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Creative Arts Personal Growth (CAPG) Group Leader Manual

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CREATIVE



PERSONAL GROWTH GROUP

TRANSFORMING FEAR AND SHAME WITH COMPASSION, COURAGE, AND COMMUNITY

LEADER MANUAL

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Introduction and Overview

Thank you for your interest in the Creative Arts Personal Growth Group (CAPG). CAPG focuses on forming a safe community to process and recover from feelings of fear and shame, as seen in the sub-title: Transforming Fear and Shame with Compassion, Courage, and Community. Why make the focus of a personal growth or counseling group fear and shame? Shame, which includes the experience of fear, has been described as a trans-diagnostic, underlying cause of many clinical concerns (Brown, 2006; 2007; Clark, 2012). Empirical studies link shame to anxiety, eating disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, addictions, depression, suicide, sexual assault, relationship problems, family violence, and other clinical concerns (Brown, 2006; Shepard & Rabinowitz, 2013). Karen, as cited in Brown (2006), determined that shame was "the preeminent cause of emotional distress of our time" (p. 43).

The feeling of shame includes the perception of oneself as bad, defective, and unworthy of the acceptance and love of others (Blum, 2008; Brown, 2006, Shepard & Rabinowitz, 2013; Tangney & Dearing, 2002). In addition, shame triggers intense fears of abandonment anxiety (Brown, 2006). All humanity experiences the universal need for acceptance and secure connection with others for survival (Siegel, 2010). In her disturbing and moving heuristic study on the lived experiences of Holocaust victims, Shantall (1999) captured the most profound sense of shame. She described it as resulting from being treated as "protoplasmic worthlessness" (p. 102). Although sufferers of the Holocaust experienced a most atrocious and violent form of de-humanization, studies indicate that intense emotions and lingering feelings of shame emerge from less severe forms of interpersonal violence, such as bullying (Plexousakis et al., 2019; Tehrani, 2004).

Sadly, bullying and interpersonal violence are an epidemic problem of our times. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) defines bullying as "unwanted and aggressive behavior that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated" (Gladden

et al., 2014, p. 17). Studies reveal that 90% of the U.S. population are bullied at some point in their lives (National Center for Education Statistics and the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2020). Not surprisingly, individuals who are bullied the most are those with multi-cultural uniqueness (e.g., race, ethnicity, disability, gender, socio-economic status) (NCES, 2019). Therefore, mental health scholars and experts have encouraged the development of treatments specifically designed to address the needs of the bullied and shamed (Lloyd-Hazlett et al., 2016). Furthermore, due to the interpersonal nature of bullying (Cannon et al., 2012; Salmivalli, 1999), inclusive, diversity-celebrating groups are especially needed (Bauman, 2010; Brown, 2007; Guth et al., 2018; Ward, 2004).

CAPG is such a group intervention. CAPG combines best practices for the treatment of shame and fear and explicitly focuses on helping participants form a safe, inclusive relationship with one another to heal from shame. According to Brown (2013), inclusive, emotionally safe communities have the potential to promote recovery from shame and the development of "shame resilience." Brown defines shame resilience as coming to "understand our vulnerabilities and cultivating empathy, courage, and compassion" (2013; p. 253) for ourselves and one another.

Although CAPG focuses specifically on shame, we have also found it effective for other presenting concerns (Sosin et al., 2019; Sosin et al., 2020). This finding aligns with the conceptualization of shame as trans-diagnostic (Clark, 2012), as stated above. In addition, shame activates intense fear. Therefore, we use "fear-shame" to capture the dual constructs of anxiety and worthlessness that underlie shame (Freed & D'Andrea, 2015).

CAPG combines research-based principles and interventions from the creative and expressive arts, trans-theoretical and integrative counseling, mindfulness, self-compassion, and multi-cultural competencies and strategies (Barlow, 2014; Bazargan & Pakdaman, 2016; Bernstein et al., 2011; Guth et al., 2018; Singh et al., 2012; Sosin & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2016). The incorporation of creative and

expressive arts enables group members to explore, express, and process their complex thoughts, feelings, and experiences of shame, which are often beyond words alone (Armstrong & Ricard, 2016; Lloyd-Hazlett et al., 2016; Sosin & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2016).

CAPG is a structured group approach that emphasizes the primacy of relationships and the courage to discover and be oneself. The purpose and goals of CAPG are to:

1. Place bullied, interpersonally traumatized, and marginalized persons in a safe, inclusive community.
2. Provide practical tools to monitor and modify symptoms of shame and trauma.
3. Promote identity solidification and self-acceptance.

CAPG enables participants to:

1. Understand shame as an automatic, biological response to a perceived interpersonal threat.
2. Face and tolerate shame in the presence and support of caring others.
3. Courageously replace shame with loving-kindness.
4. Support each other in coming to know, strengthen, and celebrate their core, authentic, and healthy selves.

Because the role of the leader is active, directive, and protective, it is crucial to the safety of group members and the success of the intervention that CAPG leaders have the appropriate training and credentials to provide group counseling (ACA, 2014). In particular, CAPG leaders adhere to best practice guidelines for group work, as outlined in the Association for Specialists in Group Work's (ASGW) foundational documents. At the time of this writing, these can be found at:

<https://www.asgw.org/resources-1>, and include ASGW Best Practice Guidelines (Thomas & Pender,

2008), ASGW Professional Standards for the Training of Group Workers (2000), ASGW Multicultural and Social Justice Competence Principles for Group Workers (Singh et al., 2012), and Ten Strategies to Intentionally Use Group Work to Transform Hate, Facilitate Courageous Conversations, and Enhance Community Building (Guth et al., 2018). Moreover, the latest version of Group counseling: Strategies and skills (Jacobs et al., 2016) outlines the organization, style, and skills needed for leading a CAPG group. Leaders who run CAPG will understand how to effectively lead groups from start to finish by reading this text. For this reason, we ask that all CAPG leaders carefully review and apply the principles highlighted in these ASGW foundational documents and the Jacobs et al. text before running a CAPG group.

We hope you and your clients have a rich, meaningful, and transformational experience of connecting in your CAPG group(s).

