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CURRICULA SAMPLE

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Empowerment and Identity on Social Media



**10-SESSION GIRLS CIRCLE
FACILITATOR ACTIVITY GUIDE**

For Ages 11 – 18

By Vicki Pitstick, Ph.D., Giovanna Taormina,
and Laura Cartwright

Written: 2019

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Session Two Theme: **FINDING MY MEDIA BALANCE**

Girls will begin to think further about their relationship to technology and social media in contrast with other types of activities in their lives apart from social media. Further, they will develop a “Media Plan” for themselves in an endeavor to balance media (screen time/technology) with non-media activities. Circle members will also participate in selecting a “challenge” for themselves whereby they will choose what type of non-media related activities they would like to engage in over the next several sessions to achieve that balance.

ACTIVITY:

- Screen Time Usage Discussion and Review
- Pros and Cons of Life in Virtual Communities
- Finding My Media Balance

MATERIALS:

- Challenge Cards
- My Media Plan for a Perfect Day Handout
- Session 2 Reflection Question Handout (*printed on back of “My Media Plan...” Handout*)

PURPOSE

- To review and discuss the past week’s usage reports on screen time (phone, social media, apps, etc.)
- To evaluate and explore finding a balance of media and non-media activities and choose a “challenge” activity unrelated to screen time
- To develop a personal “Media Plan” that is reflective of that balance

FACILITATOR PREPARATION

- 1 Make a copy of the “Challenge Cards” page and cut out each card. Make sure to also cut out the blank cards and have them available.
- 2 Make copies of the handout: *My Media Plan for a Perfect Day* – one for each Circle member. Copy two-sided so that the Reflection Questions are on the back of the handout.



Session Two



OPENING RITUAL

Do established opening ritual.



THEME INTRODUCTION

Introduce the theme of the week – *Finding My Media Balance*. Tell members that this session will focus on developing a media plan for themselves in addition to choosing a challenge that will balance their time between media and non-media activities.



CHECK-IN

- 1 Before beginning the check-in process, ask the girls how they are doing with the Circle agreements that they created together during the first session. Affirm anything that you have noticed going well!
- 2 Then, go around the Circle and have each girl “check-in” as to what is going on in her life.



ACTIVITY 1

Screen Time Usage Discussion and Review

- 1 Ask everyone to pull up their screen time app that shows their usage over the past week and have a brief discussion.
- 2 Go around the Circle and have everyone briefly answer the following questions:
 - What are you noticing about your usage report over the last week?
 - What surprised you or stood out in regard to your usage and time on certain platforms and apps?
 - Is there anything you might want to change, e.g. where might you like to spend more time or less time? If so, what would that be?



ACTIVITY 2

The Pros and Cons of Life in Virtual Communities

- 1 Ask the following questions to explore the benefits of interacting with technology. *Listen and reflect:*
 - What are the tech activities that people your age range enjoy the most? Why?
 - Which ones, in particular, do you enjoy the most?
 - Why do you enjoy them? Say more about the benefits and the reasons you like them.
 - Which ones are really important to keep in your life?
 - How much does “FOMO” (Fear Of Missing Out) affect the time you find yourself on your apps?
 - In what ways do they help you to stay and feel connected?

Summarize the benefits from the group as a whole.



Session Two

- 2 Next, discuss what youth might not enjoy about tech activities: Ask:
 - Which tech activities do you not enjoy?
 - What situations arise for girls that are problematic or negative?
 - What happens when someone uses too much technology?
 - How do you feel about your own use?
 - Do you ever feel “apart” or “disconnected” when using your phone? What about when not using your phone... do you ever feel “apart” or “disconnected” then?
 - Is there anything you would like to do less of in relation to your technology use? If so, what?
Summarize the downsides or have the group summarize what was said.

- 3 Explore non-media activities with the group. Say:
 - Let’s also look at some of the non-media related activities in our life and think about how each – media use and non-media use – can be balanced.
 - First, what do you consider to be “non-media” activities for your age group that don’t involve anything on your phone or computer?
Examples might include: Non-digital media (books, magazines, etc.), friends and/or family, outdoor activities, sports, alone time, hobbies/ personal interests, etc.
 - Which ones in particular do each of you personally enjoy?
 - What are the advantages of these types of activities?
 - How do you feel when you participate in these activities?
 - In what ways do they make you feel connected to others?
 - Are there any non-media activities you want to see happen more during your day? If so, what are they?
Summarize what the Circle members have shared.



ACTIVITY 3

Finding My Media Balance

- 1 Tell the girls that they are going to do an activity that will have them keep thinking about their media usage and finding balance.
- 2 Pass out the “My Media Plan for a Perfect Day” Handout to each member and review the handout with participants, but don’t have them fill it out yet.
- 3 Ask them to think about their usage over the past week and how that relates to finding their media balance.



Session Two

- 4 Tell the girls that you are going to invite them to pick one or more challenges for themselves in regard to finding their media balance.
- 5 Lay out the CHALLENGE CARDS face up. Leave blank cards showing also.
- 6 Ask the participants to think about ONE Challenge Card that they want to select to challenge themselves to achieve during the day or week. If any of the choices are not a fit, allow them to fill out a blank card with an activity of their own suggestion.
- 7 Then, have girls pair up with a partner and share why she chose that challenge card, what is important to her about it, and some of the ways she plans on achieving it.
- 8 Bring the group back together and allow about 15-20 minutes for each person, individually, to fill out their Social Media Plan and answer the questions on the back of the sheet.
- 9 When finished, ask them to sign the plan!



