



## newsletter for nurturing support groups

Issue 50  
Volume 9, Number 2  
July 1989

### Dear Reader,

Welcome to **An Invitation to Play**, the 50th issue of **WE**, a newsletter for and about groups of people who get together for the purpose of giving each other personal support.

The new book, **Growing Up Again** is finally out and here is **WE** again. I have been playing a lot this spring! Connie Dawson and I had kept the **Growing** book on the writing table for a long time. The first copies from Hazelden reached us in February and Harper & Row put the books on bookstore shelves in April. I see that I have taken a vacation from writing since **Growing** came out and you may have wondered where **WE** is. **WE** is here, now. And you will get your six issues for 1989 in '89. My pencil is hot again.

In this issue I had intended to share some expanded information on the recycling process from **Growing Up Again**. When I sent it to Marnie Lilja Baehr, artist and publisher of **WE**, she suggested that I reconsider putting so much information in a **WE** format. I have decided to reformat that writing, add some new information on how children recycle, and publish it as a booklet. That will take more time, so you can expect to receive it in the future.

So, for this issue, let's think about **PLAY**. Do you think about play and why it is important? Have you played a board game recently? Do you like to play? Are you ready to hear about an exciting new game that is fun to play and teaches you how lovable and successful you are at the same time? A game in which everybody wins?

Carole Gesme, the creator of **Ups & Downs with Feelings Starter Games, 3 to 6 years** and **Ups & Downs With Feelings Explorer Games, 6 years through adult** has created a new board game, **THE LOVE GAME: A Pathway Out Of Shame Into Celebration**. I have played this game in several different settings. Each time it has been well received and I have "felt better" the next day. I highly recommend it.

In this issue Carole offers:

- What Happened to Play?
- **THE LOVE GAME: A Pathway Out Of Shame Into Celebration** including a list of sixteen ways out of shame.
- Activities you can do with a sampling of the Celebration cards from **THE LOVE GAME** and with the Love affirmations.

Happy play!

*Jean Illsley Clarke*

Jean Illsley Clarke, Editor

## Special Request

### Help! with Drugs

#### A chance to ask or to contribute

Next year Harper and Row will publish a new book in the Help! series. Carole Gesme, Marion London and Don Brundage with Jean Clarke's help, are compiling a book on everything you always wanted to know about drugs but wouldn't need a degree in pharmacology to read. Will you help us by:

- \* Sending copies of any Suggestion Circles you have done with either kids' or adults' groups (Directions for leading a Suggestion Circle are included in each of the six Help! for Parents books by Jean Illsley Clarke, et al).
- \* Sending your questions—any questions that you would like answered or think others need answers to about drug usage or prevention.

You can send your responses to **WE** or call Barbara Wright at (612) 473-1840 (Monday - Thursday, 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.) and tell her or leave a message on the machine anytime. Be sure to tell her who you are so we can credit you.

—Jean Illsley Clarke

# THE LOVE GAME:



## A Pathway Out Of Shame Into Celebration

**The Love Game** is an exciting new board game for two, three or four players in which everyone wins. The game can be completed in about an hour. It offers a way to hear messages of unconditional love over and over in a supportive situation.

Playing **The Love Game** can help people to become better acquainted. It offers opportunities to apply affirmations to personal experiences and to give and receive affirmations of unconditional regard. It allows people ways to express feelings and to practice ways to celebrate life.

Included in the game are a game board, game pieces and dice, Celebration Cards, Feeling Face Cards, Read and Share Cards and Love Affirmations. Most importantly, the game contains the potential for a lot of joyful learning.

### Out of Shame

The subtitle, A Pathway Out Of Shame Into Celebration, reminds us that the opposite of shame is not lack of shame, but rather celebration.

**The Love Game: A Pathway Out Of Shame Into Celebration** is based on the following set of beliefs: Shame is a warning about old pain. Shame is not about our behavior. Shame does not require that we have done anything wrong. Shame is about our being, it isn't brought up by what we do, but rather by what we believe we are. It is the feeling of not measuring up and not meeting someone else's expectations. It is a feeling of being exposed. It is a feeling we feel all by ourselves.

Shame occurs as a result of our having confused our being with what we do. We need to keep our being separated from our doing. When they are connected, we feel we must earn love—by getting degrees, by working, by care-taking, by being someone other than who we are, by being who others want us to be, by being perfect, by having to know everything, by being right, by turning to others for definitions of who we are, by being co-dependent, by being in style, by wearing the right clothes, by having the right house, by being a job hero, by having money. Or we misuse drugs, food, sex, shopping or gambling in an attempt to ease the pain of having our sense of being depend upon doing. These attempts to get love don't work because we can't really earn love—love is always unconditional.

