



newsletter for nurturing support groups

March-April, 1982
Volume 3, Number 4

Welcome to the 16th issue of **WE**, a newsletter for and about groups of people who get together for the purpose of giving each other personal support. This issue includes:

- a suggested format for group meetings
- suggested activities for opening and closing meetings
- more about ground rules
- a new way to look at Resentments and Appreciations
- more about the Power of Hearing, Seeing and Doing in Communication
- how to introduce an activity to both the Big Picture people and the Detail people
- activities for building a successful support group

and

- **INFORMATION ABOUT SUCCESSFUL FAMILIES**
- Ground Rules for family activities
- I See, I Hear, I Do. . .improving communications in families
- Six Characteristics of Successful Families
- Build the Success of your Family
- **Prime Time for Families** — a book review
- Creating Affirmations in the Family — "Sing a Song"

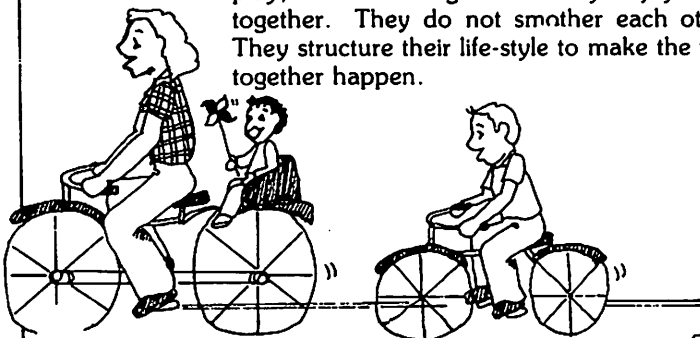
Jean Illsley Clarke

Jean Illsley Clarke
Editor

SUCCESSFUL FAMILIES

What do successful families have in common? Nick Stinnett of the University of Nebraska surveyed more than 750 well functioning families in the United States and other countries and found that they have six qualities in common. He found that successful families:

I Spend a lot of **time** together. They work, play, eat meals together. They enjoy being together. They do not smother each other. They structure their life-style to make the time together happen.



2 Have a high degree of **commitment** to promote each others welfare and happiness. They also have a high degree of **commitment** to the family as a group.

3 Show a high degree of **religious participation**. They are committed to a spiritual life-style. Their religion is personal as well as practical. Their religion is not necessarily church affiliated.



4 Have a special ability to deal with **tragedies and crises**. They keep a sense of balance by focusing on something positive about the event, such as how much they care about each other. They offer strong support to the one in crisis.

5 Have good **communication** patterns. They take time to talk together. They are very good listeners. They do fight, have quarrels and conflict. They are free to express feelings; they look at alternatives to use in resolving conflicts.



6 Express a great deal of **appreciation** to each other. They give a lot of positive messages to each other. They build each other up psychologically. They give many sincere compliments. They express appreciation very well and very often.



HOW TO BUILD A SUCCESSFUL

suggested activity



1. Say: This activity will give each family a chance to look at their successes.
2. Explain the ground rules for family activities listed in this issue.
3. Hand each family member a graph that looks like this.

Name A Successful Family	1. Spend enjoyable time together.	2. Committed to each other and family.	3. Religious participation.	4. Tragedy and crisis.	5. Communications; Listen	Appreciation

4. Explain each of the six qualities briefly.
Ask: Will each member of the family work independently? (People who are too young to read may have recording help from an older person.)
5. Ask: Will each of you draw a tall bar above the quality you think your family needs the most improvement in? Will you fill in the other bars indicating where they fall in between?
6. Ask: Will each family sit together in a circle and listen while every member, in turn, presents his or her graph and explains why the bars are the way they are, if he or she wishes to. Remember that each family member is to listen to the others, but not to judge or to make any "put down" statements.
Say: After you have heard each member and seen each graph, will each family choose one area that they would like to improve during the coming month and plan three specific activities that they will do to make that improvement?
A family that wants to improve appreciations will find specific suggestions in the last issue of **WE**, which focused on Affirmations.
A family that wants help on how to spend enjoyable time together could use Pappas' book, **Prime Time for Families**, reviewed in this issue.
7. After the families have shared their graphs and made their contracts, say: One of the qualities of a successful family is the way they express appreciation to each other. To close this exercise, will each family focus on each family member in turn and tell that person one thing you appreciate about how they did this exercise?

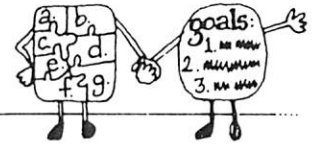
Suggested Activity for a Support Group HOW TO BUILD A SUCCESSFUL SUPPORT GROUP

The qualities that strengthen a successful family are also qualities of a successful support group. Do the suggested activity, **HOW TO BUILD A SUCCESSFUL FAMILY** and substitute "support group" for "family" in the direction.

Another way you can strengthen your support group is to do the Five Dot Exercise in Volume 1, No. 6, especially if you have not done it for several meetings.