SHARING OF ACTIVITY

- 1 Go around the Circle and ask each person to share their plan.
- 2 Utilize the following questions to lead a discussion.
 - How much screen time did you put into your perfect day?
 - How much non-media usage did you put into your perfect day?
 - What was it like to fill in the time for your challenge card?
 - Why, particularly, is the challenge you chose important to you?
 - What are some of the barriers or obstacles that might get in your way?
 - What supports do you need to help you achieve it?
 - Which of you can share what you wrote about how you will feel if you achieve it?
 - How will your plan support you to feel healthy and balanced?
- 3 Tell the participants to keep their Media Plan for a Perfect Day, AND take a picture of it, sign it, and place it in a place where they can see it daily. Ask them to bring it next week to share with the group about how it went, and that it will be okay to revise it after they see how the week has gone.



Session Two

4 Place the talking piece in the middle of the Circle. Ask the following question and go around the Circle and have each member share:

- **What is one feeling that you want to experience over the next week in regard to your technology use and what particularly will help you feel that way?**

***Optional:** Girls can also choose an “accountability partner” whereby they choose someone in the group who will support them reaching the goals in their plan. If so, they can take a picture of their plan and send it to their partner.*



CLOSING RITUAL

Bring the members together for their closing ritual.



Session Two Handout: CHALLENGE CARDS

READ A BOOK, MAGAZINE OR LISTEN TO AN AUDIO BOOK	SPORTS OR ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES	OUTDOOR ACTIVITY
VISITING FRIENDS	VISITING FAMILY	ALONE TIME
YOGA	MEDITATION/ PRAYER	TIME ON PERSONAL HOBBY
TURN OFF PHONE FOR ____ HOURS BETWEEN ____ AND ____ !	DRAMA/ THEATER	DANCE
RE-CONNECTING OR REACHING OUT TO SOMEONE WHO YOU'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT	CALLING	HIKE
PLAY GAMES	COMMUNITY SERVICE	COOK A MEAL



Session Two Handout: CHALLENGE CARDS (CONT'D.)

WRITE A LETTER OR CARD TO SOMEONE	BICYCLE	GARDEN
ARTWORK	DECORATE SOMETHING.	WALK A PET
TAKE A NAP	TAKE A DAY'S BREAK FROM _____ APP OR PLATFORM	TAKE A WEEK'S BREAK FROM _____ APP OR PLATFORM
DON'T LOOK AT MY PHONE AT NIGHT AFTER _____ PM	(YOUR IDEA) _____ _____ _____	(YOUR IDEA) _____ _____ _____
(YOUR IDEA) _____ _____ _____	(YOUR IDEA) _____ _____ _____	(YOUR IDEA) _____ _____ _____



Session Two Handout: MY MEDIA PLAN FOR A PERFECT DAY

Directions: Think about which media and non-media choices help you feel healthy and balanced. Then, use the chart below to plan out your perfect day. For each choice, fill out the columns. You can include more than one activity in each row. Also, think about where you will fit in your “challenge” activity.

	WHAT? (Description of Activity)	WHEN? (Approximate time of day)	HOW MUCH? (# of minutes or hours)	DID I ACHIEVE THIS? (Yes, No, Somewhat)	HOW DO I FEEL? (Use emotion word)
MORNING	<i>Example: Go for a run</i>	<i>Example: 9am</i>	<i>Example: 45 mins</i>		
DAY	<i>Example: Check phone apps</i>	<i>Example: 10am</i>	<i>Example: 10 mins</i>		
AFTERNOON AND EVENING					
NIGHT					



Calm & Connected:

A Guide to Personalized Grounding
and Mental Health



**12-SESSION UNITY CIRCLE
FACILITATOR ACTIVITY GUIDE**

For Ages 11 – 18

By Shayla Benson

Edited by Beth Hossfeld, LMFT
and Moorea Dickason

Published: 2026

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Session Seven Theme: SEEING THE INNER WORLD (VISUAL-SPATIAL)

In this session, youth will express their emotions and inner experiences through visual art and symbolic imagery, and discover and practice how these methods can facilitate their emotional awareness, expression, and sense of well-being.

ACTIVITY

- “Inner Weather” Drawing (individual reflection)
- Emotion Collage (individual reflection)

MATERIALS

- All Standard Supplies*
- Inner Weather Drawing – Handout (one per participant)
- Magazines, printed photos, newspapers, printed words & quotes
- Scissors
- Glue sticks
- Card stock paper
- Audio speaker or technology and calm playlist for background music

PURPOSE

- To express emotions through color, shape, and imagery
- To explore the “inner world” using collage
- To engage in nonverbal methods for emotional reflection and creative self-expression
- To experience a calming, focused space that supports emotional processing through art

FACILITATOR PREPARATION

- 1 Read through the entire session for familiarity with the content and activities.
- 2 *Refer to Session 1 of activity guide for All Standard Supplies list.
- 3 Choose a Warm-Up Activity from the tabbed section of this guide.
- 4 Ensure that an emoji chart is printed and large enough (e.g. poster size) for participants to place stickers on. Display the emoji chart on a wall where everyone can see it.
- 5 Read through the questions in each Sharing of Activity and prepare to select 2-3 questions that best fit with your Circle and time frame.
- 6 Have all listed materials prepared before the session.
- 7 You might locate magazines and newspapers through neighbors, community centers, libraries, doctor or dentist offices, hair stylists and barber shops, and local stores.



