

# Developing a Thriving Group Therapy Program at a College Counseling Center

**Randal W. Boldt, Psy.D.,  
Baylor University  
TUCCCC 2013**

# Why Group?



# Build a Process!



# Identify and Respond to challenges of developing a group program



# Address institutionally relevant topics



# Changing the Culture: what do we all really want?



# Building a Group Program



# Getting everyone on board!



Courtesy SF Sketchfest



# Features of an Effective Group Program



# Enthusiasm is Contagious



# Start Strong and Flashy



# Invest in Changing the Culture



# Selling Group in Triage



# Every Therapist Running a Group



# Diversity of Group Offerings:

- Mindfulness
- Men's Issues
- Recovery Issues
- Creative Arts X 2
- Surviving Dating
- Women's Empowerment
- Body Image/Eating Issues
- Interpersonal Process
- Social Confidence
- Coping Clinic
- Finding Your Voice
- Family Exploration
- Addiction/Recovery
- Alcoholics Anon.

# Survival of the Fittest





# The Screening Session: Finding a Place to Belong



## The Screening Session:

What do  
Students  
want and  
need in  
their lives?



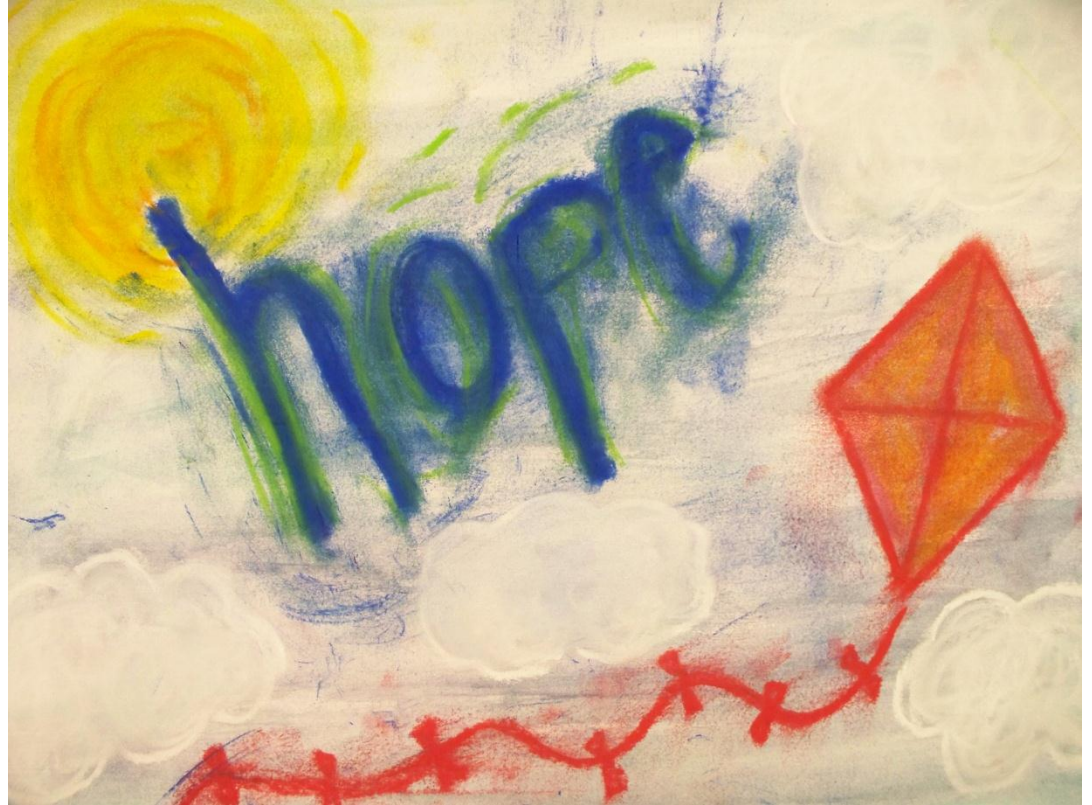
The Screening  
Session:

