

Advanced Structured Exercises for Group Counseling

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These exercises are powerful deepening tools. They should be used only for a group who is in the "working" stage, and who is willing to take some risks to deepen their work together. It is important that you feel confident that you can "hold the space" for these kind of exchanges.

My Regrets and What I Can Do About Them

So often it is said, "Live this day as though it is your last" Indeed, it is important for us to live fully, so that we can look back and have few regrets. However, it is common for us to postpone living fully and pursuing our dreams, or rectifying a longstanding problem. Ask each member, If you died today, what regrets would you have? What can you do now to make sure that you don't look back and wish you'd done something different?

I've Got a Secret

Ask each member to get in touch with something that they haven't yet shared with the group, which would be difficult to share. Tell them that they are **not to share** this information during this exercise, but only to share 1) what they would feel if they revealed it, 2) what they believe others would feel or think, and 3) how it would change their relationships with the group members. Ask each person to say who, among the the group members, would be the most accepting of this "secret," and who would react the most negatively.

Revealing "Withholds"

Ask each member to share any feelings or thoughts about the other members, which they have been afraid to share. These "withholds" can be feelings of criticism, attraction, admiration, envy, etc. Have the group process this information before asking the recipient of this disclosure to reveal their feelings.

The Self Talk I Hear the Most

Most of us talk to ourselves in ways that remain private. This self-talk is often disparaging and judgmental. Have each person disclose the actual language that they use to talk to themselves. Explore the source of these messages, and whether they have any basis in fact. Have the group suggest other self-talk based on their appreciation and knowledge of the other person.