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OPENING RITUAL

Open with your chosen ritual that marks the beginning of your Circle.



THEME INTRODUCTION

Introduce the theme for the week. Say:

- The theme of the week is “Seeing the Inner World (Visual-Spatial).”
- Today, we will use drawing, collage, and visualization to explore and express our emotions, inner experiences, and a sense of peace through creative visual art. No art experience or talent is required, whatsoever!



WARM-UP

Conduct your selected Warm-Up Activity from the tabbed section of this guide.



CHECK-IN

- 1 Have the talking piece, emoji chart on the wall, and dot stickers. Say:
 - We are going to begin our check-in using the emoji chart (point out the emoji chart on the wall).
 - On the chart, you will find various emojis with different emotions. Here are some circle dot stickers. Please select a sticker and place it on the chart based on how you are feeling in the Circle today. Which emoji shows how you are feeling today?
- 2 Give participants 2-3 dot stickers each and a couple minutes to place their stickers on the emoji chart.
- 3 When everyone is back in the Circle, ask:
 - Can I hear from a couple of volunteers on which emoji you selected?
 - Why did you choose that emoji?
(Allow space for volunteers to share more if they want.)
- 4 Pass the talking piece around the Circle and invite each Circle participant to “check-in” as to what is going on in their life. Invite them to share any thoughts or feelings that came up for them after the last session.
- 5 Thank the group for participating. Remind everyone that all feelings are okay and that it’s typical for our moods to change.



ACTIVITY 1

“Inner Weather” Drawing

Materials: Inner Weather Drawing – Handout (one per participant), pens or pencils, colored pencils, crayons, markers, audio speaker or technology and calm playlist for background music (optional)

- 1 Ask, by show of hands:
 - How many of you have found that sometimes it’s difficult to put feelings into words, at least for a while?



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- How many of you sometimes draw, doodle, use colors, images, or any other ways of making art to express feelings without words?
 - How many have felt calmer or had more clarity after doing some kind of creative visual activity?
- 2 Say:
 - Today we'll be using a nonverbal activity that requires NO artistic skill but is a way to express our current emotional state using color, shape, and visual imagery – without needing to explain it in words.
 - Sometimes, it's easier to express how we feel using colors, shapes, or symbols instead of words.
 - 3 Provide the Handout: Inner Weather Drawing, colored pencils, markers, crayons, etc.
 - 4 Explain the following activity to the group:
 - Take a look at the box on the handout. Please use the space inside the box to draw your “inner weather.” This can be whatever your emotional world feels like right now, today.
 - Is it stormy, foggy, clear, windy, or sunny? Is there thunder, rain, snow, hail, etc.?
 - There is no right or wrong way to draw the inner weather – you can draw what matches your feelings and mood.
 - 5 Encourage people to work on their handout individually. Let them work at their own pace.
 - 6 Optional: play calming instrumental music during the activity



SHARING OF ACTIVITY

- 1 Bring the group together for several debriefing questions, selecting the questions that fit best for your Circle and time frame. Invite volunteers to share their drawing and an emotion represented by a color or symbol.
- 2 Next, ask:
 - How was it drawing about your “inner weather” today?
 - What different emotions were expressed in our Circle?
 - How did having different colors, shapes or images help to show feelings?
 - What emotions did you express in your drawing?
 - What surprised you about your own or others' drawings?
 - What does your drawing say about what's going on inside of you today?
 - How can drawing or art help us take care of our mental health?



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ACTIVITY 2

Emotion Collage

Materials: Pens or pencils, magazines, printed photos, newspapers, printed words & quotes, scissors, glue sticks, colored pencils, crayons, markers, and card stock paper

- 1 Inform the group that in the next activity, they will utilize a creative outlet to explore their emotions, identity, goals, and sense of peace using visual imagery.
- 2 Say:
 - Sometimes pictures can say more than words. Today I invite you to create a collage that reflects how you're feeling, who you are, or what brings you peace.
 - There is no right way to do this – it's about choosing images that feel meaningful to you.
- 3 Provide magazines, printed photos, newspapers, printed words & quotes, scissors, glue sticks, colored pencils, crayons, markers, and card stock paper.
- 4 Encourage everyone to spread out and find their own workspace.
- 5 Ask the youth to browse the media and printed materials. They are free to cut or tear out and arrange images, words, or symbols on their card stock paper that reflect:
 - Their current emotions
 - Things that make them feel safe, calm, or inspired
 - Hopes, goals, or pieces of their identity
- 6 They can add their own drawings, words of affirmation, collage titles, etc.
- 7 Let them know the amount of time they will have for their collage-making.