Planning Phase: Screening and Orientation

In order to gain insight into a prospective group member's treatment needs, it is essential to provide individual, comprehensive screening and orientation interviews before selecting group members for CAPG (Jacobs et al., 2016). The purpose of member screening is to (a) initiate a sense of warmth and connection between leaders and potential members; (b) describe the group purposes, norms, structure, content, and goals; (c) establish a collaborative, non-hierarchical relationship between leaders and members; (d) discern, through clinical assessment, if potential participants need collateral or referral to individual counseling; (e) mutually determine the rightness of fit for CAPG; and (f) obtain informed consent (Jacobs et al., 2016). Because CAPG includes exposure to shaming experiences that may have been traumatizing, leaders must be knowledgeable about participants' symptom severity and readiness for group work. Likewise, participants must have full disclosure about what to expect from week to week in CAPG. The Appendix contains the screening documents we currently use as well as the group guidelines. During the screening, leaders review the group guidelines with each potential participant and give them a copy for their records.

CAPG Group Guidelines:

- Please come on time every week.
- Please attend every week. If you cannot attend, notify us via email.
- Please be fully present in the group (instead of using a cell phone or other devices during group). We need your input and presence.
- Please understand my role as leader. Do not take it personally if I:
 - Scan the group when you are sharing, I am checking to see how our group is reacting and who wants to speak next in order to keep everyone involved. I am still actively listening to you.

- Refocus on the purpose of the group if someone takes us off track.
- “Cut off” a member if they have shared too long. I’ve got to make sure everyone has a chance to share.
- “Cut off” an activity so I can be sure we get to everything planned: 10 - 15-minute opening round, 45 - 60-minute activity, 10 - 15-minute closing activity.
- Please be a part of making this a safe, diversity-celebrating, supportive community by being kind, thoughtful, inclusive, and non-pressuring.
- Please participate in weekly opening sharing, weekly activities, and closing sharing. Moreover, share with the entire group, not just the leaders, by looking around at everyone.
- Please honor the confidentiality of group members by not discussing personal things shared in the group with people outside of the group. Feel free to discuss what you are learning with others but avoid talking about other people in the group.
- If you feel sad, hurt, or angry about anything in the group, please let me know right away. I am here to help you feel safe, accepted, and honored. Whatever you do, please do not drop out of the group because you are upset about something.

The purpose of this group is to help members recover from shame and become “shame resilient.” Here is a summary of the focus of each weekly session. Each activity has a creative arts component. You will be able to select how you want to express yourself (i.e., art medium, poem, story, song, dance, writing).

- Week One: Community: Creating a ‘Village of Safety’.
- Week Two: The Rest of the Story: Knowing, Being, and Celebrating Your True Self.
- Week Three: Creative Shame Resiliency I.
- Week Four: Creative Shame Resiliency II.

- Week Five: Rewriting the Shame Narrative.
- Week Six: Review, Present Moment Awareness, and Maintenance Plan

Session 1: Creating a Village of Safety

The goals of session one are to:

1. Promote safety and connection between group members and leaders.
2. Provide psychoeducation about biological needs for safety, acceptance, inclusion, and love, and the bio-psycho-social-multicultural/identity impact of bullying and marginalization, including symptoms of trauma and shame; and
3. Introduce and practice anchoring skills and record-keeping to support emotion regulation and promote shame resilience.

If running the group in person, set up chairs around a table with art supplies (i.e., paints, pastels, crayons, pencils, markers, clay). If running the group virtually, tell them in advance of the first session to have art supplies at hand and to participate in a private setting. Note that leaders who run the group virtually must have expertise in both group counseling and telemental health with groups.

At the opening of each session, allow members to enjoy an open art time as members arrive. During this time, encourage participants to relax and cultivate a sense of quiet, safety, and peace for a few minutes. Next, ask participants to go around and share their names and what they hope to get out of the group in a few sentences (i.e., 2-4 sentences).

Key Points to cover in the psychoeducation portion:

1. Feeling safe, accepted, valued, included, and loved is a normal, human biological-emotional need (Farrel & Shaw, 2018).
2. Shame is the opposite of feeling safe, accepted, valued, included, and loved as we are (Brown, 2013). All people experience shame at times, and it makes sense that we do. We have not always been treated with loving-kindness by others or ourselves.

3. Shame activates the central nervous system's fight, flight, and freeze response and a set of rapidly firing intolerable thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations (Brown, 2006).
4. Because shame is intolerable, we sometimes develop coping mechanisms (CM) to manage it that do not meet our needs for connection and acceptance (Farrel & Shaw, 2018).
5. When we take the time to connect with our core self, calm our bodies, come back into the present moment, and sort out our minds, we can think clearly and respond to ourselves with the same loving-kindness and compassion we give to others. In addition, quieting our bodies and minds enables us to figure out what we need and how we can honor our needs in a manner that aligns with our true self and values (Neff et al., 2018).
6. The "Window of Tolerance" (WOT) is the range of activation where we feel we can function well. CM may give us a "faux window," a semblance of being in the WOT when we are not. Grounding or anchoring skills help us return to our genuine window. Breathwork, learning to control the speed of the in-breath and out-breath, is critical for regulating the nervous system (Jill, 2017).
7. The anchoring activities we will learn today enable us to calm and soothe our bodies when we become activated. The more we practice them, the better we will get at deactivating fear and shame (Siegel, 2010).

For the session activity, teach members "Anchoring Skills," including deep breathing, systematic relaxation, imaginal safe place, and depicting a safe place using art. The purpose of anchoring is to learn how to calm and soothe the mind and body when fear and shame get triggered or activated.

Provide the following, or similar, instructions for each activity. Once everyone understands, then do the activities together. Leaders model and do the activities along with participants. However, when

processing, leaders only disclose what would be helpful for the group members. Thus, group workers never use group work to meet their own therapeutic needs (Jacobs et al., 2016).

Creative Activity: Anchoring

Deep Breathing:

Instructions: Let us begin by closing our eyes and focusing on our breath. If closing your eyes is not comfortable for you, please find a spot in the room to focus on. As we begin noticing our breath, slowly and deeply take in a breath for four (4) counts ...1...2...3...4..., hold your breath for seven (7) counts ...1...2...3...4...5...6...7..., and slowly and thoroughly exhale for eight (8) counts ...1...2...3...4...5...6...7...8. As you breathe, allow your stomach to rise...not your chest. We want to take full, deep breaths. Again, let's take in a breath for four (4) counts ...1...2...3...4..., hold for seven (7) ...1...2...3...4...5...6...7..., and slowly and thoroughly exhale for eight (8) counts ...1...2...3...4...5...6...7...8...

Note to group leader: Continue this activity for 2-3 minutes. The most important part of this activity is the exhale to activate the parasympathetic nervous system.

