

# Weekly Activity Groups



## Introduction

This section of the manual describes how to conduct the weekly activity groups. Each activity will be presented separately. When presenting each activity, the manual will describe how to implement the activity as well as describe or provide any raw materials needed for the activity. In general, this section of the manual can be likened to a menu in which you may choose an activity from among all those presented and the activities usually may be presented in any order, with a few noted exceptions.

## Goal of Weekly Activity Group

The goal of the weekly activity group is to maximize enjoyable interactions among the recovering women and the Community Anchor Persons (CAPs). As a result, both the recovering women and the CAPs attend the weekly activity groups. Because the goal of the weekly activities is to facilitate fun, the group coordinator's role is to facilitate interactions and exchanges among the women. These groups do not resemble the structure or format of group therapy.

## Location

The ideal location for the weekly activity groups is a large room at the treatment facility; however, we have also conducted the weekly activity groups in community buildings and religious buildings that are within short walking distance to the treatment facility.

Ideally, the room should allow for different configurations with respect to seating and tables. This flexibility allows the women to create different configurations depending on the different type of weekly activities.

## Common Structure

Each session should begin with introductions of new members, and a brief spiritual reading or prayer. Some groups may find it enjoyable to establish a little ritual of welcome that can be repeated each time a new member joins. The spiritual reading or prayer may be kept constant, or changed weekly or periodically. Some examples of welcoming rituals are provided beginning on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.** Examples of welcoming invocations begin on page 3. Leaders should feel free to draw from these examples or to develop or use welcomes of their own.

Then, the group leader should congratulate all members for attending the group as well as all members who remained abstinent the last week. This is also the time to provide tokens of accomplishment for continuous attendance. These are presented for every 4 weeks of continuous attendance (i.e., 4 wks, 8 wks, 12 wks, 16 wks, 20 wks, etc.). The group leader might ask if there are other milestones and achievements that the group should acknowledge and celebrate.

At this point, the activity should be introduced. Suggestions for group activities begin on page 4. It is important to note that the group coordinator should not be the only woman “facilitating” the activity. As a matter of fact, each woman should be asked to help lead the group if and when she is comfortable.

Group Leaders may want to make use of inspirational prayers, stories, songs, or readings. These can be interspersed through the group meeting as appropriate. These should be used freely, but restricted to one or two per group meeting. Examples of inspirational readings and stories are provided beginning on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Each group should last about 60 minutes. The group leader should end the session by giving a benediction. A benediction is a blessing and could be a straightforward blessing, or a poem, a song, or a brief inspirational reading. Examples of benedictions are provided beginning on page 16.

We have found that the women appreciate being provided food during the weekly activity groups. This may be especially important if recovering women are attending the weekly group immediately after their treatment program ends. As a result, they are hungry. If the group meetings are scheduled near lunch and/or dinner times, the CAPs also may miss these meals.

In addition, food is an important societal and cultural cue for comfort, and human interaction. ...

## **Common Themes**

Cultural Relevance

Celebrating Holidays

Celebrating Achievements

Continuing Human Growth through One’s Lifetime

# Invocations



Recommended for the beginning of groups

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1.

O light of life,  
Be kindled again in our hearts  
As we meet together this morning  
To celebrate the joy of human community  
Seeking a wholeness that extends beyond ourselves.

*-- Samuel A. Trumbore*

2.

Spirit of life and hope, we turn our minds and hearts again toward thee. Awaken us again to the mysteries that humble us, the realities that orient us, the truths that judge and guide us, the beauty that informs and ravishes us, the love that nurtures us, the fellowship that sustains us, the creativity that heightens and deepens and reorders our living, that we may give ourselves in honesty and openness to the larger life before us. Amen.