SHARING OF ACTIVITY

- 1 Bring the group together for several debriefing questions, selecting the questions that fit best for your Circle and time frame. Invite volunteers to share their collage and/or one thing about it that expresses something about their emotions.
- 2 Next, ask:
 - How was it to create something with your hands that reflects something about your inner self?
 - What emotions did we have in common? How many ways were they expressed, for example, through colors, symbols, or images?
 - What was the theme or feeling behind your collage?



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- What's one image or word you chose to include that really stood out to you? Why?
 - What did you learn about yourself while making your collage?
 - How can using collage or artmaking be a way to care for your mental health?
- 3 Summarize the activities of the day, and the key points that Circle members shared, for example:
- Today we made visual art through drawing, collage, and imagery to explore and express inner emotions and inner experiences.
- 4 Application Question: Pass the talking piece around the Circle, and invite each member to answer the following question:
- **What is one art activity you will use over the next week to explore and express your feelings nonverbally?**

Note to Facilitator: Record responses from group members and check in with them at the next session.

- 5 Ask each person to put their initials on their handout. Collect their handouts. Let everyone know that their handout will be returned to them at the last session.



CLOSING RITUAL

Thank everyone for participating. Bring them together and close with your chosen ritual that marks the end of your Circle.

Evidence and research to support visual arts for youth mental health (e.g. Inner Weather Drawing, Emotion Collage): ^{1,2,3}

- 1 Applewhite, B., Delattre, B., Singh, I. et al. Creative arts-based interventions for the improvement of PTSD symptoms in young people: a meta-analysis with a focus on non-Western populations. *Nat. Mental Health* (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s44220-025-00543-y>
- 2 Carley, K. (2023, June 27). Study shows benefits of creativity for youth mental health. Public News Service. <https://www.publicnewsservice.org/2023-06-27/mental-health/study-shows-benefits-of-creativity-for-youth-mental-health/a85097-1>
- 3 Jean-Berluce, D. (2024). Creative expression and mental health. *Journal of Creativity*, 34(2), 100083. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joc.2024.100083>



Session 7 Handout – INNER WEATHER DRAWING

Prompt: What does my “inner weather” look like?

Instructions:

1. Use this space to draw your “inner weather” - whatever your emotional world feels like today.
2. Is it cloudy, sunny, stormy, foggy, raining, or something else?
3. Let your drawing reflect what’s going on inside you right now.

(Use the space below)



Growing Healthy, Going Strong



**10-SESSION COUNCIL FOR BOYS
AND YOUNG MEN FACILITATOR
ACTIVITY GUIDE**

For Ages 9 – 14

By Tanya Wiser, LCSW &
Lani Chow, Ph.D.

Edited by Beth Hossfeld, LMFT
& Giovanna Taormina

Written: 12/06, Revised 11/09, 03/23

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Session Six Theme: WHAT'S YOUR CHOICE? BOYS & THEIR EMOTIONS – PART I

...the silence is broken and replaced by a lively roar of communication...

– William Pollack

By working with boys to talk and communicate in ways that facilitate personal expression and self exploration, boys will be encouraged to see the world of emotions in more colorful and expressive terms than just the concrete – positive or negative, happy or mad. The activities in this unit build boys' skills in recognizing and expressing a broad range of emotions. Further, this unit invites boys to communicate about common emotional issues with one another, and to discuss their perceptions about expressing emotions with peers.

ACTIVITY: “Catch the Message”

MATERIALS: Large Blow Up or Hand Copy of “Feeling Chart” at the end of this unit, multiple squishy balls – one ball *per pair* of boys.

PURPOSE

- To encourage healthy self-expression
- To facilitate boys' verbal expression of emotion and opinion
- To provide boys with a listening challenge
- To promote empathy and understanding different perspectives

QUOTE FOR THE FACILITATOR: *“Giving boys the help and permission they need to be expressive is a major contribution to their emotional well-being. This is because being able to express emotions is the path to congruity – the degree of similarity between a person’s inner experience and outer behavior. Congruity helps us ‘feel at home’ with ourselves, providing reassurance that we are acting in accord with our deepest feelings and beliefs.”*

– Adam J. Cox, PhD, Boys of Few Words, p. 33

FACILITATOR PREPARATION

- 1 Choose a warm-up from the tabbed section of this guide.
- 2 Make a large copy of the “Feeling Chart” at the end of this unit and place in visible location.



Session Six



OPENING RITUAL

Open with your chosen ritual that marks the beginning of your council.



THEME INTRODUCTION

- Introduce the theme of the week – “Boys and Their Emotions.”
- Review The Council Agreements.



WARM-UP ACTIVITY

(Choose from tabbed section.) We suggest you choose a physically expressive activity from the options provided.



CHECK-IN

Using the talking piece, go around the council, and have each boy “check in” about whatever he would like or he can respond to the following:

- How do you know when it’s okay to express your feelings?
- Tell us about something you are proud of.



