

## **SECTION 2**

### **GROUP FACILITATION**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The Dietary Modification (DM) Intervention is delivered to groups of 8-15 women by a WHI trained and certified Group Nutritionist. A variety of educational techniques are used to increase the participants' levels of interest and retention of skills and efficacy.

Most nutrition counselors have worked with groups as an educator or lecturer. Consequently, they have focused their experiences on how to present information and ideas. As a result, many group nutrition educators have perfected their presentation skills. However, presenting is only one part of the Group Nutritionist's responsibility. This section reviews some of the fundamentals of group facilitation and provides guidelines for the Group Nutritionist to use when leading her/his own groups.

## **2.1 Overview**

### **2.1.1 What is a Successful Group?**

A successful group is a gathering of three or more people who work independently but depend on each other to some degree as they try to reach a common goal. In a successful group, each participant needs to feel that she is able to affect the others to some degree. Often a person can make a change without helping others in the group. But groups can become successful groups if people work together, share ideas and support each other.

### **2.1.2 Who is an Effective Group Nutritionist?**

The effective Group Nutritionist is one who:

- Creates a comfortable setting.
- Has a positive attitude.
- Encourages each participant to share ideas.
- Builds on each participant's knowledge.
- Does not "lecture."
- Keeps goals in mind.

An effective Group Nutritionist allows the participants to "learn by doing." She/he introduces the topic to the group and then guides the discussion or activities concerning that topic. After discussion, the Group Nutritionist may summarize or may choose to let the participants summarize.

Women have a great deal of knowledge and experience about food and eating behaviors. It is important that the Group Nutritionist makes use of this expertise and experience whenever possible. In most cases, the participants' experiences will be more meaningful than examples from the Group Nutritionist. Note: It might be helpful to the Group Nutritionist to keep a notebook of participants' ideas and solutions.

When women actively participate in the group, everyone wins. The women win because they increase their self-esteem and are encouraged to continue participating. The Group Nutritionist wins because she/he has the opportunity to become better acquainted with the individuals in her/his group.

The Group Nutritionist's attitude shows from the start, so it is important to begin with a positive outlook. This means that you communicate expectations for successful dietary change from the beginning. Nothing is more obvious to participants than a reluctant Group Nutritionist. During any session it is easy to let your own negative or positive attitudes influence the discussion. However, the Group Nutritionist needs to remain neutral.

## 2.2 Communication Skills

Although many of the principles essential in individual counseling are also relevant to group counseling, groups present additional challenges. The Group Nutritionist must create a fine balance between accomplishment of the goal or task and the needs of individual group participants. She/he must also try to involve all group participants equally – encouraging those who are quiet and controlling those who dominate the conversation.

### 2.2.1 Developing Rapport

You can develop rapport with participants by responding to their feelings and needs. This is done through your verbal and non-verbal actions by which you communicate empathic understanding to people about their feelings. There are several principles to use when developing rapport:

Guidelines:

- Care and value each participant.
- View participants as capable.
- Express warmth and friendliness.
- Provide encouragement, support and appropriate challenges.
- Be willing to share yourself and your experiences with participants.

### 2.2.2 Listening and Attending in a Group

Listening and attending behavior lets a participant know that you are paying close attention to what she's saying so she is encouraged to continue. This is more difficult to do in a group because of the number of people who need attention.

Guidelines:

- **Be alert to non-verbal cues.** As you speak to the group, look around the room and make eye contact with several participants. This keeps them interested and gives you feedback. Their expressions indicate whether they've understood a concept. Maintain an open facial expression and body language.
- **Use small encouragements.** Turn toward the participant you are attending, lean forward in your chair, nod and smile. As you listen, use brief verbal statements such as "uh huh" or "yes" or three or four words that exactly repeat what the other person just said.
- **Ask probing, open-ended questions.** Ask questions that allow the participant to talk more. Typically these questions begin with words such as "What," "How," "Why" or "Could."
- **Paraphrase the statements.** Paraphrases are statements that feed back to the participant the spirit of what has just been said. They are brief and often clarify what has been said.
- **Read between the lines.** Sometime participants allude to an issue or mention in passing a problem they are having. You must be prepared to use your "third ear" and your experience with that participant to identify the true problem and verbalize it.
- **Use summary statements.** Summary statements feed back the details of what has been said over a longer period of time. This technique is similar to paraphrasing except that more material is covered when summarizing.
- **Note:** You may want to purposely give less attention to someone whose participation is not helping the group or who is participating too much.

You are attending successfully if:

- The participant continues talking.
- You get additional, useful information.
- Group participants don't have to compete for attention.
- Group participants feel that they are being understood.

Listening is an important communication skill and attending is a powerful reinforcer. Group participation is likely to increase when the Group Nutritionist is a good listener and attendee. However, if an individual is ignored, after a while she will give up trying to participate.

Group Nutritionists should not only use the attending skill to reward participation but also to gather information about a participant in order to understand her better.

### 2.2.3 Seeking and Giving Information

This process may seem easy but it presents a range of communication challenges. For example, with your group you may have participants who have:

- Different language patterns and styles.
- A range of listening skills.
- Different abilities to absorb and retain information.
- An unwillingness to disclose personal information.

Guidelines:

- **Use the group.** Before giving the facts, try to discover if one of the group participants has the information. This helps to increase groups' confidence in their group and in themselves. Remember that the best sources of information are the group participants themselves. However, the Group Nutritionist should provide the information when it is needed to keep the discussion moving.
- **Use simple, common language.** Ask only one question at a time, and wait for an answer. Listen and use attending skills. If you have a lot of information to give, give the most important piece first; it is more likely to be remembered.
- **Avoid closed-ended questions.** Close-ended questions can be answered with a yes or no. Unless you want a definite commitment to one point of view, avoid close-ended questions. Instead, use flexible, open-ended questions. For example, don't ask "Did you like the sample?" Instead, say "Describe the flavor and texture of the sample you tasted," or "What did you like about the sample?"
- **Provide reasons for seeking or giving information.** When seeking information, tell participants why you want information and how you plan to use it. When giving information, make sure it is necessary and useful.
- **Use a neutral tone of voice.** This technique encourages differing views. If your voice shows a bias, you may limit the amount of discussion by people with different opinions.

### 2.2.4 Focusing

Focusing calls attention to something that has been said or has happened within the group. Focusing helps to highlight or clarify information so that the group is more aware of a particular point. It also helps bring the discussion back on track.

