

Passive, Aggressive, Passive-Aggressive, and Assertive Communication Styles

EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICES (EBP): Integrated System of Care; Universal Dual Diagnosis Capabilities; Principles of Empathy and Hope; Motivational Interviewing Approach; Stages of Change Model Design; Strength Based; Skill Building; Solution Focused; Neurochemistry Based Disorders of the Brain; Symptom Identification; Symptom Management; EBP Curriculum Topics, i.e. Nutrition, Stress Management, Cognitive Behavioral, and more...

Consistency in the Group Setting

The importance of *consistency* in a treatment setting can't be overstated. This is especially true when people are placed in vulnerable situations. *Inconsistency* can, at best, increase uncertainty and insecurity for the person receiving services. At worst, unpredictability can create a sense of helplessness while simultaneously decreasing a person's development of self-reliance. In fact, all human beings benefit from a dependable approach in the treatment of chronic disorders. When a person learns they can rely on consistency, they are less stressed and more relaxed. Consistency in the group setting includes the group structure, psychoeducational material, and the approach.

Each agency or facility will have different requirements – such as group receipts or paperwork – however, consistency can still include a structure similar to the following:

1. Group members pick up: a. Clip Board, b. Paper, and c. Pencil/Pen as they enter the room.
2. Group facilitator picks up the group receipts from each person in the group, and/or the group facilitator passes out the sign-in sheet for the group members to sign.
3. Group facilitator provides a Positive Group Beginning, Consistent Psychoeducational Material, Consistent Approach, and a Positive Group Closure.

Psychoeducational Groups and Crisis Event Processing (when requested)

Notes to Facilitator(s):

1. *THE BASICS, Second Edition* meets the definitions and goals of Psychoeducational Groups, Skill Building Groups, and Cognitive Behavioral Groups.
2. Group participants who have become accustomed to Interpersonal Processing Groups – as well as staff who have facilitated them – may find it a challenge to now facilitate Psychoeducational Groups.
3. Likewise, facilitators who may have followed a more lecture-style education presentation, may find it challenging to now devote at least 1/3rd of group time to specific topic discussions and interactions.
4. Both types of groups (Interpersonal Processing Groups and Psychoeducational Groups) are extremely important, yet each has different goals and structure.
5. The structure of Psychoeducational Groups, Skill Building Groups, and/or Cognitive-Behavioral Groups in no way means that there will not be *interaction* – far from it. It just means that the interactions, discussions, and exercises will be about the topic(s) of each group.
6. Facilitators *may* – or not – still want to allow time in each group for the group member(s) to discuss a crisis that may have occurred since the last group.
7. We do know, of course, that *every* person in group is typically experiencing many challenges each and every week; however, most of these incidents are often best resolved in ways other than group time where the event does not pertain to every group member.
8. Suggested responses to a challenge, problem, or crisis can also include suggesting the person contact their primary care provider; schedule a 1:1 appointment; reschedule their next 1:1 to an earlier time; or, meet with the facilitator after group to explore options and develop a plan.
9. A facilitator would, of course, not “*grade*” an event as being worthy or not for group time. If a person requests individual time in the group, then that would be accepted as valid and time allotted at the end of the group.
10. Over time, the group begins to understand the differences between a situation, a challenge, a problem, or a crisis and can make decisions to utilize group time or continue with the current psychoeducational topic.

Prepare Professionals

Suggestions for professionals to prepare themselves for group typically includes:

1. Review all content material, appendices, and/or handouts *prior* to group to avoid a lecturing style.
2. Decide beforehand the *key points* to be covered in each group to produce flexibility for group responses, discussions, or questions.
3. Gain an overall understanding of the content so summarizing is possible in order to create an interactive facilitation style.
4. Determine the group structure to achieve the essential balance between education and discussions.
5. Check group room to be sure there are enough clipboards, pencils or pens, and markers or chalk for the board.
6. Make enough copies of any handouts *before* group.
7. Write any group content on the board *prior* to the beginning of group whenever possible.

