



A Technical Aid Packet on

School-Based Mutual Support Groups

(For Parents, Staff, Older Students)



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Preface

Mutual support groups in schools can be developed as part of strategies providing assistance for parents or other family members, students, or school staff. These groups also can be used to provide support for newcomers or others undergoing periods of transition. Of course these groups offer a useful strategy for enhancing home involvement with a school.

This technical aid describes the process as used with parents; however, the procedures described can readily be adapted for use with others (e.g., students, staff).

Jane Simoni prepared this technical aid based on her work in developing and implementing the ParentTalk and PadresHablan groups at several schools. In doing so, she benefitted from training and materials from the California Self-Help Center as well as from the close working relationship between our university-based project and the Los Angeles Unified School District. Additional financial support for development of the work came from the UCLA Graduate Division, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Education. Special thanks go to the many parents and staff in the participating schools, the School Mental Health Project staff members, and the many UCLA students who are working so hard in the interest of youth, families and communities.

SCHOOL-BASED MUTUAL SUPPORT GROUPS

(For Parents, Staff, and Older Students)

This aid focuses on steps and-tasks related to establishing mutual support groups in a school setting. A sequential approach is described that involves (1) working within the school to get started, (2) recruiting members, (3) training them on how to run their own meetings, and (4) offering off-site consultation as requested. The specific focus here is on parents; however, the procedures are readily adaptable for use with others, such as older students and staff.

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SCHOOL-BASED MUTUAL SUPPORT GROUPS: AN OVERVIEW

On the experience of a parent in a mutual support group:

There is the exhilarating feeling that one is no longer alone--that all parents are in the same boat, whether they can row it or not (p. 48).

Brown, 1976

What are Mutual Support Groups?

Essentially, mutual support groups are "composed of members who share a common condition, situation, heritage, symptom, or experience. They are largely self-governing and self-regulating. They emphasize self-reliance and generally offer a face-to-face or phone-to-phone fellowship network, available and accessible without charge. They tend to be self-supporting rather than dependent on external funding" (Lieberman, 1986, p. 745).

Mutual support groups assume various forms, from the highly structured daily meeting format of the 12-Step programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous to the more informal diurnal gatherings of friends and co-workers. Among other variables, mutual support groups differ according to size, longevity, structure, technology, level of development, purported goals, public image, and relationships with other mutual support groups and community service systems (Borkman, 1990; Powell, 1987). The form of mutual support groups is limited only by the needs and ingenuity of their members.

What are the Benefits of Mutual Support?

Summarizing the benefits of mutual support, authors of the training manual for group starters produced by the California Self-Help Center (CS-HC) state that "groups of people with common concerns start with a potential for mutual understanding and empathy which helps build trust, openness and a feeling of belonging, which in turn, enhances coping, problem solving and self-empowerment."

For the socially isolated, mutual support groups reduce the sense of aloneness, offering a new community of peers that can be supportive both during and between group meetings. In addition to receiving emotional support and empathic understanding, members acquire practical advice and information from individuals in similar predicaments or life circumstances. Mutual support groups also provide the opportunity for optimistic peer comparisons, as members realize with relief that their problems really are not so extraordinary and that others with similar problems are working toward their resolution. Finally, members of mutual support groups benefit from what Reissman (1965) has called the helper-

therapy principle. According to Reissman, helpers often benefit more than the helped. Helping others purportedly (a) increases feelings of independence, social usefulness, interpersonal competence, and equality with others, (b) begets social approval, and (c) results in personalized learning and self-reinforcement (Gartner & Reissman, 1977).

Why Introduce Mutual Support Groups Into the Schools?

Perhaps the most compelling reason for introducing mutual aid interventions into the schools is that present attempts to serve parents from within the public school system are inadequate. Many schools address the needs of parents by offering parent training sessions (e.g., Dinkmeyer & McKay, 1985). These programs are often targeted at lower SES and ethnic minority parents, who are seen as lacking "appropriate" child rearing skills and as not adequately involved in their children's schooling (Ascher, 1988; Ascher & Flaxman, 1985, Herman & Yeh, 1983). Powell (1988) describes the rationales for such parent education programs as resting on one of two premises: (a) parents are ignorant of new research in child development that would be beneficial to them or (b) parents need to be taught how to relate to their children. These interventions typically consist of a professional providing several lessons and leading a related discussion. Toward the end of such programs, parents often indicate a desire to continue meeting with each other as a resource for ongoing social support (Fritz, 1985). However, without proper training, such groups tend to be short-lived (e.g., Leon, Mazur, Montalvo, & Rodriguez, 1984).

In contrast to the traditional parent educational model, which aims primarily at imparting information, Powell (1988) describes the support-centered discussion group, which emphasizes the supportive relationship among group members. According to Powell,

In support groups, discussion is a means of developing ties with other individuals, enabling members to increase the size and resourcefulness of their social networks. Group discussion also serves a social comparison function, allowing members to realize that their parenting experiences and feelings may be similar to others. It is assumed that these group processes lead to a *supported* parent . . . (whereas) a traditional parent education group (leads to) a *well-informed* parent. (p. 112)

Mutual support groups constitute a potentially beneficial supplement to current parent training programs, with several advantages. First, the groups are cost effective, involving only minimal initial professional consultation. Additionally, they constitute a nonpathologically focused approach which aims to capitalize on existing strengths rather than remedying "deficits" based on external standards. Because of their self-led nature, mutual support groups for parents also provide an opportunity for self-efficacy and personal empowerment. By drawing parents into the school, the groups may also lead to enhanced parent involvement in their children's schooling. Moreover, a well-structured group could bestow all the benefits of traditional parent training (by inviting in guest lecturers, for example), while also offering all the advantages of a parent-led group based on an empowerment model.

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SCHOOL-BASED MUTUAL SUPPORT GROUPS: GETTING STARTED

Qualities of a Good Group Starter

A good group starter is a catalyst not a leader. She or he will guide, direct, advise, and model in a way that gives parents confidence in their own abilities. A good starter is self-assured and effective enough to get a group going, yet is not so attached to being in control that he or she does not let the members "own" their group. No specific training or schooling is required.

It is best to begin a group with a co-starter, as working in pairs provides the starters with the support needed to persist. Ideally, a starting pair might consist of one person who works at the school and one parent who is a regular volunteer or who is already involved at the school in some way. If parents are too timid to take on the role of co-starter, they should be encouraged to help in other ways. For example, parents may be able to recruit new members at PTA meetings or help with child care the first few meetings.

Selecting a Time and Place

You may wish initially to survey interested parents regarding their preferred times to meet. Two convenient times for most parents are early in the morning when they drop their children off at school (i.e., around 8:15 AM) or in the evening after work and supper (e.g., 7 PM). Offering two groups, one in the evening for working parents and one in the morning for other parents is a good idea if feasible. In an ethnically diverse school, groups conducted in different languages usually are necessary.

Initially, have parents meet at the school, a central, neutral location. Later parents may opt to meet in each other's homes. Within the school, a warm and inviting room such as the school library is best. The auditorium can work for bigger groups or if no other rooms are available.

GRUPOS DE AYUDA MUTUA PARA PADRES BASADO EN LA ESCUELA: COMO COMENZAR

Buenas Cualidades de un Iniciador de Grupo

Un iniciador de grupo desempeña el papel de catalizador no un líder. Ella o él dirige, guía, aconseja, y modela de una manera u otra que da a los padres confianza en sus propias capacidades. Un iniciador de grupo es seguro de sí mismo y bastante eficaz, pero no tan controlante que no deja a los demás miembros ser dueños de su grupo. No se requiere ningún entrenamiento o educación específica.