Systematic Relaxation:

Instructions: Let us begin by closing our eyes and focusing on our breath. If closing your eyes is not comfortable for you, please find a spot in the room to focus on. Notice the top of your head. Notice any sensations or tension that you may have there. Gently allow relaxation to come to the top of your head. (Pause) Now, move your attention to your forehead. If you feel tension there, soften the experience by imagining that you can breathe into this part of your body. (Pause) Now, let's move to our eyes. Notice any tension there. Soften the muscles around your eyes. Allow the relaxation to come in. If you notice your mind wandering, that is okay. Gently bring your attention back to your breath and allow calmness and relaxation to fill your body.

Note to group leader: Continue this script through the various parts of the body: Cheeks, mouth,

jaws, neck, back of the head, entire head, shoulders, upper arms, biceps, forearms, wrists, hands, fingers, upper back, lower back, chest, stomach, waist, hips, pelvic area, bottom (seat), upper legs, knees, lower legs, ankles, feet, toes, and entire body.

When you are ready, gently open your eyes and take in a good breath.

Imaginal Safe Place:

Instructions: Let us begin by closing our eyes and focusing on our breath. If closing your eyes is not comfortable for you, please find a spot in the room to focus on. Next, visualize opening a door that leads you to a calm, safe place in your mind. This safe place can be a memory, a place you would like to visit (e.g., beach), or an imaginary place. As you create this safe space, focus on what you see (pause), hear (pause), feel (touch; pause), smell (pause), and taste (if anything; pause). Allow yourself to feel this experience deeply within your body. Take your time to enjoy this calm, safe place.

Note to group leader: Take time to move through the five senses. Take time to accentuate each sense by exploring the various aspects. For instance, notice what you see, the colors, shapes, lighting.

Self in Safe Place Depiction:

Instructions:

1. Visualize and depict your safe place in the center of a sheet of paper with the art supplies.
2. Depict yourself in your safe place where you feel safe and loved just as you are.
3. Note that it does not matter what your art looks like.
4. Allow yourself to feel this experience deeply within your body.
5. Take your time to enjoy this calm, safe place.

After each anchoring skill, take time to process the participants' experiences.

Questions to consider asking participants during the processing rounds: What did engaging in

this activity feel like for you? Is there anything you can do to make these activities more effective in calming and soothing you?

Distribute the NICABM Window of Tolerance (WOT) handout (NICABM, 2019). Briefly describe the Window of Tolerance and discuss the role of using anchoring skills instead of CM to return to the WOT when dysregulated.

After processing, conduct a closing round: In a few sentences (i.e., 2-4), what was most meaningful to you in our session today? What do you want to remember and practice between sessions? Is there anything you want to say to another member of the group to encourage and support them?

Before closing the session, provide group members with a copy of the Trigger Processing Chart to practice anchoring skills, and monitoring and modifying fear and shame between sessions. The chart's purpose is for members to begin to conceptualize the link between fear and shame triggers and corresponding thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations, and to use the "tools" they will learn in CAPG to "deactivate" fear and shame symptoms.

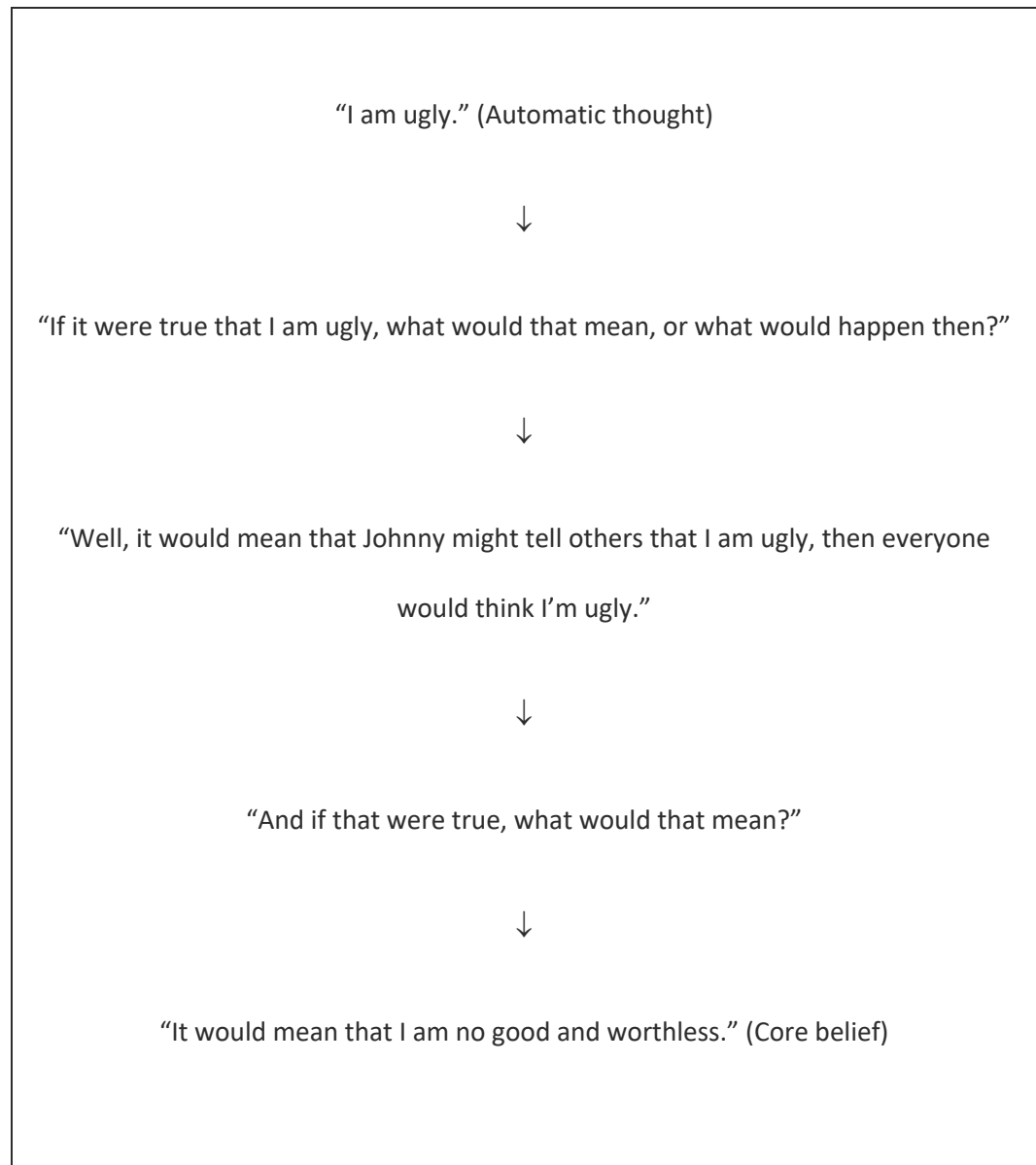
The CAPG Trigger Chart

Instructions: We will use this chart to process fear-shame-provoking experiences from the week. To practice, select an event that triggered fear-shame for you this week. Take time to record and process each column as outlined on the form. In Column 1, record the date and time of the disturbing event. In Column 2, briefly describe the disturbing event. In Column 3, record the feelings you had during the event and rate the distress level of each feeling using the SUDS scale (Wolpe, 1969). SUDS stands for Subjective Units of Distress and provides a fear-shame level rating from 1-10, where 1 means little or no fear-shame and 10 is the highest level of fear-shame. In Column 4, list the automatic thoughts you had. Selecting the most disturbing thought first, use the Downward Arrow Technique to