ACTIVITY

“Catch the Message”

- 1 Show the Feelings Chart poster to the council members. Tell the group that these words represent a range of normal human feelings – for boys, men, girls, women, everyone. Ask group members to call out various words on the chart and define any which may need clarification. Welcome the boys to add any feelings that they don’t see on the chart. Tell them that for the following activity, they can use the chart as a reference for some of the questions they’ll answer.
- 2 Tell the group that they will now have an activity in pairs. The object of their task is to answer questions to each other that you will pose, one question at a time, and to reflect back to each other the answer their partner gives. For each question, each boy in the pair will take turns answering the question with a sentence or two, then toss the ball to his partner. The partner will replay the first boy’s answer. He doesn’t have to memorize the answer, just get the message right. Then they will switch. They will be “catching the message” (the answer) from their partner, tossing the message back verbally that they heard their partner say, and then switching.
- 3 Show the boys what you mean. Ask for a volunteer and stand facing each other about 4-5ft. apart. Toss a ball to the volunteer, and ask him to answer the following question and then toss the ball back to you. Tell the group there is no “right” or “wrong” answer to these feelings, as feelings are a personal and normal experience, not an action.

Facilitator asks Question: “What is a feeling you have when you have worked hard on an assignment or project and have completed it?” Now facilitator tosses ball to boy.



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Volunteer Boy Responds: Catches the ball. (He may say, “I feel satisfied, cause I gave it my best.”) Now boy tosses ball back to facilitator.

Facilitator: Catches the ball. Reflect what the boy has said such as, “So you’ll feel satisfied knowing you did it and did it well!”

Now tell the group, “At this point, if your partner agrees that you’ve understood his message, then you switch. He listens now to your answer to the same question. Remember the person speaking is the one who holds the ball, so toss it back and forth according to who is speaking.”

- 4 Check for understanding.
- 5 Break the boys up into random pairs. Provide each pair with one squishy ball.
- 6 Have boys spread out, pairs facing each other, standing about 4-5ft. apart.
- 7 Begin asking the following questions, one by one, allowing boys time to think, then answer and reflect, then switch. About one minute per question is probably enough, but STOP after the first round to check for understanding about HOW the boys are doing the activity. Remind them they should first think of their answer, then one tells the other, the other reflects back; if he got the message right, then they switch who is listening and who is answering. Tell the boys, if your partner didn’t catch your message well enough, say it again and give him another chance to understand your answer. Keep the process moving.
- 8 After about half the questions have been answered, have boys say good bye to their partners and randomly get into new pairs for the remainder of the questions.

Catch the Message Questions:

- If you could choose any feeling to feel at least once every day, what would that be and why?
- If you could choose any feeling to have complete control over in yourself, what would it be?
- What is something that scared you when you were 6 or 7 years old but doesn’t scare you anymore?
- What is one characteristic or quality about your personality that you are proud of?
- What do you feel when you are about to give a presentation in class?
- Name five ways people express their enthusiasm.



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- How do you let people know they need to leave you alone?
- What do you feel when a friend moves away or changes schools?
- How do you feel when a friend invites you to join in a game or activity?
- When do you feel anger?
- Tell about a time you handled your anger in a decent way.
- Are there some feelings you can express more easily to boys than to girls? More to girls than to boys?



REFLECTION

Bring the boys back into council, either standing in a circle or sitting.

- What was it like to be asked these questions?
- How was it to answer them?
- How was it to reflect back to your partner his answers?
- How did it feel to have your answers reflected back to you?
- How similar or different were your answers?
- Were there questions you did not want to answer?
- What feelings are harder to express? Are there some feelings that are easier to express to girls than to guys? If so, why?
- Are there some feelings that are more okay than others for boys to have? Are there some feelings that boys are sometimes expected not to have? Why?
- Who decides what emotion is okay or not okay for someone to feel?

Pass the talking piece for this final question:

- *We've talked about many normal feelings that every boy has. Who is someone in your life that you would be willing to talk to when you are having some important feelings inside?*



CLOSING RITUAL

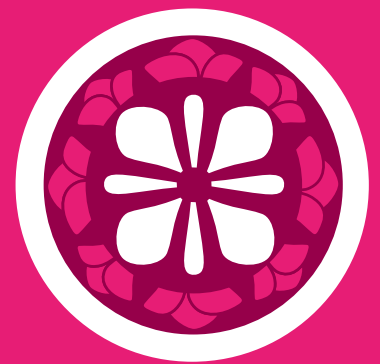
Thank everyone for their participation. Complete the session with your group's closing ritual.



Session Six

FEELINGS WORDS

Afraid	Alarmed	Terrified	Nervous
Angry	Offended	Furious	Annoyed
Confused	Upset	Embarrassed	Shy
Depressed	Guilty	Disappointed	Miserable
Happy	Lucky	Ecstatic	Thankful
Helpless	Alone	Useless	Frustrated
Hurt	Rejected	Injured	Silly
Sad	Relieved	Unhappy	Down
Tired	Exhausted	Loved	Bored
Satisfied	Restless	Excited	Proud
Impatient	Worried	Brave	Eager



Being a Well Woman

10-SESSION WOMEN'S CIRCLE® FACILITATOR ACTIVITY GUIDE

By Julie Humbel-Courtney, Jamie Lodermeier-Fay, & Vicki K. Pitstick
With Giovanna Taormina and Beth Hossfeld, LMFT, Edited by Shayla Benson

Written: 2011, Rev. 7/24



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Session Four Theme: **OCCUPATIONAL / VOCATIONAL WELLNESS**

Women will examine the “occupational wellness” dimension of the wellness model and discuss how that relates to their sense of success in academia, service, and/or the workplace. Activities will include having women define occupational wellness, envision an occupational dream, identify their strengths, talents, and supports and contemplate how their occupational goals are in alignment with their values, interests, and beliefs.

