GROUP LEADERS QUICK GUIDE TO CONDUCTING WELLNESS SELF MANAGEMENT (WSM) GROUPS

CONDUCTING A WSM GROUP

THE BEGINNING OF A WSM GROUP

Review and Overview
ASK: What was one of the important points you took away from the last group?
CHECK: Who chose to complete an ACTION STEP?
STATE: Today we are starting/continuing a topic called ___ that starts on page ___ of your workbook.
STATE: The plan for today includes reading and discussing important information on this topic; completing a worksheet and deciding on an Action Step.
ASK: Let’s begin by discussing what experience group members have had with this topic. What does the topic mean to you? What experience have you had with this topic?
ASK: Why is this topic important?

THE MIDDLE OF A WSM GROUP

Presentation TELL-SHOW-DO
ASK: Who would like to begin reading the IMPORTANT INFORMATION about this topic?
ASK: Now that we’ve read and discussed some important information on this topic, are there any questions about the material?
STATE: One of the goals of the WSM program is to make sure everyone gets a chance to relate the topic to his/her own life. The PERSONALIZED WORKSHEET gives you an opportunity to do so. Please take some time to complete the worksheet. It may be helpful for us to go through the first several items together to make sure the worksheet is clear to everyone. Afterwards you will have an opportunity to discuss what you have learned.

Exercise
STATE: One of the important parts of the WSM group is taking what you have learned and deciding to continue your learning through completing an ACTION STEP. Even if you are not interested in learning more about this topic right now, it may be helpful to complete an ACTION STEP to improve your planning skills.
ASK: Who is interested in completing an ACTION STEP related to this topic? (If at least one person is interested, the other group members participate by giving suggestions and sharing ideas).

Note: Some ACTION STEPS lend themselves to role play and practice in the WSM group

THE END OF A WSM GROUP

Summary
ASK: What was one main point you took from today’s lesson?
ASK: How do you feel about today’s group? Is the topic interesting and helpful or not? Did we go too fast, too slow or just right today?
STATE: I’d like to share my thoughts about today’s group. NOTE: place emphasis on positive feedback and reinforcement for all efforts and behaviors that contributed to the group.

KEEP IN MIND....

“Recovery involves the development of new meaning and purpose in one’s life as one grows beyond the catastrophic effects of mental illness.” (William Anthony, Ph.D.)

Long term studies have consistently found that 50% or more of people diagnosed with major mental illness go on to a significant or complete recovery.

Maintain an ASKING STANCE to insure that the WSM program respects the cultural, religious and personal perspectives of group members

The VALUES of recovery include:
PERSON CENTERED: Focus on a person’s strengths, talents, interests, values and beliefs.
INVOLVEMENT: Emphasize peer to peer interactions, focus on strengths and expertise of group members
CHOICE: Focus on individual’s identifying, evaluating and choosing options.
HOPE AND GROWTH POTENTIAL: Believing in each person’s potential to learn and grow. Build confidence by supporting step by step progress.

CORE COMPETENCIES CHECKLIST

ENGAGEMENT AND MOTIVATIONAL TECHNIQUES
- Connects topic to members’ goals and values
- Uses reflective listening and empathic responding
  (avoids judgmental and critical comments)
- Emphasizes the benefits of learning the topic area
- Makes inspiring comments that promote hope
- Expresses appreciation for participants’ efforts

EDUCATIONAL/TEACHING TECHNIQUES
- Engages people in reading out loud
- Asks questions about main points to increase comprehension
- Respectfully assists members to stay on topic
- Clarifies ideas via examples relevant to participants’ lives
- Uses questions to check on participants’ comprehension

COGNITIVE-BEHAVIORAL TECHNIQUES
- Reframes ideas or beliefs that are self-defeating
- Breaks information down into small segments
- Models behavior via demonstrations and/or self disclosure
- Provides specific feedback to participants
- Provides positive reinforcing comments to participants

GROUP SKILLS UTILIZING THE ROPES FORMAT
- Prior to group session, describes the plan for the session with
  specific goals that can be observed
- Prior to the group session, describes the progress made by each
  participant and strategies to address problem areas
- Checks on the outcome of Action Steps from previous session
- Reviews participants’ experiences with and knowledge of topic
- Presents an Overview of today’s session
- Leads a discussion about the importance of today’s topic
  for participants
- Leads a discussion focusing on the Important Information
  presented in today’s lesson
- Assists participants with the completion of Personalized
  Worksheets
- In session, assists members’ planning for Action Steps
- Encourages participants to Summarize the important points
  of the lesson
GROUND RULES

It’s best to have group members reach consensus on ground rules for the group. Some common ground rules:

♦ ONE PERSON TALKS AT A TIME
♦ TREAT EACH OTHER WITH RESPECT (NO PUT DOWNS)
♦ WHAT IS SAID HERE STAYS HERE (CONFIDENTIALITY)
♦ STAY ON TOPIC
♦ AVOID SEPARATE CONVERSATIONS

MENU OF POSSIBLE ACTION STEPS

When your action step is to better REMEMBER or find out more about the topic in the WSM program

- Reading written materials related to the topic
- Re-read the workbook material on your own
- Finding out more about the topic through the internet
- Talking to a professional person (case manager, counselor, psychiatrist, nurse, pharmacist, etc.) to learn more about the topic
- Talking to a family member or friend to get their opinion about the topic
- Talk to a peer (someone who is also working on their mental health problems) about their experiences and opinions
- Talking to a pastor, priest, rabbi or other spiritual counselor in your community to better understand the topic and how it relates to your spiritual life

When your action step is to PRACTICE something you learned in the WSM program.

- Ask someone you trust to support you in practicing a new skill
- Pick a time and place where you can practice your new skill without distractions
- Write down the steps of the skill and carry it with you to read before you try it out

When your action step is to EXPRESS your thoughts and feelings about the topic in the WSM program

- Express your thoughts and feeling about the topic through creative activities such as writing a poem or an essay; drawing a picture; playing a song that relates to the topic etc.

When your action step involves getting SUPPORT from others

- Talk to someone you trust about your involvement in the Wellness Self-Management program. Let them know how they can be helpful

When your action step involves CONNECTING with resources in your community

- Make a phone call to set up a meeting
- Ask someone to join you in visiting community resources such as self-help and advocacy groups, cultural programs, educational programs, religions/spiritual groups, social clubs or other groups in your community

When your action step is to practice LEADERSHIP

- In the WSM program you may be offered an opportunity to lead or co-lead a lesson of interest.
- Share your ideas to enhance the WSM program (i.e., guest speakers, field trips, organize healthy lifestyle events/activities etc.)

SPICE UP THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

1. DYAD/TRIAD LEARNING EXERCISES:
Organize group members into groups of 2 or 3 small groups. Design a learning exercise that involves discussion, recording and reporting on the small group task.

2. GUEST SPEAKERS: Invite staff or other people to share their expertise on workbook topics.

3. PEER LEADERSHIP: Invite 2-3 interested members of the group to conduct a group lesson. The staff person may assist the “peer leaders” to plan the lesson beforehand, conduct the group, and afterwards, to review the experience.

4. AUDIO/VISUAL RESOURCES: Use video and/or audio tapes related to the WSM topic as a way to stimulate discussion.

5. SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL: Supplement workbook material with additional educational resources.

6. GAMES AND CREATIVE LEARNING ACTIVITIES
Present information, organize worksheets or design action steps through engaging games such as Jeopardy, Match Game, board games or other interesting activities that accomplish the aims of the lesson.