get to the core fear-shame provoking belief (Beck, 1995). Getting to the core beliefs under the surface thoughts will help you understand why you feel so distressed.

Figure 1

Example of the Downward Arrow Technique



Once you identify the core, rate the Belief Level (BL) (Barlow, 2014), in other words, how true the core belief feels based on a 1-10 scale, where 1 means untrue and 10 means completely true. Now, we will practice lowering the SUDS and BLs. First, imagine the disturbing event and the thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations. Next, focus on the core disturbing belief and how uncomfortable you feel. Refocus on your safe place after a moment or two [the leader takes the group through all four anchoring skills described above]. Now, [after anchoring is complete] in Column 5, write down the anchoring skills just used. Notice if you feel safer and less anxious. Ask yourself what would help me feel even safer? What do I need regarding this trigger to feel safe, peaceful, and unashamed? Do I need to connect with a loving friend? Go for a walk? Journal? Listen to or play music? Be out in nature? Apply a spiritual or cultural practice? Finally, in Column 6, re-rate the SUDS for each feeling charted in Column 3 and the BL for each thought charted in Column 4. After completing this with the most disturbing thought, do likewise with other thoughts related to the triggered fear-shame.

Figure 2

The CAPG Trigger Processing Chart with Columns 1-4 completed (Sosin & Rockinson-Szapikw, 2016, p.39)

Column 1:	Column 2:	Column 3:	Column 4:	Column 5:	Column 6:
Date and Time	Disturbing Event (External [interpersonal situation] or Internal [i.e., memory, thought, feeling])	Feeling/s with Significant Units of Disturbance (SUDS) (Rate: 1-10)	Automatic Thought/s Images with Belief Levels (BL) (Rate: 1-10)	Creative Exposure (or use of other bio-psycho- social-diversity tools) Used to Decrease SUDS and BL	After Creative Exposure (or use of another tool) (SUDS & BL Rate 1-10)
Late September	“Vulture” incident	Fear and Panic SUDS: 10 Shame SUDS: 10 Unworthiness SUDS: 9	I am ugly BL: 8 I am fat BL: 8 I am worthy of being treated this way BL: 7 I am unsafe BL: 9		

Session 2: Knowing, Being, and Celebrating your Authentic and Evolving Self

The goals of session two are to increase awareness and acceptance of (1) members' "strength" narrative; and connect them with their (2) authentic self/identity and their grounded-ness.

Following the opening round, present the key points for the session.

Key Points:

1. The anchoring techniques we learned last week help regulate our Autonomic Nervous System when fear and shame activate (Jill, 2017). By practicing these skills regularly, we can learn to cultivate a quiet heart when we feel fear or shame.
2. Because fear and shame feel intolerable, sometimes we turn to maladaptive coping mechanisms (CM) to help soothe ourselves. This group is safe to talk about these behaviors no matter what they are. We can support and encourage one another to shift from automatic maladaptive coping to healthy coping that meets our real emotional needs.
3. When shame activates, we have an opportunity to soothe ourselves and "get back to" our core, healthy self. Our core, healthy self is always with us. In this group we will explore, celebrate, honor, and encourage one another to have the courage to know and be ourselves (Brown, 2006). Knowing who we are helps us to "get back home" (back in to the "Window of Tolerance"; NICBM, 2019) more quickly when shame activates. We know who we are and who we aren't.
4. In order to be our healthy, core selves, we need to know, value, and have support to be our true selves. Today's creative arts activity helps us to discover, explore, and honor our core self by sharing aspects of our identity with one another.

5. It takes courage, loving-kindness, time, and support to know and live from who we are in this world.
6. Today's creative and expressive arts activity is derived from a narrative therapy exercise called The Tree of Life (Denborough, 2014).

Once you get a sense that everyone understands the key points, present the creative activity.

Creative Activity: Connecting with, Celebrating, and Sharing the “Rest of the Story” Through Creative and Expressive Arts

Instructions:

Let's begin with the set of anchoring skills learned last session: deep breathing, systematic relaxation, and safe place. Next depict a tree of strengths and beauty:

Start with an outline of a tree and branches. Include the following on your tree:

1. The Ground: Life giving persons and the foundational support that give/gave you (can be spiritual heroes in your life, people from whom you've learned (i.e., mentors, authors, books, courses [classes], teachers, characters in movies/books, friends, pets).
2. The Roots: Life giving aspects of your culture, ethnicity, values, beliefs, morals that shaped your youth.
3. The Trunk: Your skills, talents, things you find refreshing and fun (ways you like to play), strength and courage you see in your life history and today (travel abroad, acts of kindness, serving others, love and generosity, vocation, hard work, accomplishments, education, etc.).

4. The Branches: Your aspirational dreams, wishes, hopes, and goals (personal or professional).
5. The Leaves and Flowers: the kind, affirming, and life-giving things people have said about you or the way you sensed they feel/felt about you-draw on people across the whole of your life; picture their smiling faces. Also, the material and/or aspirational attributes (i.e., creativity, humility, courage, love, etc.) write down their names.
6. The Birds: What you want to take flight from your life: fruit you want to bear in terms of characteristics, the legacy you want to pass forward to others (can be on the tree or flying around).
7. Your tree is something you can add to overtime as you become more aware of the remarkable you that you are and are becoming (Denborough, 2014).

Prior to the closing round ask group members to make the following commitment to their core self: "I will value time observing my thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations. I will practice responding to myself with loving-kindness. I will make every effort to soothe and calm myself. I will fight the good fight to know, be, and celebrate my true self."

