

# Preface

This book is written for those who wish to learn how to use group-centered prevention programs in school-based settings. School-based settings not only include venues during school hours, but also before school, after school, and community-related programs for school children.

Prevention has become a major focus in school-based mental health; many counselors, community organizations, and after school programmers are seeking resources to help fill this need. This book has been written in response to such programming needs and outlines the theoretical structure for developing and implementing group-centered prevention programs. Group-centered prevention programs may be used by psychologists, school counselors, social workers, school-based health practitioners, teachers, parents, and community-based organizations working with children and teens.

A group-centered prevention program combines the learning and psychological needs of students. Group-centered prevention programs develop cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills through structured hands-on group sessions.

Many school counselors have limited training in designing and facilitating group prevention programs with children and teens. This book can serve as a training manual or as supplemental reading. This book can also benefit the group specialist seeking to fine tune skills as well as the beginning practitioner with no group experience. By the end of this book, the reader should have the background, the theory, and the application to use group-centered prevention programs in a school or community setting.

This is the second in a series on school-based mental health. The first book, *Group Interventions in Schools: Promoting Mental Health for At-Risk Children and Youth* (2008), introduced the concept of group-centered interventions in school-based settings. This book takes the next step in the formulation of the group-centered theory, focusing on using group-centered interventions as both an avenue for preventing at-risk behaviors and as a means of correcting or changing dysfunctional behaviors. Additionally, this book introduces a new form of group-centered intervention. While the first book stressed the 1-hour pull-out style intervention, this book focuses on week-long intensive prevention programs.

There are three types of group-centered interventions: (1) 1-hour independent group-centered interventions used in traditional pull-out counseling sessions such

as the interventions presented at the end of each chapter, (2) intensive week-long special focus motivational group-centered prevention programs such as the *Camp Sharigan* program, and (3) year-long after school group-centered programs such as *The Reading Orienteering Club*, also discussed in this book.

Motivational group-centered prevention programs such as *Camp Sharigan* and *The Reading Orienteering Club* are discussed throughout the book, but neither program can be contained in their entirety in this book because of their length. *Camp Sharigan* (Clanton Harpine 2010a) is a ready-to-use 10 hour, week-long hands-on program. It comes complete with patterns, learning center booklets, and games. We will discuss the theoretical structure of developing such a week-long special focus intensive motivational group-centered prevention program, but the *Camp Sharigan* program is too lengthy to include in an appendix. It is a complete ready-to-use program packet. *The Reading Orienteering Club* (Clanton Harpine 2011) is a ready-to-use program packet for a year-long weekly program. It encompasses three volumes. For those who are interested in learning more about the *Camp Sharigan* program or *The Reading Orienteering Club* after school program, please feel free to contact me at [clantonharpine@hotmail.com](mailto:clantonharpine@hotmail.com)

For this book series on group-centered interventions, we have chosen to write small books, approximately 100 pages in length, rather than one long textbook length manuscript because we believe that this will make the books more useable. The first book, *Group Interventions in Schools*, could easily be included as supplemental reading for any undergraduate or graduate class discussing group interventions, schools, school-age children, or issues in educational psychology. In this, the second book in the series, I discuss the development and application of group-centered interventions more in depth, especially as they relate to prevention programming. Such an orientation makes this book an excellent supplement for any psychology or education class wishing to incorporate prevention science and/or group theory. It could also be used by counselors, parenting groups, or teachers wanting to understand the school-based mental health approach. It is also an excellent hands-on guide for developing group-centered prevention programs. I include step-by-step instructions for developing group-centered prevention programs that may be used in a program design class, workshop, in a community organization, or by individual counselors or teachers developing programs at their school. Both books are written in an easy reading style, packed with real-world examples from classrooms, schools, and community-based programs. The brief, 100+ page length, makes these books an excellent choice for workshops, continuing education courses, in-service training, or those who wish to add to their knowledge in group counseling but have limited time for study. Each book is packed with theoretical depth, current references, and ready-to-use exercises which have been tested in real-world settings.

A ready-to-use group-centered intervention is included at the end of each chapter. For some interventions, I give suggestions for expanding beyond the intervention into a week- or month-long program. Several of the ready-to-use group-centered interventions demonstrate how learning centers can be used in group programming. I have chosen to place these interventions at the end of the chapters rather than in a

compiled appendix because each group-centered intervention has been selected to represent a specific theoretical concept. Interventions have been placed with the theoretical concept they best illustrate. This is important because the ready-to-use interventions are more than just a quick easy-to-use resource; they are a teaching tool. Their purpose is to illustrate how each theoretical principle can be implemented and used in a real program. To make it easier for those using the book and wishing to search for a particular intervention, I have included a special table of contents listing all of the interventions and highlighting some of the ways they might be used. This easy reference will make it easier to select an intervention at a glance.

