USE AND MISUSE OF ACTIVITIES IN GROUPS

Workers must be careful in using activities as they can be harmful to the members and program if they are not well thought through. The worker, as a professional, must be sure that they know what they are trying to achieve and that the activity is appropriate for the group. This involves clear knowledge of group dynamics, purposive action and how to tailor the activities for the group. This sheet contains some areas to consider in planning group activities.

FIVE BASIC USES OF ACTIVITIES AND EXERCISES:
1. Influence the group process (e.g., focusing attention, providing information, addressing issues).
2. Influencing group affect.
3. Influencing group thinking or beliefs.
4. Influencing member behaviors and skills.
5. Influencing interactions or interactive skills.

DECISION TREE:
This tree is a series of decisions and thoughts that one should go through before implementing any activity.

Before beginning to structure the activity:
1. How will the activity further the group purpose?
2. Are there more natural or empowered methods for achieving the same outcomes?
3. What exactly is the activity going to achieve?
4. Is the activity powerful enough to meet the goals or is this window dressing?

Choosing the activities:
1. What level of activity
2. Match with abilities of members
3. What resources are needed - cost/benefit
4. Level of abstraction
5. Realistic time frames
6. Response of the members

Thinking through the Activity:
1. How will you tailor the activities to the specific group members and the needs of the group?
2. Try to provide comparable choices of activities so members can discuss and select which activity to use.
3. Think though how you will engage members during implementation.
4. How will the activity proceed from beginning to end?
5. How much debriefing or integration will be necessary?
6. Given the population, what might be the problems arising out of this activity in the setting or in the home situation?