FACILITATION SKILLS

the big picture and the details



When you are introducing an activity in your support group or in your family, remember, some people like to know the big picture, and some people want to start fitting pieces together right away. If you are a "pieces" person and you start by introducing small parts without telling the purpose or the goal of the activity, the "big picture" people will be uncomfortable with the activity and with your leadership. If you are a "big picture" person and you take a long time to explain the purposes and goals, the "small pieces" people will get bored and may stop listening or leave. Whenever you start an activity, remember to state the purpose clearly but briefly, and offer some part of an activity soon. That way you will not lose either type of learner.

Look at the Suggested Activity, **I See, I Hear, I Do**. Saying, "The purpose of this activity is to sharpen our awareness of the differing ways people take in information and to increase our options in communication" honors the big picture people. Immediately handing out the list of clues reassures the people who want to start with smaller pieces.

GROUND RULES FOR FAMILY ACTIVITIES

In his book, **Prime Time for Families**, Michael Pappas suggests four rights and ground rules for families to observe while they are doing family activities.

Rights and Rules for Family Activities:

1. Each family member has the right to act as activity leader.
2. Each family member has the right to pass.
3. Each family member has the right to a supportive growth atmosphere. (No put-downs or unsolicited advice allowed.)
4. Each family member has the right to confidentiality.
How do these ground rules compare with the ones you use when you do a family activity? If you change "family member" to "support group member," how do these ground rules compare with the ones you use in your group?



When Sonia first started to lead Support Group meetings she asked for Appreciations at the close of the meetings, but she did not ask for Resentments. She had interpreted resentments as personal criticisms and she needed reinforcement for leading. One day she listened to a friend who was comparing the western and eastern ways of handling the positives and negatives in life. "Westerners tend to think that life should be good all the time. When it is not, they feel inadequate because they have not succeeded in managing their lives well enough. Eastern philosophy emphasizes that both the negative and the positive parts of life are normal. Easterners tend to accept a negative-times attitude and to look forward to, and to enjoy, the positive times."

Sonia decided to enjoy Appreciations and to ask for Resentments, which she will look at as part of the negative experiences in life, but will not hear and feel them as personal criticisms.

The Power of Hearing, Seeing and Doing in Communications

by Jean Clarke

Sometimes, when I am having difficulty getting someone to understand me, it is because I am not "talking his language." I may be talking in visual terms while he understands kinesthetic terms more easily. **Neurolinguistics** is the name used to refer to representational systems, or thinking about experiences in terms that are visual (through the eyes), auditory (through the ears), or kinesthetic (through the body).

Deane Gradous reports that she can express the same message three ways:

1. "John **heard** the group resolve their differences and come to a consensus." (auditory)
2. "Helen **saw** the group work through their differences and come to a consensus." (visual)
3. "Mary **felt** the group conflict and then the harmony of a consensus." (kinesthetic)

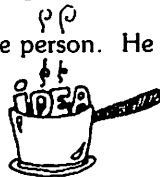
When Deane has difficulty getting someone to understand her, she listens for clues in his speech and then mirrors his system.

Following is a list of 30 clues she recorded. As you read each clue, decide if you would mirror it with a seeing, a hearing, or a doing message.

Deane's 30 Clues

1. "I have butterflies in my stomach."
Mirror: (kinesthetic) *Got any feelings about how we should approach this problem?*
2. "I simply can not see why."
Mirror: (visual) *Do you have a picture of how we should view this problem?*
3. "They are not listening to us!"
Mirror: (auditory) *I would like to hear any suggestions you have about how to solve this problem.*
4. When it comes to that he has real tunnel vision.
He gives me a creepy feeling.
5. At that moment the scales fell from my eyes.
7. That's when the rubber hits the road.
8. Now you are talking my language.
9. I'm beginning to fit the pieces together.
10. Let me show you.
11. That's music to my ears.
12. This just seems to stick in my throat.
13. Now hear this!
14. He respects me. He looks me straight in the eye.
15. I've got her ear on this issue.
16. I've lost touch with that information.
17. That's coming through clear as a bell.
18. How do you feel about that?
19. I'll tell you how this thing sounds to me.
20. I start talking to you and you look down at the floor.
21. She respects my opinion — she really listens to me.
22. I sense you respect me by the way you shake hands with me.
23. That's an exciting story you tell.
24. I see. I've got the picture.
25. I can't get a handle on that problem. I can't get ahold of it.
26. What does that look like to you?
27. My boss just doesn't see me as a valuable person. He is always telling me what to do.
28. That sounds good to me.
29. Let the idea simmer for awhile.
30. I hear you better when I close my eyes.

Some clues are not obvious to you, ponder them awhile and ask other people what they mean. "I start talking to you and you look down at the floor" reminded me that a friend who frequently looks away while I am speaking told me that she has to look at neutral ground in order to hear well, because she takes in so many visual stimulations that she loses track of what the speaker is saying.