ACTIVITY

- Journal Reflection on Occupational Wellness
- Reach for the STARS – an Occupational Vision Activity
- Occupational Goals Activity
- Career Readiness Competencies Self Reflection
- Envelopes – one for each woman
- Letter to Self

MATERIALS

- Flip chart paper and markers
- Handouts for: Definition of Occupational Wellness, Career Readiness Competencies Self Reflection, and Competencies for a Career Ready Workforce
- Pastels
- Pens or pencils
- Stationary – a few sheets for each woman
- Envelopes – one for each woman
- Journals

PURPOSE

- To define the term “Occupational Wellness”
- To envision a dream occupation and to identify occupational goals that support the dream
- To identify women’s personal goals in life and develop a plan of action for success in regard to occupational wellness
- To help women self-reflect on their levels of career readiness

FACILITATOR PREPARATION

- 1 Have flip chart paper and pastels for each woman.
- 2 Make copies of the following handouts: “Definitions of Occupational Wellness,” “Career Readiness Competencies Self Reflection” and Competencies for a Career Ready Workforce found at <https://www.naceweb.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/2024/resources/nace-career-readiness-competencies-revised-apr-2024.pdf?> (naceweb.org) – one for each woman.
- 3 Write down the following goals on a large sheet of flip chart or butcher paper to be revealed later for Activity 3 – the Occupational Goals Activity:



Session Four Theme: **OCCUPATIONAL / VOCATIONAL WELLNESS**

- Graduate from college
 - Complete service commitment (Military, Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, etc.)
 - Complete technical or job training program
 - Pursue a passion
 - Apply my strengths, talents, and interests
 - Choose the right major/career for me
 - Peace of mind
 - Financial security
 - Community/world involvement
 - Travel
 - Fulfilling career
 - Creativity
 - Free time or flexibility with work hours
 - Material possessions (house, furnishings, car, etc.)
 - Own a business
 - Fame
 - Balance life between work, relationships, & family
- 4 Make a copy of the Take Home Activity – “Letter to Self” at the end of this unit and cut it into strips. Copy and cut enough instructions/questions for each woman.



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OPENING RITUAL

Do the same opening ritual each time.



THEME INTRODUCTION

Introduce the theme of the week – “Occupational/Vocational Wellness.”



CHECK-IN

- 1 Go around the Circle and have each woman “check-in” as to what is going on in her life.
- 2 In addition to the general check in, she can share one educational, vocational, or occupational success she has accomplished and one current educational, vocational, or occupational challenge she is facing.



ACTIVITY 1

Journal Reflection on Occupational Wellness

- 1 Ask the group:
 - What does “**occupational wellness**” mean for a woman?
 - Think about someone you know who reflects occupational wellness in her life. What factors stand out to you about her occupational wellness?
 - How many here feel that they have some sense of that occupational wellness now?

- 2 Distribute the “Definition of Occupational Wellness” which states:

“Occupational wellness is the ability to achieve a balance between work and leisure in a way that promotes health, a sense of personal satisfaction and is (for most people) financially rewarding. A person who is doing exactly what they want to do in life and is comfortable and content with their work and leisure plans is in a healthy state of occupational wellness. Our attitude and ability to effectively deal with work, school, and career goals greatly affect wellness, performance, interactions with others and overall success.”

Source: <https://spokane.wsu.edu/wellness/occupational-wellness/>

NOTE: If you are working with college students, you can explain that you are going to relate occupational wellness to their sense of academic wellness since, for many, their primary or current “job” is being a student.

- 3 State that the words they’ll hear now are one group’s definition, from Washington State University in Spokane. Have someone in the group read the occupational wellness definition aloud or have the women read it individually.
- 4 Once it has been read, ask the women to take out their journals and give them 5-7 minutes to record thoughts or reflections on what they just heard or read, perhaps including concepts or words that jumped out at them and reactions, and on the idea of occupational (or academic) wellness itself.



