



## newsletter for nurturing support groups

July-August, 1982  
Volume 3, Number 6

**W**elcome to the 18th issue of **WE**, a newsletter for an about groups of people who get together for the purpose of giving each other personal support. This issue includes a suggested format, opening and closing activities and standards for using Ground Rules. Deane Gradous has contributed several ideas to this issue. Think about her report on Planning a Workshop for 100 people the next time you work with a large group, or her Options of Communication when you ask a person to do something.

In addition, there is information about **WINNING**;

- What it Means to Win
- A Winners List
- Recording Wins
- Exploring the Winners List
- How Winners Take Care of Themselves
- How to Win in a Blended Family by *Stepping Lightly*, a book review

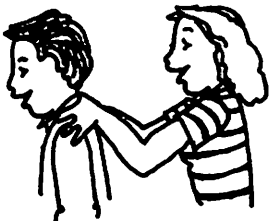
*Jean Illsley Clarke*

Jean Illsley Clarke, Editor

### **win**(win), v. 1. to gain, to be successful

"I won!" means. . . what does it mean? My Harper's Dictionary lists 14 definitions for the word "win." All 14 include achievement, only four imply "beating out" someone else. The first meaning listed is "to succeed by striving or effort." Winners are people who do successful, positive things. They are good at living. They don't necessarily "beat" other people.  
by Jean Clarke

#### **suggested activity**



#### **PICK A NUMBER**

If your support group has been sitting for awhile and you want to raise the energy level of the group, or if there is some unconstructive competition going on and you want to switch to collaboration, try this exercise.

Say: Pick a number between one and seven. Move about the room and, without talking, find the person who chose the same number or one closest to it. Give each other a one-minute back or shoulder rub.

#### **Suggested Activity**

### **WINNERS TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES**



Update old messages about how to take care of ourselves.

1. Ask each person to list old ideas she had about how to take care of herself. Sample items:

Be responsible for your own health.

Take care of other people before you take of yourself.

If you don't take care of yourself, no one else will.

Taking care of yourself is selfish.

2. Combine the ideas into one list. List on newsprint or a chalkboard and have everyone copy or compile lists to hand out and complete at the next meeting.
3. Ask each person to look at each message and decide, "If everyone did this, would the world be a better world to live in?"  
Put + if it would  
Put - if it would not  
Put 0 if it wouldn't make any difference.

(People do not need to agree; encourage each person to do her own thinking.)

4. Ask each person to star the items that help her take care of herself well now. Cross out or rewrite items that are not helpful and add any new items needed.
5. Ask each person to share with the group what she did with any two items that are important to her.



# Planning a Workshop

(with a little help from my support group)

by Deane Gradous

Last fall the program chair of the State Home Economics convention asked me to be a workshop leader. She knew of my current interest in the subject of networking and thought it would appeal to convention goers.

Carried away by my enthusiasm for the subject, I agreed to do the workshop. At that point I had a comfortable vision of 15-25 people quietly sharing their networking successes and techniques together. Suddenly, I heard her asking me to plan for about a hundred people. I gulped, paused, and said a very subdued "OK." Afterwards, I panicked and had many thoughts about backing out of my commitment, but eventually I talked myself into doing the workshop — and doing it well. I knew I could present a really good workshop. And I knew I needed help.

My support group proved invaluable. I interviewed two members about their networking experiences. I asked another member to work with me in leading the workshop. She and I planned the agenda and the timing of the workshop. This was wonderful support, but I needed even more. I was not at all comfortable with the idea of producing a new workshop for so many people without rehearsing it first. My support group responded again. "Sure, you can lead the next meeting. We'd like very much to experience your material on networking. Yes, we'll think about our being a hundred people and give you feedback from that perspective."

Bless them! Every one of them! I presented my networking material at the next support group meeting and received two kinds of feedback.

1. **Affirmations:** "It's great material!" "They'll be lucky to have you." "You do good work!" "Very clear and understandable."
2. **Suggestions:** "I think this role-play script should be changed." "This visual should be larger." "Everyone could easily locate the same part of the handout if you used page numbers." "Your directions for the role-play should be clearer."

I accepted their affirmations and made the suggested changes in my materials. A week later I presented the workshop at the convention with confidence. I was successful. Try asking your support group to help you rehearse for an important event.