Es mejor comenzar un grupo con un co-iniciador, porque trabajar en parejas provee a los dirigentes del grupo la ayuda y apoyo necesario para persistir. Idealmente, la pareja que comienza el grupo consiste de una persona que trabaja en la escuela y un padre que es un voluntario regular o que está ya implicado en la escuela de una cierta manera. Si los padres son demasiado tímidos en adquirir el papel de co-iniciador, se les debe de animar que ayuden de otras maneras. Por ejemplo, los padres pueden reclutar a nuevos miembros durante las reuniones de PTA o ayudar con el cuidado de niños durante las primeras reuniones.

Seleccionando la Hora y el Lugar

Inicialmente, usted podría preguntar a los padres que están interesados cuál es la hora más conveniente para reunirse. Dos de los tiempos más convenientes para la mayoría de los padres son temprano en la mañana cuando dejan a sus niños (i.e., 8:15 a.m.) o en la tarde después del trabajo o la cena (e.g., 7 p.m.). Ofrecer dos grupos, uno en la tarde para los padres que trabajan y uno en la mañana para otros padres es una buena idea, si es posible. En una escuela con variación étnica, grupos conducido en diferentes lenguas son usualmente necesarios.

Inicialmente tengan las reuniones en la escuela, una localización central y neutral para los padres. Luego los padres pueden optar en reunirse en sus propias casas. Dentro de la escuela, una sala tranquila y relajante como la biblioteca es lo más indicado. El auditorio puede ser útil para grupos más grandes o si no cualquier otra sala disponible.

MEMBER RECRUITMENT

There are various ways to spread the word about a new parent group. Many schools have a monthly newsletter which is mailed to all parents, an ideal forum for an announcement. Sending flyers home through the children is another inexpensive way of inviting all parents. (See Exhibits A-C for examples of flyers and Exhibit E for a sample letter to teachers.)

Although flyers are a convenient way of reaching a large number of parents, personal contact can be more compelling. Try approaching parents as they drop their children off at school or calling potential participants. The school may have lists of names and numbers of parents from attendance sheets of previous parent meetings or from PTA enrollment. Interested parents can help spread the word.

Parents respond well when group starters describe the advantages of the group. Mutual Support Groups are a place to:

- get parenting ideas and advice
- join with other parents to give themselves more power in their lives and within the school
- have fun
- meet new friends
- share ideas
- just listen

Recruitment does not always end when the meetings begin. Typically, new members will be welcomed for the first few weeks. Toward this end, a recruitment flyer such as the one displayed in Exhibit D can be distributed by group members. One of the more artistic members may be able to make a poster for prominent display in the school lobby.

RECLUTAMIENTO DE MIEMBROS

Hay varias maneras de dar a conocer la existencia de un nuevo grupo. Muchas escuelas tienen un boletín de noticias mensual que se envía a todos los padres, un foro ideal para un aviso. Enviar notas a casa a través de los niños es otra manera barata de invitar a todos los padres. (Véase los apéndice A-C para ejemplos de notas y apéndices E para muestra de una carta para los maestros.)

Aunque las notas o avisos son una manera conveniente de contactar a una gran cantidad de padres, el contacto personal puede ser más llamativo y efectivo. Intente acercarse a los padres cuando dejan a sus niños en la escuela o intente llamar a participantes potenciales. La escuela puede tener listas con los nombres y números de padres de las reuniones anteriores o de reuniones de PTA. Padres que están interesados pueden ayudar a regar el mensaje.

Los padres responden positivamente cuando el iniciador del grupo describe las ventajas del grupo. Grupos de Apoyo Mutuo para padres son lugares para:

- Tomar ideas de los padres y sus consejos
- Unirse con otros padres para darse más energía en sus vidas y más autoridad dentro de la escuela
- Divertirse
- Hacer nuevos amigos
- Compartir ideas
- Escuchar

El reclutamiento no siempre termina cuando las reuniones comienzan. Típicamente, nuevos miembros son bienvenidos durante las primeras semanas. Al concluir el reclutamiento, una nota de aviso como en el apéndice D puede ser distribuido por los miembros del grupo. Uno de los miembros con habilidades artísticas puede hacer un cartel para exhibirse en el pasillo de la escuela.

PARENT TRAINING

A meeting-by-meeting procedure for training parents on how to run their own groups is outlined on the following pages. In essence, the group starters meet with the group for four weeks, explaining the concept of mutual aid and instructing the parents in a format they can use to run their own group. At the fifth meeting, parents are encouraged to meet on their own to practice their new skills and gain confidence in their own autonomy. At the sixth meeting, the starters return for a final time to encourage the group and to say good-bye. Thereafter, they serve as off-site consultants at the members' discretion.

GETTING STARTED CAN BE FRUSTRATING.

REMEMBER:

1. BE PATIENT

It can take time to get the word out about a new group. In the beginning, several dedicated parents are all you need.

2. BE FLEXIBLE

Group size and membership may vary from week to week. Be ready to help newcomers get going.

3. GIVE AWAY YOUR POWER

Forming mutual support groups is a way of empowering parents, so let them play a leading role from the beginning. For example, let parents help set up the room if they get there early. When asked a question, encourage other members to respond

ENTRENAMIENTO PARA PADRES

Procedimientos de como conducir las reuniones son presentadas en las páginas siguientes. En esencia, los iniciadores del grupo se reúnen con el grupo por cuatro semanas y explican los conceptos de ayuda mutua e instruyen a los padres sobre procedimientos que ellos pueden emplear en sus propios grupos. En la quinta reunión, los padres son motivados en reunirse por su propia cuenta para practicar sus nuevas habilidades de cómo conducir un grupo y así ganar confianza en su autonomía. En la sexta reunión, los comenzadores vuelven por una última vez para animar al grupo y para decir adiós. Después de eso, ellos sirven como consultores afuera de la escuela a la discreción de los miembros.

COMENZAR PUEDE SER FRUSTRANTE.

RECUERDA:

1. **SER PAICIENTE**
Puede tomar tiempo en regar el anuncio acerca del nuevo grupo. Al comienzo, unos cuantos padres dedicados son los que usted necesita.
2. **SEA FLEXIBLE**
El tamaño del grupo y miembros puede variar cada semana. Esté listo a dar ayuda a nuevos miembros a sentirse cómodos.
3. **ASIGNE LA AUTORIDAD Y PODER A OTROS**
El formar grupos de ayuda mutua es una manera de fortalecer a los padres por eso deje que los padres tomen el papel de dirigir desde el comienzo. Por ejemplo, deje que los padres arreglen la sala si llegan temprano. Cuando hagan preguntas, animen a los otros miembros a responder.

Meeting #1: Introductions and Guidelines

Preparation

- Make contact with partner
- Recruit someone to look after the children (an older student may be available)
- Check that the school has reserved the room for you
- Come early to prepare coffee and refreshments and set up the room
- Get name tags for parents
- Call the parents who have expressed an interest to remind them to come

Procedure

- Greet members as they arrive and give them a name tag to fill out
- Serve refreshments
- Sit in a circle
- Go around the circle having members say name and children's names and ages
- Make the group presentation (see below)
- Group discussion time
 - Members take turns saying what they would like from the group
 - General discussion
- Wrap-up
 - Members each say what they learned or liked about the group
- At the end
 - Ask for a volunteer for refreshments for next meeting
 - Ask members to bring a friend, neighbor, or spouse next time

Presentation

- A.
 - Concept of mutual support: Parents helping parents
 - Parents can support each other.
 - We think you have a lot of knowledge to share.
 - You are all experts at something.

- B.
 - The role of the group starters
 - We are group starters, not group leaders.
 - We will help the group get started.
 - We will teach you how to run the group.
 - We will teach you how to take turns leading the group so that no one does all the work.
 - Afterwards, parents will run the group.
 - We will help out only when you want us to.

- C.
 - The schedule of the group
 - We will all meet together for four weeks.
 - The group will meet on their own without the starter (meeting #5).
 - The group starter will come back for meeting #6.
 - The group starter will then be available by phone.