*-- Clarke Wells*

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<http://www.uua.org/worshipweb/opening/invocations.html>

# Weekly Activity



## Who Are You?

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### When

Recommended as Session 1 and when any new members join the group

### Goal

To provide a non-intrusive, fun way for women to meet other women in the group

### Brief Description

In this activity, women will choose slips of paper that ask them a question. Initially, the questions will be relatively superficial. The second round will require a little more disclosure and the third round requires even more disclosure.

### Materials Needed

1. Three groups of questions on cut and folded slips of paper. Questions are provided on p. \_\_\_\_.
2. A bowl, hat, can, or other container to hold the slips of paper

### How

1. Prior to the meeting, the group leader will copy and cut out the questions that accompany this activity.
2. After the opening "ceremonies" the group leader will place the first folded slips of paper into a container.
3. The group leader will ask each group member to choose a slip of paper either while she herself circulates among the group members or by passing the container from one group member to the next group member.
4. When everyone has one piece of paper, the group leader facilitates the participation of each member by either asking for volunteers or calling on a group member. When it is her turn, each woman reads aloud the question on the slip of paper, and then answers it for the group.
5. The group leader listens for answers that can begin a small discussion that might allow the group to learn more about that individual member.

6. When everyone has had a turn with the first round of questions, the group leader passes the container again for a second round of questions with the initial set of questions.
7. The process is repeated with the second set of questions on p. x and the third set of questions on p. x. As the questions become more probing in nature, the group leader should remain vigilant to each woman's comfort level and assist as necessary in redirecting conversations.

### **Variations**

The activity described above requires disclosure to the entire group. One possible variation of this activity is to ask the women to pair up with another woman. They each answer 1-2 questions. When these questions are answered, each woman changes partners until each woman has been paired with every other woman in the group.

## Round 1 Sample Questions



My favorite hobbies are

My favorite TV program is

My favorite time of day is

The movie that had the greatest affect on me is

The kind of books I like to read are

My favorite holiday in the year is

My least favorite holiday in the year is

If I could visit any place in the world, I would visit

If I had 10 million dollars to spend, I would

My ideal job would be

If I had one year to live, I would

The thing that gives me the greatest satisfaction is

The thing that causes me the greatest concern is

The time I feel most alive is

The time I feel most alone is

The time I feel the most peaceful is

## Round 2 Sample Questions



If you could spend one whole day with your best friend, who would it be and what would you do?

Which of your senses do you value most?

What kind of emergency scares you most?

What do you like that seems out of the ordinary?

What have you done in the past three months that makes you feel proud?

How do you feel about sharing personal problems?

What is the one thing you could do to improve your life?

When do you feel most confident?

What is the most depressing thing that has happened in your life?

Who is the most significant person in your life and why?

## Round 3 Sample Questions



I feel regret and sorrow when

I feel support from others when

I am happiest when

Which fairy tale character do you feel most like? Why?

What would you like to achieve with your life?

What are your strengths and talents?

Have you ever had a mentor? What is that person like?

What is true love to you?

What does it mean to be a good friend?

What gives you the strength to go on each day?

Have you ever tried to help someone? How did it turn out?

# Weekly Activity



## Gift Sachets

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### **When**

Good for middle to later sessions and around holidays such as Mother's Day.

### **Goal**

To provide participants with a way to express themselves and create a gift for themselves or other important women in their lives.

### **Brief Description**

In this activity, clients and CAPs will sit around a table. The group leader will lead a discussion about celebrating their mothers, other strong women in their lives, and themselves as mothers and/or strong women. The group leader will then introduce the sachet-making exercise with the intent of creating a gift for important women in each participant's life or for themselves. The group leader will then give instructions for making the sachets and make the sachet-making supplies available for the participants to start making their sachets. After everyone has made a sachet, the group leader will encourage participants to display their sachets and talk about who they have made the sachet for and why.