Some helps for presenting an experiential workshop for 100 people:

1. Try out your design and material on a small group first. Don't go "on Broadway" unrehearsed.
2. Since a roomful of small groups is a lot to keep track of, get an experienced helper or two or three to assist with handling materials and supervising small group work. The key word here is "experienced." You won't have time to supervise your helpers, too. Tell them exactly what their job is ahead of time.
3. Before the workshop begins, arrange the chairs in groups. This physical activity will relieve some of your tension and will provide quiet structure about where to sit at this workshop.
4. Have something for people to do (interview a partner, fill out a short questionnaire) when they walk in the door. Registration may be slow, or people may lag after lunch. Yes, the late comers will have missed something. The early birds will have had a chance to be involved and put their energy into your workshop offering.
5. Make your visuals large. 22"x17" is minimum size for posters for 100 people. You might prefer to use an

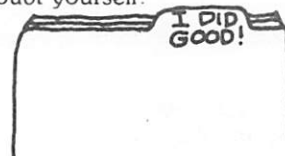
## Suggestion Circle RECORD YOUR WINS

Read the WINNERS list.

Say, "Two of the things WINNERS do is record their wins and savour them. Let us do a Suggestion Circle on ways people can record wins and savour them at a later time."

Sample suggestions:

Keep an "I did good" file and look at it when you doubt yourself.



Close your eyes and remember something you did well. Appreciate yourself for doing that.

Needlepoint a tote bag that says "I may not be perfect, but parts of me are excellent."

Keep a complimentary letter in your top desk drawer and read it often.



Make up a song about something you did well and sing it.



Ask a friend to tell you three things she likes about you.



Ask someone to write down the Suggestions so you can post them or duplicate them for anyone who wants a copy.

Go quickly around the circle and ask each person to offer her best Suggestion. Say "thank you" to each person without signaling approval or disapproval.

Ask each person to think about the Suggestions and to use those that fit for her.

There are additional tips on how to lead a Suggestion Circle in Vol. 1, Number 1 of *WE*, and in *Self Esteem: A Family Affair Leader Guide* by Jean Illsley Clarke, Winston Press.

overhead projector to insure visibility. Hand lettering and stick figures make adequate transparencies.

6. Allow extra time for 100 people to participate. It takes longer to turn around a cruise ship than it does a rowboat.
7. Have the courage to interrupt while people are still involved. Waiting for 100 people to stop talking could take until next year. Use a microphone so you can be heard, and suggest that people with unfinished business could complete their discussion during break or after the workshop.
8. Be clear and extremely precise in giving directions. You won't have time to get feedback from all groups as to whether they understand. Better yet, have the directions in writing on a handout or on a transparency.
9. Relax! When you have good materials and good information to offer to people, you'll be surprised at how many people in the workshop are boosting you.

## FACILITATORS TRAINING WORKSHOPS



August 16-20, 1982, Lafayette, California  
February 7-11, 1983, Minneapolis, Minnesota

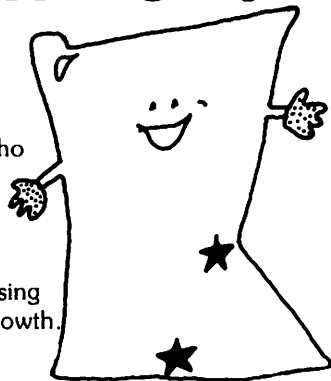
A week-long workshop for people who want to . . .

- 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

Write to **WE** for details.

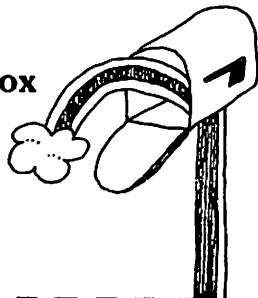
### news about support groups

This is how we use **WE** in our Support Group for teenagers who used to abuse chemicals," the facilitator of the group offered. The editor listened carefully to the exciting things this group in Southern Minnesota is doing, using **WE** as a tool for healing and growth.



**WE** is also happy to welcome the Minnesota State Coordinators of Quality Child Care, Inc. We're glad to have these important, warm, capable people be part of the **WE** network. Remember, you are welcome to write and request that we write about topics or activities that will be helpful to you.

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



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**WE**, 16535 9th Avenue N., Plymouth, MN 55447

## Suggested Activity

# Behavior Change Chain

If a person is engaging in behavior that is unsafe or annoying or inappropriate, you can do nothing, and allow him to experience the consequences of his behavior. Or, if you indicate to the person that you want him to change his behavior, there are several options for this communication that you can use.

