

## POSITIVE PEER INFLUENCE

Mrs. Frontier  
Women's Group Leader

Mr. Stern  
Men's Group Leader

### Women's PPI Syllabus

#### COURSE OBJECTIVES

The format used in this course is modeled after that of self-help groups that utilize the power of the peer group to assist oneself and others in setting goals, resolving differences, and effecting behavioral change. Areas of emphasis include communication training, conflict management, and problem-solving skills.

Specific course objectives are as follows:

1. To foster personal growth by:
  - a.) Increasing self-awareness and self-understanding.
  - b.) Providing the tools to enhance the effectiveness of an individual's behavior.
2. To acquire the communication skills necessary to facilitate the development of helping relationships. This includes development of strong active-listening skills.
3. To demonstrate sensitivity to other peers' personal and interpersonal problems. This includes developing an understanding of and empathy for people who are different from us in some way.
4. To develop individual and group problem-solving and conflict management abilities.
5. To apply the above skills in the larger school setting.
6. To offer alternatives and modifications in the behavior patterns of peers to assist them in achieving personal goals. **In PPI we do not judge people, but we do think critically about behaviors and choices.**
7. To improve overall school climate by developing a greater sense of responsibility to oneself and the school community.
8. To hone leadership skills.

**GROUP EXPECTATIONS:** Every group member will abide by the following core values. **If a group member conducts themselves in ways that are inconsistent with these values, it may result in dismissal from PPI.**

#### Core Value 1: RESPECT

- Respectful attitudes and actions toward others - This includes the elimination of "put downs," even in a joking manner.

- Refrain from gossip about students in or out of group. Others' personal information is theirs to share. When discussing a concern, we think carefully before divulging information.
- Showing courtesy to others by not interrupting others when they are speaking. When someone is talking, we truly listen and value what that individual has to say. Put your fist into the circle when you have something to share.
- Give individuals time to respond to your question before talking. Silence and pauses give people time to think.
- Respecting the right of others to "pass"- If a group member chooses not to speak to the group, no one will force them to do so.
- Upholding the right of others to indicate to the group that "enough is enough"- If a group member has shared some information with the group, they can choose not to disclose further information.

## **Core Value 2: CONFIDENTIALITY**

- Information shared within the group does not go outside the group. **Violation of this rule may result in immediate removal from PPI.**
- EXCEPTIONS TO CONFIDENTIALITY: Adult facilitators are professionally and legally obligated to report the following to school administration and/or other relevant staff or agencies:

Exception 1) Presence of drugs or weapons at school, including being under the influence at school

Exception 2) Thoughts/threats of suicide or homicide

Exception 3) Current physical or sexual abuse

Exception 4) Sex or use of alcohol/drugs with a parent or guardian

## **Core Value 3: FOCUS**

- We are not there for ourselves, but for others.
- Nothing on the table/desks. This includes no use of phone or computer unless related to group purpose, and no food/drink (except on special occasions)
- Sit up, show that you are listening.
- No side-conversations
- Minimize tangents, bring the group back to the purpose/topic at hand.

## **Core Value 4: SCHOOL POLICIES**

As with any class at Pioneer High School, students must abide by the Pioneer High School Code of Conduct including the tardiness and absence policy.

What to do if a Group Rule has been violated?

We will discuss problems as a group and work through how we can constantly improve our work as PPI Members. If there are serious violations, such as a confidentiality breach, a lack of respect for members and the group, or repeated violations of school policy, a group member may be removed from the group.

## **PPI GROUP MEETING FORMAT**

### **Member Check-in:**

Members check in on their own status and then are responsible for reporting individual, group, and school concerns in a clear concise manner. Check-ins should be very short; the purpose of the check-in is to put our personal issues aside for the hour and declare that we can be present and contribute to the group purpose for the day. Consider: “Am I good to go? Or did something happen that will interfere with my functioning in group today?”

**Check-Backs:** If a group member needs to report an individual, group or school concern that will take more than one minute to share, then that person can ask for a check-back. After all individuals have checked in, we will return to any check-backs.

### **Daily Meeting Activity:**

After check-ins, members reach consensus about the purpose of the day’s meeting. (e.g. Issue to be discussed, referral to be seen, etc.). Members may ask for the meeting or suggest that the meeting be awarded to another member.

### **At each meeting the group will accomplish one of the following:**

1. **Life Story.** Each PPI member will present their life story some time during the semester. Each life story will take approximately one class period. Life stories may include sharing of photographs and factual information such as: date and place of birth, family members, personal history, typical weekend activities, and religion. But this is also an opportunity to go deeper and share how past events and people have affected/shaped your personal identity, quality of your relationships, religious/moral beliefs, hardest experience, regrets, interests/passions, and future plans.
2. **Student Referral or Follow-Up Referral**
  - a. Students may be referred by another student or school staff as someone who might benefit from talking with PPI.
  - b. Each referral begins with introductions, explanation of what PPI is and limits of confidentiality.