Focusing is an effective skill to use if a useful contribution is overlooked by the group, or if the group "gets off track."

Guidelines:

- **First, see if group participants will focus themselves.** If it doesn't happen after a few minutes, look for an opening to politely (but firmly) call the group's attention to whatever you think needs to be highlighted.
- **Help the group if people are always going off topic.** Let the group agree to take up the new topic at once, or ask the group to discuss it later. However, remember that the group will go nowhere if it tries to address every passing interest.

### 2.2.5 Responding to Feelings

You can help participants express the central concerns they are experiencing by listening for and responding to feelings. Being alert and responding to the feeling being expressed rather than attending solely to the content is an important skill. What the participant is saying is the content portion of the message. The Group Nutritionist needs to also listen to the how the participant gives the message. For example, the participant may speak more quickly when communicating enthusiasm, more slowly when communicating discouragement, etc. It is this feeling portion of the communication to which the Group Nutritionist needs to pay attention.

Example of responding to feelings:

Participant: "I suppose if I eat out at Mary's house, I'll just bungle things again..."

Group Nutritionist: "You feel that it's pretty fruitless to try again."

You can respond to feelings in a group in three ways:

**Mentally note the feeling but make no response.** Do this if:

- It would embarrass the participant.
- There is a full agenda for the group.
- The feeling is too emotional and would throw the group off topic.
- The participants are uncomfortable with the feeling and are likely to withdraw from interaction.

**Give some sign of understanding, and then go on with the discussion.** Do this if:

- A participant's words or actions show that she is ready to share with the group.
- It's not possible to ignore the feelings without seeming uninterested.
- There seems to be a general mood of the group that you cannot put your finger on. They might be reacting to something you do not know about.
- The feelings are too strong to be overlooked but are not relevant to the focus of the group discussion.

**Stop the discussion and focus on the feeling.** Do this if:

- Discussion of the feeling would facilitate the group's progress.
- The group's progress would be stopped unless the issue is resolved.
- The group's objective involves the feelings of participants. For example: Helping participants develop ways to deal with uncomfortable social interactions when eating at someone's home.

### 2.2.6 Summarizing

Summarizing is the process of pulling together and briefly restating a number of responses to a discussion statement. After the summarization, ask the group participants if they think the summary statement was accurate.

#### When to summarize:

- You want everyone to start at the same point.
- There is confusion about an issue being discussed.
- There has been a lot of discussion, and you want the group to move on to the next step.
- A new subject is introduced before the old one has been settled.
- The meeting is ending and it is appropriate to draw everything together.

#### Guidelines:

- Be brief. Highlight the major points of the discussion and omit any nonessential information.
- Recognize participants. Identify participants with their contribution.
- Include only information discussed. Do not add any new information to the discussion.
- Seek agreement from the group. Include a statement that seeks agreement from the group.

It is usually better to ask the group participants to summarize. If the participants know ahead of time that they may be asked to summarize, they are more likely to listen.

## **2.3 Facilitation Skills**

The primary advantage of group activity for participants is the opportunity to interact with others who have common problems and solutions. The Group Nutritionist needs to manage these interactions so that they enhance rather than interfere with learning new behaviors. The Group Nutritionist must be able to use facilitation skills to "arrange learning experiences" and not merely impart information.

### **2.3.1 Guiding Activities**

As a Group Nutritionist, it is your responsibility to keep the group process moving. You must see that all the session objectives are met within the allotted time (90-120 minutes). Occasionally, special circumstances may arise that could prevent you from meeting all the session objectives (unexpected but relevant problems or successes, participant in the group who has been diagnosed with cancer or another serious illness, weather, etc.). If a segment of the session is not covered, it is better to arrange an additional group meeting to cover the missed material instead of trying to modify the next group session.

However, if you find that one or two participants steer the discussion off track, guide the group back to the topic by:

- Thanking the participant(s) for their input and redirecting the group to go to the next activity.
- Relating the participant's experience to the topic and then quickly moving on.

Guiding the group participants in this way encourages them to continue contributing to the group.

#### Standing vs. sitting:

Usually the person standing has the floor. So it is only logical that if the Group Nutritionist sits down the "floor is up for grabs." Sitting among participants or joining a small group makes the Group Nutritionist one of the group. It also helps to encourage discussion.

#### Use of silence:

Many new Group Nutritionists are afraid of silence. They feel that it shows weakness. However, silence can be an effective tool when used appropriately. Wait at least five seconds after you ask a question before you say anything. Be careful not to use it too often, or the effectiveness is lost with overuse.

### **2.3.2 Involving all Participants**

Once you are involved with a group, you quickly realize which women are eager to participate and which ones are withdrawn. It is easy to fall into the pattern of relying on the same participants time after time, but your job as Group Nutritionist is to involve everyone.

#### Techniques to encourage participation:

- When participants are working in small groups, ask that a different person act as the spokesperson each time.
- Use participant's names. This makes people feel more comfortable and more likely to offer comments.
- Ask a specific participant to respond. If she does not answer, quickly ask someone else in order to maintain a non-threatening atmosphere.
- Use a technique called a "whip." Go around the group asking all members to contribute an example or idea. A member who does not have an idea to contribute may "pass" so no one is put on the spot.

### 2.3.3 Gatekeeping

Gatekeeping is a skill you can use to get equal participation among all group participants. This technique attempts to limit those participants who monopolize the discussion and encourages silent participants to talk more.

#### Practice gatekeeping if:

- One or two people dominate the conversation.
- Some people have not contributed at all.
- There is little interaction among group participants, and most of the comments are directed to the Group Nutritionist.

You should coordinate the flow of discussion from the beginning in the first group session and continue throughout all the sessions.

#### Guidelines:

- At the first session, discuss the importance of group participation.
- Encourage each participant to be a gatekeeper, rather than relying on the Group Nutritionist to do it all the time.
- Always combine limitations to overtalkers with invitations to talk for undertalkers. For example:  
"That's a good point, Mary. What do some of the rest of you think about that?"  
(Pause. If no one responds, ask a participant who you know will not feel uncomfortable, "Joan, what do you think of Mary's idea?")
- Praise the contribution of the more quiet participants, especially if they are shy or uncertain.
- If one participant monopolizes the group completely, you may have to speak to her outside of class.

#### Cautions for gatekeeping:

- Try not to encourage remarks that are off the topic. However, if a remark is made by a participant who doesn't normally talk, encourage her participation and then try to relate her remark to the topic.
- Be wary of encouraging response only from the women you like, or the ones who agree with you.
- Similarly, don't discourage response from participants you may like less, or who do not agree with you.

