

Conducting the First Persuasion Group Session

- **Presenting the Rationale for the Group:**

Sample Script: “I’d like to welcome everybody to this meeting today and tell you what a pleasure it is to see you. My name is Jamal, and this is my co-leader, Samantha. We’d like to spend a few minutes talking with you about this group, and then to spend a few minutes getting to know each other.

“This group is for people who have had a mental illness and some problems related to using alcohol or drugs. The goal of the group is to provide a safe place for people to talk about their experiences with their mental illness and coping with it and about the effects of alcohol or drugs on their lives, including positive or negative effects. You might not think you’ve had one of these problems, and that’s okay. You were invited to participate in this group because your case manager or someone else on your treatment team thought it would be helpful to you. We’re not going to judge you, and we want you to have the freedom to truly speak your mind and to use this group to your own best advantage. Any comments or thoughts about the ideas behind this group?”

- **Introductions by Members:**

Sample Script: “Let’s introduce ourselves. I’m Jamal and I work as a Case Manager on the C Team. I’d like each person to introduce himself or herself and to give a brief explanation about how you came to this group. [Turns to the client on the left.] Shelby, do you mind starting this off?”

[Participants should not be pressed to give specific details about their life or circumstances if they prefer not to. Leaders should strive to make the group atmosphere as tolerant and accepting as possible]

- **Discussing Group Rules:**

Sample Script: “We’d like to spend a little time talking about guidelines for participating in this group. Guidelines can be helpful because they let everyone know what is expected of them and what they can expect from other people. One guideline that I like is that one person speaks at a time—no interrupting. That way, each person gets to say what’s important to him or her without worrying that someone is going to cut them off. Does anyone have any ideas of guidelines for the group that they would like to suggest?”

Example of Common Persuasion Group Rules [This is not part of the sample script]:

- One person speaks at a time
- No interruptions
- Come to group on time
- No name calling or put downs
- Respect personal differences
- Everyone who wants to speak gets a chance

- **Wrap-Up**

Leaders close with some observations about the group and remind participants of the date and time of the next group session. Final questions and comments are handled and the session ends

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