessions to give your students the best experience possible.

Some counselors like to present *Group Rules* at the beginning of a small-group counseling experience. Although these rules have not been included in the first sessions of the groups, counselors should feel free to add them to their lesson. You’ll find an example of *Group Rules* in the *Grief And Loss* section on page 117.

Although *Groups To Go* has been created to make your small-group counseling program easy to initiate and continue, it must be remembered that:



TIME MANAGEMENT

(Grades 3-5)

Incomplete assignments cause many different problems. Grades fall, parents become upset, students lose confidence in themselves, and teachers become frustrated. The reason for this problem is usually the student's inability to use time properly. For years, report cards have included a place for teachers to evaluate their students' use of time. Some students receive less than satisfactory marks in that space year after year after year. Counselors can address this problem by offering short, small-group sessions on the use of time for students needing help with this skill.

The demands of modern-day education are increasing. There is more to learn each year and no more time in which to learn the required information. So older students must think constructively about their use of time.

This group is designed to help students:

- Recognize "time-wasters"
- Understand the importance of time management
- Make a workable personal schedule

Group candidates:

- Students who repeatedly do not complete work
- Students who repeatedly turn in incomplete work
- Six to eight students from the same or adjoining grade levels

Group preparation:

Interview each student selected individually and explain the purpose and process of the group. Then send a parent notification and permission letter (page 19).



Session 3

FITTING EVERYTHING IN

Objective:

To have the students make a daily schedule for everything they want to do

Materials Needed:

For each student:

- ☐ Chart from Session 2
- ☐ Copy of *Time-Management Schedule* (page 24)
- ☐ Pencil

For the leader:

- ☐ None

Session Preparation:

Reproduce *Time-Management Schedule* for each student. Gather any other necessary materials.

Session:

- Distribute the charts from Session 2, *Time-Management Schedule*, and a pencil to each student.
- Explain that the purpose of this session is for the students to learn to fit all the things they want to do each day into the time they have.
- Have the students look at their charts from the previous session and decide how much time they need to do each thing. Then tell them to use the *Time-Management Schedule* and make a schedule for the day, fitting each activity into the time available. Since most things listed will take place before or after school, you may have to tell the students to schedule only those parts of the day.

- Conclude the session by asking the students to answer the following questions:

Did everything fit easily into the schedule?

Is there enough time for everything?

- Collect the schedules and the charts. Save them for the final session.



Session 5

PARTNER SCULPTING

Objective:

To allow the students to experience cooperative sculpting with a partner

Materials Needed:

For each pair of students:

- ☐ Different colors of clay
- ☐ Paper towel

For the leader:

- ☐ CD player and music CD
- ☐ Table and chairs

Session Preparation:

Gather the necessary materials.

Session:

(**Note:** This session uses the same concepts, format, and discussion questions as Session 3. Only the medium has changed. Instead of paint, the students will work with clay. The purpose of this session is to monitor the students' cooperative behavior in a similar situation.)

- Have the students seat themselves around the table.
- Review the previous session. Review the feelings the students experienced and encourage them to draw conclusions about why certain feelings occurred. Compliment each behavior change that the students notice and emphasize that these changes will make their classroom a better place for learning and that they will gain their classmates' respect.

- Tell each student to choose a partner with whom he/she will sculpt a picture out of clay. The picture may have many parts and should tell a story. Give each partnership clay and a paper towel on which to put the clay. Tell the students that they will have five minutes to create anything they like and that they may talk with one another.

- Begin playing the music and have the students begin creating their pictures. When the allotted time has elapsed, have the students tell the story their sculptures depict.

- Then ask the following questions:

What do you think of your sculpture?

How did you feel when working on this project?

Did you feel the same way the last time you worked with a partner?

What made the difference? (Everyone worked together.)

How does cooperating affect the feelings you have for others? (When you cooperate, you care about the other person's feelings, you are not trying to have everything your own way, you understand that the other person may have some good ideas, too, etc.)

How does cooperating affect the feelings others have for you? (When you cooperate, other people will like you and want to do things with you.)