### 2.3.4 Mediating

A Group Nutritionist may also need to be a mediator. This involves playing a neutral role between participants in a conflict in order to avoid or resolve a disagreement that keeps the group unproductive. There are some easy steps for mediating in a group session.

#### Guidelines:

- Listen to each side and paraphrase back for the group what each participant has said.
- Clarify the issues.
- Point out positive elements that will help each side feel good about being together (goals, old friendships, etc.).



- Discuss the options:
  - Search for more information to make a choice.
  - Seek a compromise position.
  - Ask for a vote.
  - Agree to put the issue on hold temporarily if you cannot reach a mutual agreement.
  - Agree to disagree.

If there is a decision in which one point of view "loses," pay attention to the response of the defeated participants. They may quit or withdraw from their normal level of group participation. If this happens, make an extra effort to re-involve them in the group's activities.

Encourage group participants to mediate and take responsibility for helping others reach a decision. Remember not to take sides or favor anyone in the decision.

### **2.3.5 Demonstration (Modeling)**

A demonstration is a carefully prepared presentation that shows how to perform an act, use a skill or behavior, or use a procedure. Modeling is a special type of demonstration that involves acting out a skill or a behavior.

Modeling occurs when a participant or Group Nutritionist in a group demonstrates a behavior or set of behaviors in such a way that another person can imitate it. It encourages participants to use skills they already have and learn new skills from others.

To set up a demonstration or modeling activity, the Group Nutritionist:

- Explains the purpose of the modeling activity.
- Tells participants in advance what details of the demonstration they should notice.
- Keeps the directions and explanations simple.
- Periodically checks during the demonstration to be sure that the participants understand each step.
- Involves participants in the demonstration, whenever possible.
- Uses vocabulary understood by all.
- Does not prolong demonstration. Example: cooking demonstration, all ingredients are pre-measured or chopped.
- Summarizes and briefly reviews the key points of the demonstration with the group, after the demonstration is completed.

The advantages of the demonstration (modeling) activity are:

- Creates a vivid impact on participants because it allows them to have first-hand contact with the topic.
- Helps to clarify concepts and make them come alive.
- Appeals to a variety of senses.

The disadvantages of the demonstration (modeling) activity are:

- Requires careful planning and rehearsal.
- Can be time-consuming.
- May require assembling equipment, supplies, and materials.
- Usually involves only a few people actively.
- Can be difficult for some participants to see and hear.

### **2.3.6 Role Playing/Simulation**

In a role play, participants assume defined roles and enact a situation toward a resolution, while others observe. The Group Nutritionist may stop the “action” at critical points for discussion of the actions, issues, and problems demonstrated by the participants.

Role playing serves primarily as an opportunity to rehearse or practice an interaction that is likely to arise in the near future. Role playing provides an opportunity to sample new roles in a playful, relatively risk-free environment. Participants can test themselves or experiment with different behaviors. Fears about new situations or trying new approaches are likely to be eased after practice in a simulated experience. Role playing is often used to follow up a group discussion at the point where people need to “learn by doing.”

Role playing may be done by a small group in front of everyone, or by all the participants in small groups around the room. Some participants may feel self-conscious or awkward about role playing in front of a group, and may even refuse to try the activity. They may feel this way because the activity requires them to try out a new way of responding, or they do not like to do something that seems closely related to acting or performing. Encourage participants to try the role playing, but if some refuse, do not force them into the activity.

To set up a role play, the Group Nutritionist introduces the situation (written descriptions may be helpful). If participants are supposed to work on the role play in groups, the groups are given time to discuss their plan and strategy. The groups should select the members to play roles. Individuals should not be forced to take roles. The Group Nutritionist then takes the following steps:

- Provide instructions to non-role playing participants concerning specific points they should observe.
- Set the scene and has the players act out the role play.
- Watch for:
  - Incidents where it would be important to determine the hidden thinking and feelings of players, for later discussion.
  - Verbal and/or non-verbal evidence of players unable to cope with the roles, so action may be stopped if necessary.
  - Repetitious interaction that does not progress towards resolution of conflict, so action may be stopped if necessary.
- End role play by some action congruent with the situation. For example, if the role play was being assertive in a restaurant, the Group Nutritionist could pretend to be the hostess interrupting the restaurant waiter for an urgent phone call.
- Ask the group members playing the roles to discuss the situation before the larger group.
- Ask the group members observing to report their reactions.
- Discuss the critical events, important issues, and solutions with the group.

- Summarize the discussion.

The advantages of the role play are:

- Enables participants to rehearse new behaviors safely in situations which may not otherwise be experienced.
- Facilitates in-depth exploration of feelings which situations may evoke.
- Gives feedback to players about their interactions.
- Improves skill in behaving effectively in interpersonal situations.
- Role play action can be stopped at any time.

The disadvantages of the role play are:

- The Group Nutritionist must be sensitive to role player's feelings.
- Printed instructions for role players are required for some role play exercises.
- Process can be time-consuming.
- Group Nutritionist needs to know when to stop the action and have discussion.
- Participants may feel embarrassed or reluctant to role play initially.

### **2.3.7 Group Discussion Methods**

The following methods can be used during group sessions to engage participants in the learning process and to facilitate learning experiences with small groups.

- Group discussion
- Pairs/triads
- Brainstorming
- Lecturette

#### Group Discussion

A group discussion is when the Group Nutritionist and the group participants cooperatively talk over a topic or a problem. The Group Nutritionist introduces the topic or problem and clearly states the purpose of the discussion.

To stimulate participation, the Group Nutritionist:

- Provides a supportive, non-threatening climate.
- Asks questions that provoke thought rather than emphasize facts.
- Avoids directing all questions to the group at large. Occasionally directs questions to non-participating group members.
- Redirects questions raised by one participant to other group participants. Example: "Can any of you help her out on this?"
- Involves all group members.

To keep discussion moving, the Group Nutritionist:

- Prevents needless repetition of discussion.
- Makes sure that the discussion points are clear to the group.
- Stays on the topic.
- Is accepting of participant's opinions.
- Periodically summarizes the main points as the discussion develops.

To bring closure to the discussion, the Group Nutritionist:

- Reviews and summarizes the discussion.
- Emphasizes the important points.

The advantages of the group discussion method are:

- Increases active involvement of participants in the learning process.
- Provides for informal expression of personal experiences and information.
- Involves creative thinking.
- Allows thinking aloud together to revise errors in judgment.