For the closing round, ask members to briefly share (2-4 sentences) what was most meaningful to them in the session today and what they want to remember and practice between sessions.

Encourage group members to practice anchoring and using the Trigger Processing Chart between sessions.

Throughout CAPG celebrate members for their courage and kindness toward one another. Remember to emphasize that you are a community of inclusiveness and healing.

Session 3: Creative Shame Resiliency I

The theme of session three is that members can use creative tools to strengthen and honor their core, healthy selves (Gladding, 2016; Malchiodi, 2020). We can respond to all of our thoughts, feelings, and body sensations with loving-kindness and find relief from fear and shame. The goals of this session are (1) to deepen connection between group members; (2) increase knowledge and skills needed to transform fear and shame into compassionate connection with self and others; and (3) promote meaning and purpose.

After the open art time, present a brief summary of session two contents. Remind members that “awareness of and celebration of your core self will grow as you take the time to calm and connect with yourself. No matter what automatic thoughts you have about your true self, the truth is that you are a unique and precious person worthy of love and acceptance.”

Next, conduct the opening round: ask participants to share their reactions and thoughts that emerged about last week’s session or whatever they’d like to share related to the focus of the group in a few sentences.

Following the opening round, present the key points for the session.

Key Points:

1. In this session and the next, we learn tools to help us creatively monitor the energy and attention of our mind and nervous system (Siegel, 2010; 2017) so that we can decrease fear and shame. This entails (a) practicing soothing our minds and bodies when fear and shame activates so we can think and feel clearly; (b) taking time to sort out our thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations; (c) feel and validate (accept) our feelings; and (d) determine what we need and meet our underlying emotional needs.

2. It takes courage, support, time, and energy to learn and use these tools. All people should be treated with loving-kindness. Know that you have the right to have a relationship with yourself and others that is loving and kind (Neff & Germer, 2017; Neff et al., 2018).
3. Feelings (i.e., sad, mad, glad, afraid, shame) are biological. When activated they “message us” that there may be something we need to attend to.
4. If a need (love and security, validation of feelings and needs, autonomy and identity, realistic limits, and spontaneity/play/refreshment; Farrel & Shaw, 2018) arises, we can learn to effectively meet the need.
5. When needs go unmet, feelings and beliefs related to them may get “buried alive,” waiting for closure. In these cases, coping mechanisms (CM) may kick in to give us a sense of faux security. CMs don’t meet the actual need; however, they temporarily make us feel safe (Farrel & Shaw, 2018).
6. We can learn to slow down, assess what our feelings are telling us, and respect and meet our needs according to our healthy, adult values. Today’s creative activity will help us with this.
7. When learning to respond to our needs and attend to our core self, meaning and purpose can be fostered through the use of diversity affirming creative and expressive arts.

Today we will learn a creative way to monitor internal activity called the *Creative Exposure Intervention* (CEI) (Sosin & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2016). The CEI enables us to monitor shame triggers, attend to the thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations activated by them, and to compassionately bring ourselves back into our “Window of Tolerance” (WOT) (Ogden et al., 2006). This allows us to go through

the “tunnel” of our experience instead of avoiding it and resorting to CM. Each time we take the time to attend to this process and meet our emotional needs in adaptive, compassionate, values-based ways we become stronger; remaining in our WOT enables us to receive, process, and integrate information effectively (Siegel, 2010).

Creative Activity: The Creative Exposure Intervention (CEI)

Instructions:

1. Visualize and depict your safe place in the center of a sheet of paper with art supplies.
2. Activate a shame trigger by remembering a recent time when you felt shame.
3. Attend mindfully to your thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations.
4. Express this memory on paper on a “movie screen” outside of your safe place, including the disturbing thoughts and feelings activated.
5. Thoughts: Depict these any way that truthfully represents them. For each disturbing thought use the Downward Arrow (see session one) to get to the root of these. Using the downward arrow technique to unearth core beliefs validates the intensity of the fear and shame. As usual, it does not matter what your art looks like, it is for you.
6. Feelings: In addition to the thoughts, depict or write out the feelings, emotions, and body sensations you had at the time of the memory. Notice if there is a harsh, shaming voice within you. Notice where in your body you feel these sensations. Try to bring space to it, soften it, and compassionately observe it. Don’t move away from the pain. Compassionately and curiously sit with it as you would a beloved child.
7. Relax again, focusing back on your safe place. From there, reflect on what you depicted. Consider how you might lovingly and kindly soothe yourself regarding this disturbing event. For instance, what would you say to someone you love who shared this

experience with you? How would you respond if someone you loved had these thoughts in response to this shaming event? How would you help them with the disturbing feelings they were having? How can you bring warmth to soften and soothe the distress so as to meet your need for unconditional love and safety? Ask yourself, “What do I need?”

8. Additionally, consider how you might bring hope, peace, meaning, and love into this moment by applying a cultural or spiritual practice that you enjoy: “Is there a way I can apply a cultural or spiritual practice that I enjoy?” “Is there a way I can apply a cultural or spiritual practice that might foster a sense of hope and peace even in the midst of this distress?” You may want to find a song that reflects your experience or write one. Perhaps you feel like moving, dancing, or shaking off the feelings. You may want to write a poem, journal or have an imaginary conversation with someone to express your thoughts and feelings.
9. Next, artistically depict the answers to these questions around the safe place using the art supplies in any way you feel moved to. Continue depicting the depth of your experience until you feel complete.

Following the art activity, allow members to briefly share what they are comfortable sharing with the group. If the group is larger than five or six, pair members up to take turns listening and sharing.

As always, for the closing round ask members to share what was most meaningful to them in the session today. What do they want to remember and practice between sessions?

Bear in mind that exposure activities can be disturbing. Be prepared to help individuals in the group de-activate and *do not allow members to leave the group until they are sufficiently regulated*. If

needed, remain after with any group member to support them so that they leave peacefully. Review Jacobs et al. (2016) for many important tips on keeping members engaged and how to appropriately focus and lead groups during the beginning, middle, and end phases of a group.

Session 4: Creative Shame Resilience II

The theme of session four is accessing compassion and protection. Fear and shame can't stand up to loving-kindness and emotional safety.

The goals of session four are (1) to deepen connection between group members and (2) to increase knowledge and skills needed to transform fear and shame into compassionate connection with self and others.