The Behavior Change Chain is a chain with nine links. None of these nine involves criticism. If someone you care about, a child, a friend, your spouse, is having fun in a way that is dangerous, you can use any of the nine links in the Behavior Change Chain. Here is a list of the nine links or methods with examples:

1. Report feelings — "I feel scared when you do that."
2. Report a wish — "I wish you would find a safer way to have fun."
3. Offer a warning — "Think about what often happens to people who do what you are doing. Is that what you want for yourself?"
4. Offer to help — "I am scared about your safety when you do that. Do you want me to help you in some way?"
5. Offer options — "Here are several things you could do instead of having fun in an unsafe way."
6. Make a request — "Will you stop what you are doing and find a safer way to have fun?"
7. Offer a reminder — "Remember the rules or agreement we made about safety."
8. State an expectation — "You are important and your safety is important. I expect you to find a safer way to have fun." (Don't do this because, do this instead)
9. Issue a demand with consequences — "Find a safer way to have fun. If you keep on doing what you are doing, I will withhold the privilege of . . . for a period of . . ."

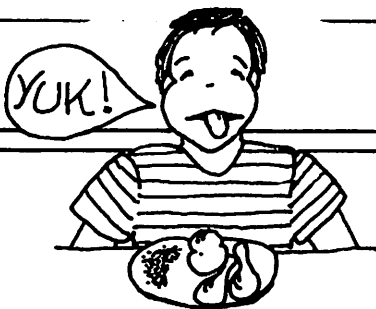


## ACTIVITY

- Read, post or hand out a copy of the nine options for communication.
- Ask each person to make a bar graph indicating how often he uses each option when he asks other people to change their behavior.
- Choose a behavior (being late, interrupting, saying put-downs, breaking promises, hitting, etc.) and ask the group to give an example of each level of communication about that behavior.
- Ask: "If someone is asking you to change your behavior, which 2 options do you respond to most readily?"  
"When someone is asking you to change your behavior, which 2 are you least likely to respond to?"
- Remember: in any situation, the more options you have, the more power you have.
- Ask: "Does anyone want to share an 'I learned' or an 'I wonder' with the group?"  
Thanks to Deane Gradous for the Options Concept.

Permission is given to reproduce the  
**WINNERS** list for group use.

# Books



**Stepping Lightly** by Cynthia Lewis-Steere is an A to Z guide for step-parents. Alphabetical listings of topics from "abandoned" and "authority" to "zit" and "zombie" contain pertinent, no nonsense, often humorous advice about blending two families following second marriages. For example:

"Yuk: Hmmm. . .that's odd. This word is not in the dictionary. But I KNOW it's a word! My step-children use it frequently when I put vegetables on their plates. Need I tell you that we now have a RULE against 'yuk'? However, 'no, thank you' is quite all right."

Author Lewis-Steere believes in the light touch and **Stepping Lightly** provides it. A helpful, amusing book for anyone living in a blend or considering one. Published by Comp-Care Publications, Minneapolis, MN, 1981.

## OPENING ACTIVITY THAT OFFERS EVERYONE A POSITIVE PERSONAL MESSAGE

**C**hoose a partner. Make a name tag for her and ask her to tell you three ways that she expects to be a winner during the next month. Write or draw a picture of one of these wins on her name tag. Introduce your partner and tell the group about her wins if she is willing to share that information with the group.

## CLOSING ACTIVITY THAT OFFERS EVERYONE A POSITIVE PERSONAL MESSAGE

**S**tand in a circle. Ask if anyone has any resentments about the meeting. Accept resentments. You do not necessarily have to do anything about them. Ask for appreciations.

Close by making a winning chain. Ask a person to make a link of the chain by telling one way the person on his right is a winner. Continue all the way around the circle.

**suggested activity**

## explore the **WINNERS** List

Post the Winners List or duplicate it and give each person a copy.

Ask each person to choose three items from the list, decide on a way she can act upon those items during the coming week, and tell the group about at least one of her plans.

## ground rules

Here are five standards for using ground rules:

1. Ground rules are visible — large enough and clearly written so all participants can see them.
2. Ground rules are stated early in the meeting.
3. Ground rules are explained meaningfully and in one or two sentences each.
4. Leaders demonstrate ground rules by practicing them throughout the meeting.
5. Participants have the opportunity to amend or add Ground Rules.

### 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 appreciations
- closing activity that offers everyone a positive personal message

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

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