



## NEWSLETTER for NURTURING SUPPORT GROUPS

November-December, 1980  
Volume 2, Number 2

Welcome to the eighth 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 group meetings
- how the use of clock time or task time can be used in your meetings to reduce stress
- news about support groups

I am off to China to see how folks support each other there. I'll tell you about it in the next issue.

*Jean Illsley Clarke*

Jean Illsley Clarke, Editor

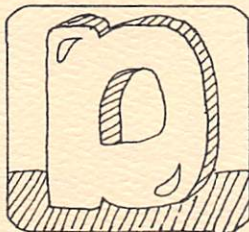


**ASK TIME, OR**



**LOCK TIME**

by Jean Illsley Clarke



Does your Support Group run on clock time or task time? If you start your meeting promptly at seven thirty and close promptly at nine thirty,

you start and stop by the clock, on clock time. If each person in your group shares a celebration and you stay with celebrations until each person has had a turn, you are using task time. You start the task and stay with it until the task (in this case sharing celebrations) is completed.



We will share celebrations for the next ten minutes...

We'll share celebrations until every body has had the opportunity to do so...



Working on task time is not stress-producing. Doing an activity by clock time, "We will brain storm for exactly five minutes and then stop," likewise, is not stress-producing. You do as much as you can and then stop.

Stress is introduced if you combine task and clock time, as in "We must make decisions about all three items in the next ten minutes." Stress also occurs if people do not agree as to whether the group is using clock time or task time. If I think we should spend not more than ten minutes on celebrations and you let people celebrate for twenty-seven minutes, I will probably start tapping my foot or withdrawing. One of the ways you can help your Support Group function smoothly is to be clear about which time your group is using. "Let's start and stop on time, but tonight I would like us to spend as much time as we need planning our fall party."



## FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT SUPPORT GROUPS

by Jean I. Clarke

### SUPPORT GROUPS FOR FAMILY DAY CARE PROVIDERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

"There was a noticeable difference in the behavior of (day care) mothers, who were part of an organized group which provided a support system to answer questions, provide instruction and serve as a sounding board for care-give concerns. These mothers spent more time with the children and demonstrated a confidence in interacting with them beyond that shown by other home mothers. They also showed a greater readiness to provide support for the children in their care." Bonnie Tyler and Laura Dittman reported this information in "Meeting the Toddler More Than Halfway," **NAEYC Journal**; January, 1980.



Deane Gradous, former training and Outreach Supervisor of Quality Child Care, writing about Child Care Providers, says: "Day Care Providers are in their own homes day after day caring for children. Meanwhile, who supports the providers? Who gives them a listening ear and understanding? Who nurtures the nurturers? More and more providers are meeting regularly in support groups."



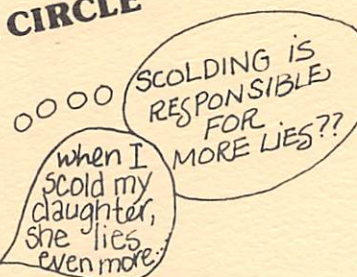
Groups that are genuinely supportive of members can be a vehicle for successfully accommodating the needs of a diversity of providers. Such support groups are organized under certain premises:

1. Because members are doing valuable work in society their needs are important.
2. Only people whose needs are reasonably met can begin to meet the needs of others.
3. Providers are responsible individuals who will begin to get their needs met fully and assertively if given the opportunity to learn ways to do this with each other.

I had the superb experience of meeting with about forty members of Quality Child Care in August in Lakeville, Minnesota. The warmth and energy that they offered to each other and to me still warms me. These people not only know how to support each other, they do it!"

## SUGGESTION CIRCLE

by Jean Clarke



When you are leading a Suggestion Circle for someone in your group who wants help solving a problem, be sure to get the person to state the problem in a way that is clear about who is responsible for which part of the problem. For example: Bill said, "I want suggestions of different things I can do when my seven year old daughter lies. Scolding her causes her to lie even more." Pat, the leader for the evening, asked Bill, "Will you restate the question and be clear about what part is your responsibility and what part is your daughter's responsibility?"

Bill was confused. His ears were not tuned to hear that he had implied that "scolding" had the power to make his daughter lie. Pat offered an alternative. "Are you willing to accept this for a statement of your problem? 'When I scold my daughter for lying she responds by lying more. What are some things I could do besides scolding?' " Bill laughed with relief. "Yes," he said, "that is what I meant."

If you want to review the directions for running a Suggestion Circle you can refer to Vol. 1, Number 1 issue of WE.

### suggested format for group meetings

place \_\_\_\_\_  
date \_\_\_\_\_  
time \_\_\_\_\_  
person in charge \_\_\_\_\_

#### program:

- opening activity that offers everyone a positive personal message
- 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





## NEWS ABOUT SUPPORT GROUPS

### Cincinnati, Ohio

I'm subscribing to **WE** to use with the four support groups I have started within the "Homemaker Unit" at the Welfare Department. I am the Social/Work supervisor for the "Homemaker Unit." Our support groups are structured according to the guidelines set forth in **WE** and Self Esteem: A Family Affair.\*

It's really fun having the groups share responsibilities and seeing each other grow.

I'll continue to share with you from time to time news about myself and the support groups.

Your friend,  
Fran Schultz  
Cincinnati, Ohio

\*Winston Press, 430 Oak Grove, Minneapolis, MN 55403  
Price: \$7.95

### Use Of The Support Group Format

"Hey, that format really does work!"

