



newsletter for nurturing support groups

March-April 1981
Volume 2, Number 4

Welcome to the tenth 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
- news about support groups
- more about ground rules
- the Three P's of Leadership by Annette Pattie

Sincerely,

Jean Illsley Clarke

Jean Illsley Clarke, Editor

3 P's of Leadership

by Annette Pattie

When you do a good job of leading a Support Group meeting, whether you realize it or not, you are using the 3 P's: PROTECTION, PERMISSION and POTENCY.

PROTECTION is offering a safe environment for people during the meeting.

PERMISSION is giving encouragement to the people there, to think and to feel, to be who they are and to do what they need to do in order to feel lovable and capable.

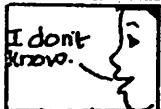
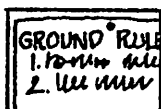
POTENCY is power, being in charge.

You offer PROTECTION to the group when you:

1. Start on time and end on time.
2. Use ground rules (See Volume 2, Number 3)
3. State the goals of the meeting and keep on agenda.
4. Speak with nurturing voice quality.

You offer PERMISSION to the group when you:

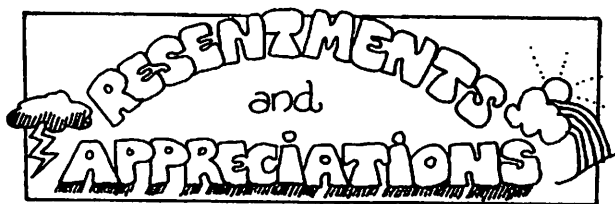
1. Honor the people for making their own decisions about what works best for them.
2. Share personal wins and problems.
3. Structure the meeting to include positive experiences.
4. Affirm people's needs as being OK.



You are a POTENT leader when you:

1. Claim the power of the leadership role . . . structuring time and honoring the ground rules.
2. Take responsibility for what you know and for what you don't know.
3. Speak clearly and concisely.
4. Ask the group for what you need in order for you to be an effective leader.

I invite each of you to identify the ways you use the 3 P's in your own leadership style. Celebrate the ways you do well and plan ways to improve your leadership skills.



A support group member reports that he told his family about the use of Resentments and Appreciations at the close of each meeting and his family is now expressing Resentments and Appreciations before bedtime each night. If he forgets to ask for them, his six year old reminds the family, "It is time to tell what bothers us and what we like!"

suggested activity

MAKE A WINNERS LIST



This is an activity that helps people focus on things winners do. Pass out this list by Hedges Capers or read the list aloud. Then ask people to make their own WINNERS.

WINNERS

Winners win at being human beings; they don't have to "beat."

1. Expect to win
2. Are around winners
3. Invite other people to win
4. Record their wins
5. Make winning decisions
6. Choose friends who are winners
7. Do some things just to please themselves
8. Take care of themselves
9. Take the positive strokes offered them
10. Set up situations to get rewarded
11. Invite others to get rewarded
12. Find good in others and record it and reward it
13. Appreciate names
14. Keep a good stroke reserve
15. Have a "Want List"
16. Have a "Fun List"
17. Become aware of negative feelings they are hanging on to and throw them away
18. Collect good feelings and wins and savor them and think about them instead of staying in a bad place
19. Win!
- 20.
- 21.
- 22.
- 23.

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



There is a new item in the Support Group Format this week. That item is "Ground Rules" and it has been added at the request of people who use the format. Ground rules, whatever those rules are that your group negotiates, set tone and offer protection to each member of the group. Mary Ann Eckenberg uses the Ground Rules that are listed in the last issue of **WE** (Volume 2, Number 3) when she teaches a class based on *Self Esteem: A Family Affair*.*

1. Everyone participates (at least in their heads).
2. Everyone has the right to pass on an activity.
3. Everyone's opinion or belief is honored.
4. No gossip.
5. Leader stays in a position of respect for self and others.

Mary Ann reported, "I have a neat new awareness about using Ground Rules. I belong to a group that has adult retreats. I asked a friend if he was planning to attend. He said that he was not. He had heard from people who have gone in the past, who were not "groupie" types, that they had been shunned for not participating in group activities. I know that the leader had given permission to people to cross country ski or swim instead of attending small group sessions, but the group had not given permission. People from the group criticized or made fun of people who chose not to participate. This proved to me how powerful the group acceptance of Ground Rules is."

When Mary Ann posts her Ground Rules she asks everyone to use the rules. She reminds people that the "Right to Pass" ground rule includes her, and when someone passes Mary Ann gives approval with a word or a nod to the person who passed.

