Group Proposal: Putting on Your Rose-Colored Glasses - Empowering Young Girls to Reframe Negative Thoughts into Positive Self Evaluations

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**Rationale for Group Proposal**

Middle school girls can be especially vulnerable to negative self-talk and unconscious thoughts as they develop their personal identity and feelings of self-worth based, in part, on the feedback they receive from peers and adults. Likewise, societal rules and expectations for how young women should look and behave reinforce ideals of perfectionism that are impossible to achieve. Consequently, adolescents and young women may develop feelings of inferiority. Persistent negative thoughts and negative self-talk can have adverse effects on academic and social success, self-worth and overall happiness.

The purpose of the proposed psychoeducation group is to help middle school females learn to identify and challenge negative unconscious thoughts about themselves and their peers. A group setting will allow members to share their experiences and practice skills to build supportive peer relationships. Furthermore, a group experience will provide opportunities for students to help each other challenge negative thoughts and reframe them into more realistic, positive affirmations.

**Group Type and Defense**

Studies have demonstrated that the way we think can have a powerful impact on how we feel emotionally, physically and how we behave (Alvord, 2017; Verplanken & Tangelder, 2011). One study found that automatic negative body image thinking accounts for body dissatisfaction, eating disturbances and low elf-esteem (Verplanken & Tangelder, 2011). Fortunately, these detrimental thought patterns can be changed so that they are more positive and realistic. One method of interrupting this thought pattern is through emotional accounting which refers to transforming negative thoughts or ideas into more positive ones (Kos, 2018). Emotional accounting allows students to change the way they evaluate their thoughts about a situation and consequently change the way they experience it. Group cognitive interventions can be powerful tools to prevent mental health issues for vulnerable children and adolescents later in life. Clarke et al., found that a brief, cognitive therapy prevention program reduces risk for depression among students who had parents with a history of depression (2001). This psychoeducation group for middle school females will help teach young women to reframe their negative thoughts in order to build a positive and empowering perception of their self.

**Group Format**

Group will meet 1 day per week for 30-minute sessions over the span of 4 weeks. In the first 3 weeks students will engage in a psychoeducation lesson at each session. The first session will focus on defining and identifying unconscious, negative thoughts. The second session will help students develop techniques to challenge negative thoughts and self-evaluations. The 3rd session will focus on understanding how negative thinking impacts student academic and social emotional well-being. Students will be given the opportunity to share how their negative thoughts impact their behavior and perceptions of self. The 4th and final session will focus on reframing thoughts from negative to positive, application of this skill in real life and closing group. Lesson plans for session 1, 2 and 4 are attached in the Appendix section of this proposal. Leaders will utilize cognitive-behavioral interventions such as emotional accounting to help members recognize, label, challenge and reframe their negative unconscious thoughts.

Potential difficulties when working with minors include maintaining confidentiality among group members, obtaining parental consent for participation and ensuring members maintain a safe, nonjudgmental space. Given the nature of group work, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed for members. Therefore, members need to be aware that although confidentiality is strongly encouraged, information shared in group might not be kept confidential. Because the group involves minors, leaders may need to obtain parental consent for participation in group. Since the group is structured so that members will be challenging one another’s thought processes, leaders will need to model appropriate methods for confrontation and ensure that each member is validated. Students will benefit from this group by developing skills to reframe negative thought processes and replace them with more realistic, positive perceptions of themselves and others.

**Proposal’s Objectives for Group**

Members of the psychoeducation group will be able to:

* Define and identify their own negative, unconscious thoughts.
* State at least 2 ways in which negative thinking impacts student academic and social success.
* Utilize techniques to challenge their negative unconscious thoughts and negative self-talk such as thought stopping and positive reframing.

**Composition of Group**

***Role of the Group Leader.***

The group leader will be responsible for facilitating group development, ensuring ground rules/norms are established and maintained, reminding members about confidentiality and evaluating member progress to accomplish group goals. Leaders will prepare and implement psychoeducation lessons utilizing cognitive strategies for reframing negative thoughts.

***Member Recruitment.***

Members for the group may be recruited by teacher, parent or counselor referral. Students who express interest in participating in the group may also be considered for membership.

***Selection and Credentials.***

Students selected for this group should be middle school aged, self-identified females who have a history of low self-esteem and other negative perceptions of self or others.

***Roles.***

Members will understand confidentiality, it’s limitations and will maintain confidentiality of the group. Members are encouraged to participate in group discussions and all activities prepared by the group leader however, no member will be forced to participate. Members will establish their group norms and guidelines during session 1 and will be responsible for upholding these norms at each session. Members will be responsible for completing take home assignments promptly and prior to each session. Completing a final evaluation to determine whether group goals were met and identify need for additional interventions.