These were the words I heard expressed by one of the members of a support group I visited recently.

During the meeting people gave many nurturing and structuring messages to each other. There was a time for sharing individual wins and problems; time for stretching and growing with some new learnings; time to practice some skills; and even time to plan the next meeting. It was great to be a part of the high energy of the meeting! They are using the suggested format from **WE** to help them get what they want.

from Betty Beach, Minneapolis, MN

### Robbinsdale, Minnesota

First Congregational Church of Robbinsdale's Mothers, Fathers and Others Support Group started their informal discussion group on Monday, September 8, 1980 at 7:30 p.m. Anyone who has participated in the M, F and O classes is welcome to join us. We meet once a month, and look forward to continued sharing and growth within the class. We are located at 4200 Lake Road in Robbinsdale. Anyone with questions may call the Church, 537-6965.



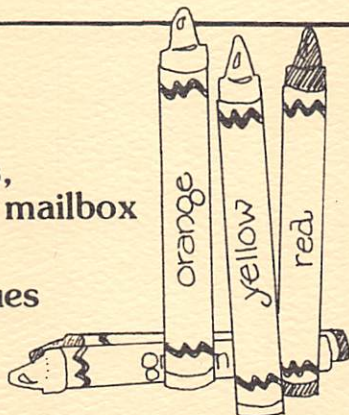
Ending each meeting with a short period for sharing Resentments and Appreciations signals the group that the meeting is completed. It encourages members to feel finished, to experience closure of the Support Group activity and to feel refreshed to go on to their next activity. When you ask for Resentments first and Appreciations last, people leave on a positive note.



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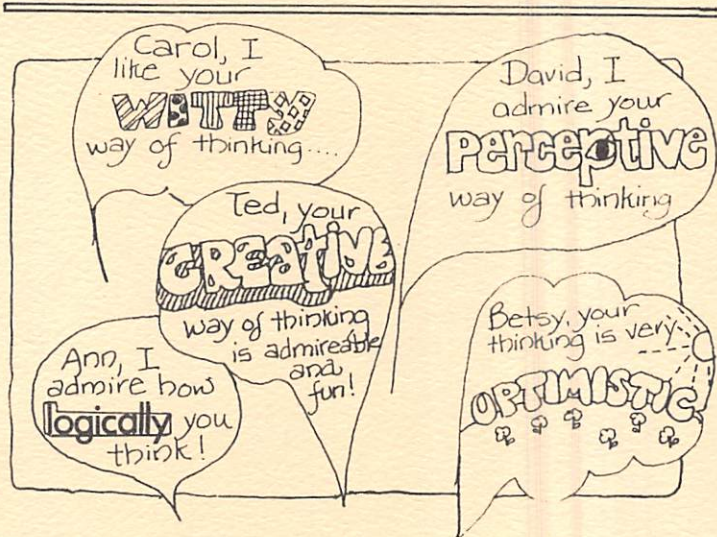
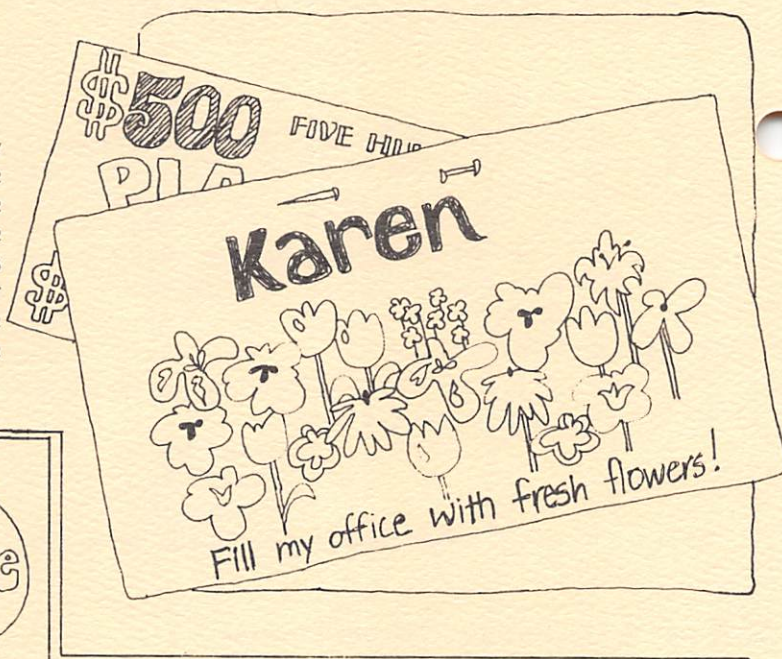
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## OPENING ACTIVITY THAT OFFERS EVERYONE A POSITIVE MESSAGE

by Mary Ann Eckenberg

Give each person a five hundred dollar bill in play money. Ask each person to find a partner; make the partner a name tag and write or draw on the name tag what the person would do to have fun with five hundred dollars (nothing practical, no paying bills or buying something "needed" please). Let your imagination soar! Introduce your partner to the group and tell what he/she would do with the money.



## CLOSING ACTIVITY THAT OFFERS EVERYONE A POSITIVE PERSONAL MESSAGE

Find someone you haven't spent much time with today and tell her/him two things you admire about her/his thinking.

Edited by Jean Illsley Clarke

Published by Judee Hansord  
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**