Start the session as outlined in session one, providing members with the session four handout. After the open art time, present a summary of what you covered from the start of CAPG up until now. Ask if they have any questions or concerns. Here is a sample script for the summary:

In CAPG we have learned about how important it is to anchor in safety in the present moment. You have learned more about your core self and depicted it in safety, knowing that this awareness will continue to develop and evolve. Last week you learned the Creative Exposure Intervention (CEI), a tool you can use to monitor your body and mind when you feel fear and shame. This included depicting yourself in safety and compassionately observing a recent shame trigger. You identified the thoughts, feelings, body sensations, and needs that accompanied this trigger and practiced considering how you would respond to a loved one experiencing fear and shame. In CAPG you are learning to respond to yourself with the same kindness, compassion, and tolerance you would to others.

Next, conduct the opening round as done in previous weeks.

Following the opening round, present the following key points for the session:

Key Points:

1. When we practiced the CEI last week, we anchored ourselves and then depicted ourselves in safety. Then, we remembered a recent fear-shame trigger. We put words and symbols to the thoughts, feelings, and body sensations that activated at that time.

We used the downward arrow technique to connect with the core belief fueling the shame. This validated our sense of terror. We practiced lovingly connecting with ourselves to determine what we needed to feel safe again. We thought, “what would we say to or do with our own beloved child or best friend if they were experiencing this sense of fear and shame?” We also discovered that it is not easy to monitor and modify fear and shame when our bodies are hyper or hypo aroused. The thinking part of our brain goes “offline” when the fight-flight response sets in. Additionally, a critical, shaming internal voice often sets in when we are in this vulnerable state (Farrel & Shaw, 2018).

2. This week we will bring images of loving and protective figures into our Safe Place (Parnell, 2013) and learn a tool to help us respond to ourselves with compassion and loving-kindness (Neff et al., 2018). When we are in the presence of someone who loves us and shines their face of love upon us, feelings of fear-shame recede (Parnell, 2013).
3. You are worthy of love, protection, honoring, truth-based mentoring, validation, and rest/refreshment/play. These are normal, human, life-long emotional needs (Farrel & Shaw, 2018).
4. Although the world can be harsh at times and feel like an unsafe “holding environment,” (Winicott, 1984) we can learn to cultivate a quiet core self. We can get back “home” to love and safety (Siegel, 2010).
5. Session four also focuses on how past and future-oriented thinking, as well as self-criticism, impact fear-shame. Self-criticism activates the threat response, which then triggers coping mechanisms that do not meet our actual needs (Farrel & Shaw, 2018).

6. We can learn how to bring our focus back to the present moment when fear and shame activate. We can learn to monitor self-criticism and transform it into self-compassion (Neff et al., 2018).
7. We can cultivate a quiet heart when fear-shame activates. We can get back to feeling safe and lovable. We can figure out what we need and connect with ourselves and others who are safe and loving.

Creative Activity 1: Safe Place with Loving, Protective Person(s)

Instructions:

We'll begin with a time of anchoring, as done in the CEI, including depicting yourself in Safe Place. Next, we will invite into your Safe Place a person or persons (i.e., from your present life, history, imagination, culture-spirituality) who you feel unconditionally loves and protects you. Imagine this person or persons loving, smiling face shining on you. Experience their desire to protect you from all harm and all who would harm you. See if this soothes and calms you. Depict this experience any way you'd like. If no one emerges for you right now, no worries, just focus on letting a sense of love and safety encompass you. A loving and protective person may emerge later or even on another day.

Following the art activity, allow members to briefly share what they are comfortable sharing about the experience with the group. If the group is larger than five or six, pair members up to take turns listening and sharing.

Creative Activity 2: The Creative Self-Compassion Tool (CSCT)

To prepare group members to use the CSCT, provide the following, or similar psychoeducation:

Psychoeducation:

When anxiety is activated, we think in black and white or all-or-nothing ways (Barlow et al.,

2011). We worry about what we did in the past or think about possible catastrophic events in the future. If we listen carefully to the content of these thoughts, we will likely notice that it is often unkind and critical, like a demanding and harsh bully (Farrell & Shaw, 2018). Oftentimes, we do not realize it as bullying, but it is. Like all forms of bullying, it causes a tremendous amount of emotional pain. However, we can learn to observe and modify these negative automatic thoughts as we notice them.

In this group, we are learning to observe fear-shame thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations, and modify them using calming, soothing skills. Today, we want to start cultivating a calm, present-focused and compassionate relationship with ourselves. Research reveals that these mindfulness and self-compassion skills are vital to shame resiliency (Neff & Dahm, 2014). Mindfulness is having “a non-judgmental, receptive mind state in which one observes thoughts and feelings as they are, without trying to suppress or deny them” (Neff, 2020, para. 3). Self-compassion involves “being warm and understanding toward ourselves when we suffer, fail, or feel inadequate, rather than ignoring our pain or flagellating ourselves with self-criticism” (Neff, 2020, para. 1). Instead of engaging with “the bully,” we can learn to engage with ourselves with mindfulness and self-compassion. We can conceptualize this as activating the healthy adult part of ourselves to connect with and calm the vulnerable child-like part of ourselves (Farrel & Shaw, 2018).

The Creative Self-Compassion Tool (CSCT)

Instructions:

Visualize and depict your safe place in the center of a sheet of paper with art supplies. Next, remember a recent time when you felt fear-shame. Focus your attention on the thoughts you had during that anxiety provoking event. Notice thoughts that are self-critical, demanding, perfectionistic, judging of self or others, or past/future-oriented. Observe the impact these thoughts have on your feelings (bodily sensations) and emotions. Depict, using the art supplies, the thoughts, feelings, and

bodily sensations that represent the critical attitudes toward the self that emerged on the left side of your paper. Reflect on how these attitudes keep you from being in the present moment and compassionately accepting yourself and others. Next, gently and lovingly see yourself as complete, whole, and free from any worry or judgment as you focus back on your safe place. Practice self-calming techniques to bring peace to your thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations. On the right side of the paper, use the art supplies to depict compassionate responses to each of the specific critical attitudes that you wrote on the left side of the paper. To help with this, ask yourself questions like, “How would I respond to my best friend? What would I say to a child I dearly love?”

Be mindful that this may be the first-time participants hear of the concept of self-compassion and that the idea of having a warm and kind relationship with oneself may feel foreign or even uncomfortable.

For the closing round, ask group members what the take-home message was for them this week and what they want to focus on in the week to come.

Session 5: Rewriting the Shame Narrative

Session five focuses on understanding how shame took root and how, together, we can bring it into the light of love.