The disadvantages of the group discussion method are:

- Is not as effective with large groups as it is with small because not everyone may have a chance to participate.
- May allow a few participants to monopolize the conversation unless the Group Nutritionist encourages equal participation by all members.
- Tends to be more time consuming.
- May get off the track without good facilitation.

### Pairs and Triads

A pair/triad discussion is when two or three participants have a brief but intensive discussion on a topic, issue or problem. It is held among two or three participants without advance preparation and with a minimum of formality.

The Group Nutritionist briefly introduces the topic in general terms without indicating the desired conclusions.

- State the purpose of the pair/triad discussion. Example: "to identify challenges of eating away from home..." or "to list low-fat ways to prepare fish..."
- Set a time limit and give directions for breaking into groups (usually two to three per group).
- Have each group select a recorder who will write down conclusions from the group.
- Alert the groups two minutes before the end of the discussion period.
- Re-group into large group and lead a brief discussion on various conclusions.

The advantages of the pair/triad discussion method are:

- Increases awareness of issues and problems.

- Increases participant involvement.
- Focuses participants' attention on critical issues.
- Improves participants' ability to solve the problems they discuss.
- Allow participants to become acquainted and comfortable with other group members.
- It's easy to do.

The disadvantages of the pair/triad discussion method are:

- Quality of discussion may be superficial if participants lack relevant background.
- Reports from sub-groups may be repetitious if Group Nutritionist fails to limit duplication.
- May be difficult logistically with large groups.

### Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a technique that helps groups come up with innovative solutions to challenges.

The group participants and/or Group Nutritionist select a specific challenge that the group needs to solve. The brainstorming may be limited to a specific time frame or a specific number of solutions. To use the brainstorming technique, the Group Nutritionist takes the following steps:

- Makes sure all group members can define the challenge.
- States the rules: Judgments and evaluations are OUT! Lack of criticism is the key to successful brainstorming. The idea is to generate lots of ideas, not kill them. Even a “crazy” idea may lead to real progress.
- Allows the group members to list as many solutions as possible--the wilder, the better. Thinking out loud can help. One idea may trigger others.
- Encourages group members to “piggyback” on ideas of other group members. Once an idea is out, it belongs to the group. Anyone may expand on it.
- Records all ideas on a board or flip chart that everyone can see.
- Evaluates and organizes the list with the group when the brainstorming time is up. Avoids commenting on anything anyone says until the group has completed the brainstorming activity.

The advantages of the brainstorming method are:

- All group members participate.
- Creative ideas appear quickly.
- Ideas expressed by one group member may trigger solutions from others.
- Group members can build on each other's ideas.

The disadvantages of the brainstorming method are:

- Does not work well with groups larger than 15 members.
- Getting everyone to “play by the rules” may be difficult.
- Works best for groups whose members are of similar status.

### Lecturette

A lecturette is a short (5-10 minute) presentation by the Group Nutritionist or other individual to a group of listeners.

To use the brief lecturette activity, the Group Nutritionist:

- Explains the purpose of lecturette to the group.
- Has a clear introduction and summary which outline the major points of the lecturette.
- Motivates the group by relating the lecturette to challenges with which group members are familiar.
- Includes as many examples and illustrations as possible, related to group's age, interests, experiences, etc.
- Maintains informality.
- Makes eye contact with group.
- Uses support materials to provide needed detail, keep presentation interesting, and clarify or explain concepts.
- Encourages participants to ask questions at any time.
- Stops periodically to make sure participants understand information.
- Follows lecturette with a question and answer period.

The advantages of the lecturette method are:

- Conveys large amounts of information in a short period of time.
- Synthesizes and presents material in an orderly, logical fashion so that it can be more clearly understood by listeners.
- Provides information that is difficult for listeners to obtain on their own.
- Can be fully prepared ahead of time.

The disadvantages of the lecturette method are:

- May put learners in a passive role. Passive learners only remember 10-20% of what they hear.
- It is not adaptable to individual needs or interests.
- Does not guarantee that the listener will understand the contents.
- Can be boring if not well prepared.
- Does not take advantage of benefits of group process, such as promoting active involvement of participants in the learning process.

## **2.4 Handling Challenging Participants**

A Group Nutritionist may be confronted with a variety of difficult or challenging participants. Several types of problem behaviors are briefly described, along with suggested ways for handling these participants.

### **2.4.1 The Monopolizer**

The Group Nutritionist may encounter a participant who tries to monopolize the group session with her comments whether or not her comments are relevant. Constant attempts to be the star attraction can create group hostility towards the monopolizer. The Group Nutritionist may want to “let the group deal with this,” but the group participants may wait until they have exhausted their patience and then lash out in destructive anger (sometimes at the facilitator). Close observation of non-verbal behavior within the group reveals clues indicating when the Group Nutritionist should take corrective action. Be firm but inoffensive in requesting this participant to allow others to offer their views. For example: “I’m sure you have a great suggestion, Anita, but we haven’t heard Linda’s or Marjorie’s ideas yet.”

### **2.4.2 The Scapegoat**

Often a group singles out one or two participants as targets of criticism. Scapegoating is targeting one group participant who seems non-threatening. Stress, tension, guilt, and anxiety tend to rise as a group bonds. This increases the likelihood of scapegoating. By including a discussion of “ground rules” in the first group meeting, the Group Nutritionist may decrease the occurrence of this situation. The discussion focus should be on encouragement, constructive suggestions and positive reinforcement rather than negative criticism. The Group Nutritionist should remind group members that the goal is to help and support each other and not highlight problems of others.

When a potential situation occurs in later sessions, the Group Nutritionist can refer to the early discussion of “ground rules.” She can remind the group members that everyone will have problems or difficulties at some point and they might need help from other group members. The Group Nutritionist must support and protect the scapegoat while trying to understand the hostility and finding an alternate outlet for that hostility.

### **2.4.3 The Nontalker**

Some women in the group may not want to participate in group discussions or other group activities. It is possible that this type of behavior has been conditioned over many years. The Group Nutritionist needs to use gentle persuasion in a friendly, warm manner to encourage these participants to become involved in the group. Do not expect immediate success. Be sure to encourage them when they do contribute to the group, but do so in a way that does not single them out from the rest of the group. Try the technique of going around the room to get everyone’s opinion on something, or say, “We haven’t heard Carol’s opinion of this idea yet.”

