

Social Skills Group Proposal Project

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Author Note

[Include any grant/funding information and a complete correspondence address.]

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This group proposal was created to be implemented by the professional school counselor for ninth and tenth grade high school students who are struggling with social skills in connection to academic and social development. The social skills group is designed and open to support students of multicultural diversity. It is expected the social skills group will consist of no more than 8 members and the professional school counselor as the acting group leader.

Rationale for the Group

The rationale of the group proposal is to help students who are struggling academically because of their lack of social skills. In order to understand how to best help these students, it is important to first understand the theories behind personality and social development.

Development Across the Life Span (Geldman, 2011) defines personality development and social development as follows:

Topical Areas in Life Span Development	Definition
Personality Development	The study of stability and change in the enduring characteristics that differentiate one person from another over the life span.
Social Development	The way in which individuals' interactions with others and their social relationships grow, change, and remain stable over the course of life.

“A developmentalist interested in personality development might ask whether there are stable, enduring personality traits throughout the life span, whereas a specialist of in social development might examine the effects of racism or poverty or divorce on development (Evans, Boxhill, & Pinkava, 2008; Lansford, 2009)” (Geldman, 2011)

Erikson's Psychosocial Theory

Psychoanalyst Erik Erikson provided an alternative psychodynamic view of his theory of psychosocial development, which emphasizes our social interaction with other people.

Negative Outcomes Effecting Social Skills (12 months to Adolescent)

Trust vs. Mistrust	Fear and concern regarding others.
Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt	Doubts about self, lack of independence.
Initiative vs. Guilt	Guilt from actions and thoughts.
Industry vs. Inferiority	Feelings of inferiority, no sense of mastery.
Identity vs. Role Diffusion	Inability to identify appropriate roles in life.

Acquiring knowledge and use of Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory will help the professional school counselor understand the foundational cause of the negative outcomes effecting the student's social development and skills.

Goals of the Group (Illinois State Board of Education)

Goal:

Use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships.

Why this goal is important?

Building and maintaining positive relationships with others are central to success in school and life and require the ability to recognize the thoughts, feelings, and perspectives of others, including those different from one's own. In addition, establishing positive peer, family, and work relationships requires skills in cooperating, communicating respectfully, and constructively resolving conflicts with others.

Social Skills Learning Standards for Early High School Grades:

A: Recognize the feelings and perspectives of others.

2A.4a. Analyze similarities and differences between one's own and others' perspectives.

2A.4b. Use conversation skills to understand others' feelings and perspectives.

Screening and Selecting of the Group Members

Students will be screened and selected using the following criteria:

1. 9th or 10th grade enrollment status.
2. Referral by grade level teacher or parent.
3. Student self-referral (Optional)

4. Observation by the professional school counselor to determine severity of social development (articulation, confidence, quietness, etc.) on academic participation and progress.
5. Review of the students' academic and behavioral records.
6. Parent signed consent form on *Social Skills Psychoeducational Counseling Group* (**See Appendix A**)

Group Sessions 1-2: The Forming and Orienting Stage (Erford, 2010)

Session One:

- I. Review group goals
 - a. Students will be greeted by the professional school counselor.
 - b. Students will introduce themselves.
 - c. Students will understand the rationale and goals of the social skills group.
- II. Helping members establish personal goals
 - a. Students will share and establish personal goals with facilitation from the professional school counselor.
- III. Specifying group rules
 - a. Students will receive a paper that list the rules and expectations of group. (**See Appendix D**)
 - b. Students will actively listen as the professional school counselors specifies the group's rules.
- IV. Modeling facilitative group behavior
 - a. Students will observe the professional school counselor modeling appropriate group behavior.
 - b. Students will show understanding by role playing appropriate behavior.
 - c. Students will ask questions and receive clarification of appropriate group behavior.
- V. Assist members in expressing their apprehensions
 - a. Students will participate in a social icebreaker activity to lessen feelings of anxiety in a group setting. (**See Appendix B**)

Session Two:

- VI. Establishing and maintaining trust

- a. Students will actively listen to the professional school counselor explain the importance of confidentiality (rights and responsibilities of group members).
 - b. Students will participate in a group trust activity to help each member establish and maintain a feeling of trust within the group setting.
(See Appendix C)
- VII. Promoting positive interchanges among group members
- a. Students will write and participate in sharing of an interactive journal entry that contains their thoughts, fears, impression, and behavior as it related to the group trust activity.
 - b. Students will be facilitated by the professional school counselor during sharing of journal entries.
- VIII. Teaching members basic interpersonal skills
- a. Students will be taught by the professional school counselor basic interpersonal skills (active listening, empathy, genuineness, and respect).
 - b. Students will demonstrate understanding of basic interpersonal skills through role playing activities facilitated by the professional school counselor.
- IX. Instilling and maintaining hope
- a. Students will actively listen and be inspired by the professional school counselor shared personal experiences of dealing with and overcoming deficient social development and skills.
- X. Resolve possible group problems that manifest in the forming and orienting stage.
- a. Students will be reminded of the group's confidentiality agreement, goals, rules, and appropriate behavior within and outside the group setting.

Group Sessions 3-4: The Transitional Stage (Erford, 2010)

Session Three:

- I. Struggle for Control
 - a. The professional school counselor will challenge students to discuss or participate in social activities that takes the students out of their comfort zone. (McKay, Davis, & Fanning, 2009)
 - b. The professional school counselor will deal with student's *resistance* in a professional manner while ensuring what's in the best interest for the group.

II. Hostility toward the leader

- a. The professional school counselor will deal with student's *anger* in a professional manner while ensuring what's in the best interest for the group.

Session Four:

III. Hostility toward other group members

- a. The professional school counselor will deal with student's *non-compliance* of basic interpersonal skills (active listening, empathy, genuineness, and respect) in a professional manner while maintaining what's in the best interest for the group.

IV. Resistance to intimacy

- a. The professional school counselor will deal with student's *setting of personal boundaries and non-exploration of feelings* in a professional manner while ensuring what's in the best interest for the group.

Group Sessions 5-6: The Working Stage (Erford, 2010)

Session Five:

I. Responsive Working Style

- a. Students will answer directive questions from the professional school counselor pertaining to personal experience of dealing with poor social skills.

II. Conventional Working Style

- a. Students will actively listen and participate in a group discussion of interest pertaining to personal experience of dealing with poor social skills.

III. Assertive Working Style (Part I)

- a. Students will share personal opinions pertaining to personal experience of dealing with poor social skills with the professional school counselor's facilitation.

Session Six:

IV. Assertive Working Style (Part II)

- a. Students will continue and conclude the sharing of personal opinions pertaining to personal experience of dealing with poor social skills with the professional school counselor's facilitation.

V. Speculative Working Style

- a. Students will participate in an open exploration among group members that includes a cooperative spirit in an effort to understand how to overcome poor social skills.

VI. Confrontive Working Style

- a. Students with the facilitation of the professional school counselor will clarify, evaluate, and resolve issues both in the group and within the members.
- b. Students will engage in a deeper level of understanding poor social skills.

Group Sessions 7-8: The Termination Stage (Erford, 2010)

Session Seven:

I. Self-Awareness

- a. The professional school counselor will inform students of the upcoming termination session.
- b. The professional school counselor will highlight similarities among group members, question students, and encourage students feedback amongst the group.
- c. Students will develop a sense of self-awareness in the termination process.
- d. Students will recognize personal attributes and behavior facilitate social skills development.
- e. Students will improve decision ability as well as social skills as it relates to the classroom and in life.

II. Awareness of Others

- a. Students will acknowledge that their social skills issue are normal and experienced by others.
- b. Students will experience universality in the group process.

Session Eight:

1. Planning for the Future

- a. Students will plan for the future with the facilitation of the professional school counselor
- b. Students will transfer social skills developed in the group to the classroom and in life. (**See Appendix E**)

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APPENDIX A

Psychoeducational Group Counseling Parental Consent Form

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Your child has been referred by his or her teacher or you to participate in a small psychoeducational counseling group on the issue of: Developing Social Skills. Your child has been selected to participate in this group (8 sessions) because he or she met the screening criteria list below:

1. 9th or 10th grade enrollment status.
2. Referral by grade level teacher or parent.
3. Student self-referral (Optional)
4. Observation by the professional school counselor to determine severity of social development (articulation, confidence, quietness, etc.) on academic participation and progress.
5. Review of the students' academic and behavioral records.

In order for your child to participate in the group, I must have your consent on file. Please select one of the options below with signature and return it with your child to school.

Option A. _____ Yes I would like for my child to participate in the psychoeducational counseling group.

Option B. _____ No I would **not** like for my child to participate in the psychoeducational counseling group.

