

HIGHEST HOPES, DEEPEST FEARS

This exercise allows group members to express their hopes and fears to a partner who then relays the information to the group. In this way, each group member has meaningful one-on-one time with another member. Sharing feelings promotes a sense of trust and belonging while expressing the feelings of another promotes empathy.

OBJECTIVES

I. Behavioral

Members will

1. Identify hopes and fears in writing.
2. Interact spontaneously with other group members.
3. Practice empathic skills by listening to a partner.

II. Cognitive

Members will

1. Decrease sense of isolation by giving and receiving feedback with group members.
2. Increase empathy with another member by explaining a partner's worksheet.

MATERIALS

1. Copy of "Highest Hopes, Deepest Fears" worksheet (p. 46) for each member.
2. Ink pens or pencils.

METHOD

Group members work independently to identify on the worksheet (copies of p. 46) their highest hopes and deepest fears. After the leader determines that most members are finished, partners are assigned. Partners pair up and discuss their worksheets together. The group then reconvenes in a circle, and each member explains his or her partner's worksheet to the group. Feedback is encouraged.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Hand out xerographic copies of the worksheet and instruct members to think about their highest hopes and deepest fears. Tell the members to identify their hopes and fears on the worksheet by writing them out in the spaces provided.
2. After everyone is finished, divide the group into partners, either selected randomly or assigned carefully by design. For example, if Rhonda and Kim have been at odds lately, this might be a vehicle through which differences could be overcome. On the other hand, if you are fairly certain that Rhonda would use this exercise to expose and humiliate Kim, then the two should not be assigned together.
3. Instruct the couples to share their worksheets with one another, making sure they have a good understanding of what their partner means by the material written on his or her worksheet. Encourage partners to question and explore one another's work.

4. Call members back to the group circle. Then ask each member to share his or her partner's worksheet with the group. Encourage feedback from the group, although questions and comments should be directed to the presenter of the worksheet, not the author.
5. Explain that the author now has a chance to comment on how well the presenter understood him or her.
6. Call on the next member, in round-robin fashion.

CONCLUSION

Conclude the session with some comments about the following:

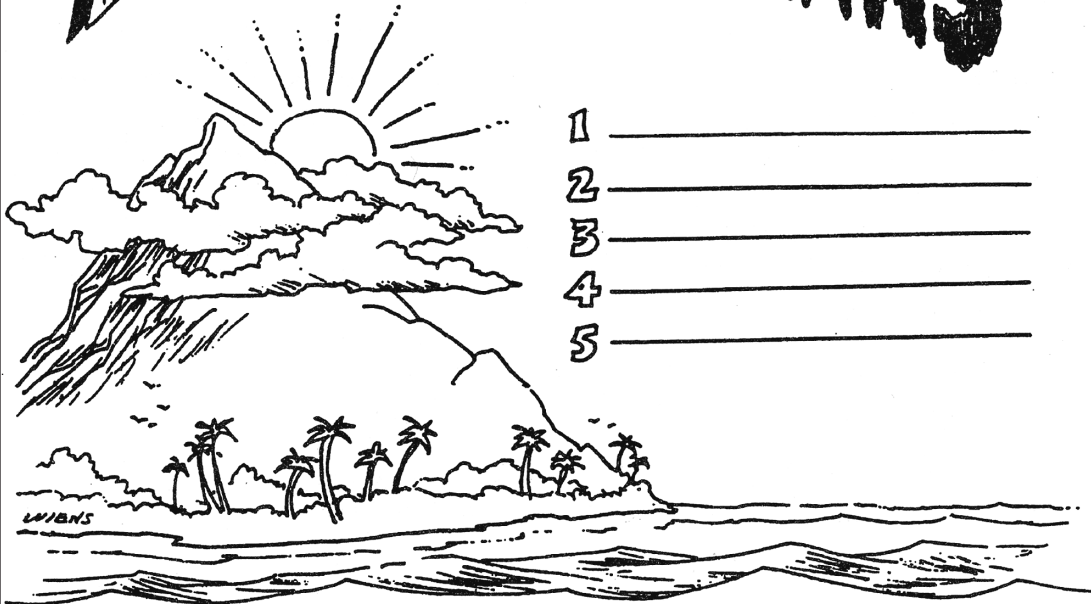
1. Commonality of hopes and fears expressed.
2. Importance of understanding another's perspective (empathy).

AUTHOR'S COMMENT

This exercise has more bang for your buck because two important processes are at work: First, a sense of belonging to the group is promoted when hopes and fears are shared; second, empathic skills are practiced when members present their partner's worksheet to the group.

HIGHEST HOPES

DEEPEST FEARS



- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

