

Overview

3-S group sessions are provided weekly to provide an opportunity for clients to practice, in a group setting, skills that were learned in individual sessions. These groups are in described in a separate manual. The following format is used:

3-S Group Session Format	—	Total time:	60 minutes
			<u>Duration approximate</u>
1. Video			4-6 minutes
2. Welcome			
3. Introductions			3 minutes
4. Renewal of commitment to one’s Spiritual path			
5. General philosophy of 3-S development program			3 minutes
6. Agenda for today’s session			
7. Meditation Practice			7 minutes
8. New material with experiential exercise			30 minutes
9. Q&A period			8 minutes
10. Review/summary of session			
11. Spiritual stretch			3 minutes
12. End			

Overview of the above segments are provided below. Detailed group sessions with therapist ‘scripts’ follow the overview.

1. Video: A commercially available meditation video of tranquil nature scenes is played to mark the beginning of each 3-S group session. [Note: the names of videos provided during the 3-S randomized clinical trial is provided in the detailed session description.] The purpose of playing a meditative video at this time is to provide a buffer, or transition period, during which group members can begin to detach from their often chaotic lives, in readiness for the activation of their Spiritual selves through the practices of meditation and mindfulness. The video also provides a “tardiness window.” Out of respect for the group, punctuality is expected of group members. However, if group members are unavoidably detained, they will be permitted to enter the group room late only during the playing of the video. Once the video has finished, the group room door is closed, the tardiness sign is placed on the door (see list of required group materials) and any late members will not be permitted to enter. They will, of course, be encouraged to return, on time, the following week. Repeated lateness should be discussed with the client privately (e.g., during individual sessions).

2. Welcome : The therapist places the “tardiness sign” on the outside of the group room door and welcomes all members present to the 3-S group [Note: ground rules for the group, if any, (e.g., time management strategies used, policy regarding eating/drinking during group, etc.) may be reviewed at this time.]

3. Introductions: Immediately following the welcome, the therapist asks group members to introduce themselves, by standing and saying their first names. [Note: as new group members may be added each week, it is important to have all group members introduce themselves every week.]

4. Commitment: Following the introductions, while group members are still standing, they are asked to renew their commitment to their Spiritual path by reading aloud the words on the Commitment Statement Poster [“Today I renew my commitment to my spiritual path”] that is displayed prominently on the front of the group room (see list of required group materials). Group members are then seated.

5. Overview of 3-S development program philosophy: The therapist provides the following overview each week: “Each of you are here today because you have made a commitment to abandon the addict self that has caused a great deal suffering in your lives, and to develop instead your Spiritual self which will provide you with access to the peace and happiness of your true Spiritual nature. I know I don’t have to tell you that although the addict self promises you relief from physical and emotional pain, it is actually taking you on a path that leads to unending physical, emotional, and spiritual suffering. You all know that once it takes over it -- once it goes on automatic pilot -- your welfare and the welfare of loved ones is of no importance to the addict self -- it can easily convince you that absolutely nothing else matters except getting high. The goal of this program is to help you to see the addict self for what it is – a habit pattern of the mind that causes tremendous suffering. You will learn how to interrupt its habitual scripts – those tapes that play over and over in your head that urge you to use drugs just one more time, or to engage in other behaviors that can cause harm to you or others. These include sharing drug paraphernalia and having unsafe sex both of which can transmit HIV and other infections that can cause even greater suffering in your lives. In this program, you will learn how to recognize the voice of the addict self and to stop it before it can harm you or others. You will do this by seeking refuge and strength in your true Spiritual nature. In this program, we view you as your Spiritual nature. That’s the real you, not the addict self. Over the years of addiction, you may have come to doubt that you even have a Spiritual nature, or you may feel that it is now inaccessible to you. At this point, just have faith that it is still there; that it is always there. Your true Spiritual nature may be temporarily hidden from view, but trust that it is there. All you need is a way to access it – a path – that’s your Spiritual path. However, in order to develop or strengthening this Spiritual path you will need a Spiritual self that has strong spiritual muscles – [therapist points to the paramis poster – see list of required materials] – your Spiritual self’s muscles are these 10 spiritual qualities that the addict self has tried to destroy. Together we will help you strengthen those spiritual muscles so that your Spiritual self stays strong and access to your Spiritual nature is available to you in every moment of the day. Just like strengthening physical muscles, strengthening your spiritual muscles takes training and practice. Each week we will practice meditation and do mindfulness exercises together that will help you to stay on your Spiritual path and access your Spiritual nature, but you also need to practice between groups. To get the most out of these group sessions, you will need to make the effort to quiet your mind, to focus your attention, and to listen carefully to what I and the other group members are saying. The exercises we

