

GROUP ROLE PLAY # 3

Resolving Group Conflict and Tension

Worker: Begin the session with an opening statement such as, “last week we talked about how we will be using the group and many of you wanted to be able to share your stories and get some support, who has something they would like to talk about?” As the members start sharing, you notice some tension among the members, try to pick up on the tensions and help them resolve their differences.

Zoe: You don't talk right away when the group leader starts the meeting. As you listen you start picking up on some of the themes. If you hear any themes that sound like partner blaming or intolerance start reacting to these themes. You are feeling pretty guilty lately because you have been starting to become attracted to new, potential partners. The partner blaming themes don't fit well with your guilt and you react strongly. Take a stand to protect the partners a little but as things unfold, be prepared to relax your position based on the group interaction.

Jamie: When the leader starts things off you don't talk right away. As you listen to some of the members you hear a theme of “partner hating”. This bothers you a lot. Especially mention of partners going around seeking support from others. You feel that they are lucky to have a person who loves so much to run around feeling wounded. If members start sharing this theme start reacting to it. Remember that this is also what you are doing (but you don't have this insight yet). Start with confronting others and defending people seeking support. Then let things resolve over time based on the group discussion.

Franky: You have continued to feel rejected by your family and are a little “pissed off” that your partner keeps going to your family for support. You both have family nearby and you would like to see your partner leave your family alone. You are starting to feel very alone and vulnerable. It is hard to manage living alone with nobody to talk to or help you out.

Devon: You have had a lousy week. Your mother is angry with you for leaving the marriage and you have very little patience with the people in your life. You can't understand why people just don't support your decisions and try to understand you. Your partner has been spending so much time with your family that you are afraid to call thinking that your partner is probably there. It feels as though you have no family or friends because everyone is taking care of your partner. You are so sick of the pity party and want some understanding.

Fran: Your partner has been drinking more and laying guilt trips on you. You are so sick of this crap and are tired of your partner interfering in your life. Your partner has also turned many of your old friends against you. Your partner tells them that you feel that you are better than them and that you are not giving a chance for the relationship to work. Some of these friends have called you to try to get you to reconsider leaving. You are tired of the interference and pity trips that your partner has been running. People don't seem to understand you and are taking your partner's stories as true. This really irritates you.

Teresa: You have not had a good week. Your mother-in-law has been phoning you and blaming you for “ruining her son's life”. She says that her son is devastated and is lonely since you left. You became upset because he didn't even make his own phone call. You see this as one more example of your partner whimpering out and not taking responsibility for himself. He gets to use pity and get all kinds of support but you have to put up with all this interference and get no support. You are sick of this!