- Conclude the session by congratulating the students on their insightful comments they have made about the importance of cooperation.



PEER PRESSURE

(Grades 3-5)

As students move through the elementary grades, peers become an increasingly dominant influence on their behaviors and decisions. As students grow older, they strive for independence. The influence of adults, which was once primary in their lives, diminishes. So, it is important that decision making be taught at an early age and that the opportunity to make decisions be made a part of students' everyday lives.

This six-session group includes recognizing peer pressure, identifying the acceptable and unacceptable risks peer pressure involves, and practicing saying "no" in dangerous or risky situations.

This group is designed to help students:

- Recognize the power of peer pressure
- Identify a decision's alternatives and outcomes
- Learn the difference between *acceptable* and *unacceptable risks*

Group candidates:

- Students who are easily influenced by their peers
- Students who seem to strive for peer acceptance
- Six to eight students from the same or adjoining grade levels

Group preparation:

Interview each student selected individually and explain the purpose and process of

Session 1

PEERS CAN AFFECT DECISIONS

Objective:

To introduce the power of peer pressure

Materials Needed:

For each student:

- ☐ None

For the leader:

- ☐ Chalkboard and chalk or chart paper and marker

Session Preparation:

Gather the necessary materials.

Session:

- Begin the group by asking one of the students to volunteer to be part of an experiment. Have that student leave the room.
- Draw two identical geometrical designs—straight lines, triangles, or rectangles—on the board/chart paper.
- Tell the group that it is their job to convince the student who is out of the room that one of the designs is longer or larger than the other one. They may do this through logical argument, bantering, or heckling. Emphasize that it is important that everyone participate by calling out comments rather than waiting to be called upon. Have the group agree which shape they will say is larger.

- Ask the student volunteer to come back into the room. Begin the commentary as soon as the student is asked, “Which (NAME OF SHAPE DRAWN) is larger?” Have the activity last from three to five minutes. (Watch the student volunteer carefully and stop the bantering if it is apparent that the student is being affected by the others. Do not subject the student to more pressure than necessary for him/her to experience a feeling of peer pressure.)
- Stop the commentary and tell the student what has taken place. Have the student describe how he/she felt about what just happened. Have the others tell how they felt when pressuring the student.
- Continue the lesson by having the students discuss peer pressure and how it affects decisions. Allow the students to share their personal experiences with peer pressure.
- Conclude the session by asking the students to be alert, between now and the next session, for examples of peer pressure in action.



HOW DIVORCE WORKS

Directions: Imagine that you are wondering about divorce. You are not sure how it works or what is going to happen. Then imagine you ask both your mother and father, “How does divorce work?” Write on the lines provided what you think they would say. Then write what *you* think about how divorce works.



My mother says _____

My father says _____

I think _____

THINGS THAT MAKE ME ANGRY

I was very sad when _____ died.

I didn't want it to happen.

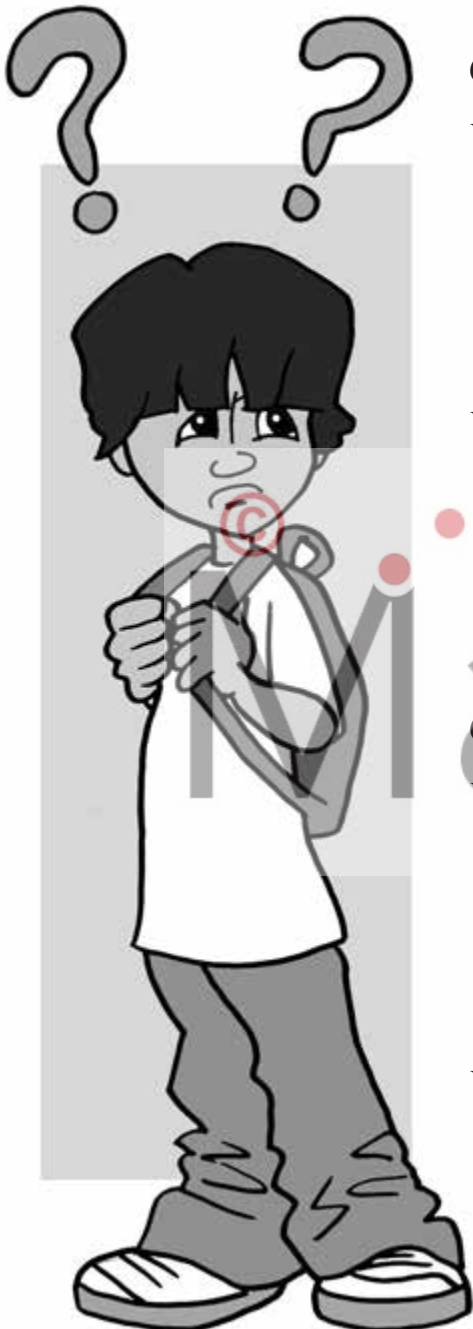
Because of _____'s death,
it makes me angry that I will no longer be able to:

Because of _____'s death,
it makes me angry that I now have to:

SITUATION SHEET #1

Situation: Tom goes back to pick up a book he left in science class. His teacher, Mr. Jones, is working at his desk. Tom stops to talk with him. As they are talking, Mr. Jones is called to the office. As Tom looks over Mr. Jones' desk, he notices that the unit science test with the answer key has been left out in full view.

What are Tom's two choices?



CHOICE #1 _____

What effect will this choice have on others? _____

What effect will this choice have on Tom's self-respect? _____

CHOICE #2 _____

What effect will this choice have on others? _____

What effect will this choice have on Tom's self-respect? _____

Session 1

AUTHORITY: WHAT IS IT AND WHO HAS IT?

Objective:

To introduce and discuss vocabulary words related to authority and authority figures

Session Preparation:

Gather the necessary materials.

Materials Needed:

For each student:

☐ None

For each student group:

☐ Paper

☐ Pencil

For the leader:

☐ Chart paper and marker

Session:

- Write the words *officer*, *influence*, *ruler*, and *command* on the chart paper.
- Divide the students into groups of two or three students. Give each group paper and a pencil. Assign one or two of the words written on the chart paper to each group.
- Tell the students they will have five minutes to list as many words as they can think of that are associated with the word(s) assigned to them. Have each group choose a recorder to write down its suggestions.



Session 5

FINALIZING THE DRAMATIZATION

Objective:

To help the students develop self-confidence through drama

Materials Needed:

For each student:

☐ None

For the leader:

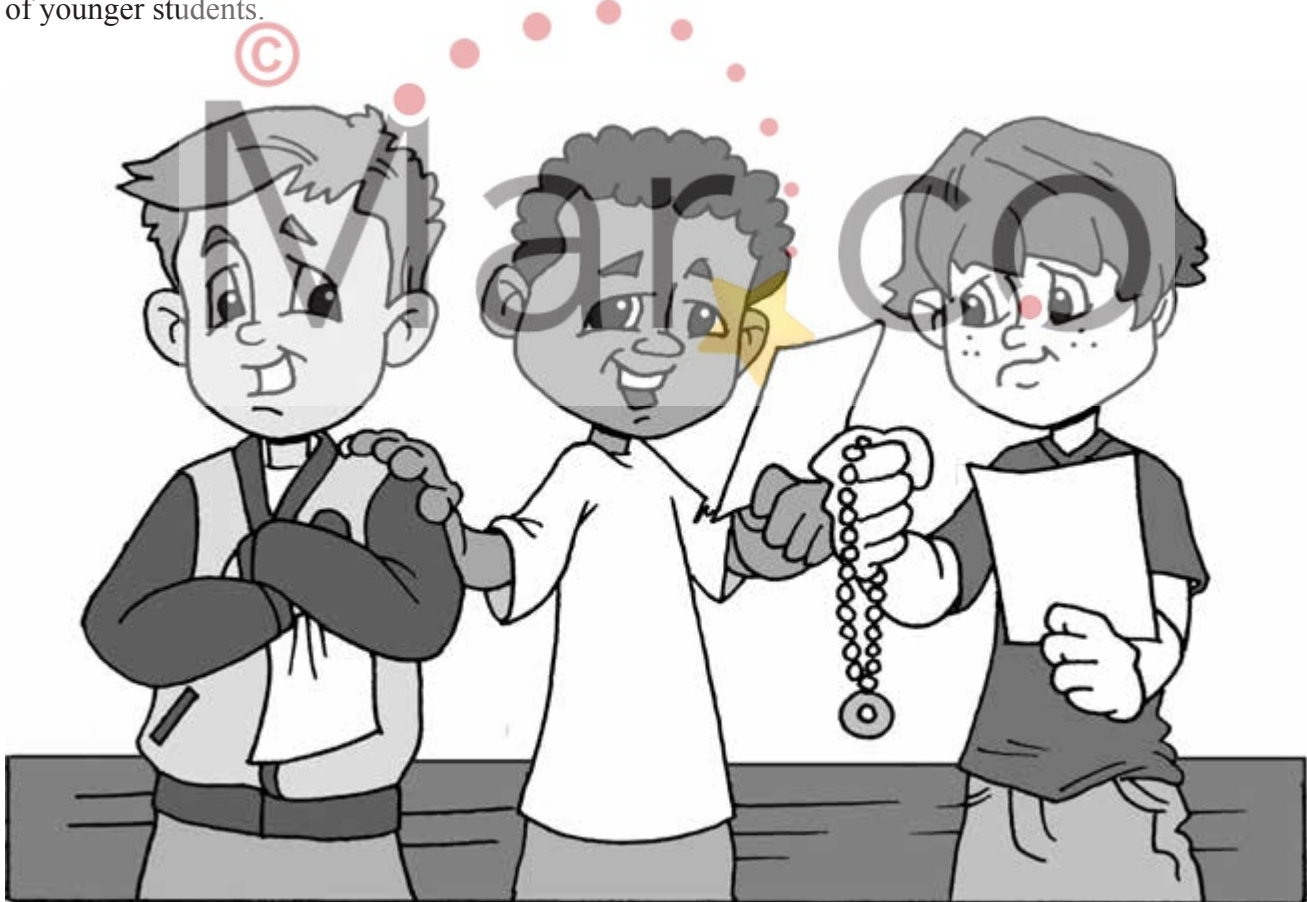
☐ Props from Session 1

Session:

- Tell the students that at the next and final session they will be presenting their skit to the ____ grade class. This session will be their last opportunity for rehearsal.
- Spend the rest of the session rehearsing the dramatization. The leader will make suggestions to improve the weaker parts of the production.
- Conclude the lesson by telling the students that you are looking forward to the next session, when they will be presenting their work to a ____ grade class.

Session Preparation:

Gather the necessary materials. Arrange for Session 6 to be a presentation of the drama to a group of younger students.





CAFETERIA BEHAVIOR CONTRACT

I will improve my cafeteria behavior by

My partner, _____ ,
will observe me and report my progress to the class.

Signed _____

I, _____ ,

felt that _____

fulfilled the contract.

I, _____ ,

felt that _____

did not fulfill the contract.



Session 3

FINDING THE CAUSE

Objective:

To help each student deal with the reasons for his/her feelings associated with a testing situation

Materials Needed:

For each student:

☐ None

For the leader:

☐ Notes taken at the last session

Session Preparation:

Gather the necessary materials.

Session:

- Begin the session by reviewing the different feelings about tests you heard expressed in the previous sessions.
- Since the students' reasons will be very different, the following are only sample suggestions that might be used. Address one student at a time, using the information learned in the last lesson in the following manner:

Kirk, last week you said that when you hear you are going to have a test, you feel like throwing up. You thought that the reason for this sick feeling was that the thought of having to take a test made your stomach do flip-flops.

Jerry, last week you said that the night before a test you could hardly sleep because

you were so hyper. You said that the reason you were hyper was because you couldn't get the next day's test out of your mind. The more you tried to sleep, the more you mentally kept trying to answer questions. Your mind just wouldn't shut off.

Cindy, last week you said that during the school day, you got more and more nervous as the time to take the test got closer. You