**Evaluation**

The following questions should be administered for follow up after students complete group.

* Do you feel confident in your ability to identify when you are having a negative thought?
* Name at least 2 ways in which negative thinking has impacted your life.
* How confident do you feel in your ability to reframe negative thoughts into positive ones? *1 (not very) 2 (somewhat confident) 3 (very confident)*
* Did you find this group helpful? *Yes* or *No.*
* Would you recommend this group to a friend? *Yes* or *No.*

Works Cited

Belmont, J. (2016). *150 more group activities and tips.* Cracking the nuts and eliminating the ants. Retrieved from [www.belmontwellness.com](http://www.belmontwellness.com)

Clarke N. G. et al., (2001). A randomized trial of a group cognitive intervention for preventing depression in adolescent offspring of depressed parents. *American Medical Association.* Retrieved from <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapsychiatry/fullarticle/481868?resultClick=1>

Koz, B. (2018). Cognitive reframing – it’s not about what happens to you, but how you frame it. *Agite Lean Life*. Retrieved from <https://agileleanlife.com/cognitive-reframing/>

Verplanken B., & Tangelder Y. (2011). No body is perfect: The significance of habitual negative thinking about appearance for body dissatisfaction, eating disorder propensity, self-esteem and snacking. *Psychology and Health.*  Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/08870441003763246?scroll=top&needAccess=true>

Appendix

Small Group Lesson Plan #1

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| **Small Group Counseling Title/Theme:** Positive Thinking Strategies  **Session Title:** Cracking the Nuts & Eliminating the Ants **Session** #1  **Grade Level:** 6th-8th **Estimated time**: 30 Minutes  **Small Group Counseling Session Objective:**  Students will be able to demonstrate a positive attitude toward working and learning (M6) as well as self confidence in their ability to succeed (M2) in accordance with ASCA Mindset Behaviors. Students will be able to define and identify their negative unconscious thoughts ([ASCA Mindsets / Behaviors](https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/home/MindsetsBehaviors.pdf) ).  This session will help students develop Social/Emotional Development Competency #2. Lesson for this session will assist students in developing personal management and collaborative skills needed to become successful learners, responsible citizens and productive. Student indicators for 6-8th grade include: Articulate socially appropriate emotional reactions of the self and others in various settings; identities internal and external strengths and personal qualities ([Indiana School Counseling Competencies for Students](https://www.in.gov/dwd/files/Indiana_School_Counseling_Competencies_for_Students_FINAL.pdf)). |
| **Materials/Supplies Needed (include activity sheets and/ or supporting resources)**  Activity sheet: Cracking the NUTS and Eliminating the ANTS  Belmont, J. (2016). *150 more group activities and tips.* Cracking the nuts and eliminating the ants. Retrieved from: [www.belmontwellness.com](http://www.belmontwellness.com) |
| **Assessment Strategy (How will you show outcomes of your group counseling intervention? What data are you collecting?)**  Students will be able to define NUTS and ANTS acronyms and verbally identify at least 3 of their negative unconscious thoughts and 3 automatic negative thoughts. For a post test at the end of session, ask students to write down examples of 5 NUTS and 5 ANTS they experience and have students share 2-3 with group members. For additional assessment, have students continue to identify and record their NUTS and ANTS throughout the week. At next session, ask students how many negative thoughts they identified, and how many of these thoughts did they stop, “crack” or “step on?” Then group leaders could lead a session on ways to stop negative thoughts and reframe into those that are more realistic and positive. |
| **Preparation:**  Group leaders will need to prepare copies of Belmont’s (2016), “Cracking the NUTS and Eliminating the ANTS” handout. Furthermore, leaders should be prepared to provide a mini educational lesson explaining NUTS/ANTS, why it’s important to bring these thoughts into our awareness, and why they can be detrimental.  **Essential Question:**  Are students able to identify negative unhealthy thoughts?  **Engagement Question/Hook/Icebreaker:**  Ice breaker: Play Dough Personality. This is a reflective, quiet activity for small groups to encourage students to share a little information about themselves. |

