

WHOLE PERSON HEALING THROUGH SELF-HELP GROUPS: EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS

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WELLNESS IS WHOLENESS!



Wellness is *wholeness* or harmony between:

- aspects of the self (mind, body and spirit)
- self and God
- self and others, and in addition
- self and the natural environment

A STRATEGY FOR ACHIEVING WHOLE PERSON HEALTH

- **MISSION**

Total healing for the whole person

- **GOAL**

Positive changes in values and behaviours

- **CONTEXT**

Small groups in community (“in-reach” and “out-reach”)

- **APPROACH**

Multi-disciplinary teamwork

- **ENABLEMENT**

The inner potential and gifts of members

THE “SPEERS” GROUP MODEL

Small group based

Peer managed for Promotion and Prevention

Enrichment oriented

Enabling in crisis

Reconciling and healing

Self-help support in philosophy

Small group
Peer managed
Enrichment
Enabling
Reconciling
and healing
Self-help

Small group based: TYPES OF SMALL GROUPS

- **ROLE-RELATED GROUPS**

(gender, stage of life, marital status, responsibilities*)

- **SPECIAL FUNCTION-RELATED GROUPS**

(Enrichment, crisis, anger management, recovery, rehabilitative, other special needs)

* family, work, church etc

Small group
Peer managed
Enrichment
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Self-help

Small group based: WHY A SMALL GROUP?

- Basic unit of **productivity**
- Best context for lifelong **socialization process** for the promotion of healthy lifestyles and relationships
- Most powerful human agency for
 - meeting **needs** (overcoming individualism, isolation, lifestyle and life problems)
 - providing social **support**
 - promoting whole person **growth and development**
 - healing, reconciliation and restoration**

Small group
Peer managed
Enrichment
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Self-help

Peer managed for Promotion and Prevention

- **PEERS:** Those with whom we identify as we share many things in common. Together, as a group, we will **focus on and manage:**
- **PROMOTION** of activities to maintain and improve wellness; and on
- **PREVENTION** of current needs and concerns from becoming crises

Small group
Peer managed
Enrichment
Enabling
Reconciling
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Self-help

Enrichment oriented

- “Here-and-now” self and other awareness
- Promotion of whole person growth for the “abundant life” – a lifelong learning process
- Building mutual-aid for effective interpersonal relationships
- Fun, humour, play, laughter
- Enjoying nature and the environment
- Music, drama, poetry, art

➤ **Primary Focus: Overcoming and Wellness**

Small group
Peer managed
Enrichment
Enabling
Reconciling
and healing
Self-help

Enabling in crises

- **P**resence – be there!
 - listen with Empathy
- **P**rotection – to meet *support, safety and security* needs
- **P**erspective matters! Encourage positive thinking and new learning
- **P**ro-action – encourage this
- **P**roblem solving facilitation
 - Exploring alternative options
 - Facilitating which seems best
 - Trial and Evaluation

Reconciling and Healing

Small group
Peer managed
Enrichment
Enabling
Reconciling
and Healing
Self-help

- **Context:** Groups for a “healing community”
- **Purpose:** Enabling reconciliation with others and healing for wellness
- **Pre-requisite:** Love and a belief in the empowerment of community
- **Process:** Remorse, Confession, Forgiveness, Restoration (may involve reparation to others)
- **Outcome:** Healing, Health, Transformation

Small group
Peer managed
Enrichment
Enabling
Reconciling
 Restoring
Self-help

Why **S**elf-help?

- Answers lie within the self
- Self discovery and answers enabled by the self-help group process
- Help and change most permanent when there is self-initiative and self-responsibility
- Most inexpensive and accessible form of whole person health care