The Group Nutritionist can also collect additional information about a participant by periodic review of food diaries and “listening” during group meetings. The Group Nutritionist may then use this information about successes relative to behavior, recipe modification ideas, etc. to get a quiet participant to open up and elaborate. Many are happy to share successes if asked.

### **2.4.4 The Hostile Person**

It is difficult to deal with an angry person in any interaction. When anger is expressed in a group setting it can be quite threatening, especially when the Group Nutritionist is the one under attack. Hostility between group participants is quite disruptive as well. Do not minimize the overwhelming emotions participants feel. When someone is in a towering rage, she should be acknowledged. Take time out to deal with this situation. There are several ways to deal with hostile behavior in participants.

Guidelines:

- Verbally acknowledge the person's feelings.
- Direct your responses to her concerns.
- Accept her feelings without making a value judgment.
- Listen carefully and refrain from arguing, giving advice, or venting personal feelings.
- Involve the other group participants in coming up with suggestions to help resolve the problem.

**2.4.5 The Crepehanger**

This person manages to find the negative side of any situation. She feels depressed and cannot imagine making any changes in her life. The Group Nutritionist needs to diffuse her complaints and anxieties so that other participants are not discouraged or annoyed by her pessimistic attitude. Be careful to show concern for her problem and offer suggestions for solutions to the problem. Other group participants soon identify the chronic depressant and take her complaints with a grain of salt. However, the Group Nutritionist needs to continue to show support and take her situation seriously but not allow her to misdirect the group session.

**2.4.6 The Digressor**

Many people tend to go off on tangents and become sidetracked from the main subject. If the Group Nutritionist feels that the point is relevant to the topic and important to discuss at that time, then do so briefly. But remember to go back to your main topic. If you feel that the point is irrelevant to the discussion at hand then say for example: "That's an important point that we can discuss later." If it is a personal question, the Group Nutritionist can always tell the digressor to please see her/him privately after the session. It is important to remember to encourage participants to ask relevant questions. Have the women write down their question(s) on a piece of paper, if questions pop into their minds during the session and there isn't an opportunity to discuss them.

**2.4.7 The Mythologist**

Many people believe misinformation, or "myths" about nutrition, health, illness, etc. Participants might bring up some of their myths in the group session, and some may insist on the truth of their belief, despite information to the contrary. For the WHI, these myths can fall into two types: myths that could harm the participant's or other group members' participation in WHI, and myths that are irrelevant to participation in WHI.

In the first case, the Group Nutritionist needs to correct any myths that participants voice in the group session. Use a phrase such as, "Many people think that..., but recent research indicates..." This will help the participant to avoid feeling embarrassed or ignorant. The Group Nutritionist should then try to draw the discussion back to the WHI. for example:

"Many people think that there are *safe* or *good* fats, but recent research indicates that large amounts of any fat can be harmful to health. That's why the WHI intervention focuses on total fat."

It is important for the Group Nutritionist to simply make her position clear for the rest of the group members to hear. If a participant insists on voicing a myth, the Group Nutritionist could request a meeting after class to better explain the truth.

For myths that are irrelevant to the WHI, the Group Nutritionist may correct the participant or may suggest that she contact a local resource or voluntary organization because new research has found something other than what she is relaying.



**2.4.8 The Multiple Problem Person**

Group Nutritionists may have group participants who display a combination of problem behaviors. You will need to use all of your energies to redirect the negative feelings of these participants. They can be especially disruptive if they are complainers with multiple dietary behavior problems. Be alert to these participants. You will need all of your group facilitation skills to keep such participants in check.

## **2.5 Peer-Led Groups (Recommended)**

### **2.5.1 Definition of Peer-Led Groups**

Peer-led groups are groups of WHI participants who continue to meet after the first year (18 sessions) of DM Intervention. The peer-led groups are held in addition to the quarterly maintenance sessions, which a Group Nutritionist leads. The purpose of peer-led groups is to provide women who want more frequent contact with an opportunity to meet with other participants, discuss a topic related to their dietary patterns, and review their study dietary goals if desired. A peer leader, chosen and trained by the Group Nutritionist, will coordinate each peer-led group.

Peer leaders will follow guidelines to assist them with coordinating the peer-led groups. Attendance by the participants is not mandatory. Women should be encouraged to attend if they feel that a group session will help them maintain their dietary goals or solve problems.

The proposed frequency for peer-led group meetings is once per month. This will give the women frequent contact, while not creating a burden on any participants. It is up to the peer-led group if they want to meet more frequently during the month. There is a regularly scheduled quarterly DM Intervention maintenance session.

### **2.5.2 Benefits of Peer-Led Groups**

These peer-led groups will help the WHI in at least three ways. First, they will take some of the burden of support and contact from the Group Nutritionist after the first year. The Group Nutritionist will conduct regular sessions with DM Intervention groups four times per year, as indicated in the Protocol. Between these regular sessions, participants can receive support and assistance from the peer leader and members of the peer-led group. Second, the peer-led groups are intended to promote self-direction and maintain interest. These qualities could lead to an increased ability of the participants to solve their own problems. Finally, regular contact has led to better maintenance of dietary change in other studies and should help in the WHI.

### **2.5.3 Identifying Peer Group Leaders**

#### **2.5.3.1 Qualities of Good Peer Leaders**

When you are looking for participants who might make potential peer-led group leaders, look for the following characteristics:

- **Person must want to be a helper.**

The leader must be willing to help others by leading the groups and helping others work through problems in their dietary plans.

- **Person must have enough time and attention to give.**

The leader must be able to attend all peer-led groups, and she must have access to a telephone and time available to coordinate the logistics of the groups.

- **Person must be able to talk easily about her own experiences (both successes and failures).**

The leader can acknowledge mistakes that she has made and recognize what she can offer others. The person who can't talk about her experiences is not yet ready to help others.

- **Person must have achieved a low-fat, high fruit/vegetable and grains eating pattern.**

The prospective leader has to have successfully achieved a low-fat, high fruit/vegetable and grain eating pattern according to the WHI guidelines.

- **Person should be willing to use the experience of other group members.**

When the leader doesn't have personal experience with the issue or challenge, she should be willing to let others in the group help lead the discussion.

- **Person must be empathetic, able to listen and to learn from other group members.**

A leader has to learn how to listen to people, and to distinguish the people who want to help from those who do not. By listening carefully, the volunteer can learn the variations that reveal the differences and can generalize from them.