**Procedures**

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| **School Counselor Procedures/Steps**  **1. Welcome students and explain the purpose of the group** (Stopping negative thoughts, positive thinking.).  **2. Explain limits of confidentiality,** mandated reporting and gain informed consent from students.  **3. Discuss group guidelines/rules** and as a group develop a shared Group Agreement that will be a used/referred to throughout each group.  **4. Ice breaker / Play Dough Personality**  I. Give each student a piece of play dough  II. instruct them to make something out of it that represents or describes some aspect of themselves.  III. After members are finished, have them present their creation to the group and tell about it.  IV. If you would like you can have them pair up and make another representation reflecting their partners personality.  **5. Counselor will provide information to define NUTS/ANTS.**  **6. Counselor will ask students to come up with examples**  **7. Closure/Summary:** Why stop negative thoughts?  **8. Group assignment / HW:** Ask students to continue to identify and record their negative thoughts throughout the week. At next session, ask students how many negative thoughts they identified, and how many of these thoughts did they stop. | **Student Involvement (anticipated/expected)**  **1.** Students listen and respond/ask clarifying questions.  2. Students complete informed consent document.  3. Students complete activity sheet for NUTS/ANTS  4. Students should be able to identify some of their own negative unconscious thoughts. |

Small Group Lesson Plan #2

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| **Small Group Counseling Title/Theme:** Positive Thinking Strategies  **Session Title:** Challenging Negative Thoughts  **Session** # **2**  **Grade Level:** 6th-8th **Estimated time**: 30 Minutes  **Small Group Counseling Session Objective:**  **Indiana School Counseling Competencies for Students:**  [**https://www.in.gov/dwd/files/Indiana\_School\_Counseling\_Competencies\_for\_Students\_FINAL.pdf**](https://www.in.gov/dwd/files/Indiana_School_Counseling_Competencies_for_Students_FINAL.pdf)  Students will meet criteria for developing Social/Emotional Development Competency #2. Lesson for this session will assist students in developing personal management and collaborative skills needed to become successful learners, responsible citizens and productive. Student indicators for 6-8th grade include: Articulate socially appropriate emotional reactions of the self and others in various settings; identities internal and external strengths and personal qualities.  ASCA Mindsets/Behaviors:  <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/home/MindsetsBehaviors.pdf>  Students will be able to demonstrate a positive attitude toward working and learning (M6) as well as self confidence in their ability to succeed (M2) in accordance with ASCA Mindset Behaviors. Students will be able to define and identify their negative unconscious thoughts. |
| **Materials/Supplies Needed (include activity sheets and/ or supporting resources)**  Activity sheet: Lesson 2 – Challenging Negative Thoughts |
| **Assessment Strategy:**  The primary assessment for the effectiveness of this lesson will be evaluation questions for group members to complete at the end of session. Group outcomes may also be assessed by reports from teachers and parents in which they evaluate students ability to challenge negative thought processes. For a pre/post assessment, ask students to record examples of negative unconscious thoughts and provide evidence for their thought and ask themselves why they are having that thought. |
| **Preparation:**  Group leaders will need to prepare copies of the “Lesson 2 – Challenging Negative Thoughts” worksheet. Leaders should be prepared to provide examples of negative thoughts as well as questions to challenge them.  **Essential Question:**  Are students able to challenge their own negative unconscious thoughts?  **Engagement Question/Hook/Icebreaker:**  High & Low: Ask each student to share a brief high and low for the week. |

**Procedures**

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| **School Counselor Procedures/Steps**  **1. Welcome students to the group.** Explain the purpose of the group.  **2. Gain informed consent from students**.  **3. Discuss group guidelines** and as a group develop a shared Group Agreement that will be a used/referred to throughout each group.  **4. Discuss/review Confidentiality**  **5. Ice breaker/engagement question.** Ask students to give a brief high and low for the week.  **6.** **Briefly review last session** give brief summary about NUTS/ANTS.  **7. Counselor will provide Lesson 2 sheet** and will work through the worksheet with students. Ask students to provide examples of negative thoughts and practice challenging them using questions provided in the sheet.  **8. Closure/Summary:** Why is it important to challenge our unhealthy thoughts?  **Group assignment:** Pick 2-3 questions you will use to challenge your own negative unconscious thoughts when they occur. Record at least one example of a negative thought and how you challenged it prior to next session. | **Student Involvement**  **1.** Students listen and respond/ask clarifying questions.  **2.** Students complete informed consent document.  **3.** Students review confidentiality  **4.** Students respond to engagement questions/activity  **5.** Students complete Lesson #2 worksheet.  **6.** Students should provide examples negative unconscious thoughts and practice challenging their own thoughts as well as the thoughts of their peers. |

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| **Follow-Up Activities**  Check-in with students to see which challenge questions they selected and how their new strategy is working for them. |

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| **Counselor reflection notes** (completed after the session)  *STUDENT LEARNING: How will students’ lives improve as a result of what happened during this session?*  *SELF EVALUATION: How did I do? What could I do differently to improve the lesson? What were the strengths of the lesson?*  *IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES: How did the session work?* |

