**Depression Small Group Lesson Plan Session 4: Learning to be Positive**

**School Counselor:** Any Riverside Brookfield High School Counselor

**Date:** 2013-2014 School Year **Grade:** 10th

**Duration:** One hour after school

**ASCA Student Standards (Domains/Standards/Competencies):**

**Academic:**

Standard A: Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and across the life span.

Competency A:A1 Improve Academic Self-concept

A.A1.3: Take pride in work & achievement

**Personal/Social:**

Standard A: Students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others.

Competency PS:A1 Acquire Self-knowledge

PS:A1.1 Develop positive attitudes toward self as a unique and worthy person

Competency PS:A1 Acquire Self-knowledge

PS:A1.5 Identify and express feelings

Competency PS:A1 Acquire Self-knowledge

PS:A1.10 Identify personal strengths and assets.

Standard C: Students will understand safety and survival skills.

Competency PS:C1 Acquire Personal Safety Skills

PS:C1.5 Differentiate between situations requiring peer support and situations requiring adult professional help

**Learning Objectives:**

* Students will learn to be more positive towards their classmates.
* Students will experience the satisfaction & benefits resulting from special positive attention by their classmates.
* Students will experience the rewarding nature of thoughtfully expressing a compliment to a classmate & in turn, seeing positive results through building a better sense of community within the school.

**Materials:**

positive/negative ratio on a poster

Copies of positive/negative ratio for each student

Poster board & felt markers for brainstorming ideas

Post-test forms (to be completed at the end of the group session)

**Procedures: (Total time needed:** 60 minutes**)**

**Procedure**:

1. Begin the session by reviewing the materials/information covered over the first three sessions of the group. Have an open forum allowing students to ask questions where they may clarify anything they are still unsure of while also briefly discussing anything that may have come up within the last week relating to past session.
2. Begin the new session with an opening activity. Have the students work together as a group to create a list of both positive & negative feeling words. The group leader will serve as the “secretary” & record all the feeling words on the board. Inform students that it is helpful to have separate lists for both the positive & negative words so they can compare their meanings. Students will be able to see the sharp contract in meaning between the positive & negative words & how impactful they can possibly be.
3. Introduce the plan for the new session by explaining to the group members about how the Positive/Negative ratio & how it works (positive percentage & negative percentage must add up to 100%). The goal is of this activity is to increase the positive feelings of each student as well as creating a more positive atmosphere around the school.
4. Ask each student to share their positive/negative ratio with their classmates while respecting a student’s right to pass as well as being less than 50% positive. For example, a student may say “I am 70% positive & 30% negative” or “I am 40% positive & 60% negative.”
5. Allow students to take turns sitting in a special chair in view of the whole class where they can disclose why they are feeling sad or hurt (again, students must respect a classmate’s choice to pass). Explain to the students that they may talk about what is currently making them sad or something that does make them sad from time to time.
6. After hearing their classmate speak, have the rest of the students in the group take turns giving them positive statements to increase that student’s mental well-being & morale. Examples could include “You were very helpful to me during math class when I didn’t understand how to complete my homework” or “You are a great friend & trust you enough to where I feel like I can tell you anything.” Each student will give a response along these lines until everyone else in the group has said one.
7. Turning back to the original student, ask him/her how the positive statements made them feel. Ask them if hearing these statements by their classmates made them feel better? Also ask this student if their positive/negative ratio has changed as a result of this activity.
8. After the previous activity has been completed, refocus the group members. Define internal (positive) & external (negative) locus of control & cite examples of each. Internal/Positive loci of control include having several close friends or being loyal & honest. External/Negative loci of control include lacking goals for the future or is often rebellious.
9. In a final activity, have the group work together to answer the following questions. How would you describe a person who is 80 to 100% positive & in turn, how would you describe a person who is 80 to 100% negative? Record the responses for each type of person on a posterboard which allows for a comparsion. Discuss aspects such as what type of friend this person would be, what type of student this person would be in school, & what their short & long-term goals might be in life.
10. Conclude the lesson by thanking each student for being open with their classmates. It is important for the leader to point out to the group members that there isn’t a single person who will feel extremely positive 100% of the time. They should realize it is perfectly acceptable to admit “I feel sad because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” Hopefully, this lesson will cause students to think in a different mindset & be more positive with themselves & others at all times in an attempt to build a stronger community within the walls of the school.
11. Have the students complete the post-test evaluation form prior to leaving. Inform them names are not needed to retain confidentiality but to also fill out the forms as honestly as they can because the results will be tallied to analyze the success of the group.

**Follow Up:** Students who did not learn to view themselves or others in a more positive light or still felt sad/depressed more often than not will be given the opportunity for additional one-on-one time with their counselor or one of the school social workers.

**References:**

Caron, Myrna. *Learning to be Positive*. New Meadows, Idaho. Retrieved April 18, 2013 from <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:U2m6zA7TgO8J:www.counselorsroom.com/SCREL01/LessonPlans/LP_1_POSITIVE_ATTITUDE.DOC+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us>