will do in the group have direct application to the kind of person you can be outside of this room, and, if you do them conscientiously, they will help you to become increasingly aware of your true self – your Spiritual nature – in all your daily activities.

6. Agenda: The therapist provides group members with the agenda for the session. Providing an agenda aids in keeping the group focused and facilitates time management. “Today we are going to begin as we always do by practicing meditation on the in and out breath. We will do this for five minutes. We will then work on some new material for about 30 minutes. We will then end as we always do with a discussion and review, and our spiritual stretch.”

7. Meditation Practice: Each group session provides an opportunity to practice meditation on the in- and out-breath (*anapanasati*). This brief, 5-minute practice session is primarily for the purpose of reviewing the technique, for providing rationale for its use as a means by which the automaticity of the addict self is reduced and the spiritual self is accessed, and for encouraging daily practice. Group members are encouraged to practice daily for longer periods (e.g., 30-60 minutes daily).

8. Presentation of new material with experiential exercise: New material is provided experientially each week for the purpose of helping group members increase mindfulness and to practice activation of the Spiritual self-schema. The therapist uses a technique that requires group members to attend carefully to the instructions as they are being provided. Instructions for all exercises are provided slowly and clearly, just once. After the instructions are given, group members are permitted one question in the event further clarification is necessary. If a group member still does not understand the instructions, he or she may ask another member of the group to repeat the instructions aloud to the entire group. This technique fosters mindfulness and cooperation.

9. Q&A - Question and Answer Period: Following the experiential presentation of new material, the therapist poses questions for group discussion in order to determine how well they understand the relevance of the new material to their daily lives, specifically, to the prevention of harm to self and others, and whether group members can identify the spiritual qualities that they demonstrated during the session.

10. Summary: Therapist provides a brief review of the entire session, “Today, we” and ending with “... In a few minutes the group will be over. Until we meet again next week, keep reminding yourself of your true nature. Once you are back into the routine of daily life, it can be easy to lose sight of who you really are. Just remember, you are not your Addict self – the addict self is that “voice” that lies to you over and over again promising you relief from your suffering when in fact it just causes more and more suffering. Don’t forget that. Remind yourself of your Spiritual nature and its capacity for love and compassion, and enact it in your daily life. I know you can do it. Practice your meditation daily and follow your Spiritual path in all your daily activities. If you do this, you will change your life forever. Let’s end with our Spiritual stretch”

11. The Spiritual Stretch is shown on the following page. It's purpose is for group members to renew their commitment to staying on their Spiritual path throughout the day in their thoughts, words, deeds, and perceptions, and to be open to the experience and expression of their Spiritual nature in all their daily activities. Group members stand and, while in various postures, recite the following: Today I take my spiritual path (hands raised above the head, palms together). May my thoughts reflect my spiritual nature (hands in front of forehead, palms together); may my words reflect my spiritual nature (hands in front of mouth, palms together); may my emotions reflect my spiritual nature (hands in front of chest/heart, palms together); may my actions reflect my spiritual nature (hands in front of abdomen, palms together); may my perceptions reflect my spiritual nature (hands outstretched to side, towards ground); may I be open and receptive to my spiritual nature (hands outstretched to side, towards sky); I am my spiritual nature (back to starting position with hands raised above the head, palms together).