### 2.5.3.2 Guidelines for Asking Potential Peer Leaders

The Group Nutritionist uses the criteria listed above to identify a participant(s) who might be a potential peer leader. She/he then uses the following suggested guidelines to ask the woman to become a peer leader:

- Describe the plan for peer-led groups in years 02 and beyond.
- Ask her to consider being a peer leader for a year. She can continue for longer, but a year's commitment will give some stability to the group.
- Review with the participant the skills needed to be a peer leader, as listed above.
- Set a time to discuss her decision.

### 2.5.4 Timelines for Forming Peer-Led Groups

<b>Timeline for Completion:</b>	<b>What to Do</b>
Sessions 14-16	Group Nutritionist begins to identify participants who would be potential peer leaders.
Session 16	Approach participants who are potential peer leaders.
Session 17	Introduce peer-led groups to WHI group members.
Sessions 17-18	Train peer leaders.
Session 18	WHI members sign up for a peer-led group.

### 2.5.5 Training of Peer Leaders

The training session for peer leaders should be scheduled some time before the first peer group meeting. The Group Nutritionist should allow 1-1/2 to 2 hours for training of peer leaders. Depending on the timing of group formation, the Group Nutritionist can train the peer leaders singly or in groups. A suggested peer leader training agenda is shown in the table below.

Topic	Time in Training	Vol. 4 Section(s)
Overview of peer-led groups (definition, benefits, leader qualities)	5 min.	2.5.1. - 2.5.3.
Group formation and membership	5 min.	2.5.6.
Peer leader support from CC	5 min.	2.5.7.
Responsibilities of peer leaders	20 min.	2.5.8.
Format of typical group session and membership	15 min.	Appendix 2A
Group facilitation skills	30 min.	Appendix 2B
Discussion and practice	as needed	_____

### 2.5.6 Forming Peer Groups

Initial group formation should consist of interested participants from one or more DM Intervention groups. If two or more DM Intervention groups are merged for quarterly intervention sessions, then the groups could be merged for peer-led groups as well. An optimal size for peer groups is between 6-12, with an average of 8. Once the groups are formed, they should be maintained if possible.

### 2.5.7 Peer Leader Support from CC

#### 2.5.7.1 Telephone Calls

Each Group Nutritionist calls the peer leader for the peer-led groups under their guidance. The schedule is once a month for the first six months, and quarterly after that. During these phone calls the Group Nutritionist discusses the following:

- Progress of groups, including attendance, topics, flow of discussion.
- Plans for future meetings.
- Any problems or concerns.

#### 2.5.7.2 Reimbursement

Each CC identifies any goods or activities for which it can provide reimbursement to peer leaders. This could include room rental, food purchases, stamps, stationary, etc. The Group Nutritionist and the peer leader should work out a budget prior to starting a peer group and provide clear methods of obtaining reimbursement.

## **2.5.8 Responsibilities of a Peer Leader**

### **2.5.8.1 Overview**

Coordinating a group of peers requires some organization outside of the group meeting, in addition to being a good group facilitator during the meeting. The peer leader needs to help members communicate, set up the logistics of the meetings and schedule an occasional speaker if appropriate. These activities require some planning ahead, and we've included some suggestions to help.

### **2.5.8.2 Group Communication**

At Session 18, the last group session of the initial year, the peer leader will pass around a sheet labeled "Peer Group Sign Up Sheet." Interested participants will sign up on this sheet to get involved in the peer-led groups. The peer leader will make copies of this sheet to help the group members communicate with each other.

### **2.5.8.3 Scheduling a Peer-Led Group Meeting**

The peer leader, with the Group Nutritionist's help, schedules the first peer-led group meeting at Session 18. Pick an arbitrary place for the first meeting such as a library, someone's home, a restaurant, or a local organization. The peer leader can choose a time that is convenient for all participants. The regular group time is a good place to start. All group members should reach a consensus on where to meet. Issues of cost, distance, transportation, and ease of location should be considered when deciding on a location.

After the first peer group meeting, the group members may choose a different location or time, if there is a consensus within the group. The group should try and make sure that any changes do not exclude participants who want to attend peer-led group meetings.

### **2.5.8.4 Reminder Contacts**

The peer leader might want to call all of the participants in the peer-led group to remind them of the meeting. After the first time, the peer leader can ask group members to help her to do this. The peer leader can set up a formal telephone tree to have group members call each other. An example is included in *Vol. 4, Appendix 2A - Outline For a Typical Group Meeting*.

### **2.5.8.5 Scheduling An Outside Speaker**

If the group identifies an outside speaker they want to invite, this person needs to be scheduled at least two weeks, and preferably four weeks, before the peer group meeting. See *Vol. 4, Appendix 2A - Outline For a Typical Group Meeting* for how to identify speakers.

Some speakers may request an honorarium (payment) for coming to speak to a group. You should consult your CC for the clinic's policy on honorariums. You might want to send the speaker a thank you note after the meeting.

### **2.5.8.6 Choosing A Topic**

Each group meeting should have a topic. These topics will often relate to the DM Intervention sessions, so use the materials already covered in any of the previous DM Intervention sessions. There are at least three ways that topics can be chosen:

- A nutrition-related issue or concern that the peer group members identify.
- An issue or concern from the list in *Vol. 4, Appendix 2A - Outline For a Typical Group Meeting*.
- A speaker who will present a nutrition-related point of view, then become involved in a discussion.

- Do not schedule any sales-related events (e.g., Tupperware or Mary Kay). This type of event may not be acceptable to all women.

#### **2.5.8.7 Recording Attendance (Required)**

The peer leader provides the following information to the Group Nutritionist after each DM Intervention peer group meeting:

- Date of meeting.
- Names of each participant who attended the meeting.

After receiving peer group meeting attendance information from the peer leader, the Group Nutritionist records the attendance data on *Form 66 - DM Intervention Peer Group Meeting*. See *Vol. 3 - Forms* and *Vol. 5 - Data System, Section 8 - DM Intervention Group Data System* (to be added).

#### **2.5.9 Format for Typical Group Meeting**

See *Vol. 4, Appendix 2A - Outline For a Typical Group Meeting*. The Group Nutritionist should make copies for peer-led group leaders prior to the training session.

#### **2.5.9.10 Group Facilitation Skills for Peer Leaders**

See *Vol. 4, Appendix 2B - Peer-Led Group Leader Group Facilitation*. The Group Nutritionist should make copies for peer-led group leaders prior to the training session.