### **Materials Needed**

1. Potpourri (a couple different scents, if possible)
2. Squares/circles of different cloths, or pre-made cloth pockets (if lace or doilies are used, be sure to use a fine netting as a liner)
3. Rubber bands
4. Different ribbons
5. Scissors
6. Extra decorative items that can easily be applied to the sachets, such as wire-stemmed flowers and charms

### **How**

1. The group leader starts out with a discussion about celebrating mothers & other strong women, then introduces this exercise. The group leader explains that participants can either make a gift for their mothers or other strong women in their lives, or themselves as mothers and/or strong women.
2. The group leader instructs participants on making sachets:  
Take a square sheet of suitable cloth. Fold in the four corners to form a cloth bag. Be certain that each corner is included. Fill the bag about one-half full with potpourri. Hold the bag with one hand and use your free hand to wrap a rubber band around the neck of the sachet, making sure the sachet is securely closed. Then, take one or more ribbon(s) and tie the ribbon(s) around the neck of the sachet. Use other decorative items to add more of a personal touch to the sachets.
3. After everyone has made a sachet, the group leader encourages participants to display their sachets and talk about who they have made their sachets for and why.

### **Variations**

This activity can also be done around Christmas time, focusing on the positive aspects of gift-sharing and using Christmas-themed fabrics, colors, and scents.

# Weekly Activity



*Idle hands are the devil's tools*

Time Management

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## When

Best done early in the development of the group and revisited when new people have joined the group.

## Goal

To educate the recovering women about time management, goal setting and prioritizing tasks.

## Brief Description

The substantial lifestyle changes needed to achieve and maintain abstinence from cocaine require that clients make productive use of their time. They must learn to plan and schedule events and activities so they have little idle, high-risk time available.

## Materials Needed

1. Individual appointment books
2. Activity worksheet
3. Adjusting your schedule handout
4. Index cards

## How

1. Introduce the activity

How many of you have heard the saying: *Idle hands are the devil's tools?*  
What does it mean?

Many women report that they are most likely to use drugs when they are bored or have nothing to do. We want to help you keep busy so that you are less likely to be tempted to use.

We don't want to keep you busy doing things that aren't fulfilling to you. One of the purposes of this group is to help you achieve personal goals that you set for yourself. In future weeks we will be focusing more on your goals and

make plans for achieving them. Part of that plan will involve finding time to work toward those goals. Usually in order to get the time to work toward our goals, we need to make time. As women, we often spend much of our time taking care of others. Finding time for ourselves doesn't just happen.

Today we are going to learn to plan, schedule and prioritize events and activities in your life. Some women say they don't like to plan or they like to be spontaneous, but if we don't find a way to schedule and organize our lives, we will eventually become overwhelmed and we won't achieve our personal goals. (paraphrased from Budney & Higgins, 1998, p. 72).

2. Using the activity worksheet, guide each woman to make a list of the activities and appointments scheduled for them in the next week (group therapy at NET, weekly CREST group, recovery house meetings, visitation with family, etc.). Next to each event or activity, how the women estimate the amount of time each activity will take. While women are working on the list, encourage CAPs to help woman brainstorm other known, scheduled events. Make sure the women schedule time to provide a urine sample Monday, Wednesday, and Friday each week.
3. Spend some extra time to address attendance at the CREST group each week. Make sure that everyone has scheduled it. Talk about how we miss them and worry that they are okay when one of the ladies misses the group. Emphasize how we tell CAPs that it is important for to attend. This should be a priority for everyone. Ask everyone to make every effort to attend the group and if they can't, let the group know they won't be there. Ask the group to plan how to handle it when a member doesn't show up and hasn't called to tell us why.
4. Distribute the appointment books to all group members. Emphasize the importance of writing down and scheduling appointments and activities to:
  - a. increase the probability of following through with plans and reaching goals,
  - b. reduce stress,
  - c. avoid missed appointments,
  - d. increase awareness of accomplishments, and
  - e. help organize and prioritize plans.
5. When the list of known events is complete, have each woman write those events and activities into the book in BLACK ink. Explain that BLACK INK events are events that are the first priority-these cannot be missed.