- D.
 - Guidelines (distribute and discuss "Guidelines" handout)

Reunión #1:

Introducciones y guía

Preparación

- Contacte al compañero
- Reclute a alguien que cuide a los niños (un estudiante mayor puede estar disponible)
- Asegúrese que la escuela tiene una sala reservada para usted
- Venga temprano para preparar café y refrigerios y para ordenar la sala de reunión
- Consiga etiquetas con nombres para los padres
- Llame a los padres que han expresado interés para recordarles que vengán

Procedimiento

- Salude a los miembros cuando lleguen y entréguele una etiqueta para que escriban sus nombres.
- Sirva los refrigerios
- Siéntense formando un círculo
- Circule alrededor del círculo para que digan sus nombres y los nombres y las edades de sus hijos/as
- Haga la presentación del grupo (vea abajo)
- Tiempo de discusión del grupo
 - Los miembros toman turnos para decir lo que desean de este grupo
 - Discusión General
- Conclusión
 - Cada miembro expresa que aprendieron o que disfrutaron de este grupo
- Al final
 - Pregunte por voluntarios para traer los refrigerios para la próxima semana
 - Pregunte a los miembros si pueden traer amigos, vecinos, o esposas/os para la próxima reunión

Presentación

- A.
 - Concepto de apoyo mutuo: Padres ayudando a padres
 - Los padres se ayudan entre ellos
 - Creemos que tienen mucho conocimiento para compartir
 - Ustedes son expertos en algo
- B.
 - El papel del iniciador del grupo
 - Nosotros somos iniciadores de grupos, no líderes de grupo
 - Nosotros ayudaremos a que éste grupo comience.
 - Les enseñaremos como dirigir este grupo.
 - Les enseñaremos como tomar turnos dirigiendo el grupo para que no solo una persona haga todo el trabajo
 - Después de esto, los padres dirigirán el grupo.
 - Nosotros les ayudaremos solo cuando ustedes gusten.
- C.
 - El horario del grupo
 - Todos Nosotros nos reuniremos por cuatro semanas
 - El grupo se reunirá por si solo sin los iniciadores durante la quinta reunión
 - Los iniciadores de grupo regresaran para la sexta reunión.
 - Los iniciadores de grupos estarán disponible por teléfono.
- D.
 - Guía (Distribuya y discuta el folleto de guía)

Meeting #2: The Four-Part Format

Preparation

- Make contact with partner
- Call to remind parent who volunteered to bring refreshments
- Recruit someone to look after the children (an older student may be available)

Procedure

- Greet members as they arrive
- Make a name tag for each if there are many new members
- Refreshments served
- Sit in a circle
- Go around the circle saying name and children's names and ages
- Make the group presentation (see below)
- Lead the group in the 4-part format
- At the end
 - Select a leader and timekeeper for the next meeting

Presentation

- A. Briefly review introductory presentation
 1. Parenting helping parents
 2. Role of the group starters
 3. Group schedule
- B. Briefly review "Guidelines" handout--see if members can remember them
 1. Time
 2. Attendance
 3. Confidentiality
 4. No cross-talk
- C. Distribute and discuss 'Meeting Format' handout

Reunión #2:

El Formato de Cuatro-Parte

Preparación

- Contacte al compañero
- Llame pare recordar al padre que se ofreció en traer los refrigerios
- Reclute a alguien que cuide a los niños (un estudiante mayor puede estar disponible)

Procedimiento

- Salude a los miembros cuando lleguen y entréguele y una etiqueta para que escriban sus nombres.
- Haga etiquetas con nombres para los nuevos miembros
- Siéntense haciendo un círculo
- Sirva los refrigerios
- Circule alrededor del círculo para que digan sus nombres y los nombres y edades de sus hijos/as
- Haga la presentación del grupo (vea abajo)
- Dirija el grupo en el formato de cuatro-parte
- Al final
Seleccione al líder que tome el tiempo para la próxima reunión

Presentación

- A. Brevemente revise la presentación introductora
 1. Padres ayudando a padres
 2. El papel del iniciador de grupos
 3. El horario del grupo
- B. Brevemente revise el "Folleto" y pautas--mire si los miembros pueden recordarlas
 1. Horario
 2. Asistencia
 3. Confidencialidad
 4. No interrupciones cuando alguien habla
- C. Distribuya y discuta la guía del "Formato de la Reunión"

Meeting #3: Parents' Turn

Preparation

- Make contact with partner,
- Call to remind leader to bring refreshments and timekeeper to bring toys or another person to care for the children

Procedure,

- Greet members as they arrive
- Refreshments served
- Go around circle, checking in
- Make the group presentation (see below)
- The group leader and timekeeper chosen last time run the meeting according to the 4-part format
- Announce that the group starter will try to remain quiet but will be available for questions
- At the end:
 - Discuss what it was like for the group leader and timekeeper
 - Make sure group leader and timekeeper are chosen for the next meeting
 - Be sure to praise the timekeeper and group leader and reinforce the group for running the meeting by themselves
 - If necessary, ask for volunteers to recruit new members either by calling or distributing handouts

Presentation

- A. Review introductory presentation
 1. Parenting helping parents
 2. Our role
 3. Group schedule
- B. Review "Guidelines" handout--see if members can remember them
 1. Time
 2. Attendance
 3. Confidentiality
 4. No cross-talk
- C. Review "Meeting Format" handout
 1. 4-part format
 - Announcements
 - Check-in
 - Group Discussion
 - Wrap-up
 2. Roles of leader and timekeeper

Reunión #3: ***El Turno de los Padres***

Preparación

- Contacte al compañero,
- Llame para recordar al líder traer los refrigerios y a la persona que lleva el tiempo para que traiga juguetes u otra persona para cuidar a los niños

Procedimiento

- Salude a los miembros cuando lleguen
- Sirva los refrigerios
- Circule alrededor del círculo tomando asistencia
- Haga la presentación del grupo (vea abajo)
- El líder del grupo y el que toma el tiempo escogido en la reunión anterior dirigen la reunión de acuerdo al formato de cuatro-partes
- Anuncie que el iniciador de grupo permanecerá en silencio pero estará disponibles para preguntas

- Al final:
 - Comparte como fue la experiencia para el líder del grupo y el que toma el tiempo
 - Cerciórese de que el líder y el que lleva el tiempo sean elegido para la reunión siguiente
 - Si es necesario, pregunte por voluntarios para reclutar a nuevos miembros llamando por teléfono o distribuyendo anuncios

Presentación

- A. Revise la presentación introductora
 - 1. Padres ayudando a padres
 - 2. Nuestro papel
 - 3. El horario del grupo

- B. Revise la guía—vea si los miembros pueden recordarlas
 - 1. El horario
 - 2. Asistencia
 - 3. Confidencialidad
 - 4. Esperar su turno para hablar

- C. Revise la guía del “Formato del Grupo”
 - 1. El formato de 4-partes
 - Anuncios
 - Anotarse
 - Discusión del grupo
 - Conclusión

 - 2. El papel del líder del grupo y el que lleva el tiempo

Meeting # 4: "W.I.S.E. Advice"*

Preparation

- Make contact with partner
- Call to remind leader to bring refreshments and timekeeper to bring toys or another person to care for the children

Procedure

- Greet members as they arrive
- Go around circle, checking in
- Make group presentation
- The designated group leader and timekeeper run the meeting according to the 4 part format.
- Announce that the group starter will try to remain quiet but will be available for questions.
- At the end:
 - Discuss what it was like for the group leader and timekeeper
 - Make sure group leader and timekeeper are chosen for the next meeting
 - Be sure to praise the timekeeper and group leader
 - Reinforce the group for running the meeting by themselves
 - Ask members if they would like a list of their names and telephone numbers to be distributed at the meeting #6
 - Remind the group that they will be meeting on their own next time

Presentation

- A. Review "Guidelines" handout--see if members can remember them
 - 1. Time
 - 2. Attendance
 - 3. Confidentiality
 - 4. No cross-talk
- B. Review "Meeting Format" handout
 - 1. 4-part format:
 - Announcements
 - Check-in
 - Group Discussion
 - Wrap-up
 - 2. Roles of leader and timekeeper
- C. Introduce the topic of advice giving
 - 1. General discussion of good vs. bad advice - solicit examples
 - 2. Distribute and discuss "W.I.S.E. Advice" Handout
 - 3. Practice with a sample problem

- * W = Does the person want to hear advice?
- I = Are you informed about what the person has already tried?
- S = Has the advice you want to give been successful for you?
- E = Are you trying to be empathetic and caring as well as helpful?