I See, I Hear, I Do... suggested activity

1. Say: The purpose of this activity is to sharpen our awareness of the differing ways people take in information, and to increase our options in communication.
2. Hand out a copy of **Deane's 30 Clues**.
3. Ask: Will you work in groups of three? Will each group take some of the items (divide the 30 clues among the groups)? For each item, identify whether that person seems to be thinking in visual (seeing), in auditory (hearing), or in kinesthetic (doing) system. Write a possible response to the item, mirroring the speakers' system.
4. Read the first three items with suggested responses aloud. After about ten minutes or when people have finished revising their lists,
5. Ask: Will someone from each group read the statement, identify whether you think this is an auditory, visual or kinesthetic item, and read your response?
6. After every group has reported, say: Understanding and using auditory, visual and kinesthetic modes of speaking can improve our communication skills in our support groups and in our families. Have any of you thought of ways you can use this information in the next few days?
7. Say: You can learn more about how these communication systems work in families by reading **Helping Families to Change** by Satir, Stachowiak and Taschman, Jason Aronson, Inc., New York, 1976. Leslie Cameron-Bandler tells how this information can be used with couples in therapy. Her book is **They Lived Happily Ever After**, Meta Publications, Cupertino, Calif., 1978.



SPRING and SUMMER FACILITATORS TRAINING WORKSHOPS

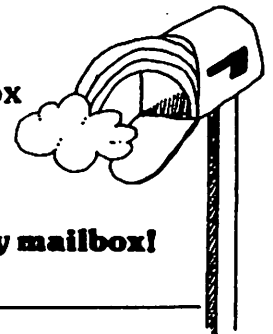
A week long workshop for people who want to...

- Facilitate the Self Esteem: A Family Affair parenting model, or
- Improve group leadership skills for working with growth and education and support groups.
- Led by Jean Illsley Clarke

- 🌸 May 3-7, Calgary, Alberta, Canada
- 🌸 June 21-25, Minneapolis, Minnesota
- 🌸 July 26-30, Seattle, Washington
- 🌸 August 16-20, Lafayette, California

Write to: **WE** for details.

For fifteen dollars,
a rainbow in your mailbox
six times a year!



yes, color my mailbox!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Send check to: **WE, 16536 9th Avenue N.,
Plymouth, MN 55447**

Prime Time for Families is a book that describes over 50 activities, games and exercises for Personal and Family growth. Author Michael G. Pappas is a family counselor and Dad. If you are looking for enjoyable ways your family can spend time together without watching television or spending money, use this book! It is from Winston Press, 430 Oak Grove, Minneapolis, MN 55403 — \$5.95.

Some of the activities focus on doing things. They include working activities and playing activities. Some focus on appreciating family history and some on affirming family members. Sample titles are *Becoming Energetic*, *Time Wasters*, *Happy Holidays*, *Setting Family Goals*, *The Last Moment*, *What We Like About Each Other* and *Questions for Sharing*. Following is a suggested activity from *Prime Time for Families*.

Activity 7: Sing a Song

About the Activity: In this activity, family members exercise their creative skills by making up and singing affirmation songs about one another. They express their appreciation of one another and of themselves by giving and receiving a special song.

The Leader Says: "Maybe you've told someone in the family that you appreciate him or her. But have you ever thought about *singing* your appreciation?"

"Let's use an outline to make up songs about one another. I'll start by singing a song to _____. Then we can take turns until everybody has had a chance to sing and be sung to.

"If you don't like to sing or don't want to do it right now, you can just say the words to your song. But this activity isn't an audition — let's have fun with it!"

Suggested Framework for Affirmation Songs:

- I love _____
- _____ is loved by me.
 - _____ knows something about _____.
 - _____ has the power to _____.
 - _____ respects _____.
 - _____ is respected by _____.
 - _____ is responsible for _____.
 - _____ is skillful at _____.
 - _____ likes things like _____.
 - _____ takes care of his/her body by _____.
 - _____ takes care of his/her mind by _____.

by Jean Clarke

OPENING ACTIVITY THAT OFFERS EVERYONE A POSITIVE PERSONAL MESSAGE

Choose a partner. Make a name tag for her and ask her to tell you two skills she is proud of that she learned to do well in the family she grew up in. Introduce your partner and what she learned to do well.

CLOSING ACTIVITY THAT OFFERS EVERYONE A POSITIVE PERSONAL MESSAGE



Stand in a circle. Leader reminds people that we can like each other just for being and that we can appreciate what people do also. "Today we will have cheering sections for Doing. Will each of you tell one thing that you do to help your family be a strong, successful family, and will the people who want to cheer that action shout 'HURRAH!'?"

suggested format for group meetings

- place _____
- date _____
- time _____
- person in charge _____

program:

- opening activity that offers everyone a positive personal message
- ground rules
- celebrating wins and sharing problems
- practice skills, new learnings, play
- suggestion circle
- plan the next meeting
- resentments and appreciation
- closing activity that offers everyone a positive personal message

Edited by Jean Illsley Clarke Published by Marnie Lilja Baehr
Layout Design by Marnie Lilja Baehr

\$15.00 per year (6 issues)

WE
16535 9th Avenue N.
Plymouth, MN 55447

- Suggested activities
- Thoughts on theory and purpose of support groups
- News from other support groups

newsletter for nurturing support groups