The goals of this session are (1) to help members develop, explore, express, and process their “shame narrative” and the impact these events had on them; (2) support members in grieving about the abuse/trauma; (3) increase members’ understanding of the connections between these past experiences and their current thoughts, feelings, urges, and actions; (4) deepen members compassion toward themselves and one another; and (5) reframe the impact of these toxic experiences to include “the rest of the story” of their courage, strength, resilience, and unique selfhood (Meichenbaum, 2006).

Start the session as outlined in session one, providing members with the session five handout. After the open art time, conduct the opening round as done in previous weeks. Following the opening round, present the key points for the session, these include:

Key Points:

1. This week, we will focus on how shame took root.
2. The fear-shame related thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations you sometimes have are shadows from the past, triggered by internal and external experiences in the present.
3. At the root of our shame are unkind critical “voices” (from within or without) and memories of being teased, put down in front of others, bullied, or experiencing interpersonal abuse, marginalization, or violence. These memories are stored in our bodies, activate unconsciously, and still impact our current thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and behaviors.

4. Exploring our experiences, understanding the impact they've had, and sharing them with caring and supportive people, who will also honor our privacy, knits us together (because we've all been shamed) and helps us activate and understand the "rest of the story" of who we are.

Creative Activity: Rewriting the Shame Narrative

The following psychoeducation provides information to group members about this activity.

Psychoeducation

Today, we will focus on recognizing how shame took root. The thoughts, emotions, and body sensations you experience that are related to fear-shame are echoes and shadows from the past that are triggered in the present. The root of shame includes unkind and critical voices and memories of past experiences. These memories are stored in our body and activated in the present, impacting our current thoughts, feelings, actions, and body sensations. We can return to our core selves and understand the story of who we are by exploring our experiences, understanding the impact of these experiences, and sharing them with safe, caring, and supportive people.

Instructions:

To develop your shame narrative for sharing, we will start with anchoring and depicting your safe place. Next, while remembering that others are here to support you as you face the pain of the past, watch the 'movie' of how shame took root over your lifetime. What events, situations, people, words, or experiences contributed to your sense of shame? Depict these events and experiences around your safe place, returning to safety and grounding as often as you need to. Consider additional influences that contributed to your sense of shame, such as cultural messages about gender, race, "beauty," ethnicity, sexuality, etc. Use any form of creative arts to elaborate on the impact these

experiences had on your thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations about yourself. Return to your safe place, recognizing the power of being unashamed in the safety of that place. Together, we will discuss what stood out to you from this activity and how we can support you as you fight against the power of shame.

Following the art activity, allow members to share what they are comfortable sharing with the group. If the group is larger than five or six, pair members up to take turns listening and sharing. It is important to take time to process members' experiences.

As always, for the closing round ask members to share what was most meaningful to them in the session today. What do they want to remember and practice between sessions?

Closing point to share with group: Experiences of shaming cause us to expect to be shamed. However, at any time, we can choose to be still, know, and embrace the truth of our worth, dignity, and unique beauty.

Session 6: Review, Present Moment Awareness, and Maintenance Plan

In this final session, participants develop a maintenance plan to help them continue to live free from the power of fear-shame. The goals for today's session are (1) to review the CAPG experience; (2) learn a final creative tool for fear and shame regulation; and (3) develop an aftercare plan to maintain gains made in counseling and to continue to grow.

Start the session as outlined in session one, providing members with the session six handout. After the open art time conduct the opening round as done in previous weeks. Following the opening round, present the key points for the session:

Key Points:

1. This week we learn a final tool to bring compassion to ourselves when fear and shame activate called the Embodied Present Moment Awareness Tool. This activity enables us to return to the present when the mind wanders to fearful memories from the past or fearful expectations for the future. Studies show that practicing these skills helps diminish anxiety and shame (Neff & Dahm, 2014).
2. You've worked hard in this group to learn about and practice regulating fear-shame. In order to maintain the gains you've made, it is important for you to keep practicing these tools regularly. Therefore, today, you will develop a personal maintenance plan.

Let the group know that a final tool we can use to bring calm and compassion to ourselves when fear and shame activate is present moment awareness. Present mindedness and self-compassion play integral roles in recovery (Neff & Germer, 2017, Neff et al., 2018).

Creative Activity: The Embodied Present Moment Awareness Tool (EPMAT)

Instructions:

Focus inward and allow peace to flow through you in this moment. Notice how this feels throughout your body and what you are sensing. Now, notice what you feel when you sit up straight and feel your feet grounded on the floor, and what you feel when you slightly smile. Next, picture loving-kindness, protection, and safety as a color flowing to every part of you. Allow yourself to stay focused on being safe and accepted in this present moment. Notice the color of love, safety, and freedom. If your mind wanders to the past or the future, just gently and lovingly bring the focus back to the present moment. Try to deepen this sense of being loved, safe, and free. Using art, take a few moments to depict this feeling.

Following the art activity, allow members to share what they are comfortable sharing with the group. If the group is larger than five or six, pair members up to take turns listening and sharing.

Next, lead the group members in developing a plan for continued growth to sustain a loved and shame-free state of being. For this last activity, have members depict themselves in their safe place. Ask them to consider biological, psychological, social, spiritual, cultural, and other tools they can use to help them remain in a compassionate, fear-shame free state. Ask them to depict these around their safe place.

Again, following the art activity, allow members to share what they are comfortable sharing with the group.

Close by discussing in a round-robin what was most meaningful about this group, and what each member wants to remember and continue to practice. Celebrate their successes and participation in the group! Find a creative way to end the group well.

Table 1:

CAPG: Session Overview

GOALS	INTERVENTIONS
Session 1	
<p>GOALS: (1) to promote safety and connection in the group; (2) provide psychoeducation about the impact of bullying and marginalization on thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and sense of self; and (3) introduce anchoring skills and record keeping to support emotion regulation and promote shame resilience.</p>	<p>INTERVENTIONS: Leaders distribute and explain how to use the Trigger Processing Chart (Sosin & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2016) between sessions to record triggers, disturbing thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations, and to track progress over time.</p> <p>Anchoring skills are deep breathing, systematic relaxation, imaginal safe place, and depicting safe place with art. The purpose of anchoring is to calm and soothe the mind and body when triggers activate fear and shame.</p>
Session 2	
<p>GOALS: (1) to increase awareness and acceptance of members' strength narrative; (2) to increase awareness and acceptance of</p>	<p>INTERVENTIONS: Psychoeducation highlights the value of each members' unique identity and how solidifying and accepting one's identity helps</p>