Reunión # 4: "Consejo Sabio-W.I.S.E."*

Preparación

- Haga contacto con su compañero
- Llame para recordar al líder traer los refrigerios y a la persona que lleva el tiempo para que traiga juguetes u otra persona para cuidar a los niños

Procedimiento

- Salude a los miembros cuando lleguen
- Circule alrededor del círculo tomando asistencia
- Haga la presentación del grupo
- El líder del grupo designado y el que toma el tiempo dirigen el grupo de acuerdo con el formato de 4-partes.
- Anuncie que el iniciador del grupo permanecerá callado pero estará disponible para preguntas.
- Al final:
 - Comparte como fue la experiencia para el líder del grupo y el que toma el tiempo
 - Asegúrese que un líder de grupo y el que toma el tiempo son escogidos para la próxima reunión
 - Asegúrese de complementar al líder del grupo y al que toma el tiempo
 - Felicite al grupo por dirigir la reunión ellos mismo
 - Pregunte a los miembros si desean una lista con los nombres y teléfonos que se distribuirá durante la reunión #6
 - Recuerde al grupo que se estarán reuniendo solos durante la próxima reunión

Presentación

- A. Revise la guía—vea si los miembros pueden recordarla
 - 1. Horario
 - 2. Asistencia
 - 3. Confidencialidad
 - 4. Esperar su turno para hablar
 - B. Revise la guía del "Formato del Grupo"
 - 1. -El formato de 4-partes:
 - Anuncios
 - Anotarse
 - Discusión del Grupo
 - Conclusión
 - 2. El papel del líder y de el que toma el tiempo
 - C. Introduzca el asunto de dar consejos
 - 1. Discusión general sobre buenos y malos Consejos-solicite ejemplos
 - 2. Distribuya y revise el folleto de consejo "Sabio-Wise"
 - 3. Practique con un problema como ejemplo
- * W = ¿Quiere la persona consejos?
I = ¿Estás usted informado acerca de lo que la persona ha intentado?
S = ¿Ha sido el consejo que tú das exitoso para ti?
E = ¿Usted está intentando ser comprensible y cariñoso así como también provechoso?

Meeting #5: On Their Own

Preparation

- Make contact with partner
- Call to remind leader to bring refreshments and timekeeper to bring toys or another person to care for the children

Procedure

- Parents meet on their own

Reunión #5: Se Reúnen Solos

Preparación

- Haga contacto con el compañero
- Llame para recordar al líder traer los refrigerios y a la persona que lleva el tiempo para que traiga juguetes u otra persona para cuidar a los niños

Procedimiento

- Los padres se reúnen solos

Meeting #6: Consolidation and Good-byes

Preparation

- Make contact with partner
- Copy the list of parent names and phone numbers if parents requested it

Procedure

- Go around circle, checking in
- Find out how the meeting #5 went
- Announce that this is the last time the group starter will be present during the group but emphasize that the starter will call to check how things are going and can be contacted at any time (be sure to leave an address and telephone number at the office)
(*Also, see below*)
- Remind group of options available to them, such as meeting biweekly or monthly, inviting speakers in, making announcements at PTA meetings, etc.
- Make group presentation
- The designated group leader and timekeeper run the meeting according to the 4-part format
- Announce that the group starter will try to remain quiet but will be available for questions as usual

- At the end:
 - Distribute list of members' names
 - Encourage the group in their independence
 - Good-byes

Presentation

- Two last pieces of advice:
 1. Learning to Listen - sometimes you can be most helpful to a group member by listening empathically without interrupting.
 2. Disclosure - one way to be supportive to another group member is to disclose a similar experience. By saying, "Me, too!" you can show the other person that you understand how he or she feels.

***Note: Some groups may not be ready to meet on their own after only six weeks. It is important to wait until there is some degree of group cohesion and there is a core group of regulars that can provide a support structure (for a discussion and examples, see Simoni and Adelman, 1993. It is up to the individual group members to determine if the group is ready to meet on their own.

Reunión #6: Consolidación y el Adiós

Preparación

- Haga contacto con su Compañero
- Copie la lista con los nombres de los padres y los números de teléfonos si los padres lo solicitan

Procedimiento

- Circule alrededor del círculo tomando asistencia
- Averigüe como estuvo la reunión #5
- Anuncie que ésta es la última vez que el arrancador del grupo estará presente durante el grupo pero enfatice que el arrancador llamará para preguntar cómo van las cosas y que pueden entrar en contacto en cualquier momento (asegúrese en dejar una dirección y un número de teléfono en la oficina)
(*También vea abajo*)
- Recuerde al grupo las opciones disponibles, tales como reunirse cada dos semanas o mensualmente e invitar a oradores o hacer anuncios durante las reuniones de padres de familia
- Haga la presentación del grupo
- El líder del grupo designado y el que toma el tiempo dirigen el grupo de acuerdo con el formato de 4-partes.
- Anuncie que el iniciador de grupo permanecerá callado pero estará disponibles para preguntas

- Al final:
 - Distribuya la lista con los nombres del grupo
 - Anime al grupo a ser independiente
 - Diga adiós

Presentación

- Dos últimos consejos:
 1. Aprenda a escuchar - a veces usted puede ser más provechoso hacia un miembro del grupo escuchando empáticamente sin interrupción.
 2. Compartir experiencias similares - una forma de apoyar a otro miembro del grupo es divulgar una experiencia similar. Diciendo, "¡yo, también!" usted puede demostrar a la otra persona que usted entiende cómo él o ella se siente.

***Algunos grupos pueden no estar listos a reunirse por su propia cuenta después de sólo seis semanas. Es importante esperar hasta que hay un cierto grado de cohesión en el grupo y hay un grupo principal que siempre asisten y que pueda proporcionar una estructura sólida (para una discusión y más ejemplos, vea a Simoni y a Adelman, 1993.)

Depende del grupo decidir o determinar si están listos a reunirse por si solos.

OFF-SITE CONSULTATION

After the sixth meeting, the group starters' contact with the group will be limited to consulting at the members' request. Although the separation may be tearful for both sides at first, it is essential to the empowerment model to allow the parents to continue on their own. The process of actively participating in and leading their own group can be as beneficial to parents as what they learn from the content of the meetings.

Typical Reactions to the Starters' Departure

After the groups starters leave as active participants, two extreme reactions may occur: (1) the members never attempt to make contact with the group starters or (2) the members continually contact the starters, trying to convince them they cannot continue on their own. The former situation should be seen as a victory. The group members who do not contact the starters have learned to function on their own. (Ironically, although this is the desired outcome, the group starter may feel sorrow at no longer being needed!) At the other extreme, a group whose members can not separate from the starters, requires some additional intervention. Be patient and supportive. Some groups take longer to trust their own power and ability. If necessary, the group starters can come back and visit the group after the members have run several meetings on their own. At this point, the starters should contribute only as participants and should not direct the meeting.

Common Consultation Requests

In contrast to both these extreme reactions, most groups will continue on their own with only an occasional call. Typical concerns members raise are how to recruit new members or what to do with a troublesome member. As in all contacts with the group, the starters should strive to empower the parents. Often parents can resolve their dilemmas once they are given permission to trust their own abilities. In the case of recruiting, the starter can urge the members to use the strategies employed initially. The structure of the meetings, with rotating roles for group leaders and timekeepers, will help lessen the negative effects of controlling or inactive members. In the event that some members are disruptive, the starters can help the members problem solve among themselves or can make appropriate referrals.