This subtitle of the game, **A Pathway Out Of Shame Into Celebration**, reminds us that the opposite of

shame is not lack of shame, but rather celebration. As a result of my readings and research, I have identified sixteen ways out of shame and have incorporated them in The Love Game.

### Sixteen Ways to Move from Shame to Celebration

1. Learn to separate what I do from who I am. (Separate my doing from my being).
2. Admit to myself how I am feeling.
3. Learn to express my feelings.
4. Tell someone what happened and how I feel about it.
5. Break old dysfunctional family rules and replace them with new health supporting rules.
6. Look at family history and secrets.
7. Talk to other family members about the reality of what really happened "...during my early childhood when I was making decisions about who I am...", or "...at the last family reunion..."
8. Know and believe and celebrate that, "I am someone special, I am unique."
9. Accept other people as they are.
10. Find out who the "real me" is and learn to be and honor the "real me."
11. Learn that it is OK to make mistakes and that no one is perfect.
12. Read and believe the affirmations of unconditional love.
13. Confront compulsions and addictions.
14. Know that I am not alone, that others go through what I do, and that there are resources and help.
15. Attend a twelve step program.
16. Get a therapist to help me make the changes I need to make.

Question: Which of the above list are not included in **The Love Game**?

Answer: Only the last two.

# Elements of the Game

**The Love Game** invites each player to learn to separate "What I do from who I am." Each of the four sets of cards support growth and healing in a specific way. The Read and Share and the Celebration Cards allow people to start exploring "who they are." The Feeling Face Cards allow people playing the game to practice expressing feelings and to admit to themselves how they are feeling. The Affirmation Cards are messages of growth and hope.

- \* The Read and Share cards give messages that support people in making new decisions about the drivers with which they have been running their lives. Examples: Be Perfect, Hurry Up, Please Me, Try Hard, and Be Strong. The Read and Share Cards are the allowers to the drivers.

## Read & Share

Life was not meant to be done alone. Everyone deserves to have support and help.

Ask all of the players to tell a way they get support.

© 1988 Carole Gesme

## Read & Share

By being the "real you" you invite others to know you.

Have other players use adjectives to describe the "real you."

© 1988 Carole Gesme

## Read & Share

It is OK to make a mistake, no one is perfect.

Tell about a time you made a mistake and what happened as a result of making that mistake.

1. What you learned.
2. What amends you made.

© 1988 Carole Gesme

- \* The Celebration cards remind people to remember to celebrate at specific times in their lives, thus getting people to start thinking about positive events. This helps people to begin to believe that "Life is for Celebrating."

## CELEBRATE

Tell about a sports memory.

© 1988 Carole Gesme

## CELEBRATE

Tell about one talent you have.

© 1988 Carole Gesme

## CELEBRATE

Tell about your favorite season.


© 1988 Carole Gesme

Continued on page 4

## Elements continued

- \* The **Feeling Faces** cards help players use their bodies, their thinking and their feeling to identify the emotions that are elicited by specific experiences.

Imitate this face.




Tell about a time you felt this way.

Pick the affirmation you want to hear and have someone read it to you.

© 1988 Carole Gesme

Imitate this face.

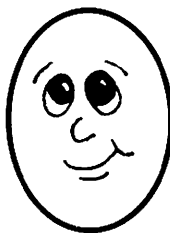


Tell about a time you felt this way.

Pick the affirmation you want to hear and have someone read it to you.

© 1988 Carole Gesme

Imitate this face.



Tell about a time you felt this way.

Pick the affirmation you want to hear and have someone read it to you.

© 1988 Carole Gesme

For more information about the unconditional love messages see Issue 41 of WE or the book **Affirmation Ovals, 139 Ways to Give and Get Affirmations** by Jean Illsley Clarke and Carole Gesme. (Both can be ordered through WE, Issue 41 for \$2.50 and **Affirmation Ovals** for \$6.95, add 6% sales tax if you are a resident of Minnesota.)

- \* The **Affirmation** cards allow people to start hearing and incorporating the unconditional love messages into their being.

Being

I love you  
and I care  
for you  
willingly.

© J.I. Clarke

Doing

I love you  
when you are  
active and  
when you  
are quiet.