Master Guide & Master Tips to Professionals

Note: *The Master Guide* (located at the beginning of Volume I & II) and the *Master Tips to Professionals* (located at the back of Volume I) have many topics to assist in the group process like Master Tip #39: Suggestions For Managing Handouts For Groups (pages Master Tips 64-67). Other tips include:

1. Master Guide: Interactive Style (pages Master Guide 10-11)
2. Master Tip #1: Suggestions for Beginning Group (pages Master Tips 1-4)
3. Master Tip #3: Empathetic Treatment Approach (pages Master Tips 7-9)
4. Master Tip #4: Promoting Hope (page Master Tips 9)
5. Master Tip #5: Maintaining a Consistent, Nonjudgmental, and Positive Attitude (pages Master Tips 10-13)
6. Master Tip #12: Responding to Requests for Copies of APPENDICES (pages Master Tips 27-29)
7. Master Tip #13: Depth of Psychoeducational Content (pages Master Tips 29-30)
8. Master Tip #14: Group Closure Suggestions (pages Master Tips 30-31)
9. Master Tip #16: Motivational Interviewing (pages Master Tips 31-32)

Present Curriculum/Topic

1. It is extremely important that each group participant leave every group with more Psychoeducation than they came in with – which may also include discussing a “familiar topic” yet with a “present-day” focus. Psychoeducational Groups are designed to provide education about all areas related to the management of Substance Use Disorders and Psychiatric Disorders. Psychoeducational Groups are not Interpersonal Processing Groups – even though interaction and processing the particular *psychoeducational topic(s)* is essential to individualizing the topic(s) or skill(s) presented.
2. It is recommended that a minimum of 1/3rd of group time be devoted to interaction (therapeutic counseling *topic* discussions). This can be accomplished – depending on the individual style of the group facilitator(s) – by any “present education-interact/discuss – present education-interact/discuss” combination while still structuring the group to include the curriculum/topic education to be covered.
3. The presentation of material will, of course, be modified by the facilitator to match the functioning skills of group participants. It is important to note, however, that *THE BASICS, Second Edition* was written in a conversational language while taking into consideration a wide-range of symptom acuity and severity. Persons with co-occurring psychiatric and substance disorders benefit from learning about their disorders and how to manage them, as do all individuals with any chronic disorder(s). Each group participant will retain what is meaningful to them at the present time.

Group Beginning Suggestions

A positive group beginning (and ending) is extremely important. There are many ways to begin (and end) a group in a positive way. Suggestions to choose from can include:



1. Reading the Thought For The Day from a meditation book. (Note: Meditation books that also contain an index at the end of the book – such as *Easy Does It* – are helpful in choosing a specific reading that matches the topic(s) presented in group like Self-Esteem.), *or*
2. Reading an inspirational or humorous curriculum handout from *THE BASICS, Second Edition*, *or*
3. Practicing a deep breathing or a stretching exercise, *or*
4. Sharing of one thing that each person is grateful for today, *or*
5. Sharing of one positive thing that he/she did that contributed to their recovery in the past few days, *or*
6. Reading an AA Slogan with a brief explanation or AA/NA/Dual Recovery inspirational reading.

* Recommended Beginning: Breathing Exercise (located on page Master Tips 3)


Practice Curriculum/Topic

Practicing subject material is the best way participants can internalize and personalize the curriculum content. Practice includes the group interactions, worksheets, exercises, handouts, and content discussions.