## Section 2 Group Facilitation

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## **APPENDIX 2A**

### **OUTLINE FOR A TYPICAL GROUP MEETING**

Total time: 1 hour

Welcome activity and attendance	10 minutes
Group discussion or speaker	30 minutes
Food tasting/socializing	15 minutes
Closure and scheduling next meeting	5 minutes

## DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

### Welcome and Attendance

Welcome everyone and let the group members introduce themselves, if this is the first group meeting, or if there are new group members. Create a warm, friendly atmosphere by asking each person in the group to share something that happened to them during the previous month.

Pass around an attendance sheet (sample on 2A-7) and have all group members sign it. Keep an attendance sheet at each meeting and give them to your Group Nutritionist at the regularly scheduled quarterly group session. Ask the women if they would like to record their fat, fruit/vegetable and grain scores as well on the attendance sheet.

### Group Discussion or Speaker

#### 1. Get the group going

Group Discussion: If the group has selected a topic that they want to discuss, state the issue and then begin group discussion. You can get group members to start talking by:

- Let everyone talk for 2-3 minutes on her opinion of the issue and then ask the group for its reaction.
- Break into pairs for one-to-one discussions (allow 20 minutes) and then return to the group to share what the ideas they have discussed.
- Ask more experienced group members to speak about solutions they have used to handle their challenges. This may help to give quieter group members some helpful ideas.

Speaker: Invite a speaker to talk for 15-20 minutes on a topic of concern to the group and then invite open discussion. If you schedule an outside speaker, have the speaker begin on time. Make sure there is time for discussion after the speaker is through.

## **2. Keep discussion going**

Try to relax and enjoy being part of the group. This helps other group members do the same thing. Don't run the group. You are like a hostess at a party. You need to make sure that everything is in order, everyone meets each other, and that you are around to help anyone who is shy. You are not the center of attention and you can't take charge of every detail.

Once the meeting is going, you can either sit back and let the group talk freely, or try to lead the group discussion and keep it on track. In any case, as group leader, you have the following responsibilities:

- Make sure each person who talks has time to explain her problem before the group offers suggestions.
- Encourage group members to give both positive and constructive comments. This offers participants new viewpoints and doesn't let the meeting turn into a gripe session.
- Encourage quieter people to take part in the discussion.
- Take part as a group member, share your problems and suggestions and ask the group for its ideas.
- Make sure that no one's request for help gets overlooked. Sometimes it's hard for people to ask for help, so they suggest their needs indirectly by saying something like, "Boy, I felt like eating the whole gallon of ice cream for lunch today." If no one in the group responds, try to call attention to their statement by commenting, "I think I heard Joan say that she had trouble avoiding high-fat sweets today."
- Try to keep the group on one subject.
- Help people deal with negative feelings. If people are angry or unhappy, they should be given a chance to talk about their feelings.
- Pull things together. Summarize the discussion at some point and ask the group for feedback.

## **Food Tasting and Socializing**

The purpose of the food tasting is to let group members sample new foods, modified traditional recipes and foods prepared with lower-fat cooking methods. Ask group members to share the responsibility of bringing a low-fat dish and/or one that emphasizes fruits, vegetables or grains. Consider having a sign-up sheet that would let group members take turns.

## **Close the Meeting**

Bring the meeting to a close at the arranged time. The group can set a time limit, but then it should be followed. To close, you can summarize the meeting or make a few remarks about the next meeting. Give the group a chance to comment or plan for their next group meeting.

If a regular quarterly group session is coming up, encourage group members to attend. Remind the members that the peer groups are not substitutes for attending regular Group Nutritionist-led group sessions.

## **DISCUSSION TOPIC IDEAS FOR PEER-LED GROUP MEETINGS**

These are suggested topics, there are many more that you may think of:

- Fast-food eating
- Understanding your supermarket
- Cooking for one or two people
- Eating alone
- How to get your husband or family to help
- Handling stress
- Feeding grandchildren
- How to stay motivated after two years
- Healthy working habits
- Handling the holidays
- Lower-fat restaurant ideas and hints
- Recipe modification ideas
- Healthy lower-fat snacks
- Lower-fat meatless meal ideas
- New low-fat food products

## OUTSIDE SPEAKERS

### Identifying Speakers

Guest speakers can add interest to group meetings, however, you need to plan ahead. Be sure to invite a speaker at least one month before your meeting. Most people who do public speaking have busy schedules.

The easiest way to identify an outside speaker is to invite someone you know. Your Group Nutritionist may also be able to give you a list of potential speakers. Many organizations have volunteers who are willing to speak to groups. Call these organizations and ask if they have a speaker's bureau or a list of volunteers willing to give talks. Some examples include:

- American Cancer Society
- American Heart Association
- American Red Cross
- The American Dietetic Association (state organization)
- AARP (American Association of Retired Persons)
- Local universities and community colleges
- Local hospitals

### Interviewing the Potential Speaker

Be sure to ask the organizational representative, or the potential speaker a few questions before you have them come to a group meeting.

- Ask what she/he will talk about.
- How long the talk will be.
- What the audience will learn.

Don't include sales or high-pressure kinds of presentations. Also, be aware of unfounded nutritional claims. If you are unsure, ask to see some literature and summaries of the research documentation for the product or activity. If you are in doubt, ask your Group Nutritionist or a health care professional. Remember, the things that seem "too good to be true" usually are.

Once you have identified a guest speaker, clearly communicate what you expect them to present – specific topic, time limit, and type of group they will be speaking to. Some speakers may expect to be paid, so be sure to make it clear to them that you cannot pay for their services. Remember to show your appreciation by writing a thank you note after the meeting.

SAMPLE

Peer Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of meeting: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

**GROUP SIGN-UP SHEET****SCORES (optional)**

	NAME	Fat	Fruit/Veg	Grain
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				

## **APPENDIX 2B**

# **PEER-LED GROUP LEADER GROUP FACILITATION**



## OVERVIEW

### What is a Successful Group?

A successful group is a group of people who work together, share ideas and support each other. The members work independently but they also depend on each other to some degree as they try to reach a common goal.

### Who is a Successful Group Leader?

A successful group leader is one who:

- Creates a comfortable setting.
- Gets the group to discuss ideas, but doesn't lecture.
- Uses the knowledge and experience of other people in the group.
- Gives other group members the feeling that they can be successful.

To create a comfortable setting, it is important for the group leader to be on good terms with the other people in the group. To do this, there are several principles you can use:

- Care about the group member.
- Consider each group member to be important.
- View group members as being capable.
- Express warmth and friendliness.
- Provide encouragement, support and appropriate challenges.
- Be willing to share yourself and your experiences with group members, without monopolizing the discussion.