© J.I. Clarke

Thinking

You can  
become  
separate from  
me and I will  
continue to  
love you.

© J.I. Clarke

Identity and Power

I love  
who you  
are.

© J.I. Clarke

Structure

I love you  
even when  
we differ;  
I love growing  
with you.

© J.I. Clarke

Identity,  
Sexuality,  
Separation

My love is  
always with  
you. I trust  
you to ask for  
my support.

© J.I. Clarke

Independence

Your love  
matures  
and  
expands.

© J.I. Clarke

Independence

You are  
lovable at  
every age.

© J.I. Clarke

\*Permission is granted to reprint and cut out.

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# What Happened to Play?

By Carole Gesme



When I was growing up, simple games like Kick the Can, Hide and Seek, and Red Rover, Red Rover, Send Someone Right Over, were played daily in our neighborhood. These games allowed me to develop and improve my motor skills, which in turn helped me to sharpen my intellectual skills and to develop and build my self-esteem.

A cold rainy day or a Sunday afternoon was a time for our family and friends to play cards or a board game. These games taught us social skills. Play was spontaneous and allowed us to interact in a way that let us be who we were and be accepted by the group in that way. It was a chance to learn through repetition. The games encouraged fun and friendship and we learned new things with enthusiasm.

Games share a number of characteristics from which we can learn much. Many games consist of a series of activities that offer opportunities to learn because they are sequential, practical, adaptable, fun, inexpensive, rewarding, immediately useable, possible, preventative, relevant, and effective. Some are easy, some are hard.

These days, kids I work with often tell me board games are educational and boring—not enough fun. Do we have a generation of children who are deprived because they do not enjoy and play games?

Why the change?

- Do families spend too much time watching television?
- Are there smaller families with less family time together?
- Are there fewer safe neighborhood play areas?
- Do children spend too much time in structured lessons and Little League type programs?
- What do we adults model for kids to do in their spare time and when we have time together?
- What does your family do on Sunday afternoon or on a cold, rainy evening?

I encourage you to find many ways to play with your family.

## *Elements continued from page 4*

By listening to other people answer the questions on the cards and talk about their feelings, players can learn to accept other people as they are. The game allows players the chance to experience what it is like to tell silly secrets, thus allowing them to start finding out what happens when one shares secrets. It also allows people to make mistakes and to practice doing a skill over as many times as they need to. It becomes a way to learn that other people have the same feelings that you do, that you are not alone. Others do go through what you do and you can get support and help.

By playing the game and being part of a group experience people can learn to trust and share with others. They can begin to believe it is OK to be who they are, unique and special.

There is also a non-competitive element in this game. Two squares on the board require the plays to exchange "hands" or move to another position around the board. Players who focus on "winning" or "beating," can start learning the art of "letting go."

*Have the courage  
to seek truth,  
the strength  
to stand alone,  
and the wisdom  
to be taught  
by all experience.*

**author unknown**

## CELEBRATE *you!*

Tell about one way  
you are special.

© 1988 Carole Gesme

## CELEBRATE

Tell about a time you had fun.

© 1988 Carole Gesme

## CELEBRATE

Tell about a place you  
go to feel at peace or a time  
when you feel at peace.

© 1988 Carole Gesme

## CELEBRATE

Tell about your favorite bird.

© 1988 Carole Gesme

## CELEBRATE

Brag about something  
you have done.

© 1988 Carole Gesme

## CELEBRATE

Tell about a time you were  
hunting or fishing.

© 1988 Carole Gesme

## CELEBRATE *life!*

Tell about one way  
you Celebrate Life.

© 1988 Carole Gesme

## CELEBRATE

Tell about your favorite toy.

© 1988 Carole Gesme

## CELEBRATE

Describe a new friend  
or an old one.

© 1988 Carole Gesme

## CELEBRATE

Celebrate something about  
your family.

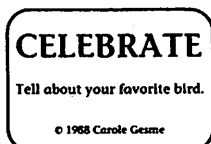
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# SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

## Ways to Use Celebration Cards

Ground Rules To Be Used With All Celebration Card Activities

- No one is required to reveal things about themselves that they do not wish to share.



- Everyone has the right to pass.
- All opinions are honored.
- Confidentiality.

### With Your Family:

1. Cut out the Celebration messages on page 6 or re-write them on cards.
2. Place the cards in a small bowl or dish.
3. Start and end each day by having each person choose a Celebration card and have everyone tell their celebration.