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ACTIVITY 2

Reach to the STARS – An Occupational Vision

- 1 Tell the group that they will have a chance to create or re-visit their occupational dreams, by “Reaching for the STARS.”
- 2 Share with the women that there are certain signs of occupational wellness we can think about, which are also on their occupational wellness definition handout. Read over these and tell them to keep them in mind as they do this activity.
- 3 Provide a sheet of flip chart paper and some pastels to each woman, and encourage them to find a place in the room to work individually.
- 4 Tell them that this activity will allow them to envision themselves doing work that they DREAM to do. For some women, they may have already discovered the career path and this exercise will allow them to dream more specifically within that arena. For others, the activity will tap more inspiration. There is no wrong or right way for visioning. Rather, they can follow their hearts and ideas as they proceed.
- 5 Inform the group that the expression “Reaching for the STARS” dares us to dream and envision bigger and farther than our minds sometimes let us travel. Tell them that today, we’ll take the limits off and take up the dare.
- 6 Tell the women that in this activity, “STARS” is an acronym for:
STRENGTHS
TALENTS
ACTION STEPS
ROLE MODELS
SUPPORTS
- 7 Ask the women to draw a big, wide circle on their flip chart paper. Next, invite them to create five equal segments inside the circle. Label each segment with one of the “STARS” aspects (Strengths, Talents, etc.)
- 8 Have the group take three minutes individually and silently to visualize doing work they love to do that incorporates their strengths, gifts, talents, and passions. Have them take 3 minutes NOW to simply sit silently to dream.
- 9 Next, ask the women to show a few symbols, drawings, words, images, etc., that relate to their dreams inside each segment of their STARS chart. For example, if a woman is passionate about singing and has strength in country music, her “Strengths” segment might include an image of an album and the words, “Song I wrote for Joey;” her “Action Steps” might consist of a note “Find back-up guitar player,” etc.



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- 10 For any who may feel stuck or cannot at this time imagine any dream work, suggest that they guess, make it up, or just pretend and go with that.
- 11 Suggest that the women complete the Action Steps *last*, since the most important part of dreaming is recognizing the desired experience.
- 12 Provide about 10 minutes for the women to complete the chart.



SHARING OF ACTIVITY

Go around the Circle and invite the women to share their STARS chart. Tell them that it's common for people to be shy or embarrassed to share their dreams and that the group is not here to judge, push, pressure, or discourage but to appreciate each other's dreams.



ACTIVITY 3

Occupational Goals Activity and Discussion

- 1 Tell the women that the group will focus on examining the personal goals they have for their lives when thinking about their dreams and occupational wellness.
- 2 Reveal the flip chart with the goals and tell the women to read all of the goals and then, keeping in mind their dreams, ask them if they would like to add any goals to the list.
- 3 Then tell the women to pick the top five goals that they would most like to achieve and write them down in their journals.
- 4 Next, have the women rank the five goals from number 1 to number 5 with one as the "most important" and five as the "least important."
- 5 Divide the women into dyads.
- 6 In their dyad pairs, ask the women to explore the following questions (you can write the questions on flip chart if desired). Give the women 15-20 minutes to discuss in their dyads:
 - What was it like to pick the top five goals related to your dreams and occupational wellness?
 - How are you working to achieve these goals right now?
 - Women face various obstacles that affect the development of occupational wellness. Some are internal, such as self-limiting beliefs, while others may be external, such as a lack of funds to pursue a certain type of education or lack of information or resources. What sorts of obstacles or barriers are in your way?
 - If you were able to look through the eyes of your future self that has achieved occupational wellness, how would the world look different?
 - What are some specific actions you could take right now that would help you get closer to your occupational dreams and goals?



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SHARING OF ACTIVITY

Go around the Circle and have the women share what they discovered in their dyads. Lead a discussion using some or all of the following questions:

- What did you discover about your occupational goals during that activity?
- How does your desired occupation reflect your values, interests, or sense of purpose? If your desired occupation does not reflect your values/interests, why do you think that is?
- How is your life enriched through your occupation, now and in the future?
- How do women support one another in achieving their dreams and goals in work and careers? What sort of supports do you provide to others?
- What kind of supports do you hope you will find from others along your journey?



ACTIVITY 4

Career Readiness Competencies Self Reflection

- 1 Explain to the women that the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) created 8 career ready competencies that employers would like every person to develop before entering the workforce. Career readiness is a foundation from which to demonstrate core competencies that broadly prepare people for success in the workplace and lifelong career management.
- 2 Tell the women you are going to give them copies of the Competencies for a Career Ready Workforce and Career Readiness Competencies Self Reflection handouts and they need to spend the next 25 – 30 minutes using these handouts to identify which competencies they feel they have mastered and which competencies they feel they still need to work on.
- 3 Bring the women back together after 25-30 minutes and ask the following questions:
 - Were you aware of these competencies before our circle today?
 - What do you think of them?
 - Which competencies do you feel you have done a good job developing?
 - Can anyone share an example of an experience you had that helped you develop a particular competency?
 - Which competencies do you feel you need to work on?
 - What ideas do you have about possible experiences that could help you further develop the ones you identified as needing to work on?



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TAKE HOME ACTIVITY

“Letter to Self”

- 1 Give each woman a few sheets of stationary and an envelope.
- 2 Inform them that the take home activity is for them to write a letter to themselves outlining some specific actions steps for achieving at least 3 of their top 5 occupational goals within the next 6 months.
- 3 Pass out the copies of the Take Home Activity instructions/questions for them to answer in their “Letter to Self.” Tell them they can use the questions as a guideline for their letters.
- 4 Upon completion, they can put the letter in the envelope, put their names on the front of the envelope and bring it to the next circle session. Ask them not to seal the envelope because you will be making a copy of each of their goal letters and will check in with them periodically throughout the circle in regard to their goals.



CLOSING RITUAL

Bring the women together for your closing ritual.