## Communication Skills

It is important for the group leader to involve all group members as much as possible. The communication skills listed below will help a group leader encourage all group members to contribute equally during group discussions.

### 1. Listening to people

You can show people in your group that you are listening to them by using the following skills.

- **Use non-speaking (non-verbal) encouragement.**

As you speak to the group, look around the room and make eye contact with several group members. This will keep them interested and will give you feedback. Their expressions indicate whether they've understood an idea. Keep your expressions and your body language friendly and open (try to limit frowning and folding your arms in front of you).

- **Use brief encouragements.**

Use brief verbal statements such as “uh huh” or “yes” or three or four words that exactly repeat what the other person just said. Turn toward the person you are listening to, lean forward in your chair, nod, smile.

- **Ask open-ended questions.**

Ask questions that allow the participant to talk more. Typically these questions begin with words such as “What,” “How,” “Why” or “Could.” Close-ended questions can be answered with a “yes” or “no” and tend to shut down discussion.

- **Use summary statements.**

Occasionally take time to feed back the details of what group members have said about a topic. This helps to keep the group discussion on track.

### 2. Getting people to talk to each other

This may seem easy, but you have to deal with a range of different communication styles. People tend to:

- Use words differently.
- Have different listening skills.
- Have different abilities to absorb information.
- Sometimes be unwilling to talk about their own experiences.

To get people to talk and share ideas with each other, try using some of the following skills.

- **Use the group.**

Even if you, the group leader, know a lot about the subject you are talking about, first try to see if another group member has information or experiences they can share. This helps to increase group members' confidence and willingness to talk. However, if no one in the group has anything to share, go ahead and share your own experiences to keep the discussion moving.

- **Ask open-ended questions.**

These questions usually cannot be answered with a "yes" or "no" response. They get people talking. Open-ended questions usually start with the following words: "What," "How," "When," "Why," or "Where."

- **Use simple, common language.**

Ask only one question at a time and wait for an answer. Listen carefully.

- **Use a neutral tone of voice.**

If you don't agree with someone's idea, try to keep your tone of voice neutral. Otherwise, you may limit the amount of discussion by people who have ideas that are different from yours.

### **3. Getting everyone involved**

Once you begin your small group, you will quickly realize that some women are more eager to talk than others. It's easy to let the same people talk all the time, but it's your job as group leader to get everyone to talk.

- **Involving quiet group members**

Some women in the group may not want to take part in group discussions or other group activities. You may need to use gentle persuasion to get these women involved in the group. Be sure to encourage these people to contribute to the group, but not in a way that singles them out from the rest of the group. To get quiet people involved in the group discussion, try some of these ideas:

- Go around the group and get everyone's opinion on something, or say: "let's hear from someone new this time."
- When participants are working in small groups, ask a different person to be the spokesperson each time.
- Call each person by name. This makes people feel more comfortable and more likely to offer comments.
- Call on people. If they don't answer, call upon someone else so as to maintain a non-threatening atmosphere.

- Praise the contributions of the more quiet participants, especially if they are shy or uncertain.
- **Limiting overly talkative group members**

Sometimes a group member talks too much and other group members may become frustrated and angry. To limit the amount of talking of very talkative group members, try some of these ideas:

  - At the first group meeting, discuss the importance of everyone having a chance to share in the group discussion.
  - Encourage all group members to be involved in making sure that quieter members get a chance to talk. Don't expect the group leader to do it all the time.
  - Always encourage a quieter group member to talk when you are discouraging a more talkative group member. For example: "That's a good point, Mary. What do some of the rest of you think about that?" (Pause – then, if there are no takers, "Joan, how about you?")
  - If a very talkative person doesn't seem to change, after you have tried some of the ideas above, you may have to speak to her after the meeting.

#### 4. **Keeping people on track**

As the group leader, you need to keep the group discussion going. It is easy to slip off track during discussions, sometimes even necessary. However, if you find that a group member (or maybe even you!) are going off track, guide the group back to the topic by:

- Relating the person's experience to the subject being discussed and then quickly moving on, or
- Thanking the person for her comment and then directing the group to the next activity.

Guiding the group members in this way will encourage them to continue contributing to the group. If the group wants to talk about the new subject, you could take either of the following steps:

- Ask the group to schedule their new discussion for later, or
- Go ahead and let the group agree to talk about the new topic.

However, remember that the group will not go very far if it follows every passing interest.

## 5. Summarizing the group discussion

Summarizing is the process of pulling together and briefly repeating a number of the group's ideas in a short statement. Then asking the group members if they agree with your statement. It is usually better to have group members summarize. If members know ahead of time they may be asked to summarize they are more likely to listen.

You will want to summarize (or get another group member to do the summary) when:

- You want everyone to start or end at the same point.
- There is confusion about an issue being discussed.
- There has been a lot of discussion, and you want the group to move on to the next step.
- A new topic is introduced before the old one has been settled. Summarizing is used to determine if the group is ready to move on.
- The meeting is ending and it is appropriate to draw everything together.

To summarize the group discussion, try using some of the following ideas:

- Be brief; highlight the key discussion points.
- Give recognition to group members ideas.
- Do not add any new information.
- Include a statement that asks if the group agrees. For example, "Let me try pulling together what we have said so far, to see if I am hearing everyone correctly."

## 6. Dealing with feelings

Feelings or emotions will come up in a small group setting. The important thing is to realize this and be prepared to cope with them. You can respond to feelings in a group in three ways:

- **Make note of the feeling but make no response.**

Consider doing this if it would embarrass the person, or if the group is uncomfortable and is likely to withdraw from interaction.

- **Give some sign of understanding, and then go on with the discussion.**

Consider doing this if it's not possible to ignore the feelings without appearing disinterested, or if an individual is ready to share with the group.

- **Stop the discussion and focus on the feeling.**

Consider doing this if the group would benefit from discussing the issue and feelings, or if the group's progress would be stopped unless the issue is resolved.

## **7. Getting people to work with each other**

Sometimes people will not agree with each other and you have to play a neutral role between group members in order to get people to work together. When this situation occurs, try some of the following steps:

- Explain the issues.
- Listen to each side and reflect back for the group what each group member has said.
- Discuss positive elements that will help each side to feel good about being together (goals, old friendships, etc.).
- Discuss options:
  - Search for more information to make a choice.
  - Ask for a compromise position.
  - Agree to disagree.