### For the Individual:

1. Use as a quick pick-me-up during the day to celebrate yourself.
2. Carry one in your pocket or wallet and read it as often as you need to.

### In Groups:

1. Take a celebration break during a meeting. Shuffle the cards and deal them to group members or spread the cards on a table and let each member choose one. Let each person celebrate a new or an old experience related to the card.
2. Use Celebration cards to open or close meetings. To open, ask each person to choose a card and respond to it, or choose one card and have everyone respond to it. End the group by asking each person to take a celebration card and find four ways to use it during the coming week.



## Moving Out Of Shame Into Celebration — 16 Ways

### For the Individual:

1. Read the list of sixteen ways to move from shame to celebration on page 2.
2. Star the ones that you are already doing.
3. Pick one of those ways and celebrate it. To celebrate: take a friend to lunch and tell your friend about your process, take yourself for a joyful celebration walk, buy yourself a gift, treat yourself to a phone call to someone who would be glad to celebrate with you, write yourself a letter of congratulations.
4. Then pick one item that you did not star and practice doing that activity.

### In Groups or With Your Family:

1. Read the list of sixteen ways to move from shame to celebration on page 2.
2. In turn, each person picks one way she is doing that and celebrates that achievement with the group.

### Take the next step:

3. Each person picks one item to work on and tells the kind of support she would like to help her do that.
4. Any group member who is willing to give some of that support offers it.
5. Group members tell other ways they could support that person and offer the kinds they are willing to give.

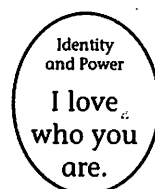
Continued on page 8

*"Being capable is not the same as  
and cannot replace  
being loveable."*

Lennie Strong

# Activities *continued*

## Using the Love Affirmations



Make a copy of the Love Affirmation Ovals on page 4 and cut them out, or copy them onto cards, or order a set of 8, 1-3/8" x 1-1/8" for \$1.50 (10 sets for \$10.00) or a set of 8, 2-1/2" x 2-1/2" for \$4.50 (10 for \$40.00) from WE or from Carole Gesme.

Some of the following activities are from Affirmation Ovals: 139 Ways to Give and Get Affirmations by Jean Illsley Clarke and Carole Gesme.

1. **I Believe Love**

Each person spreads the affirmations in front of her, picks out the one that is easiest for her to believe and reads it aloud to herself. Then, she reads it aloud to the group.

2. **I Need Love**

Each person is to rank the ovals according to their importance to him and then discuss with one other person why the top one is especially important to him now.

3. **Hearing Love Messages**

Work in pairs. Pick two affirmations and ask your partner to read them to you.

4. **Love For Others**

Work in pairs. Pick the affirmation you think is important for your child or friend to believe. Tell your partner three ways you can encourage your child or friend to believe that affirmation. Do so.

5. **Claiming Our Lovableness**

Each person lays out the Love Affirmations in the following order:

- ♥ I love you & I care for you willingly.
- ♥ I love you when you are active and when you are quiet.
- ♥ You can become separate from me and I will continue to love you.
- ♥ I love who you are.
- ♥ I love you even when we differ; I love growing with you.
- ♥ My love is always with you. I trust you to ask for my support.
- ♥ You are lovable at every age.
- ♥ Your love matures and expands.

Each person writes a list of the Love Affirmations using all first person pronouns.

Read the new affirmations in unison. They will sound like this:

- ♥ I love myself and I care for myself willingly.
- ♥ I love myself when I am active and when I am quiet.
- ♥ I can become separate from others and I will continue to be lovable.
- ♥ I love who I am.
- ♥ I love myself even when I differ with others; I love growing.
- ♥ My love is always with me. I ask for support from others when I need it and want it.
- ♥ My love matures and expands.
- ♥ I am lovable at every age.

6. **Out of Shame**

Pick the love affirmation that will help you the next time you begin to feel ashamed. Tell your partner or the group how you will use the message to help yourself.

**For the Individual:**

7. **Affirmation Reinforcement**

Choose the love affirmation that you want to believe today. Put it in your pocket. Read it to yourself each time you take a drink of water. Remember, eight glasses per day helps wash the toxins (and the shame?) away!

8. **I Don't Have To Go Without**

If there is an exercise in the group activities that you would like to do, but you are alone at the moment, read through the activity and think of some way you could do part of it or alter it so you could do it alone.