Each chapter begins with a brief case study example from a group-centered prevention program, and ends with a programming design exercise and a ready-to-use group-centered intervention that reinforces the chapter's theoretical principles and demonstrates the programming design techniques being taught. Both of the books in this series may be used in conjunction with each other or independently.

Chapter 1 introduces the two program examples used throughout the text. Chapter 2 explains why our present approach to group programming is not working in the schools and introduces step-by-step instructions for developing an effective group program. Chapter 3 discusses how to organize a group, incorporating basic group theory and also the needs of counselors today. Chapter 4 emphasizes the importance of analyzing your group and evaluating the needs of group members in depth before introducing a new program. Chapter 5 illustrates how to use the power of group process to bring about change. Chapter 6 stresses the advantages of intrinsic motivation in group programs. Chapter 7 describes how to create interactive situations in group programs and the importance interaction plays in group theory. Chapter 8 outlines how to build an instructional learning component into a group program. Chapter 9 adds the therapeutic factor. Chapter 10 focuses on transferring what has been learned back to the classroom.

## Easy Reference Guide to Group-Centered Interventions

### **Chapter 2: “Captain A & His Hot Air Balloon”..... 16**

**Age level:** Kindergarten through 2nd Grade

**Learning Objective:** To increase word recognition skills for the letter A through hands-on activities.

**Counseling Objective:** To rebuild self-efficacy by teaching the beginning word decoding skills necessary to learn to read.

**Time needed:** 2 hours. This activity can be expanded and used across a six-month study of the vowel sounds. You simply make a new balloon and add the new vowel sound.

### **Chapter 3: “Self-Reflection: Using a Narrative to Teach Writing Skills”..... 32**

**Age level:** High School

**Learning Objective:** To enhance writing skills through a reflective, critical thinking group activity.

**Counseling Objective:** To enhance the development of individual responsibility and to strengthen problem solving group skills.

**Time needed:** 1 or 2 hours (depending on whether the story is read as a group or as a homework assignment). This group-centered intervention can easily be expanded into a week-long or month-long research writing project.

#### **Chapter 4: “Sign-in, Please” ..... 44**

**Age level:** 2nd Grade through High School

**Learning Objective:** To initiate self awareness and group interaction and help group members identify feelings and experiences that they have in common.

**Counseling Objective:** To initiate interaction and to build group cohesion.

**Time needed:** 2 hours, depending on the size of the group. You may also use the name tags for several early sessions in the group to help initiate interaction.

#### **Chapter 5: “Match the Sound” ..... 62**

**Age level:** Any age

**Learning Objective:** To enhance student’s ability to distinguish vowel sounds and match vowel sounds through a hands-on activity.

**Counseling Objective:** To strengthen group skills and enhance the curative power of group process.

**Time needed:** 1 hour-can be repeated with new words. This intervention can be repeated with new words and developed into a week-long or month-long activity using different words and sentences.

#### **Chapter 6: “A Simple Pop-Up Book” ..... 77**

**Age level:** Any age

**Learning Objective:** To motivate students to write grammatically correct stories.

**Counseling Objective:** To generate intrinsic motivation through a hands-on project.

**Time needed:** 1 hour. A simple pop-up house book may be expanded into a writing project that might encompass a week or month-long project. All you need to add is the writing assignment.

#### **Chapter 7: “Manners Please” ..... 90**

**Age level:** Older elementary and middle school

**Learning Objective:** To increase reading and writing skills and polish proper etiquette through hands-on activities.

**Counseling Objective:** To increase interaction and the development of the group.

**Time needed:** Divided into three 1-hour sessions. Your school or community group may decide to host a special *Manners Please* week or month in which groups or classes practice etiquette.

#### **Chapter 8: “The Grumps on Vacation” ..... 108**

**Age level:** Third Grade through Eighth Grade

**Learning Objective:** To increase comprehension when reading through hands-on activities.

**Counseling Objective:** To enhance acceptance of others in a group.

**Time needed:** 1–2 weeks, depending how many pages of the story you wish to do a day. You can use the story for a one day activity, across a two week period, completing three pages a day, or expand the project into a month-long activity.

**Chapter 9: “*The World Pollution Conference Puppet Play*”..... 131**

**Age level:** This is an excellent intervention for older elementary, middle school, and high school students.

**Learning Objective:** To develop and strengthen vocabulary skills and phonological skills.

**Counseling Objective:** To enhance group cohesion and to teach group skills through teamwork.

**Time needed:** 1 week or 5 hours: This group-centered intervention works well with older students who need to work on phonics. You can have students simply read the puppet play or you can expand this intervention by allowing the students to present the puppet play to possibly a younger group of children.

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