A FINAL WORD

A mutual support group will not be the answer for every parent, so expect some drop outs. And some groups may not survive at all. However, do not underestimate the impact of the group. Even in a few short meetings, parents may have learned something important.

CONSULTACION FUERA DE LA ESCUELA

Después de la sexta reunión, el contacto de los arrancadores del grupo con el grupo será limitado de acuerdo a la petición de los miembros del grupo.

Aunque al comienzo la separación puede ser emotiva para ambos lados, es esencial para el liderazgo de los padres permitir que continúen por su propia cuenta. El proceso de participar activamente y de conducir a su propio grupo puede ser tan beneficioso a los padres como lo que aprenden del contenido de las reuniones.

Reacciones Típicas al despedir a los Arrancadores del Grupo

Después de que los arrancadores de los grupos se vayan como participantes activos, dos reacciones extremas pueden ocurrir: (1) Los miembros nunca intentan en contactar a los arrancadores de grupos o (2) los miembros continuamente entran en contacto con los arrancadores, intentando convencerlos que no pueden continuar por su propia cuenta. La situación anterior se debe considerar como victoria. Los miembros del grupo que no entran en contacto con los arrancadores han aprendido a funcionar por si solos. (¡Aunque éste es el resultado deseado, el arrancador del grupo puede sentir irónico dolor en no ser más necesitado!) En el otro extremo, un grupo en la cual los miembros no pueden apartarse de los arrancadores, requiere una cierta intervención adicional. Sea paciente y de apoyo. Algunos grupos duran mas tiempo en confiar en su eficacia y habilidades. Si es necesario, los arrancadores de grupos pueden regresar y visitar el grupo después que los miembros hayan realizado varias reuniones por si solo. A este punto, los arrancadores deben contribuir solamente como participantes y no deben dirigir la reunión.

Peticiones o Consulta Comunes

Contrario de estos dos extremos, la mayoría de los grupos continúan por su propia cuenta con llamadas ocasionales a los arrancadores. Preocupaciones típicas que los miembros expresan son como reclutar a nuevos miembros o que hacer con un miembro molesto. En cualquier contacto con el grupo, los arrancadores deben hacer lo posible de reforzar la autoridad de los padres. Frecuentemente, los padres pueden resolver cualquier dilema cuando se le da la confianza en confiar en sus propias habilidades. En el caso de reclutamiento, el arrancador puede impulsar a los miembros a emplear las estrategias utilizadas al comienzo. La estructura de las reuniones, rotando al líder y el que lleva el tiempo ayudará a disminuir los efectos negativos de miembros inactivo o controladores. En el caso de que algunos miembros son disruptivos, el arrancador puede ayudar a los miembros en resolver los problemas entre ellos mismo o pude hacer alguna referencia.

Una Palabra Final

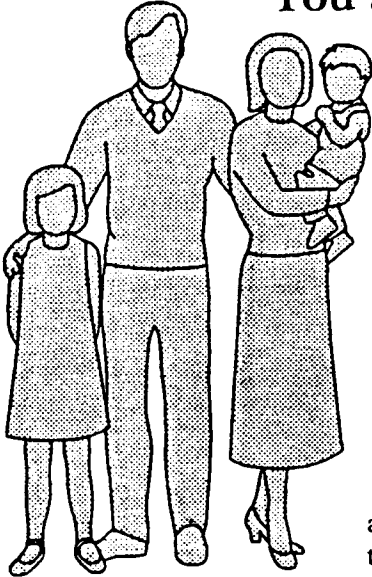
Un grupo que se apoya mutuamente no será la respuesta para cada uno de los padres, por esto espere algunas ausencias. Algunos grupos pueden que no continúen del todo. Pero Sin embargo, no subestime el impacto del grupo. Aún en unas pocas reuniones cortas, los padres pueden haber aprendido algo importante.

EXHIBITS

- A. Flyer Announcing Mutual Support Groups for Parents
- B. Flyer Announcing Mutual Support Groups for Parents
(Spanish Version)
- C. Flyer Announcing Mutual Support Groups for Parents
(In Spanish and English)
- D. Recruitment Flyer
(In Spanish and English)
- E. Cover Letter to Teachers Accompanying Flyers
- F. "Guidelines' Handout for Distribution to Members
- G. "Guidelines" Handout for Distribution to Members
(Spanish Version)
- H. "Meeting Format' Handout for Distribution to Members
- I. "Meeting Format" Handout for Distribution to Members
(Spanish Version)
- J. "W.I.S.E. Advice' Handout for Distribution to Members
- K. "W.I.S.E. Advice" Handout for Distribution to Members
(Spanish Version)

Exhibit A:
Flyer Announcing Mutual Support Groups for Parents

You are invited to attend **Parenttalk**
-a new parent support group!



WHAT IS PARENTTALK?

Parents talking to parents in small weekly discussion groups.

- Talking about raising children, discipline, school, gangs, drugs or anything else
- Sharing experiences
- Receiving advice and support
- Making new friends
- Having fun!

WHO IS THE GROUP FOR?

You! The group is FOR and will be run BY parents. With some initial help from a group trainer, parents will learn how to run the meetings. Parenttalk is a way for parents to help parents, not for professional to tell parents what to do.

HOW DO I JOIN?

Fill in the form below and send it back to school in the envelope attached!

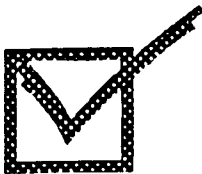
CHILD CARE WILL BE PROVIDED AT THE MEETINGS

EVEN IF YOU ARE NOT ABLE TO ATTEND, PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN THE FORM.

CHECK ONE:

NO, I am not interested in a parent-led group.

YES, please send me more information.



The best days of the week for me are (circle):

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday

The best times of the day for me are (circle):

8 9 10 11 Noon 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Child care will be provided at the meetings.

Child's Name: _____ **Child's Teacher:** _____

Your name: _____

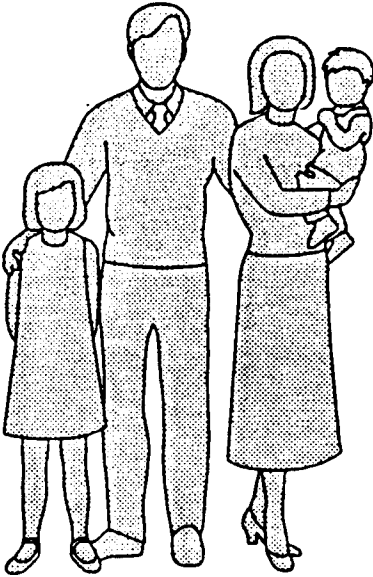
Home Phone #: _____ **Work Phone #:** _____

Best times to call: _____

Is it OK if we call you? **YES** **NO**

Exhibit B:
Flyer Announcing Mutual Support Groups for Parents
(Spanish Version)

Esta Usted Invitado Asistir a **Padres Hablan**
-un nuevo grupo de apoyo para padres!



¿QUE ES PADRESHABLAN?

Padres platicando con padres en pequeno grupos semanales.

- Hablando sobre criar niños, disciplina, escuela, pandillas, o cualquier otra cosa.
- Compartiendo experiencias
- Recibiendo apoyo y consejos practicos
- Haciendo nuevas amistades
- Divirtiendose

¿PARA QUIEN ES EL GRUPO?

Usted! Profesionales ayudaran a comenzar el grupo y ayudaran a los padres a dirigir las juntas. Regresaran cuando ayuda sea necesaria. Sin embargo, el grupo es PARA y sera manejado POR los padres.

¿COMO ME INGRESO?

Llene la forma que esta abajo y regresela a la escuela en el sobre incluido!

CUIDADO DE NINOS SERA DISPONIBLE EN TODAS LAS JUNTAS

AUNQUE USTED NO PUEDA ASISTIR, POR FAVOR LLENE Y DEVUELVA LA FORMA.