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

DeAndre M. Jackson, M.A.Ed.
Professional School Counselor
Email: jacskond@scsk12.org
Phone: 901-555-5300

APPENDIX B

Would you rather..?

Questions may range from silly trivia to more serious content. On the way you might find out some interesting things about your young people! Place a line of tape down the centre of the room. Ask the group to straddle the tape. When asked 'Would you rather?' they have to jump to the left or right as indicated by the leader. Don't forget to encourage your adult helpers to join in too! I've included 20 starter questions, just add your own and let the fun begin.

Would you rather..?

1. Visit the doctor or the dentist?
2. Eat broccoli or carrots?
3. Watch TV or listen to music?
4. Own a lizard or a snake?
5. Have a beach holiday or a mountain holiday?
6. Be an apple or a banana?
7. Be invisible or be able to read minds?
8. Be hairy all over or completely bald?
9. Be the most popular or the smartest person you know?
10. Make headlines for saving somebody's life or winning a Nobel Prize?
11. Go without television or fast food for the rest of your life?
12. Have permanent diarrhea or permanent constipation?
13. Be handsome/beautiful and dumb or be ugly and really smart?
14. Always be cold or always be hot?
15. Not hear or not see?
16. Eliminate hunger and disease or be able to bring lasting world peace?
17. Be stranded on a deserted island alone or with someone you don't like?
18. See the future or change the past?
19. Be three inches taller or three inches shorter?
20. Wrestle a lion or fight a shark?

APPENDIX C

Download from:

http://www.firststepstraining.com/resources/activities/archive/activity_blind_crossing.htm

APPENDIX D

Ground Rules for Support Groups

This is a mutual self-help group, not a therapy group. Hopefully, this group will provide emotional, psychological, and moral support for its members. Each of us is encouraged to participate to whatever extent we feel comfortable. The following ground rules facilitate the development of trust in the group and enable us to share our thoughts and feelings with each other.

Because confidentiality is essential, we expect that each person will respect and maintain the confidentiality of the group. What is said in the group is not to be repeated or discussed at any other time or place.

We are here to share our own feelings and experiences; we try not to give advice.

We each share the responsibility for making this group work.

We try to accept people, just as they are, and we avoid making judgments.

We try to give everyone an opportunity to share.

We have the right to speak and the right to remain silent.

We give supportive attention to the person who is speaking and avoid side conversations.

We avoid interrupting. If we do break in, we return the conversation to the person who was speaking.

We have the right to ask questions and the right to refuse to answer.

We try to be aware of our own feelings and talk about what is present to us now, rather than what life was like for us in the past.

We do not discuss group members who are not present.

We begin and end our meetings on time.

Note: Even though our goal is to support each person, this particular group may not meet your needs. Before deciding this group is not for you, however, we hope you will attend at least two meetings.

APPENDIX E
GROUP COUNSELING EVALUATION

We would like your feedback on your group experience at the Counseling Center. This information is voluntary and will be kept confidential. We appreciate your honesty and ask that you do not put your name on the sheet so that your responses will remain anonymous. Your feedback will help us improve our group counseling services. Fill out the form and return it to your group leader.

For #1-9, please circle the number along the scale that best represents your counseling experience:

	Not Applicable	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly
	N/A	5	4	3	2	1
1. I made progress toward my personal goals in group counseling.						N/A
5 4 3 2 1						
2. I can work more effectively on my personal problems.						N/A
5 4 3 2 1						
3. I can better understand my problems/issues.						N/A
5 4 3 2 1						
4. I can better communicate my thoughts and feelings.						N/A
5 4 3 2 1						
5. I am more sensitive to, and accepting of, differences in others.						N/A
5 4 3 2 1						
6. Group counseling helped me stay in school.						N/A
5 4 3 2 1						
7. I feel that I can better handle my feelings and behavior.						N/A
5 4 3 2 1						
8. I have healthier relationships with others.						N/A
5 4 3 2 1						
9. I am satisfied with my overall group counseling experience.						N/A
5 4 3 2 1						

(If disagree, please explain)

10. What were the best features of this group? _

11. What didn't you like or how might the group be changed?

12. How could the group counselor/leader improve?

13. Further comments on any of the above scales or about your group experience at the Counseling Center (use the back of this form if you need more room):

Number of group sessions I have already had *this semester*:

Semester Fall Spring

Year _____

1 - 2 3 - 5 6 - 9 10+

Group Counselor/Leader's name _____