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Based on a 2-Hour group: Two 50-Minute Segments	Time-Frame
Group Beginning and Prepare Group	20 Minutes Total
Positive group beginning (suggestions are located on the previous page).	5 Minutes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brief Group Introductions: (Note: The <i>interactions</i> in a psychoeducational group are discussions about the <i>topics</i>, not interpersonal processing or case management questions which do not apply to the entire group.) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ask the group members to tell the group their name. b. Welcome any group members who are new to this group or phase. 2. Crisis Processing (when requested and optional): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ask the group if anyone has experienced a crisis since their last group, and if they need/want additional time in this group to discuss it, i.e. what happened, how they managed the crisis, and/or explore options and develop a plan. b. Let the person(s) know that you will allow time at the end of this group for them to share their experience and receive support from their fellow group members. 	10 Minutes 
<p><u>Introduction of the Group Topic and Why It's Important (page Subject 1-49):</u> Sharing and accepting different perspectives takes good communication skills. Healthy communication allows each person to express their needs and wants to others. No one is born with excellent communication skills. They are developed. Learning to communicate is not accomplished in a single step; it requires practice and daily attention (Richard S., 1998). Good communication skills are a way of bringing people together and poor communication <i>fails</i> to bring people together.</p> <p>A person actually <i>chooses</i> one of four communication styles every time they speak. Today we will talk first about the importance of good listening skills and then about identifying communication styles. When a person practices communicating in the group, they can take the skills and confidence learned <i>inside</i> of the group into their everyday life <i>outside</i> of the group process.</p>	5 Minutes 

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Psychoeducation Part I: Topics & Focus		Pages & Location	Presentation Suggestions				Time-Frame				
Listening Skills		Subject 1-49 – 1-50	1. Summarize one paragraph. 2. Briefly summarize the eleven listening skills in the table below:				30 Minutes 				
1	Listen From the Heart	5	Listen For The Main Idea	9	Listen to What Is Not Being Said						
2	Focus Fully on What Someone Is Saying	6	Pay Attention If The Person Talking Is Expressing Facts or Feelings	10	Use Short Responses						
3	Listen For More Than Words	7	Use Silence When You Do Not Know What To Say	11	Listen Twice as Much						
4	Listen Objectively	8	Listen For Details								
Passive, Aggressive, Passive-Aggressive, & Assertive Communication Skills		Subject 1-51	1. Summarize one paragraph. 2. List the four communication styles. <table border="1" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr> <td>Passive</td> <td>Aggressive</td> <td>Passive-Aggressive</td> <td>Assertive</td> </tr> </table> 3. Briefly summarize why people may choose different styles of communication:				Passive	Aggressive	Passive-Aggressive	Assertive	
Passive	Aggressive	Passive-Aggressive	Assertive								
1	Past Experiences	2	Habit	3	Defenses	4	Control or Manipulation				
Passive Communication Style		Subject 1-51 – 1-52	Summarize the following information about the Passive Communication Style:								
1	Goal	4	Body Language or Tone								
2	Technique	3	Beliefs	5	Results of the Passive Style						
Aggressive Communication Style		Subject 1-52 – 1-53	Summarize the following information about the Aggressive Communication Style:								
1	Goal	4	Body Language or Tone								
2	Technique	3	Beliefs	5	Results of the Aggressive Style						
Passive-Aggressive Communication Style		Subject 1-53 – 1-54	Summarize the following information about the Passive-Aggressive Communication Style:								
1	Goal	4	Body Language or Tone								
2	Technique	3	Beliefs	5	Results of the Passive-Aggressive Style						
Break							10 Minutes				

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Psychoeducation Part II: Topics & Focus	Pages & Location	Presentation Suggestions	Time-Frame with Crisis Processing	Time-Frame without Crisis Processing												
Assertive Communication Style	Subject 1-54	Summarize the following information about the Assertive Communication Style: <table border="1" style="width:100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width:5%; text-align:center;">1</td> <td style="width:45%;">Goal</td> <td style="width:5%; text-align:center;">4</td> <td style="width:45%;">Body Language or Tone</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align:center;">2</td> <td>Technique</td> <td style="text-align:center;">3</td> <td>Beliefs</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align:center;">5</td> <td colspan="3">Results of the Assertive Style</td> </tr> </table>	1	Goal	4	Body Language or Tone	2	Technique	3	Beliefs	5	Results of the Assertive Style			 10 Minutes	 15 Minutes
1	Goal	4	Body Language or Tone													
2	Technique	3	Beliefs													
5	Results of the Assertive Style															
How To Be Assertive	Subject 1-56	Summarize one paragraph.														
Assertive Techniques	Subject 1-56	Summarize the six points found in #1 Assertive Techniques only. (Note: The rest of the table on pages: Subject 1-57 – 1-58 will be discussed in another group.)														