Small Group Lesson Plan #4

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| **Small Group Counseling Title/Theme:** Positive Thinking Strategies  **Session Title:** Keeping it Positive **Session** # **4**  **Grade Level:** 6th-8th **Estimated time**: 30 Minutes  **Small Group Counseling Session Objective:**  **Indiana School Counseling Competencies for Students:**  [**https://www.in.gov/dwd/files/Indiana\_School\_Counseling\_Competencies\_for\_Students\_FINAL.pdf**](https://www.in.gov/dwd/files/Indiana_School_Counseling_Competencies_for_Students_FINAL.pdf)  Students will meet criteria for developing Social/Emotional Development Competency #2. Lesson for this session will assist students in developing personal management and collaborative skills needed to become successful learners, responsible citizens and productive. Student indicators for 6-8th grade include: Articulate socially appropriate emotional reactions of the self and others in various settings; identities internal and external strengths and personal qualities.  ASCA Mindsets/Behaviors:  <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/home/MindsetsBehaviors.pdf>  Students will be able to demonstrate a positive attitude toward working and learning (M6) as well as self confidence in their ability to succeed (M2) in accordance with ASCA Mindset Behaviors. Students will be able to define and identify their negative unconscious thoughts. |
| **Materials/Supplies Needed:**  Activity sheet: Keeping it Positive |
| **Assessment Strategy**  Student ability to reframe negative thoughts into positive ones will be assessed using Lesson 4 worksheet in which they will provide written examples of positive, realistic thoughts. Group outcomes may also be assessed by reports from teachers and parents in which they evaluate students ability to challenge and reframe negative thought processes. For a pre/post assessment, counselors can provide an example of a negative unconscious thought and ask students to record all of the possible ways the thought can be reframed. |
| **Preparation:**  Group leaders will need to prepare copies of the “Lesson 4 – Keeping it Positive” worksheet. Leaders should be prepared to provide examples of negative thoughts as well as positive reframes to model for group members.  **Essential Question:**  Can students reframe negative unconscious thoughts into more realistic and/or positive ones?  **Engagement Question/Hook/Icebreaker:**  Tall Tales – One person starts with “Once upon a time…” and tells a small portion of a story. When the group leader buzzes arbitrarily to decide that time is up, the next person must continue the story. |

**Procedures**

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| **School Counselor Procedures/Steps**  **1. Welcome students to the group.** Explain the purpose of the group.  **2. Gain informed consent from students**.  **3. Discuss group guidelines** and as a group develop a shared Group Agreement that will be a used/referred to throughout each group.  **4. Discuss/review Confidentiality**  **5. Ice breaker/engagement question.**  Implement Tall Tales ice breaker or similar alternative.  **6.** **Briefly review last session** give brief summary about how negative thinking impacts our lives and the ways in which students can challenge negative thought processes.  **7. Counselor will provide Lesson 4 sheet** and will work through the worksheet with students. Ask students to provide examples of reframing thoughts, have them discuss with one another and record examples on their paper.  **8. Closure/Summary:** How can we reframe negative thoughts? Why is this important? Ask students to provide 1 takeaway from the group experience.  **Group assignment:** Students will apply skills they learned in group to identify, challenge and reframe their negative unconscious thoughts. Students will complete follow-up evaluation administered by school counselor following the end of group. | **Student Involvement (anticipated/expected)**  **1.** Students listen and respond/ask clarifying questions.  2. Students complete informed consent document.  **3.** Students review confidentiality  **4.** Students respond to engagement questions/activity  **5.** Students complete Lesson #4 worksheet.  **6.** Students should practice reframing their own thoughts as well as the thoughts of their peers.  **7.** Students will provide feedback about group and verbally state one takeaway from their experience. |

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| **Follow-Up Activities:**  Administer evaluation to determine group progress and need for additional or continued intervention. |

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| **Counselor reflection notes** (completed after the session)  *STUDENT LEARNING: How will students’ lives improve as a result of what happened during this session?*  *SELF EVALUATION: How did I do? What could I do differently to improve the lesson? What were the strengths of the lesson?*  *IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES: How did the session work?* |

**Assessment Outcomes**:

After completing small group, student should be able to:

* Define and identify their own negative, unconscious thoughts.
* State at least 2 ways in which negative thinking impacts student academic and social success.
* Utilize techniques to challenge their negative unconscious thoughts and negative self-talk such as thought stopping and positive reframing.

Additional outcomes for students include a belief in their ability to succeed and improved perceptions of self.