

The following descriptions are for some very interesting one-hour small group discussion programs that you can facilitate. Just print out the directions and materials and go for it!

"Friendstalk"

: This program affords participants a great opportunity to talk with others about the many facets of friendship. The format includes 50 questions or stems (such as "The most important quality in my friends is..." or "If I were to describe the ideal friend for me I'd say..." or "The way friends hurt me without even knowing it is..."). These are printed on 1/2" strips of paper. One person picks a strip. He or she reads it to the group and either responds and/or hands it to someone in the group from whom they would like to hear a response. The question/stem may be responded to by any person who gets it or it may be put face-down in the middle of the circle. Then, a new stem is selected by the last speaker and the process starts over.

"Thanks For The Memories"

: This program asks participants to think back about some important time in their lives and a person or two connected with that time. Then, it asks them to consider what they think they would like to tell that person about why that person is (was) important to them. This is a neat program because it causes participants to pause and take stock of friends and family in conscious ways. In addition it gives them help in formulating ways in which they may want to express feelings we often believe someone "just knows without my telling them directly."

"Dating Expectations"

: This program asks participants to complete a number of stems (ex: What I'd expect from my dating partner in terms of a companion or friend...?, and...decision-maker...?, and...intellectual stimulus...?) regarding their expectations in a dating partner. It also gets into identifying what needs those expectations would meet if fulfilled. The best part of this program is that it encourages the identification of attitudes the participants carry with them into dating relationships and allows them to consider those attitudes in relation to others'. (1 handout)

"I've Always Wondered..."

: This program asks participants in a group of males and females to think of questions they've always wanted to ask of the opposite sex. It also provides an opportunity to get answers. The best part of this program is that individually asked questions can remain anonymous while responses to the questions of the opposite sex are strictly voluntary.

"Ideal Mate"

: Somewhat similar to "Dating Expectations" in the topic it explores, this program asks participants to write down 15 things they most desire in an "ideal mate." It then asks participants to, step by step, narrow the list down to 10, then five of the most important items from the original list of 15. Along the way participants are asked to share their reasons and how difficult it is for them to eliminate items from the original list. This is a great format for anyone to establish their immediate priorities regarding dating partners or "ideal mate." It also gives everybody the chance to find out what others "really" want in an ideal mate, adding to the depth of their own reflection on the subject.

"Dead Silent"

: Most of us don't quite know how to react...what to say...when someone we know experiences the death of a close friend or family member. This program helps participants be better prepared to respond BEFORE it happens. Included are "do's" and "don'ts" handouts, as well as a comfortable format for discussion.

"Chief Exec"

: Each participant is asked to look over a simple diagram of a corporate board room rectangular table with one chair at the top and four along each side. They are asked to write their name in as the chief executive officer of the corporation. That corporation is called "My Life, Inc.". Then they write in the name of those who have influenced decisions of "the board" in shaping the "corporation." This is an opportunity to let individual participants examine who has helped shape their lives, as well as to learn about others in the group.

"What a Flake!"

: Self-esteem is often a matter of really appreciating our uniqueness. This program introduces the idea that we are one-of-a-kind persons, like no two snowflakes are exactly alike. Participants are asked to respond to sentence stems that help them describe what's unique about them. Then, they share what they want with one other person. Next, they describe how those who care about them would say they are unique. Finally, there's time in the larger group to talk generally about the importance of being unique.

"Relationships, Sex & Sexuality-HYPE!!"

: Talking about relationships, sex and sexuality is important to a greater understanding of those subjects in our lives. The format of this program allows participants to share with one another where they "stand" in response to statements. This "no pressure" program is always interesting and information.

"Back from the Future": This program is designed help residents focus on what they really want out of life in six areas: family, job/career, friends, interests/hobbies, spirituality and health. It involves looking ahead to the imaginary day when they would retire or their 65th birthday. They are asked to describe what would represent their "ideal" or goal for their lives by time they reach retirement age in each of the areas. From there (time permitting), they are asked to record and share what they are going to do this year which will help them achieve their slide show dreams.

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