

Myself



SESSION 1

Welcome, Introductions, and Building Our House

THIS SESSION

Your facilitator's name is _____.

Your co-facilitator is _____.

Your group will meet _____.

This program was created to help you use your inner strengths, to master difficulties in your life, and to improve the way you get along with others. The program will help you find a new way to look at issues you have faced in the past and issues you are facing in the present. You will help to create a space in which all of your group members can learn from one another and from the activities and information provided by the facilitator.

In your group, you'll hear things that you have in common with the other participants and things that are different. You have a chance to connect with other people who have been living lives of unique challenges and accomplishments. Most important, you will have a chance to share your thoughts, feelings, and experiences. You won't have to share anything you don't feel comfortable sharing. You'll find a place to be heard and to be supported by others who can relate to you.

This is also a space for you to present yourself as you really are and to explore who you hope to become. Young people come in all shapes, styles, backgrounds,

and presentations. This is a place to be your genuine self while supporting others who are doing the same thing. Although we sometimes use the terms “boys and young men” in our discussions to explain how they typically are raised and, therefore, how they may act, this program is created for boys, young men, young trans men and boys, and nonbinary and gender nonconforming people who have a masculine experience of the world.

BEING IN A GROUP

Starting in a new group is not comfortable. You may feel nervous or uneasy and you may try different ways of dealing with your feelings. These are called “defensive strategies.” Your facilitators have worked with many people like you and understand your discomfort. They will try to make this an environment in which you feel comfortable and safe and can let others see the real you.

Many of your group members may have experienced trauma or other troubling things in their lives. In this program, you will explore how violence, abuse, trauma, power, control, and powerlessness are part of the lives of many young people. It will help you to identify your inner strengths and talents in order to master the difficulties that you may be facing. Then you can discover how to lead a healthier life and have healthier relationships with yourself and others. Most important, you will begin to have a sense of mastery of yourself and your future.

MUTUAL AGREEMENTS

Some of the qualities that groups like yours name as being important are trust, confidentiality, respect, collaboration, nonjudgment, compassion, empathy, and acceptance. These, and whatever your group chooses to add, will be the foundations of your work together.

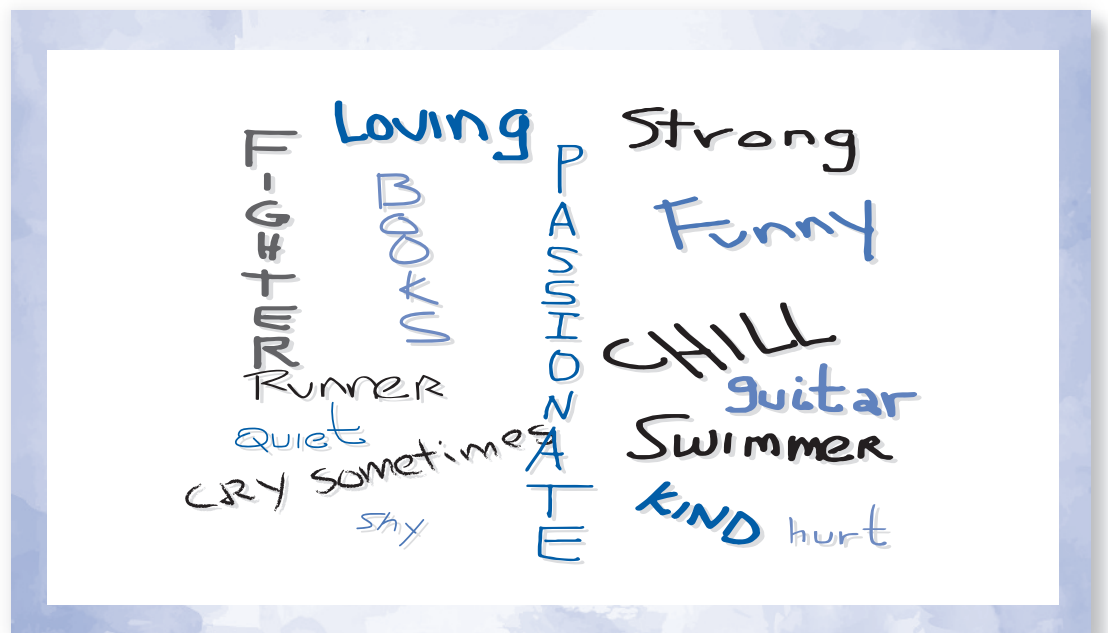
You can list your group's building blocks here:



THE WORD CLOUD

A Word Cloud is a way of tracking words that are used most often by people on social networks. The more a word is used, the larger it is.

On the next page, use words that describe you and your interests to make a Word Cloud. The more a word is true of you, the bigger it should be. Words that say more about you are horizontal on the page, and words that aren't so obvious may be vertical, upside down, or backwards. You choose the direction that fits you. You can use colors for emphasis. You also may draw symbols or pictures instead of using words. Here is a sample.





FIVE SENSES

A “grounding” activity can help you to detach from your inner, emotional discomfort by helping you to be more aware of the physical world and connecting with the “here and now.” It is one of the self-mastery techniques you will learn in this program.

1. Close your eyes or lower your eyelids.
2. Relax for a few moments. Take a few deep breaths and exhale slowly.
3. Open your eyes when you’re ready.
4. Silently, identify five things you can see around you.
5. Now identify four things you can feel or touch.
6. Identify three things you can hear.
7. Now identify two things you can smell.
8. Finally, identify what you can taste right now.
9. Now focus your eyes on something in front of you and mentally come back into the present.



Source: S. S. Covington with E. Russo. (2016). *Healing Trauma: A Brief Intervention for Women* (Rev. ed.). (p. 161). Center City, MN: Hazelden.

REFLECTION

“Reflection” is thinking deeply or carefully about something. Think back to what had the most impact on you in today’s session, what you felt, and what you want to remember. Here is a space for you to write or draw about it. You may finish this after the session ends.

A large white rectangular area for reflection, framed by a blue border. A blue pencil icon is in the top-left corner of the frame.

BETWEEN-SESSIONS ACTIVITY

Take time between now and the next session to practice the Five Senses grounding technique at least once per day. Be ready to share about your experience with this activity in the next session. You may want to make some notes about it on this page. You may also want to complete your Reflection activity.

A large rectangular box with a blue border and a blue pencil icon in the top-left corner, intended for notes or reflection.