Screening  
Students  
IN  
not OUT



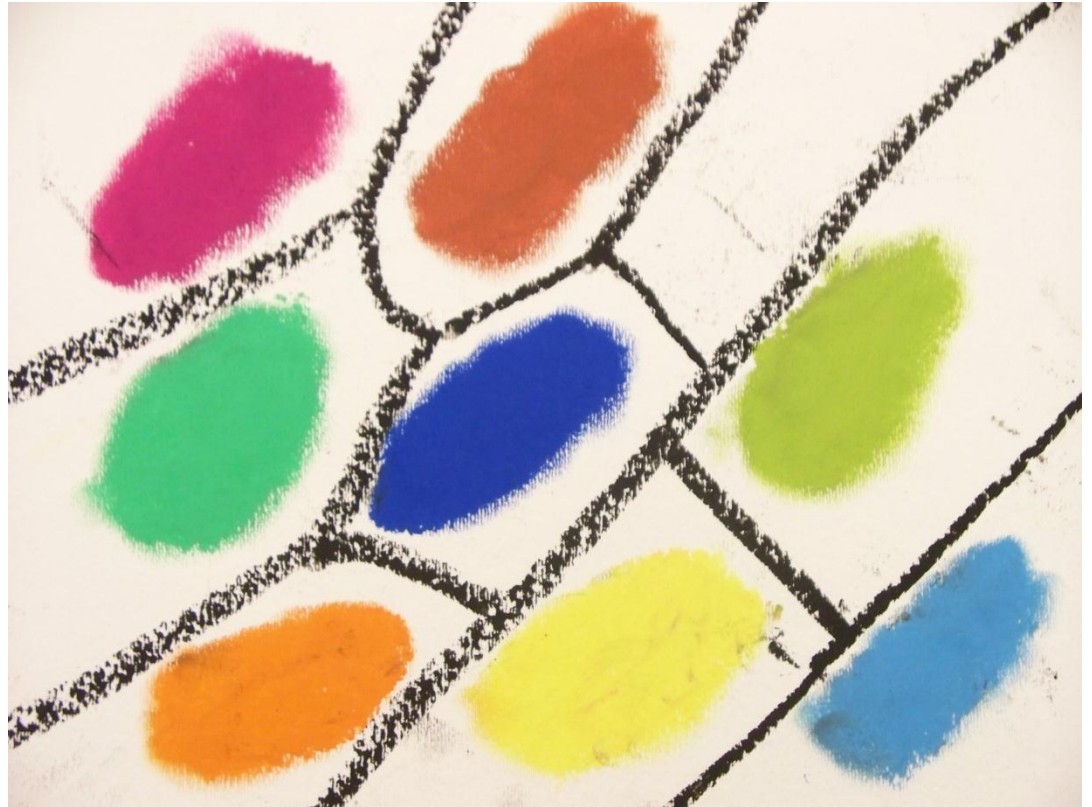
The Screening  
Session:

Building  
Positive  
Expectancies



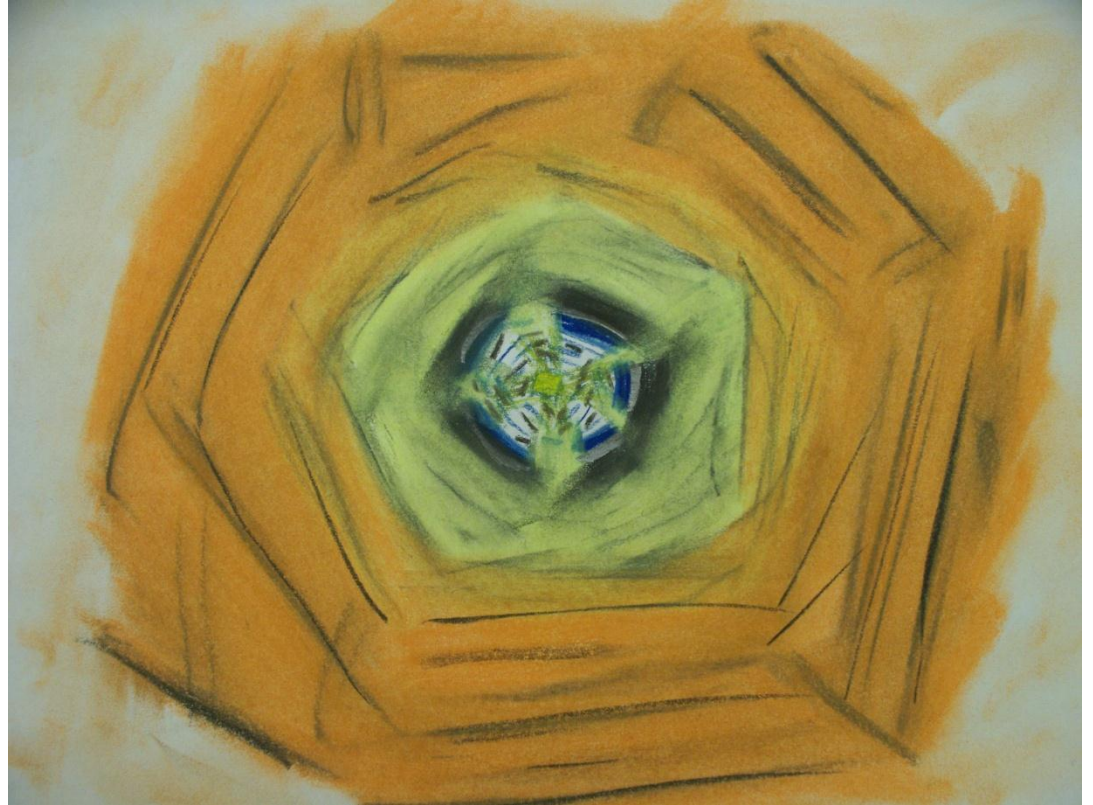
**The Screening  
Session:**

**Community  
Language**



**The Screening  
Session:**

**The  
Therapeutic  
Alliance**



**The Screening  
Session:**

**Corrective  
Emotional  
Experience**



**The Screening  
Session:**

**A Personal  
Caring  
Invitation**





# Investing in Success



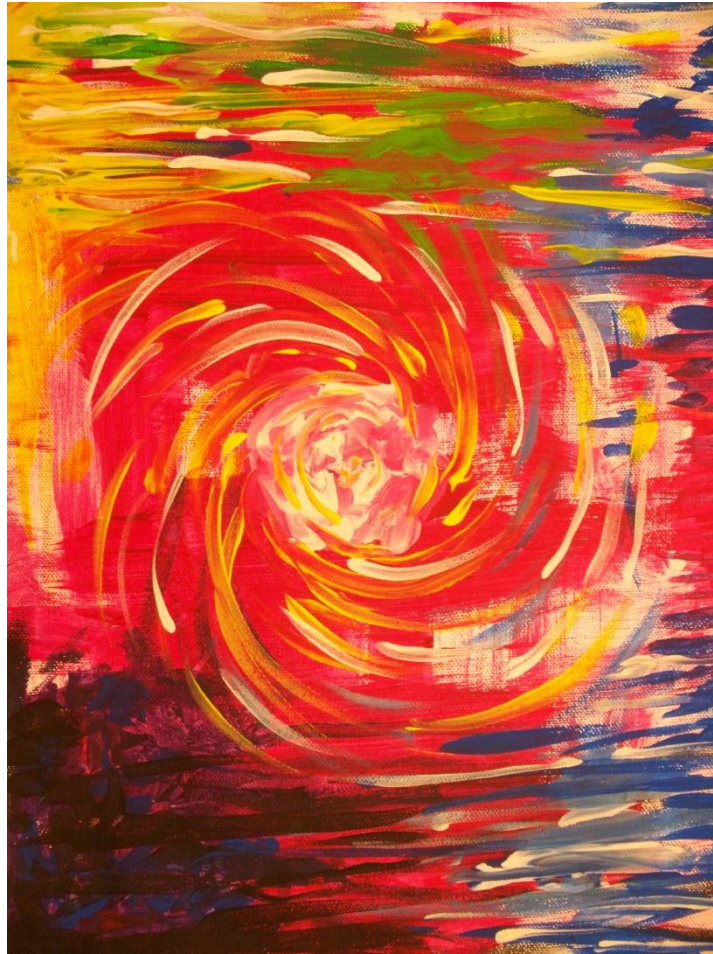
# Training Staff



# Resources



# Marketing



# Seeding the Next Group



# Lessons Learned



# Why Not Join a Group?



# This program is supported by the following works

Boldt, R., & Paul, S. (2011). Building a creative-arts therapy group at a University Counseling Center. *Journal of College Student Psychotherapy*, 25:1, 39-52.

Burlingame, G.M., Fuhrinam, A., & Mosier, J. (2003). The differential effectiveness of group psychotherapy: a meta-analytic perspective. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice*, &, 3-12.

Corazzini, J., (1994) Staff beliefs which hinder the use of group treatment. - *Electronic Reading*



Hahn, W.K., (2009). Ingenuity and uneasiness About Group Psychotherapy in University Counseling Centers. - Internal Journal of Group Psychotherapy. 59

Johnson, C. V. (2009). A process-oriented group model for university students: A semi-structured approach. International Journal of Group Psychotherapy, 59.

Oakley, D. R., (2002) Group Psychotherapy: Ideas on what to say and when. Electronic Reading

Oakley, D. R., (2010) How to Talk to Clients About Group.  
Electronic Reading

Oakley, D. R., (2010) Preparing a Client for an Interpersonal Process Group. Electronic Reading

Price, J.R., Heschels, D.R., & Price, A.R. (Eds.).(1999) A guide to starting psychotherapy groups. New York: Academic Press.

Whittingham, M., Frick E., (2010) Creating and Maintaining a Successful Group Program in a University Counseling Center: Lessons from the field. The Group Worker.

Association for Specialists in Group Work

