CRITICAL GROUP WORK SKILL SETS

1. **Promoting Interaction.** The first core skill involves helping the group members engage with each other through ongoing and meaningful interaction. Members must be able to share with each other before groups can be productive. There are four skills involved in this skill set.
   a. **Soliciting Input.** Workers engage all of the members so each person provides their thoughts and perspectives about issues of concern.
   b. **Activating the Group**. Workers defer to the group members so they increasingly assume responsibility for the interaction.
   c. **Shaping Response Norms.** Workers help members find ways to share thoughts and ideas that encourage participation and respect.
   d. **Developing Openness**. Workers help the group members establish expectations that ensure openness, trust and safety in the group.

2. **Identifying elements on the "Shared Table".** When working with groups the number of relationships and interactions can at time be overwhelming. Workers observe interactions so they can identify important issues and shared concerns. There are four skills in this skill set.
   a. **Scanning**. Workers mentally sit-back and observe the interactions among the members tracking themes and responses to themes. When several members share similar thoughts, perspective or concerns, the worker makes mental note of important themes.
   b. **Process Illumination**. When interpersonal processes emerge during the group interaction (e.g., affiliation, agreement, disagreement, tension etc.) workers reflect on these processes so they become evident for the group members.
   c. **Identifying Themes**. When themes emerge that appear important for several group members, workers highlight these themes so the group can explore shared experiences and concerns.
   d. **Promoting Group Validation**. Workers engage group members in exploring shared processes and themes seeking to promote shared experiences and endorsements of important issues or concerns.

3. **Building Commonalities.** From the shared themes, workers engage group members in focused exploration so that multiple members can begin to identify shared concerns and common ground that will help to focus the group's work. There are four skills associated with this skill set.
   a. **Building Identification**. As themes are explored, workers solicit input and shared experiences from individual members to help each member identify with other peoples' concerns and perspectives.
   b. **Building Consensus**. As shared themes and concerns emerge, workers help group members to develop a shared understanding of the issues and the importance of the issues.
   c. **Building Cohesion**. During discussion and the development of shared concerns, workers help the group members to develop a shared identity and sense that the group is valuable.
   d. **Promoting Mutuality**. Workers continually defer to the group allowing members to help each other rather than relying solely on the worker. Workers seek to link group members' skills and resources to issues so the group members help each other.

4. **Developing Shared Direction.** As commonalities emerge, workers help the group members to identify possible solutions or directions for action that will involve all members of the group working together. There are four skills inherent in this skill set.
   a. **Validating Shared Experience**. Workers reflect on the shared concerns and experiences of the group members validating both individual member stories and shared concerns among the members.
   b. **Building Common Purpose**. Workers desires inherent in the common themes and stories. Through reflecting on the individual wants and hopes, the workers can engage multiple members in identifying things that the members want to achieve.
   c. **Identifying Shared Vision**. As shared desired emerge, the worker helps members identify and ratify things that the group members want to achieve together.
   d. **Building Shared Motivation**. Workers help the group members identify personal reasons and shared benefits associated with achieving group goals. These reasons and benefits are highlighted to help members maintain their motivation for action.

5. **Activating Group Capacities.** As a shared vision emerges among the group members, the worker helps the members identify ways that they can use each other to accomplish their goals.
   a. **Developing Democratic Processes**. Workers help members make their own decisions about what is important to achieve and how the group might best approach situations or concerns. As the group makes these decisions, the worker helps clarify and disencumber the group efforts.
   b. **Task Clarification**. The worker explores situations helping the members to identify what needs to occur to accomplish the group goals. The tasks, needs and possible roadblocks are highlighted so the group members can identify how to best approach situations.
   c. **Capacity Identification**. When group members approach challenges, the worker helps them to identify their capacities and resources that can be applied to the group situation.
   d. **Developing Action Capacity**. The worker helps the members apply their capacities toward the group goals by exploring the needs of situations and challenging the members to respond.

6. **Monitoring Collective Processes.** The worker must continually scan the group progress comparing it to group goals and healthy group dynamics. The worker intervenes at the group level to ensure that the group continues for function well. There are four core skills in this skill set.
   a. **Tracking Group Progress**. Workers understand group dynamics and development. As the group responds to situations and challenges, the worker monitors the dynamics to ensure that group processes develop appropriately rather than interfere with group effectiveness.
   b. **Tracking Task Progress**. Concurrent with monitoring the group dynamics, workers pay attention to group progress toward their goals. If the group is progressing, the worker allows the members to continue with relative autonomy, when progress is not evident the worker highlights the lack of progress so the group members can address concerns.
   c. **Adjusting Group Work Processes.** When group processes interfere with group accomplishment, the worker highlights the processes and challenges members so they can alter their approaches to the situation.
   d. **Finalizing the Work.** As the group accomplishes the goal, or it is evident that the goal will never be accomplished, the worker helps the group to end their work and make sense of their shared time together.