- c. PPI is not just a place for the referral to vent. PPI members are caring and critical listeners. PPI members may help the referral to identify a problem, consider reasons for the problem, identify feelings, generate options, and consider likely outcomes of various choices. PPI members try not to tell the referral what to do, but rather they share what has worked in their own experience and make suggestions (e.g. Have you considered...?).
- d. Debrief. PPI Members will discuss how the referral went and how they can improve their support for other students.

**3. Evaluation Slips.** Sharing of messages with each group member and facilitator to provide feedback on strengths and weaknesses.

**4. Interviews.** Selecting incoming PPI members.

**5. Other planned activity,** such as:

- a. **Debrief.** An opportunity to learn and improve as individuals and as a group through discussion and feedback about group processes (e.g. facilitation of referrals)
- b. **Letters.** Third semester departing members will write a letter to incoming members reflecting on what the group has meant to them and sharing advice/wisdom.
- c. **Holiday/Alumni Party**
- d. **Workshop or Field Trip** to learn more about a specific topic relevant to PPI.
- e. **Journaling, Film Clip or Reading Activity**

## **GRADING POLICY**

Students will receive a letter grade and credit for this course. A student's grade will be based upon participation as measured by the commitment demonstrated to group purposes, and the degree to which a member is willing to help him/herself and others, and the effort given to the exercises presented in group. This grade is based on a student's adherence to the Core Values, as determined by self, peer, and facilitator evaluation. To receive credit in this course students must participate in all evaluation sessions and activities. Regular attendance is critical to the success of the group and the effectiveness of the PPI Program. Unexcused absences will result in a low or failing grade. Three unexcused tardies will equal an unexcused absence. It has been our experience that students who are active participants in the group do very well.

## APPENDIX A: PPI Facilitative Responses

1. How do you feel about it?
2. Tell us more about it.
3. How does it look to you?
4. What are your feelings in the matter?
5. What do you think you would like to do about it?
6. What seems to be your greatest obstacle?
7. How do you suppose you could find out more about it?
8. What was your reaction?
9. How does this affect you?
10. How would you go about it?
11. What part did you play in the matter?
12. How do you suppose it will work out?
13. What are some other possibilities?
14. What information do you have about this?
15. Why do you suppose you feel that way?
16. How do you plan to do it?
17. What do you plan to do about it?
18. What was it like?
19. What have you tried so far?
20. What are the likely solutions?
21. What would you like to talk about today?
22. What if that doesn't work?
23. How have things been going?
24. How does this fit into your future plans?
25. For instance?
26. How do you explain these feelings to yourself?
27. What are the next steps?
28. Are there any other angles you can think of?
29. Can you give me an example?
30. In what way do you think you could improve this situation?
31. What will you have to do to accomplish it?
32. What does it add up to as you see it?
33. What do you make of it all?
34. Would you fill me in on the background?
35. If you had your choice, what would you do?
36. In what way?
37. What seems to be the difficulty?
38. Tell me about yourself.
39. What could you do in a case like this?
40. Where will this lead?

41. What do you think is best?
42. How would you summarize our discussion?
43. What do you feel we have accomplished today?
44. What have you been thinking about since we last met?
45. What is your ultimate objective?
46. What would you like to talk about?
47. How did that work out?
48. How do you think he/she would feel about this?
49. Will you talk a little more about that?
50. I'm not sure I understand.
51. Is this what you mean....? [restate, rephrase, reflect]

## **APPENDIX B: PPI Interview Protocol**

### **Introduction**

- Statement of why the student was brought in (great respect)
- What PPI is, how it functions, its goals, representation
- Confidentiality and exceptions

### **Topics**

- What is your best quality? What do you like about yourself?
- What personal trait or behavior would you like to change?
- Top 5 priorities in your life
- Biggest problem at Pioneer
- Who in the school would you represent in PPI? (friend groups, race/culture/language, activities)
- Family: who do you live with and who are you closest to?
- Average Friday/Saturday night?
- Drugs and Alcohol: personal use history, how do you view others who use or don't use?
- Personal religious practices and views on others' religious practices and beliefs
- Hardest thing you have been through or toughest situation you have dealt with
- How would you define a leader? Do you see yourself as a leader? In what way, for whom?
- Hypotheticals based on what we see in the group. Focus on issues of confidentiality, how they would handle concerns/referrals in group.

### **Wrap-up Questions**

- Could you handle the burden of confidentiality?
- Can you make a three semester commitment?
- Can you commit to being in group every day (attendance)?
- Any questions for the group?