HEALING FACTORS IN GROUPS

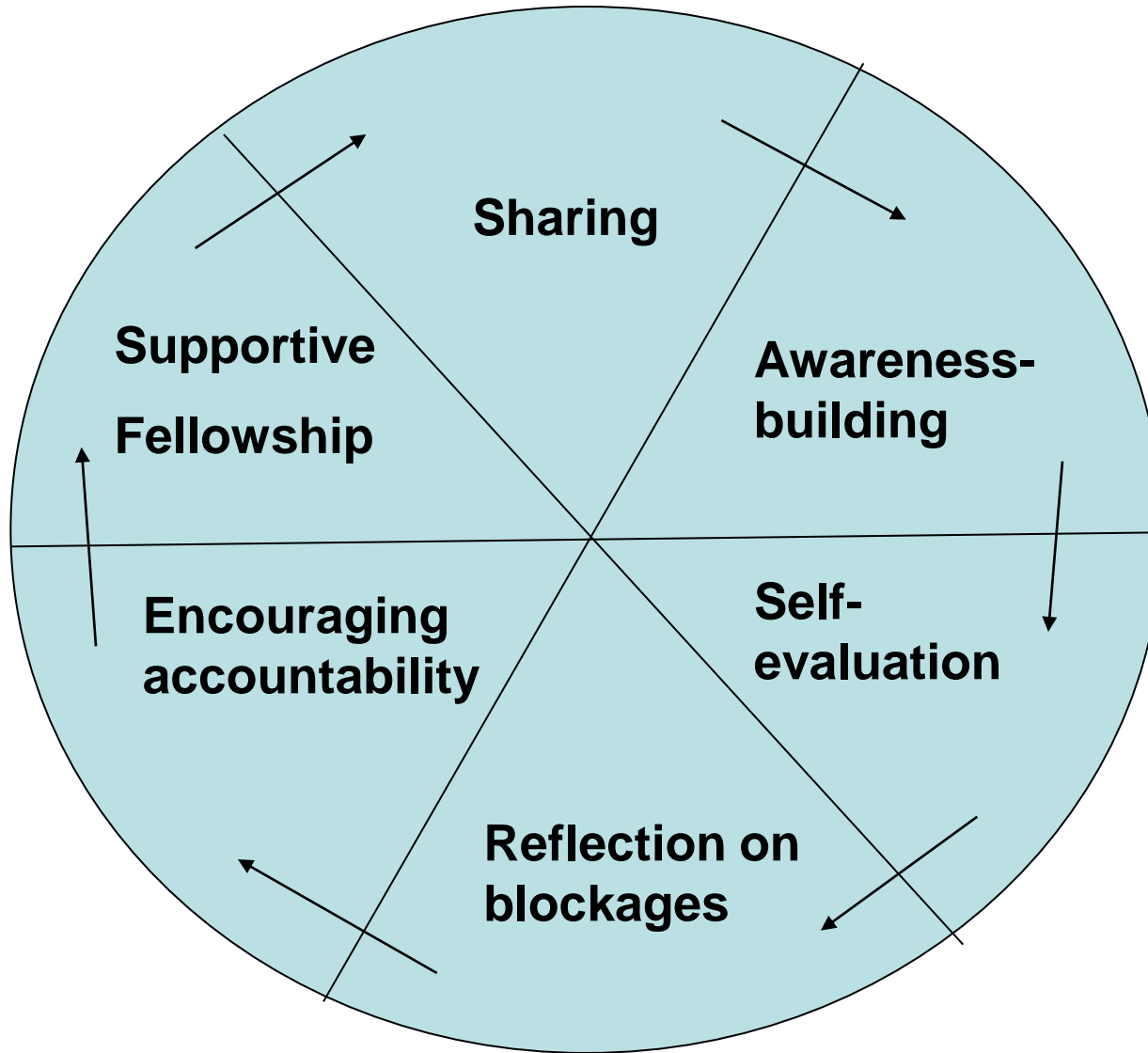
- Universalisation (“I am not alone”)
- Ventilation of thoughts and feelings
- Empathy and solidarity
- Learning
- Altruism (helping each other)
- Acceptance and belonging (group bonding)
- Growth – personal and group

The “Circle of Change”: Stages of Interaction

For any Small Peer Managed Self Help Group to function adequately, there needs to be specific stages of interaction.

A “CIRCLE OF CHANGE” is suggested in the diagram and description following. The group will naturally go back and forth as necessary between the different stages. Each group can make adaptations to these stages as necessary depending on its constituents, specific characteristics of membership setting or collective goals.

The “Circle of Change”



The “Circle of Change”: Stages of Interaction

1. Group members may begin by SHARING:

- special concerns as well as
- positive developments and
- new learning.

2. Next, in response, members can seek AWARENESS BUILDING through sharing from their own:

- knowledge base and research
- insights
- life experiences

The “Circle of Change”: Stages of Interaction

3. Each person can engage in SELF EVALUATION relating to self awareness gained. Eg :
 - Where am I now?
 - And where do I need to be?

4. Then, individuals and the group can engage in REFLECTION ON BLOCKAGES. Eg.:
 - What has been preventing me from achieving my goal for change? (past blockages)
 - What will prevent me from achieving my goal for change? (expected blockages)

5. To facilitate achieving goals for change, there can be a mutual ENCOURAGING OF ACCOUNTABILITY.

- Each person could commit to being accountable to the group in seeking to make specific action changes.
- The group can respond by holding members accountable and providing encouragement and congratulations.

6. In order to help each other deal with the pains and traumas related to their expressed concerns and the struggles of overcoming blockages to lifestyle and problem solving changes, the group can seek to become a **SUPPORTIVE FELLOWSHIP**.

This can involve:

- listening and empathy
- information giving
- moral support

DON'TS

The above elements in the Circle of Change as well as the enablement, enrichment and reconciling referred to will tremendously enable self help. In order to enable the most adequate self help, the following is discouraged:

- Giving advice - Each person needs to make their own choices
- Taking on solving the problems of others – One can give general information and suggest referrals.

Obviously, in many emergency situations where the nearest persons need to act, everyone needs to be onboard.

KEY POINTS

- Persons, human services and organizations need to develop a strategy for achieving wellness/wholeness.
- **Small, peer-managed, self-help groups** (The “SPEERS” model) provide the context and the foundation for building healing and healthy communities.
- Self-help groups are the best means for fostering **promotive** and **preventive** activities.
- Self-help groups provide for **enrichment**, **enablement in crisis**, **reconciliation** with others and **healing** for wellness.

KEY POINTS

- Self-help groups, when properly organized, have inherent healing properties
- Self-help groups are the best medium for enabling the “**cycle for change**”
- Self-help groups are **everybody’s business** – we all need to be a part of one
- Small, peer managed, self-help groups are what we need in our human services, communities and organizations today; for the building up of each other and for bringing healing and reconciliation to our nation.

Next Steps

- Identify types of groups needed
- Spend quality time in preparing for setting up such groups
- Seek professional guidance if necessary
- Do the necessary planning and organizing
- Adopt a participatory approach in all group activities
- Build leadership within the group

Reach out.....

- *How can I be there for you?*
- *How can you be there for me?*
- *How can we be there for each other?*
- *There is no other way to be.*

Thank You !

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Writings\Presentations\PowerPoint\Whole Person Healing through Self Help Groups
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