



The Friendship Group Program



What is the Friendship Group Program?

Friendship Group is a Tier 2 social skills intervention for children experiencing significant friendship difficulties. It includes an early elementary program (26 sessions) for children aged 5-8, and an advanced elementary program (14 sessions) for children aged 8-11. It builds children's prosocial and play skills, while strengthening their self-control, anger coping, and interpersonal problem-solving skills. This program focuses on social and emotional skills that motivate and support friendships, such as empathy and caring. It promotes friendships, improves peer communication skills and cooperative behavior, while decreasing impulsive and aggressive behaviors and peer rejection.

What do the sessions look like?

The sessions follow a standard format for coaching programs; each session focuses on a specific set of target skills. Discussions, modeling stories, and role plays each social skill concepts. Social skills are practiced in student role plays, structured activities and challenges, and collaborative group activities.

This training will explain, demonstrate, and support practice of the specific skills used in the program, with many interactive opportunities. A second day of training is usually held 6-8 weeks after the Friendship Group Program has begun to expand on therapeutic group processes.

Who can attend the training?

This training is for counselors, psychologists, or behavior specialists working in schools and mental health professionals who plan to deliver group sessions during after school hours.

What are the training objectives?

To enable participants to:

- Describe the research that informs the design of the Friendship Group Program.
- Discuss the core components of Friendship Group
- Discuss the developmental foundations of Friendship Group
- Demonstrate the therapeutic processes utilized in implementation
- Feel prepared to implement the Friendship Group Program

About the trainer

Sandra Stewart is a Master Friendship Group Trainer and the Project Director of Friendship Connections. She has been a trainer with Penn State since 1993 and has extensive experience working with the Friendship Group Program.

Training Agenda

Introduction Activity
Goals of Training
Overview of Social-emotional Learning
Social-emotional skill development
Foundational Concepts of FG
Core components of group
Therapeutic Processes
Behavior Management
Modeling of sessions
Supportive practice of sessions, reflection discussion
Nuts and Bolts – logistics of running groups
Questions/Closing

For more information: Please contact Project Director Sandra Stewart at 814-863-5668, sls34@psu.edu