* Jean Illsley Clarke, Winston Press.

Evaluation of 3 P's In A Leader

By Annette Pattie

Permission to reprint from WE Newsletter.

Test your skill at recognizing PROTECTION, POTENCY and PERMISSION or lack of each by filling in the following evaluation.

Situation: You are attending a three hour workshop on Assertiveness. Score each behavior as it would appear to you. Compare your responses with Annette Pattie's evaluation.

Remember that people's perceptions of **Protection**, **Permission** and **Potency** are highly personal. If you disagree with Annette's answer on some item, think about why some people might react differently to that behavior and how you can use that information to improve your ability to offer the Three P's.

PROTECTION

Put a + in front of the behavior if it offers **protection**, a - if it neglects to provide **protection**.

- a. ____ Offers support to communicate personal wants and needs.
- b. ____ States that each person is important.
- c. ____ States no Ground Rules in the beginning.
- d. ____ Does not state her Goals for the workshop.
- e. ____ Encourages the participants to get straight, compassionate reactions from others.
- f. ____ Assists people in finding new ways to believe in themselves and to be themselves.
- g. ____ Asks people to leave Humility outside the door and go on a fantasy trip, leaving an empty spot. Does not ask them to put something in the place of humility before going on the trip.

PERMISSION

Put a + in front of the behavior if it offers **permission**, a - if it neglects to provide **permission**.

- a. ____ Shares changes in her personal life.
- b. ____ Doesn't remind people that it is okay to ask for needs before telling them to ask a partner for some unconditional need.
- c. ____ Doesn't remind the group that it is okay to feel uncomfortable trying new things.
- d. ____ Encourages the participants to do many assertiveness exercises.
- e. ____ Gives them permission to be themselves.
- f. ____ Asks people to decide how they want to be.
- g. ____ Doesn't give permission to toss away criticism.
- h. ____ Does not emphasize the importance of raising own self-esteem, to support assertiveness.

POTENCY

Put a + in front of the behavior if it is an example of **potency**, a - if it lacks **potency**.

- a. ____ Challenges the participants to change.
- b. ____ Makes expedient use of time.
- c. ____ Demonstrates strength in handling an unhappy participant by staying in a positive leadership role.
- d. ____ Does not allow people to Pass on exercised they do not want to do.
- e. ____ Is Assertive.
- f. ____ Is in charge at all times.
- g. ____ Is firm about her own beliefs.
- h. ____ Withholds some permissions and protections.
- i. ____ Does not provide a closure experience for the group.
- j. ____ Communicates very clearly.

- k. ____ Models humaneness.
- l. ____ Withholds the nurturing messages saying that each participant is okay the way they are.
- m. ____ Doesn't provide mingling space.

Key:

PROTECTION: a. +, b. +, c. -, d. -, e. +, f. +, g. -

PERMISSION: a. +, b. -, c. -, d. +, e. +, f. +, g. -, h. -

POTENCY: a. +, b. +, c. +, d. -, e. +, f. +, g. +, h. -, i. -, j. +, k. +, l. -, m. -

GROUP ACTIVITY

To help all of the members of your group improve their leadership skills, ask each person to evaluate the items on the three lists individually. After they have finished, read each item and ask people to indicate if they marked it with a plus by raising a hand. When you reach an item on which people disagree, ask one person who rated it + to tell why, and one person who rated it - to tell why. Each person's answers make sense for him, so ask people to listen to each other but do not permit right-wrong comments. Ask people to share other ways they provide **Potency**, **Protection** and **Permission**.

Annette Pattie leads **Self-Esteem: A Family Affair** and other workshops on self-esteem. Through **Affirmation Enterprises** (P.O. Box 21, Savage, MN 55378), she provides developmental affirmation stickers and laminated paper circles (cymbals), blocks and charts. She also distributes shirts and pants with great messages for little people. Annette lives at 13405 Colfax Avenue South, Burnsville, MN 55337.

Suggested Personal Activity

How Do I Provide Protection, Permission, and Potency?

Annette Pattie asked fifteen professional facilitators of groups for a Suggestion Circle on ways that they provide **Protection**, **Permission** and **Potency**. The suggestions they gave are listed below. You can use these lists to help you think about when you experience potency, protection and permission, and then how you as a leader offer the Three P's to other people.

To assess when you feel **Protected**, write a "yes" on the first ____, if you feel **protected** when a leader does this; write "no" if you do not. Leave the second ____ open. Do the same for the **permission** list and for the **potency** list.

Remembering that some aspects of **Protection**, **Permission** and **Potency** are very personal, evaluate each item on the list with your own leadership style in mind.

