

IPG Group Goals & Agreement

Each group member agrees to:

Group Goals:

- 1. Put thoughts and feelings into words as you become aware of them, or explore the reluctance to doing so – *particularly your thoughts and feelings towards other people in the room***
- 2. Stay focused as much as possible on what's happening in the room, in the moment**
- 3. Actively work on the goals you set for yourself in the Group Application**
- 4. Tell the emotionally significant story of your life, gradually over time**

Group Agreement:

1. Confidentiality: Everything that people reveal in group stays in group
2. There is no action in group. Feelings and impulses are put into *words* rather than action, especially thoughts and feelings towards other group members
3. Social and professional contact outside of group is welcomed; however, thoughts and feelings originating within the group process are *only* discussed within the group, not elsewhere. Further, emotionally significant outside interactions with other group members are brought back into the group for discussion; no secrets are kept from the group as this undermines members' work
4. If members have pre-existing relationships, thoughts and feelings about those relationships are always open for discussion in the group. Thoughts and feelings about the relationships between *any* people in the group are welcome and important
5. Group starts and ends on time. If you are running late, please send a text (identifying yourself) to my cell phone so I can let the group know
6. Members pay for each group, whether they are present for the session or not. Members announce absences from group in advance whenever possible
7. Each member will, over time, take up a roughly equal amount of talking time and help others do the same
8. Departing members agree to abide by a common process for leaving group. That process is described below, and allows adequate time for a meaningful ending

Important Note:

Strong bonds develop in groups. A great deal of support is given and received, and members come to rely on and care about one another.

In addition, groups can also be very stimulating and can prompt strong feelings. As well as feeling supported and understood in the group, you can be sure there will be times when you feel frustrated, disappointed, hurt and/or unhappy. As in all enduring relationships, you can expect at

times to feel annoyed, hurt, misunderstood, angry, sad and more. These are universal feelings in groups, and in life.

When we feel these feelings in life, we often act on them instead of talking about them. For example, when hurt or angry we might shut down or withdraw from a relationship instead of talking about our feelings.

The purpose of group is to talk about feelings instead of acting on them. In group, feelings serve as a prompt for talking instead of a prompt for action. And by talking we work towards greater levels of understanding and connection.

Before entering group, it's important to make a commitment to that when uncomfortable feelings emerge (and they will), you will find a way to talk about them within the group. Talking about them may take time, but that's OK. Experiencing these feelings and talking about them is an indispensable part of the process, and is the foundation of the agreement members make with one another.

Leaving Group:

Saying goodbye is an inevitable part of life, and being in group gives us the opportunity to experience endings in a way that leads to a sense of closure, inner integrity, and mutual appreciation.

The desire to bring relationships to a finish stirs up complex feelings in all of us. In day-to-day life, we rarely have time or space to pay close attention to these feelings, let alone talk about them.

Because of the importance of endings, members of the group must agree ahead of time to the following two-step process:

- 1) When you find yourself thinking seriously about leaving group, you agree to let the group know *before you make a final decision***

Specifically, when you find yourself seriously thinking about leaving group, you agree to spend at least two sessions talking about those thoughts and feelings before deciding whether or not it is the right time for you to leave

The first step of this process (above) allows members to reflect on their reasons for ending, as well as their feelings about ending. It also gives other remaining members a chance to share their own thoughts & feelings, and to prepare for the potential departure.

If after two sessions of discussing your potential departure, you decide that it's indeed the right time to leave the group, you agree to:

- 2) Give the group a specific ending date, and attend at least two (2) more full sessions before departing, in order to talk about the effect of the good-bye on yourself and others**

Individual Consultations:

Members who want additional support and/or coaching involving their experiences in group may request up to one reduced-fee individual consult with me per month. These “consults” are 30 minutes long and focus on supporting you in the work you’re doing in group.

BY SIGNING BELOW, YOU AGREE TO HONOR THE AGREEMENT ABOVE:

Group Member Name (Print)

Date

Signature

Date