## In Case you didn't notice. . .

### Ma Bell's Family Way

As working couples struggle to meet their family responsibilities, they are asking corporate America to lend a hand. Last week AT&T agreed to one of the largest expansions of family benefits ever achieved in labor negotiations. Under a three-year contract covering 160,000 members of its communications electrical unions, AT&T will increase for six months to one year the parental leave it offers mothers and fathers of newborns. The company will also permit such leaves for the care of ailing relatives.

Among other family features: payments of up to \$2,000 to cover costs when workers adopt children and a \$5 million fund to help support and establish child-care centers. But the benefits were not free. In return for these and other new provisions, employees agreed to forgo automatic cost of living adjustments.

—Time Magazine, June 12, 1989



# Book Reviews

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**Classic Children's Games** by Vivienne Sernaque, New York, N.Y.: A Dell Trade Paperback, 1988, \$7.95.

If you agree with Carole Gesme that some of us have forgotten how to play, here is help for adults who want to help two to ten year olds play.

Grouped by ages two to four, four to six, six to eight and eight to ten, the games are subgrouped as games that one, two, or more can play. If you are looking for a specific game, the index gives instant help.

Directions for all the old, familiar games from Simon Says to Jacks to Solitaire are among the sixty-eight games described. Beside the complete directions for Cat's Cradle (which I had forgotten), I was happy to find the history of Ring-Around-A-Rosy. No, it is not about the Great Plague of London, but reflects the old world belief that gifted children had "the capability of laughing roses." Some versions use curtsies and bows instead of falling down. So, whatever the "capability of laughing roses" means to you, it seems that this is a game born of celebration, not despair. "Ashes" may be a corruption of the word Ash-a, which could have many meanings. As the author says, "Take your choice."

And London Bridges has a way for the caught "lady" or "gentleman" to get out—the child has only to whisper "silver" or "gold" to the bridge makers.

So much to learn about games I thought I knew! I'm going to play "Charlie Over the Water" and keep this book on my shelf. I, for one, don't intend to limit it's use to people under ten.

J.I.C.

**101 Ways to Tell Your Child I Love You** by Vicki Lansky, Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1988, \$4.95.

If you are looking for variety in the little, daily ways you can show love to your child, Vicki Lansky's 101 Ways to Tell Your Child I Love You is a handy resource. Hard cover, small, colorful, this helpful little book reminds me of many ways I already use and surprises me with engaging new wrinkles on the pleasurable, age-old task of expressing unconditional love. The book is beamed at children, but many of the options would be a nice surprise for the "child-within" a favorite adult.

J.I.C.

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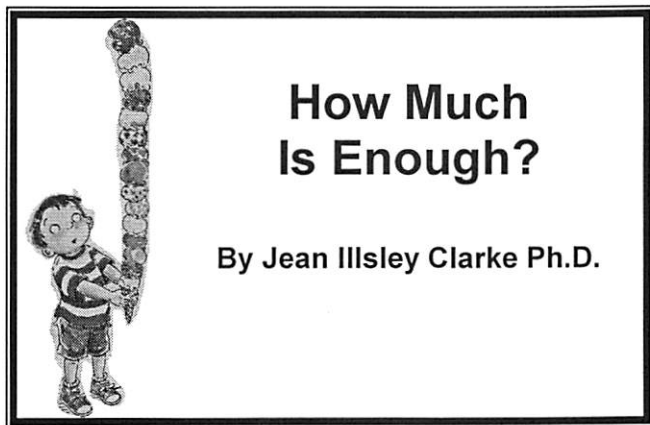
## **Opening Activity** *That Focuses on What We Learned From Games*

- Hand out name tags.
  - Choose a partner.
  - Make a name tag for her and ask her to identify a game she played between the ages of 6 and 12 and one skill that she learned while playing that game.
  - Introduce your partner and tell the group about her skill if she is willing for you to share that information.
- 

## **Closing Activity** *That Offers Everyone a Positive Personal Message*

At the end of the meeting, briefly review the activities of the meeting.

- Ask several people to share some information about play that they learned or were reminded about by playing during this meeting.
- Ask for Resentments. Listen to resentments, do not defend or explain.
- Ask for Appreciations.
- Ask each person to playfully whisper "good-bye" to at least two people on the way out.



### Can't We Just Play?

“Can we play now?” Clarissa was perplexed. Why did her children ask to play? They had been at Saturday swim classes all morning, and their mom had spent the entire afternoon playing with them. They had played a competitive math game with flashcards. Clarissa had taught them three *Taking No for an Answer* \* games: Follow Me, Follow You; Traffic Cop; and Red Light, Green Light. They had gone on a nature walk to see how many different kinds of birds they could spot.