- If you have not read **The Power of the Three P's** on page 1, read that.
- Look at the **Protection** list again.
- On the second ____ put a star if this is something you are good at. Put a check mark if this is a leadership skill you would like to improve.
- Add other ways that you offer **Protection**.
- Do the same for the **Permission** list and for the **Potency** list.
- Celebrate all of the items that you starred. Make a contract with yourself about ways to improve one item that you checked.
- After one month, review your progress and make a contract with yourself about ways to improve another item that you checked.

continued on page 4 61.

How do I provide...?

Continued

- Get in the habit of having a **Protection, Permission** and **Potency** evaluation of yourself once a month.
- Sometimes, ask a competent, impartial observer to evaluate you.
- When you have made some improvement, give yourself a **Protection, Permission** and **Potency** celebration.

PROTECTION

I provide **Protection** when I:

- ___ Structure by posting Ground Rules and goals.
- ___ Move my body — going over to person who needs help.
- ___ Say "No" when necessary and say it straight.
- ___ Use a protecting, nurturing tone of voice.
- ___ Come from a nurturing rather than a critical personal position.
- ___ Am aware of what Responsibility means and act accordingly.
- ___ Am strong and firm.
- ___ Say, "I don't know" when I don't.
- ___ Say, "I believe this to be true," instead of stating beliefs or opinions as facts.
- ___ Interrupt to keep group on task.
- ___ Am in charge, powerful but not controlling.
- ___ Am in charge of myself when I arrive.
- ___ Have room prepared and supplies ready.
- ___ Start on time and end on time.
- ___ Redo mistakes.
- ___ As leader, use right to pass, as well as other Ground Rules.
- ___ Don't respond to Resentments during Closing but make needed adjustments in my own leadership.
- ___ Do not gossip about mistakes someone else made in my group.
- ___
- ___
- ___

PERMISSION

I provide **Permission** when I:

- ___ Offer permission; say, "It's okay to try out these things or not to."
- ___ Give positive strokes.
- ___ Share personal experiences, mistakes, wins, problems, etc.
- ___ Admit to changing my opinion.
- ___ Am spontaneous in ways suitable for the situation.
- ___ Am clear about outcome, concensus vs. own conclusions.
- ___ Am in charge of the structure so people don't have to worry about who is leading.
- ___ Claim power of leader role — take charge, be in charge.
- ___ Enforce Ground Rules by repeating and acknowledging and affirming them.
- ___ Don't spring things on people or trick people.
- ___ Use the Ground Rules for myself (see page 1).
- ___ Ask people to set goals. Offer options.
- ___ Tell them they can develop their own ways of doing things.

They can disagree with me or other people in the group.

They can trust their feelings to guide them.
They don't have to suffer to get what they need.

They can think before they accept someone else's decision.

- ___ Honor mistakes as opportunities to grow.
- ___
- ___
- ___
- ___

POTENCY

I offer **Potency** when I:

- ___ Feel potent.
- ___ Center myself.
- ___ Use body language that is congruent with what I am saying.
- ___ Am firm about my beliefs but do not use them to overpower other people.
- ___ Use eye contact.
- ___ Am clear, concise and consistent about what I communicate.
- ___ Briefly relate personal experiences that relate to the topic at hand.
- ___ Provide structure and nurturing.
- ___ Am straight about my own needs.
- ___ Model humaneness.
- ___ Am assertive.
- ___ Am directive, serious, humorous, or enthusiastic at appropriate times.
- ___ Offer knowledge without acting one-up.
- ___ Disagree.
- ___ Am aware of own needs and energy level.
- ___ Leave personal problems outside group (unless it is a support or sharing group).
- ___ Am in charge.
- ___ Ask for what I need.
- ___ Am alert to the dynamics of the group.
- ___ Check out how others are thinking and feeling.
- ___ Don't invite dependency.
- ___ Keep things moving.
- ___ Have good pasture.
- ___ Give full attention to the group discussion, paraphrasing what was said and directing discussion to assigned subject.
- ___
- ___
- ___

Further Readings

If you are a therapist or are interested in the ways **Protection, Permission** and **Potency** are important in a therapeutic setting, here are some sources of further information about that topic.