MARQUE UNA:

_____ NO, no estoy interesado en el grupo de padres.

_____ SI, por favor mandeme mas informacion.

Los mejores días de la semana para mi son (encircule):

Lunes Martes Miércoles Jueves Viernes Sabado Domingo

Las mejores horas del día para mi son (encircule):

8 9 10 11 12 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Cuidado de niños sera disponible en todas las juntas.

Nombre del niño: _____

Su nombre: _____

Numero de casa: _____ Numero del trabajo: _____

Mejor tiempo para llamar: _____

Esta bien si le llamamos? _____ SI _____ NO

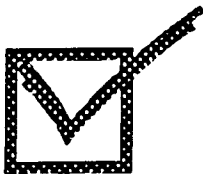


Exhibit C:
Flyer Announcing Mutual Support Groups for Parents
(In Spanish and English)



**You are invited to attend
ParentTalk
- a new parent support group!**

Parents talking to parents in small weekly discussion groups.

- *Talking about raising children, discipline, school, gangs, drugs, or anything else*
- *Just listening to other parents*
- *Receiving advice and support*
- *Making new friends*
- *Having fun!*

CHILD CARE WILL BE PROVIDED AT THE MEETINGS.

**TUESDAY MORNINGS 8:15 TO 9:45AM
THURSDAY EVENINGS 7:00-8:30PM**

**Esta Usted Invitado a Asistir
PadresHablan**

- un nuevo grupo de apoyo para padres!
Padres platicando con padres en pequeno grupos semanales.

- *Hablando sobre criar ninos, disciplina, escuela, pandillas, o cualquier otra cosa*
- *Solamente escuchando a los otros padres*
- *Recibiendo apoyo y consejos practicos*
- *Haciendo nuevas amistades*
- *Divirtiendose*

**CUIDADO DE NINOS SERA DISPONIBLE EN TODAS LAS JUNTAS.
Habrá un grupo para las personas que hablan espanol.**

MARTES 8:15-9:45AM

Exhibit D:
Recruitment Flyer (In Spanish and English)

**You are invited to attend
ParentTalk**

- a new parent discussion group!

Parents talking to parents in small weekly discussion groups.

- Talking about raising children, discipline, school, gangs, drugs, or anything else.
- Just listening to other parents
- Receiving advice and support
- Making new friends
- Having fun!

INTRODUCING

CHILD CARE WILL BE PROVIDED AT THE MEETINGS.

**Esta Usted Invitado a Asistir
Padres Hablan**

- un nuevo grupo de platicas para padres!

Padres platicando con padres en pequeno grupos semanales.

- Hablando sobre criar ninos, disciplina, escuela, pandillas, o cualquier otra cosa
- Solamente escuchando a los otros padres
- Recibiendo apoyo y consejos practicos
- Haciendo nuevas amistades
- Divirtiendose

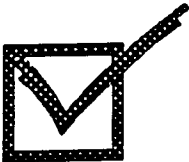
CUIDADO DE NINOS SERA DISPONIBLE EN TODAS LAS JUNTAS.

Habra un grupo para las personas que hablan espanol.

CHECK ONE/MARQUE UNA:

NO, I am not interested in a parent-led group.
NO, no estoy interesado en el grupo de padres.

YES, please send me more information.
SI, por favor mandeme mas informacion.



Child's Name/Nombre del nino: _____

Your name/Su nombre: _____

Home Phone #/Numero de telefono de casa: _____

Work Phone #/Numero de telefono del trabajo: _____

Is it OK if we call you? YES NO Esta bien si le llamamos? SI NO

TUESDAYS / LOS MARTES 8:15AM

Exhibit E:
Cover Letter to Teachers Accompanying Flyers

Dear Teacher:

We will be giving parents the opportunity to join support/discussion groups here at the school.

For the program to be a success, we need to make certain that the attached flyers are given to the students and that they are encouraged to take them home to their parents.

As you can read in the flyer, we are asking parents to fill out the flyer, put it in the attached envelope, and have their children bring it back to you. There is a big box in the office where all the envelopes are being collected. Please just drop them off as they come in.

The new parent groups are called "ParentTalk/PadresHablan." There will be a group for English-speakers and a group for Spanish-speakers. We are going to help the parents get the groups going and then the parents will meet on their own.

We are going to tally all the responses and then call the parents to let them know when the first group will be meeting.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact _____.

Thank you for continuing efforts to make the school a better place for parents.

**Exhibit F:
'Guidelines' Handout for Distribution to Members**

PARENTTALK

GUIDELINES

1. Time Limits

The group starts on time and ends on time.

2. Attendance

Try to come to every meeting, especially in the beginning. New members are always welcome.

3. Confidentiality

Do not gossip.

4. No Cross-Talk

Do not interrupt other people.

**Exhibit G:
“Guidelines” Handout for Distribution to Members
(Spanish Version)**

PADRESHABLAN

REGLAMENTOS

1. Limites de Tiempo

El grupo comienza a tiempo y se termina a tiempo.

2. Asistencia

Tratar de venir a cada junta, especialmente a las primeras juntas. Nuevos miembros siempre son bienvenidos.

3. Confidencialidad

No chismes.

4. No Hablar al Mismo Tiempo

No interumpe a otra gente.

Exhibit H:
“Meeting Format” Handout for Distribution to Members

PARENTTALK

FOUR-PART MEETING FORMAT

1. Announcements

-Any news or upcoming events.

2. Check-in (go around the circle)

-Hello, my name is _____

-I am feeling _____ today.

-I would like to talk or hear about _____.

3. Grout, discussion time

-Everyone gets a chance to talk.

-Remember, no cross-talk!

-Just listening is OK, too.

4. Wrap-up (go around the circle)

-Thank you for helping me with

-See you next time!

LEADER AND TIMEKEEPER

1. Leader

-Brings refreshments

-Greet new members and explains the group to them

-Reviews guidelines at beginning of meeting

-Makes sure everyone gets a chance to talk

-Chooses a leader and timekeeper for next meeting

2. Timekeeper

-In charge of child care

-Makes sure meeting starts on time

-Announces when its time for the wrap-up

-Makes sure meeting ends on time

**Exhibit I:
“Meeting Format” Handout for Distribution to Members
(Spanish Version)**

PADRESHABLAN

LAS CUATRO PARTES DEL GRUPO

1. Anuncios

-Alguna noticia o eventos

2. Que Tal (go around the circle)

-Hola, mi nombre es _____.

-Hola, yo me siento _____ hoy.

-Me gustaria hablar o escuchar algo acerca de _____.

3. Tiempo Para Discusion

-Todas tienen una oportunidad de hablar.

-Acuerdarse de no hablar al mismo tiempo.

-Solamente escuchar esta bien.

4. Dar Cierre (go around the circle)

-Gracias d ayudarme.

-Nos vemos para la proxima junta.

LIDER AND GUARDATIEMPO

1. Lider

-Trae refrescos

-Saluda a nuevo miembros y les explica del grupo

-Revisa los reglamentos al comienzo de la junta

-Asegura que todos tengan oportunidad de hablar

-Escoge al lider y al guardatiempo para la siguiente junta

2. Guardatiempo

-Esta encargado del cuidado de niños

-Asegura que la junta comience a tiempo

-Anuncia cuando es hora de "Dar Cierre"

-Asegura que la junta termine a tiempo

Exhibit J:
"W.I.S.E. Advice" Handout for Distribution to Members

PARENTTALK

W.I.S.E. ADVICE

W - Does the person *want* to hear advice?

I - Are you *informed* about what the person has already tried?

S - Has the advice you want to give been *successful* for you?

E - Are you trying to be *empathetic* and caring as well **as** helpful?

Exhibit K:
"W.I.S.E. Advice" Handout for Distribution to Members
(Spanish Version)

PADRESHABLAN
COMO Y QUIEN LO D.I.C.E.

D -Esta la persona *dispuesta* a ar sugerencias?

I - Estas *informada* de lo que ya ha tratado de hace la persona?