6. Ask each woman to notice the pattern of time usage. What blocks of time are open and free?
7. Going back to the worksheet, ask each woman to list activities and events they would like to accomplish in the next week. In completing this activity, ask each woman to identify what is really important to her and to her recovery. She and the CAP might use this time to set up phone calls and visits together. Encourage CAPs to help their partner generate options. Make sure that women schedule bedtime so they are well rested and have energy.
8. Next to each task or activity, ask the woman to estimate how long the task may take.
9. Each woman should now be introduced to the idea of prioritizing what she wants to accomplish. Ask each woman to rank order in importance starting from 1, the most important goal for the week and so forth.
10. Each CAP should review the list of priorities to help shape the plan towards maximal success. Some woman may tend to under schedule and some woman may tend to schedule too much. CAPs should ask questions about feasibility and to suggest other options-CAPs should not make decisions for the women though.
11. When everyone is ready, the woman should try to schedule the next week by writing events and tasks into the appointment book in pencil. The CAP should help the woman identify the best day and time in the week to accomplish priority one using the idea of how much energy will she need, how hard is the task or activity, what times in the day is she better able to concentrate etc.
12. Based on the schedule, she should make a to-do list for the next day on an index card. The group coordinator should model crossing things off a to-do list and then model how to modify the week's plans based on what was and was not accomplished on the to-do list and the priority of the activities.
13. At the end of the session, the woman should be encouraged to use her appointment book daily. Help each woman identify a morning time when she will look at the book and make a daily to-do list, how she will carry it, and an evening time when she will examine the to-do list for the day and modify the remaining weekly schedule.
14. Ask each woman to bring the appointment book back with her to the group next week.



## Adjusting Your Schedule



1. Write out a daily schedule at the beginning of each day. Include uncompleted tasks from the previous day as well as new tasks.
  - a. Use an index card
  - b. Carry the appointment book and the index card with you so you can refer to it as needed and cross off accomplishments
  
2. Evaluate your schedule in the morning
  - a. Is the schedule for the day realistic given the amount of time each task will take?
  - b. If not, remove some of the lower priority events and tasks to make your schedule easier
  
3. Evaluate your schedule in the evening
  - a. Did you accomplish everything on your list?
  - b. If not, why not?
  - c. Was the schedule unrealistic or was your time management ineffective?
  - d. What adjustments can you make in the future to make your schedule work for you?

# Benedictions



Recommended for the end of groups

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1.

When you have shut your doors and darkened your room,  
Remember, never to say you are alone;  
For you are not alone,  
But God is within, and your genius is within.

*-- Epictetus*

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2.

And now may the blessings of life be upon us. May the memories we gather here give us hope for the future. May the love that we share bring strength and joy to our hearts, and the peace of this community be with us until we meet again.

*-- Gary Kowalski*

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3.

Awesome and gracious God -- you who are the power that brings us to life and the spirit that sustains us -- forgive us for being less than we might be. Guide us to become what is in our power to become, in your service.  
This we ask in the name of those to come, and in the spirit of those who have gone before. Grant us wisdom -- grant us courage -- grant us your peace. Amen.

*-- Polly Leland-Mayer*

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4.

Cheered by our community, uplifted in mind, and renewed in spirit, go forth with courage and in peace to meet the days to come. Amen.

*-- Burton D. Carley*

5.

Go in peace, embraced by the light and warmth of our gathering.  
Go in love, ready again to struggle on.  
Go in beauty, shining forth like a lamp for freedom.  
Amen!

*-- Sarah Lammert*

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6.

Go in peace.  
Hold in your heart the certainty  
That the spirit of life is with you always.  
When your heart is torn asunder  
Or when you soar with sweet joy,  
You are never alone, never apart,  
From the spirit that resides within us,  
That guides our lives and cherishes us always.  
Take comfort.  
Blessed be.

*-- Enid A. Virago*

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<http://www.uua.org/worshipweb/closing/benedictions.html>

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