Professional Standards for the Training of Group Workers

(Revision Approved by the Executive Board, January 22, 2000  
Prepared by F. Robert Wilson and Lynn S. Rapin, Co-Chairs,  
and Lynn Haley-Banez, Member, ASGW Standards Committee  
Consultants: Robert K. Conyne and Donald E. Ward)

# Ideas List from other presentations

- Tips for creating a vibrant group program:
- “Think group first.”
- Be enthusiastic. Enthusiasm is contagious.
- Train staff to increase group facilitation skills.
- Train staff to teach about how to refer.
- Train staff to teach how to more effectively screen.
- Provide ongoing training to staff.
- Create brochures to give to students.
- Believe in what you’re selling.
- Provide resources for staff (e.g., have an intranet with resources available)
- Provide multiple days/times for the same group in order to accommodate student schedules.
- The key to beginning is getting everyone on board. It needs buy-in from the top.
- Groups should be integrated into the service model.
- Co-leadership generates collaboration and more enthusiasm.
- All staff should be involved.

# Ideas -- continued

- Include groups in case consultation times.
- Talk about groups ALL the time.
- Always talk about groups in triage (seeding the idea).
- Offer a diversity of options (but also consider if that will work in your institution).
- A thoughtful screening session (aka, group interview or pre-group meeting) is essential: you are co-creating community, and clinician attitude and use of language is vital to creating a commitment.
- At the end of the semester, survey students to see what other groups they might like; this will seed the next group.
- Establish exclusionary criteria that all staff can agree to.
- Make groups part of clinician core practice.
- Encourage offering groups that clinicians are excited about.
- Consider having students complete a pre-group questionnaire.
- Give staff research on group efficacy.
- Provide group supervision.
- Join the American Group Psychotherapy Association.