C - Estas tratando de *comprender* y ayudar?

E - Las sugerencias que has dado han sido un *exito*?



Additional Resources

Some National Self-Help Clearinghouses and Websites that are Relevant to Mutual Support Groups

Some Data

Some National Self-Help Clearinghouses and Websites Relevant to Mutual Support Groups

Following is a list of some national clearinghouses that provide information and technical assistance on starting and running support groups. Many of these agencies have materials and publications that may be helpful in for organizing and running mutual support groups, as well as information on the issues that may be of concern for support group members.

American Self-Help Clearinghouse

Maintains database of national self-help headquarters and model one-of-a-kind groups. Provides referrals to self-help clearinghouses nationwide. Offers assistance to persons interested in starting new groups. For handout on starting groups, send a self-addressed stamped envelope. Publishes directory of national support groups.
Write: American Self-Help Clearinghouse, Northwest Covenant Medical Center, 25 Pocono Rd., Denville, NJ 07834. Call (973)625-3037;
FAX: (201)625-8848; TDD: (201)625-9053;
E-Mail: ashc@bc.cybernex.net;
Web Site: www.mentalhelp.net/selfhelp

National Self-Help Clearinghouse

Information and referral to self-help groups and regional self-help clearinghouses. Encourages and conducts training of professionals about self help; carries out research activities. Publishes manuals, training materials and a newsletter.
Write: National Self-Help Clearinghouse, CUNY, Graduate School and University Ctr., 365 5th Ave. Suite 3300, New York, NY 10016.
Call: (212)817-1822;
FAX: (212)642-1956.
Web Site: www.selfhelp.org

National Mental Health Consumers Self-Help Clearinghouse

Consumer self-help resource information geared towards meeting the individual and group needs of mental health consumers. Assistance in advocacy, listings of publications, on-site consultations, training, educational events. Funded by Center of Mental Health Services.
Write: National Mental Health Consumers Self-Help Clearinghouse, 1211 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19107-4103.
Call: 800-553-4-KEY(4539) or (215)751-1810
FAX: (215)636-6312.
Web Site: www.mhselfhelp.org

National Empowerment Center

Consumer-run center that provides information on local self-help resources and upcoming conferences. Also provides networking, conference calls and workshops.

Write: National Empowerment Center, 599 Canal St., Lawrence, MA 01840.

Call: 800-POWER-2-U (800-769-3728) or Outside U.S.: +(978)685-1518;

FAX: (978)681-6426;

TTY/TTD: 800-889-7693

Web Site: www.power2u.org

Resource Clearinghouses

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI)

NCADI is the largest repository of substance abuse treatment and prevention information in the country. NCADI has over 450 items including fact sheets, booklets, posters, videotapes, audiotapes, monographs, and magazines on all aspects related to alcohol and other drugs of abuse. This clearinghouse also has information that is particularly geared toward developing prevention programs in the community, and can provide information for those interested in forming mutual support groups that address prevention issues, obtaining resources, and implementing prevention programs.

Contact: P.O. Box 2345, Rockville, MD, 20847-2345

Call: 800-729-6686; 301-468-2600

Website: <http://www.health.org/>

The Wisconsin Clearinghouse: Prevention Resources

The Wisconsin Clearinghouse has been providing educational and training materials, information and services nationally for more than 20 years. The mission of the Wisconsin Clearinghouse is to help schools, families, and communities to lead healthy, productive lives. The clearinghouse offers materials for youth workers, communities, parents and educators. Many of these materials are free or can be obtained at a low cost.

Contact: 1552 University Ave. Madison, WI 53726-4085

Or P.O. Box 1468 Madison, WI 53701-1468

Call Toll Free: 1-800-248-9244 or Call in Madison, WI: (608)262-9157

Fax: 608-262-6346

Website: <http://www.uhs.wisc.edu/wch/>

The Self-Help Interest Group

The Self-Help Interest Group is an international organization of researchers, self-help leaders, and policy makers that promotes research and action related to self-help groups and organizations.

For more information, contact: Keith Humphreys at 415-617-2746

Email: D6.F52@forsyth.stanford.edu

International Journal of Self-Help

New for self-help researchers the International Journal of Self-Help and Self-Care, edited by Alfred Katz (UCLA), Associate Editor Keith Humphreys (Stanford).

Subscribe to: Baywood Publishing Company, Inc. 26 Austin Avenue
P.O. Box 337 Amityville, NY 1170

Websites

Mental Health Net's Self Help Page: The Self Help Sourcebook Online

<http://www.mentalhelp.net/selfhelp>

The Self-Help Sourcebook Online is a searchable database that includes information on approximately 700+ national and demonstrational model self-help support groups, ideas for starting groups, and opportunities to link with others to develop new groups. This website also has documents on many of the psychosocial issues that are of concern for participants in mutual support groups (e.g., alcohol and drug use, diseases, violence, equal rights, etc.). Included is information about agencies (organized by state and community) that can provide technical assistance and guidance on a variety of self-help and group management issues. Most of this information can be obtained directly by contacting the American Self-Help Clearinghouse.

Parents Involved Network (PIN)

<http://www.pinofpa.org>

Parents Involved Network is a state-wide (Pennsylvania), parent-run, self-help advocacy, information and referral resource for families of children and adolescents with emotional or behavioral disorders. PIN provides families with an opportunity to share common concerns, exchange information, identify resources, and influence policy issues affecting children and adolescents who have behavioral disorders.

Psych Web- Psychology Self-Help Resources on the Internet

www.psywww.com/resource/selfhlep.htm

This contains links to non-commercial sites providing information and help about specific disorders related to psychology. In addition to this page, Psych Web maintains lists of brochures and articles related to psychology (many of which are related to self-help issues), commercial psychology-related sites on the web, psychology departments on the web, psychology journals on the web, other megalists of psychology resources, and scholarly psychology resources on the web.

Some Data: Exerpts from Two Evaluation Articles

Journal of Community Psychology

Volume 21, July 1993

Latina Mothers' Help Seeking at a School-Based Mutual Support Group

Jane M. Simoni

University of California, Los Angeles

Low-income Latino parents constitute a vulnerable population who are underserved by traditional mental health services but difficult to recruit to more culturally sensitive community interventions. In order to identify factors that may facilitate participation, a cognitive-motivational framework was employed to study help seeking at a school-based mutual support group (MSG) for low-income Latino parents. Phone interview data from 75 Latina mothers generally supported hypothesized differences between nonattenders and attendees. Specifically, attendees initially reported (a) greater parenting stress, (b) less confidence in parenting abilities but comparable psychological coping resources, (c) less satisfaction with and greater need for social support, (d) less negative attitudes toward help seeking, and (e) more previous school involvement. A discriminant analysis revealed that need for parenting advice and prior school involvement accounted for 34% of the variance between attenders and nonattenders. Implications for enhancing program utilization are discussed.

School-Based Mutual Support Groups for
Low-income Parents

Jane M. Simoni and Howard S. Adelman

School-based mutual support groups (MSGs) are proposed to enhance the school involvement of parents from lower socioeconomic and ethnic minority backgrounds. We present a school-based MSG format, findings from a survey regarding parent interest, and discussion of a pilot demonstration implementation in three urban elementary schools.

A review of the literature on parents and schooling indicates widespread endorsement of parent involvement, with consistent reports of positive effects for students (Comer, 1988; Davies, 1987, 1991; Dye, 1989; Epstein, 1987, 1990; Goldenberg, 1987, 1989; Hawley and Rosenholtz, 1983; Hendersen, 1987). Summarizing research findings, Epstein (1987) concludes, "The evidence is clear that parental encouragement, activities, and interest at home and participation in schools and classrooms affect children's achievements, attitudes, and aspirations, even after student ability and family socioeconomic status are taken into account" (p. 120).