All of that had been fun. At least Clarissa hoped so. Truth to tell, she was getting tired when Mason declared he was bored with birds and Madison whined, “Can we play now?”

“But we have been playing all afternoon,” Clarissa snapped, perplexed and slightly irritated. Well, more than slightly. “What do you want to play now?”

“Just play, Mom. We want to play.”

All the “play” they had done with Mom was important. It strengthened connections with Mom, and it was good learning time. But adult directed activities need to be balanced with child directed free play, the time children consider to be *real* play.

Mason and Madison needed some time for (real) free play. Time for them to select an activity, engage in it, create their own play scenario (free of adult direction), and bring the activity to closure. This need for free play time spans the childhood years.

**Infants** need some time to themselves. Babies who are entertained fulltime fail to develop self-comforting skills.

**Toddlers** must have free time to explore the environment—to touch, drop, taste, wiggle, throw, stack, smell, and listen to a wide variety of safe objects, and yes, people. Important brain-building activities.

**Two-year-olds** need free time to practice their newfound physical capabilities, to struggle and master.

**Three to five-year-olds** need free play time to explore their own creativity and their relationships with peers, real or imaginary.

**School-age children** must have free time to develop and test their knowledge of rules. Who makes them? Who follows them? What happens if you follow them? Break them? All the learning that happens when two-thirds of a softball game is spent arguing. That can't happen when an adult coach is running the show.

**Adolescents** need time to explore their relationships, to think about their values, to dream or dread about their futures.

Free playtime is not time controlled by TV or game scenarios. It is time controlled by the children themselves. If they have lost the skill of doing that, adults need to act to open up the children's schedules and protect time for play, especially out of doors.

How?

- Less time with TV, videos, electronic games, *and* plugged in earphones.
- Fewer lessons, organized sports, clubs, volunteer activities.

Are those activities bad? Not necessarily. Just carve out enough time for free play.

*Bergen (1988) views the difference between work and play in early childhood programs as a continuum from free play to work. For each of the five types of play or work activity, there is a corresponding type of learning that occurs. On this spectrum, free play corresponds to discovery learning, guided play (the nature walk) to guided discovery learning, directed play (adult guided games) to receptive learning, work disguised as play (math flashcards) to rote learning, and work to drill-repetitive practice. \*\**

How much free playtime does your child need? It varies with the temperament of the child, but we can safely plan for half-an-hour to one hour of free playtime every day.

In the Overindulgence Studies adults who had been overindulged as children complained about having been over-scheduled with not enough free time for themselves.

\* *Taking "No" for an Answer and Other Skills Children Need*, by Laurie Simons, M.A., Parenting Press, Inc, Seattle, 2000.

\*\* From MnAEYC News, Spring Edition, 2006, *Young Children's Perceptions of Play*, by Deborah Ceglowski.

*Jean Illsley Clarke Ph.D., Connie Dawson Ph.D., and David J. Bredehoft Ph.D. are co-authors of How Much is Enough? Everything You Need to Know to Steer Clear of Overindulgence and Raise Likeable, Responsible, and Respectful Children. Jean can be reached at [jiconsults@aol.com](mailto:jiconsults@aol.com). To read more about overindulgence go to [www.overindulgence.info](http://www.overindulgence.info).*

## **Suggested Format for Group Meetings**

Place \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

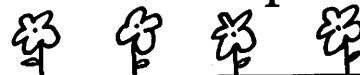
Time \_\_\_\_\_

Person in Charge \_\_\_\_\_

### **Program:**

- Opening activity that offers everyone a positive personal message
- Ground rules
- Celebrate wins and sharing problems
- Ask for support
- Practice skills, new learnings, play
- Suggestion Circle
- Plan the next meeting
- Resentments and Appreciations
- Closing activity that offers everyone a positive personal message

## **Facilitator Training Workshops**



**Spring 1990**

**Calgary and Minneapolis**

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, education, or support groups.
- Receive advanced training in the use of Transactional Analysis in educational settings.

**Led by Jean Illsley Clarke**

Write to **WE** for details.

Edited by Jean Illsley Clarke  
Designed by Lilja-Baehr Design  
**WE**

16535 9th Avenue N.  
Plymouth, MN 55447

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

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**newsletter for nurturing support groups**