Definition of Occupational Wellness



“Occupational wellness is the ability to achieve a balance between work and leisure in a way that promotes health, a sense of personal satisfaction and is (for most people) financially rewarding. A person who is doing what they want to do in life and is comfortable and content with their work and leisure plans is in a healthy state of occupational wellness. Our attitude and ability to effectively deal with work, school, and career goals greatly affect wellness, performance, interactions with others and overall success.”

Signs of Occupational Wellness

- Engaging in motivating and interesting work
- Identifying and utilizing your strengths
- Feeling a sense of purpose within your life and career
- Setting healthy boundaries to balance work and leisure
- Communicating one’s needs to achieve balance
- Working independently and with others
- Feeling inspired and challenged at work
- Feeling good at the end of the day about the work your accomplished

Source: <https://spokane.wsu.edu/wellness/occupational-wellness/>; <https://altacenters.com/addiction-resources/occupational-wellness>



Career Readiness Competencies Self Reflection

Using the **Competencies for a Career-Ready Workforce Handouts**, read the definition and examples for each competency, and answer the following for each one.

Career & Self Development

Identify roles or experiences that you have had that have helped you develop this competency and what you did in that role or experience that relates to this competency.

Role	Examples

Circle which level of mastery you have reached for this competency:

1 – have more work to do 2 – making good progress 3 – fully mastered

What other roles or experiences do you plan to have to help you further develop and master this competency?

Communication

Identify roles or experiences that you have had that have helped you develop this competency and what you did in that role or experience that relates to this competency.

Role	Examples

Circle which level of mastery you have reached for this competency:

1 – have more work to do 2 – making good progress 3 – fully mastered

What other roles or experiences do you plan to have to help you further develop and master this competency?



Career Readiness Competencies Self Reflection

Critical Thinking

Identify roles or experiences that you have had that have helped you develop this competency and what you did in that role or experience that relates to this competency.

Role	Examples

Circle which level of mastery you have reached for this competency:

1 – have more work to do

2 – making good progress

3 – fully mastered

What other roles or experiences do you plan to have to help you further develop and master this competency?

Equity and Inclusion

Identify roles or experiences that you have had that have helped you develop this competency and what you did in that role or experience that relates to this competency.

Role	Examples

Circle which level of mastery you have reached for this competency:

1 – have more work to do

2 – making good progress

3 – fully mastered

What other roles or experiences do you plan to have to help you further develop and master this competency?



Career Readiness Competencies Self Reflection

Leadership

Identify roles or experiences that you have had that have helped you develop this competency and what you did in that role or experience that relates to this competency.

Role	Examples

Circle which level of mastery you have reached for this competency:

1 – have more work to do

2 – making good progress

3 – fully mastered

What other roles or experiences do you plan to have to help you further develop and master this competency?

Professionalism

Identify roles or experiences that you have had that have helped you develop this competency and what you did in that role or experience that relates to this competency.

Role	Examples

Circle which level of mastery you have reached for this competency:

1 – have more work to do

2 – making good progress

3 – fully mastered

What other roles or experiences do you plan to have to help you further develop and master this competency?



Career Readiness Competencies Self Reflection

Teamwork

Identify roles or experiences that you have had that have helped you develop this competency and what you did in that role or experience that relates to this competency.

Role	Examples

Circle which level of mastery you have reached for this competency:

1 – have more work to do 2 – making good progress 3 – fully mastered

What other roles or experiences do you plan to have to help you further develop and master this competency?

Technology

Identify roles or experiences that you have had that have helped you develop this competency and what you did in that role or experience that relates to this competency.

Role	Examples

Circle which level of mastery you have reached for this competency:

1 – have more work to do 2 – making good progress 3 – fully mastered

What other roles or experiences do you plan to have to help you further develop and master this competency?



Session Four Take Home Activity – “Letter to Self”

FACILITATOR DIRECTION: *This page has an instructional handout for two people. Make enough copies of this page to cut copies in half and provide one take-home activity instruction for each person.*

Session Four Take-Home Activity – “Letter to Self”

Using the stationery provided, write a letter to yourself outlining some specific actions steps for achieving at least 3 of your top 5 occupational goals within the next 6 months. You may use the following questions as a guideline for your letter:

- What 3 occupational goals would you like to focus on over the next 6 months regarding to improving your sense of occupational wellness?
- How will you accomplish these goals? What supports do you need? Where or who can you go to ask for this support? What specific actions will you take over the next 6 months?
- Research shows that when a goal is shared with at least one other person, the likelihood of achieving the goal is **significantly** increased. Who can you share these goals with? How will that person support you?
- How will achieving these goals affect your sense of overall wellness?

When complete, put your letter in the envelope, do NOT seal, and bring to the next Circle meeting.

Session Four Take-Home Activity – “Letter to Self”

Using the stationery provided, write a letter to yourself outlining some specific actions steps for achieving at least 3 of your top 5 occupational goals within the next 6 months. You may use the following questions as a guideline for your letter:

- What 3 occupational goals would you like to focus on over the next 6 months regarding to improving your sense of occupational wellness?
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- Research shows that when a goal is shared with at least one other person, the likelihood of achieving the goal is **significantly** increased. Who can you share these goals with? How will that person support you?
- How will achieving these goals affect your sense of overall wellness?

When complete, put your letter in the envelope, do NOT seal, and bring to the next Circle meeting.