Equally well documented are the relatively low levels of school involvement among parents from low-income and ethnic minority backgrounds (Ascher, 1988; Ascher and Flaxman, 1985; Davies, 1988; Herman and Yeh, 1983; Lareau, 1987; McLaughlin and Shields, 1987). To enhance school involvement and improve child-rearing skills among these groups, many schools offer time-limited parent-training sessions typically consisting of lessons and discussions led by professionals (e.g., Myers, Alvy, Arrington, Richardson, Marigna, Huff, Main, & Newcomb, 1992). Nieto (1985) views these efforts as often flawed by paternalism, opportunism, manipulation, insensitivity to cultural and class realities, and fear among school staff of losing control. Others stress that most school-dominated parent programs fail to empower parents and lack a sustained and coherent strategy for increasing their involvement in schooling (Mannan and Blackwell, 1992).

As an alternative approach, we have begun to explore the feasibility of school-based mutual support groups (Simoni, 1991, 1992a, 1992b, 1992c; Simoni and Adelman, 1991a, 1991b). This strategy builds on a growing body of work related to community-based mutual support groups (see reviews by Jacobs and Goodman, 1989; Katz and Bender, 1976; Lieberman and Borman, 1979; Powell, 1987, 1990). Efficacy studies report improvements in several aspects of social and psychological functioning among MSG attendees (Lieberman, 1986). With respect to low-income parents, MSGs are seen as capable of bolstering self-esteem, self-confidence, and such values as individuality, self-worth and respect (Leon, Mazur, Montalvo, and Rodrieguez, 1994).

Discussion of Interview Findings

Among this sample of low-income parents, the interviews underscored a reasonable amount of support for the idea of parents running their own groups (60% of the Repliers endorsed the concept). At the same time, it must be recognized that 40% of the Repliers did not endorse parent-run groups. We suggest this finding may have reflected the extent to which they had been disempowered and were convinced that they lacked competence.

Most striking about the reported obstacles to school involvement was the large number that were removable. For example, the need for child care, convenient scheduling, and groups in languages other than English seemed relatively easy to address.

With respect to analyses comparing the Replier and Nonreplier groups, the most prominent finding was that the parents interested in MSGs reported more extensive social and psychological coping resources (i.e., greater social networks and higher life satisfaction). Although the correlational design precludes causal conclusions, this finding may indicate that the Repliers were accustomed to establishing useful social networks and that their superior resources facilitated interest and involvement (see Telleen, 1990). Parents who have comparable, or greater need but lack the necessary resources for attendance are likely to be among the most difficult to recruit.

The analysis involving English proficiency have relevance for reports of greater school involvement of English-proficient parents. Our findings indicate that the Latino Repliers who spoke English possessed as well other resources that might facilitate involvement (i.e., higher socioeconomic levels, fewer obstacles to school involvement, and larger social networks). However, despite their relative lack of resources, the non-English-speaking Repliers had equally high levels of interest in involvement, reported more frequent use of informal social networks, and indicated a greater desire to discuss personal problems in the groups. Based on these findings, we do not anticipate that differences in English proficiency will be predictive of MSG attendance.

Discussion of the Pilot Demonstration

In summary, although most parents, especially monolingual Spanish-speakers, were initially reluctant to take on the responsibility of running their own group, they eventually demonstrated significant interest and ability to maintain parent-led groups over a reasonable period of time. This was the case for parents with and without English-proficiency, even though the latter group reported more obstacles to involvement. Overall, the demonstration provides preliminary evidence of the feasibility of school-based MSGs.

From the perspective of increasing parental involvement in schools and schooling, the findings run counter to stereotypes that depict low-income and non-English-speaking parents as uninterested. Moreover, they suggest that interventions such as MSGs are worth pursuing as a part of efforts to enhance school involvement within this population.

Equally important, the experiences indicate the types of difficulties that should be expected and suggest ways to improve subsequent implementation. First, there is a need for more powerful recruitment strategies. A direct mailing or invitation by computerized telephoning techniques, although costly, probably would reach more parents. Personalized invitations (e.g., parents recruiting other parents, approaching parents as they drop their children off at school) have proved here and elsewhere (Klimes-Dougan, Lopez, Nelson, & Adelman, 1992)

to be a highly successful strategy.

Second, further efforts are needed to remove obstacles to parental involvement. Clearly, many parents could attend only as long as child care was provided. Other barriers to be addressed include scheduling, transportation, and accommodation of a variety of languages. Although efforts were made to schedule groups conveniently, the times were not good for many parents. Others might have come if carpools had been arranged. And, of course, some parents did not attend because groups in languages other than English and Spanish were not offered.

Third, groups should be implemented early in a school year. The groups that disbanded when the school year ended probably would have built greater group cohesion and would have continued if they had been meeting together from the beginning of the school year. In addition, training may need to be longer. The California Self-Help Center (1985) prescribes a 12-week training period.

Finally, a critical mass of group members seems necessary for group success. The consultant might consider delaying the training phase until a core group of 8- 12 members has committed. With reference to the most successful group, we have already suggested a few reasons for its longevity. Future research needs to assess contextual variables and implementation parameters such as school and neighborhood characteristics (see Bauman, Stein, & Ireys, 1992). Once factors leading to group longevity are more fully understood, future research can begin determining the effects of participation in school-based MSGs and how widely useful such groups may be. In this event, the usual range of questions about group composition and transactions will need to be studied (see Lieberman & Bond, 1979).

Conclusion

Our work thus far indicates that low-income parents with and without English proficiency demonstrate interest and ability with respect to leading their own MSGs in the schools. These findings lend support to the utility and feasibility of such groups. The data also contradict generalizations suggesting that low-income parents are hard to reach or uninterested in participating in such groups or in becoming involved at school. Indeed, the work represents another instance (see Davies, 1988) where attempts to involve low-income or non-English-speaking parents appeared to yield positive benefits as long as the activity was of interest and addressed institutional, cultural, class, language, and personal barriers.

*We hope you found this to be a useful resource.
There's more where this came from!*

This packet has been specially prepared by our Clearinghouse. Other Introductory Packets and materials are available. Resources in the Clearinghouse are organized around the following categories.

Systemic Concerns

- » Policy issues related to mental health in schools
- » Mechanisms and procedures for program/service coordination
 - Collaborative Teams
 - School-community service linkages
 - Cross disciplinary training and interprofessional education
- » Comprehensive, integrated programmatic approaches (as contrasted with fragmented, categorical, specialist oriented services)
- » Issues related to working in rural, urban, and suburban areas
- » Restructuring school support service
 - Systemic change strategies
 - Involving stakeholders in decisions
 - Staffing patterns
 - Financing
 - Evaluation, Quality Assurance
 - Legal Issues
- » Professional standards

Programs and Process Concerns

- » Clustering activities into a cohesive, programmatic approach
 - Support for transitions
 - Mental health education to enhance healthy development & prevent problems
 - Parent/home involvement
 - Enhancing classrooms to reduce referrals (including prereferral interventions)
 - Use of volunteers/trainees
 - Outreach to community
 - Crisis response
 - Crisis and violence prevention (including safe schools)
- » Staff capacity building & support
 - Cultural competence
 - Minimizing burnout
- » Interventions for student and family assistance
 - Screening/Assessment
 - Enhancing triage & ref. processes
 - Least Intervention Needed
 - Short-term student counseling
 - Family counseling and support
 - Case monitoring/management
 - Confidentiality
 - Record keeping and reporting
 - School-based Clinics

Psychosocial Problems

- » Drug/alcohol abuse
- » Depression/suicide
- » Grief
- » Dropout prevention
- » Gangs
- » School adjustment (including newcomer acculturation)
- » Pregnancy prevention/support
- » Eating problems (anorexia, bulimia)
- » Physical/Sexual Abuse
- » Neglect
- » Gender and sexuality
- » Self-esteem
- » Relationship problems
- » Anxiety
- » Disabilities
- » Reactions to chronic illness
- » Learning, attention & behavior problems



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Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563**

The Center is co-directed by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor and operates under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project, Dept. of Psychology, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563 -- Phone: (310) 825-3634.

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