Berne, Eric, **What Do You Say After You Say Hello?**, New York; Grove Press, 1972

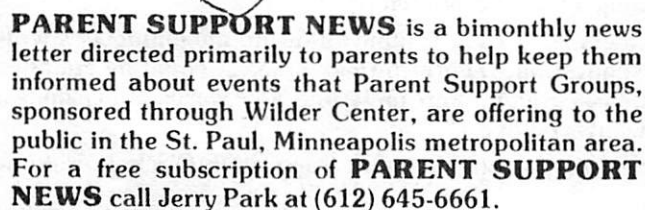
Crossman, Pat, "Permission and Protection," **TA Bulletin**, 5, 19 July 1966, p. 152-154

Levin, Pamela, **Becoming The Way We Are**, Library of Congress No. 74-215-22, 1975

Steiner, Claude, **Games Alcoholics Play**, New York; Grove Press, 1971

Steiner, Claude, **Scripts People Live**, New York; Grove Press, 1974

Woollams, Stanley, Brown, Michael and Hulge, Kristyn, **TA in Brief**, Ann Arbor, Michigan; Huron Valley Institute, 1976



news about support groups

Cincinnati, Ohio

by Gail Nordeman

I was invited to attend the Homemaker's Support Group, with Fran Schultz leading and using the **WE** format. As I moved from one homemaker to another I heard, "I'm getting what I need." "I appreciate coming here." "I feel closer to people and more important now." Fran and the members of that group are doing a wonderful job. I see them making their own lives and the lives they touch richer.

Seattle, Washington

by Jean Clarke

The members of Parent Education Associates in Seattle, Washington, meet regularly to plan and sponsor Parent Education Seminars.

Each meeting includes support group time and part of that time is spent focusing and visualizing. The members join hands, close their eyes, breathe deeply and focus their energy on the successful completion of their goals. Each silently visualizes the desired outcome and any member who wants to describes the desired picture aloud. I was invited to participate in this circle during a recent trip to Seattle and I recommend this powerful, exciting, loving experience.

Deane Gradous, former Training and Outreach Supervisor of Quality Child Care, Inc., writing about Support Groups for Day Care providers, says:

The rules of support groups do not preclude inviting experts into meetings, but they do imply that plenty of time should be allowed for providers to examine ways they might use the new ideas and information presented by the speaker. Support group rules do not preclude political activity. They do imply that the place to start is at home—making sure providers can speak out from a position of excellence and community respect.

Where do you fit in this picture of providers learning to support each other? Your enthusiasm, energy and skills can go far in facilitating group processes so that individual needs for growth in becoming day care professionals can be met.

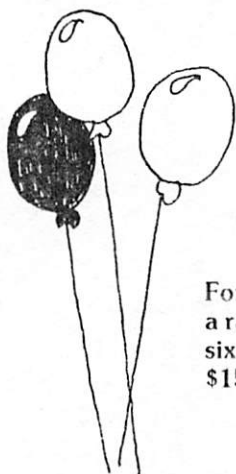
(I had the opportunity of attending a national meeting of Quality Child Care people and I was greatly impressed with the high quality of personal and professional support they give to each other. JJC)

suggested activity

by Annette Pattie

GET SUPPORT FOR DIFFICULT TASKS

1. Write down something that is not easy to do.
2. Write down three positive messages you would like to hear that would affirm your ability to do the difficult task.
3. Choose a partner and ask him or her to read the messages to you.
4. Take the messages with you and read them aloud to yourself daily until the task is completed.



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When you introduce a Suggestion Circle, that idea-collecting technique where each person suggests one quality solution to a problem, remind people that the suggestion is to include a specific behavior. If anyone offers a suggestion that sounds as if it has a put down or criticism in it, ask the person to rephrase

the suggestion indicating a positive behavior.

For example: the problem is, "I have trouble following my employer's written directions." The suggestion, "Learn to read, stupid," could be changed to, "Read the directions carefully and underline key words that suggest what your employer wants you to do."

(See additional instructions for how to run a Suggestion Circle in Volume 1, Issue 1.)

Jean Clarke

♥ *opening activity that offers everyone a positive personal message*

by Pat Perkins

Ask: "Will you find a partner and greet that person by shaking hands with your left hands? Then find out one habit or routine that person would like to change in the coming months."

Following the greeting say, "I asked you to shake hands left-handed because it demonstrates that changing even simple habits takes extra energy and coordination. Yet we can find the changes to be rewarding and exciting. I invite you to be adventuresome in making the changes you want to make."

♥ *closing activity that offers everyone a positive personal message*

Ask each person to tell at least two other people one way that he or she enjoys being a positive, powerful person. (Power is the ability to make the changes you want to make or to keep the things you want to keep.)

If you want to read about the positive use of power, I recommend Rollo May's *Power and Innocence: A Search for the Sources of Violence*, Dell Publishing, New York.

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

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