Skill Building Exercise and Discussion Suggestions			Time-Frame with Crisis Processing	Time-Frame without Crisis Processing																
<p><u>To Facilitator(s):</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> It is recommended that any group content for this particular group be written on the board <i>prior</i> to the beginning of group whenever possible. The information in the table below provides a visual to refer back to as you discuss the four communication styles: <table border="1" style="width:100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <td style="width:5%; text-align:center;">1</td> <td style="width:40%;">Goal</td> <td style="width:5%; text-align:center;">4</td> <td style="width:50%;">Body Language or Tone</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align:center;">2</td> <td>Technique</td> <td style="text-align:center;">5</td> <td>Results of the _____ Style</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align:center;">3</td> <td>Beliefs</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p><u>To the Group:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What communication style do you identify with the most? <table border="1" style="width:100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <td style="width:25%; text-align:center;">Passive?</td> <td style="width:25%; text-align:center;">Aggressive?</td> <td style="width:25%; text-align:center;">Passive-Aggressive?</td> <td style="width:25%; text-align:center;">Assertive?</td> </tr> </table> In this style, what do you relate to? The goals? The techniques? The beliefs? The body language or tone? The results you get from other people towards you when you use this particular communication style more than another? Do you use one style of communication with some people and another style with other people? 			1	Goal	4	Body Language or Tone	2	Technique	5	Results of the _____ Style	3	Beliefs			Passive?	Aggressive?	Passive-Aggressive?	Assertive?	 20 Minutes	 25 Minutes
1	Goal	4	Body Language or Tone																	
2	Technique	5	Results of the _____ Style																	
3	Beliefs																			
Passive?	Aggressive?	Passive-Aggressive?	Assertive?																	

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Skill Building Exercise and Discussion Suggestions				Time-Frame with Crisis Processing	Time-Frame without Crisis Processing				
<u>To the Group (continued):</u>				↙	↙				
4. How does this style or styles work for you? Well? Not so well? 5. Do you relate to any particular reason or influence that contributed to you developing the communication style you choose the most often?				continued	continued				
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Past Experiences</td> <td>Habit</td> <td>Defenses</td> <td>Control or Manipulation</td> </tr> </table>		Past Experiences	Habit	Defenses	Control or Manipulation				
Past Experiences	Habit	Defenses	Control or Manipulation						
6. Is this style productive, healthy, or helpful in your relationships with others? 7. Is it <i>nonproductive</i> , <i>unhealthy</i> , or <i>unhelpful</i> in your relationships with others? 8. How do others respond to this style? What about other styles? 9. Do you often get your <i>needs</i> met with this style? 10. Do you communicate with some people in a more helpful way and with others in a less helpful way? 11. Is there a particular person you would want to improve your communication style with? 12. What goal(s) would you set for your communication style in the future? 13. Where would you start? Who would you practice with first? 14. How are you doing in communicating in an Assertive Communication Style? 15. What goal would you set for yourself to practice additional assertive communication skills with others? 16. Where will you start first? And with who?				↓	↓				
Crisis Processing				Time-Frame					
1. Ask the group member(s) to tell the group what happened. 2. Explore options and/or develop an immediate plan for coping. 3. Allow the group to offer support.				10 Minutes	↓				
Group “Paper Work”					Time-Frame				
Group participants fill out Group Evaluations.					5 Minutes				
Group Closure					Time-Frame				
1. Read an inspirational thought for the day of your choice, <i>or</i> 2. Ask each group member to say one thing they are grateful for today, <i>or</i> 3. Ask each group member to state in one or two words their next communication goal like “Listening Twice As Much,” or “Expressing Thoughts Directly,” or “Being Respectful And Open To The Ideas Of Others,” or _____.					5 Minutes ↓				