<p>authentic self/identity and their groundedness.</p>	<p>develop shame resilience and congruence between daily choices and identity (Brown, 2006).</p> <p>After anchoring, members reflect on salient features of their identity and what is important to them (i.e., values, ethnicity, gender, culture, family, interests, talents) and depict these features with art supplies, followed by member sharing and support.</p>
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Session 3

<p>GOALS: (1) to deepen connection between group members; (2) increase knowledge and skills needed to transform fear and shame into compassionate connection with self and others; (3) promote meaning and purpose</p>	<p>INTERVENTIONS: Psychoeducation focuses on developing a toolbox for monitoring and modifying fear and shame and living congruently. Leaders stress how all people should be treated with loving-kindness, that bullying is an act of hate, and that they are safe now with the right to have a relationship with themselves and others that is loving and kind (Neff & Germer, 2017, Neff et al., 2018).</p> <p>The activity for session three is the Creative Exposure Intervention (CEI), described in detail in Sosin and Rockinson-Szapkiw (2016). The CEI entails</p>
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	<p>anchoring, as described in session one, and creating the safe place depiction. Next, around the safe place depiction, members portray with art a specific memory of when they were bullied, including details of what was said and done, what they thought and felt at the time, and the message the experience taught them about themselves.</p> <p>After depicting the memory, members re-anchor as they imagine themselves in their safe place.</p> <p>Members share the memory depictions and messages and then offer one another suggestions about how to bring loving-kindness and compassion into the memory. These new messages are then illustrated or written on the paper.</p>
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Session 4

GOALS: (1) to deepen connection between group members; (2) increase knowledge and skills needed to transform fear and shame into compassionate connection with self and others.

INTERVENTIONS: Introduce a safe, protective figure to the safe place, real or imagined, as suggested by Parnell (2013). Group sharing follows. Session three and four activities are forms of exposure treatment, that prepare members to explore, experience, and re-story their shame narrative in session five.

Members imagine themselves in their safe place with the safe figure, taking time to experience a sense of safety and unconditional love, and then portray the experience on paper with art. Next, they focus their attention on a memory of being bullied or marginalized, as they did with the CEI, depicting the disturbing thoughts, feelings, body, sensations, and core beliefs on the paper resulting from the memory. Focusing attention back on safe place and protective figure, they then imagine how the protective figure would intervene and comfort them. Finally, they practice responding to themselves with the same loving-kindness that

	<p>these figures would show them, depicting this on the paper as well.</p>
<p>Session 5</p>	
<p>GOALS: (1) to help members develop, explore, express, and process their “shame narrative” and awareness of the impact these events had on them; (2) support members in grieving about the abuse; (3) increase members’ understanding of the connections between these past experiences and their current thoughts, feelings, urges, and actions; (4) deepen members’ compassion towards themselves and one another; (5) reframe the impact to include “the rest of the story” (Meichenbaum, 2006).</p>	<p>INTERVENTIONS: Members first use anchoring skills to depict themselves in their safe place with art. Group leaders then guide members in visualizing a timeline of life experiences that led to their feelings of fear and shame (i.e., experiences of teasing, unkindness, bullying, marginalization, interpersonal violence, abuse). Members depict these experiences with art supplies or writing, as desired. When done, they focus their attention back on safe place and begin to consider what impact these experiences had on their thoughts, feelings, and sense of identity in the present, portraying them on the paper.</p> <p>Engage in group processing.</p>

Session 6

GOALS: (1) to review the CAPG experience; (2) learn a final creative tool for fear and shame regulation; (3) develop an aftercare plan to maintain gains made in counseling and to continue to grow.

INTERVENTIONS: Psychoeducation entails how developing a cohesive narrative about their traumatizing interpersonal experiences helps to resolve fear and shame induced by trauma (Meichenbaum, 2006).

Leaders first review key psychoeducational principles taught throughout CAPG. Next, they present the Embodied Present Moment Awareness Tool (EPMAT). The EPMAT is a creative arts activity designed to help members cultivate a calm and compassionate sense of present moment awareness. Members learn about the relationship between present mindedness, self-compassion, and recovery (Neff & Germer, 2017; Neff et al., 2018).

They then practice this skill by anchoring and then focusing on allowing peace, loving-kindness, and compassionate acceptance to flow through them in the present moment. Competing thoughts are viewed as bubbles that come into awareness and then float away. Allowing themselves to stay

	<p>compassionately present-minded, members apply art to depict and then share their experience.</p> <p>Following the art activity, members discuss what was helpful and meaningful to them about CAPG and work together to create a personalized aftercare plan to maintain what they've learned and continue to grow.</p>
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Conclusion

Thank you for your interest in the Creative Arts Personal Growth Group. We hope that you and your clients find this treatment protocol a creative and meaningful way to identify experiences of fear and shame, begin to know their core selves, and meet their needs for love and safety. Our deepest hope is that your clients find great relief as they practice these tools.

Warmly,

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Appendix

Creative Arts Personal Growth Group

Screening Documents

Group Guidelines

Demographic Form

Session Hand-Outs

Session 1 Handout

Session 2 Handout

Session 3 Handout

Session 4 Handout

Session 5 Handout

Session 6 Handout

Session Evaluation Form

Group Counseling Evaluation Form

Screening Documents

Group Guidelines

- Please come on time every week
- Please attend every week. If you can't attend, notify us via email. You will be missed.
- Please be fully present in the group (instead of using cell phone or other devices during group).
We need your input and presence.
- Please understand my role as leader. Don't take it personally if I:
 - Scan the group when you are sharing. I am checking to see how our group is reacting, who wants to speak next, and keeping all involved. I am still actively listening to you.
 - Refocus on the purpose of the group if someone takes us off track.
 - "Cut off" a member if they've shared too long. I've got to make sure everyone has a chance to share.
 - "Cut off" an activity so I can be sure we get to everything planned.
- Please be a part of making this a safe, diversity-celebrating, supportive community by being kind, thoughtful, inclusive, and non-pressuring (I know you will be but I am just making it clear that these are my expectations).
- Please participate in weekly opening sharing, weekly activities, and closing sharing. Moreover, share with the entire group, not just the leaders, by looking around at everyone. We will be modeling this too. This is to make sure everyone feels included.
- Please honor the confidentiality of group members by not discussing personal things shared in group, with people outside of the group. Feel free to discuss what you are learning with others, just avoid talking about other people who are in the group with you.

- If you feel sad, hurt, or angry about anything that takes place in the group, please let me know right away. We are here to help you feel safe, accepted, and honored. Whatever you do, please don't drop out of the group because you are upset about something.
- The purpose of this group is to help members recover from shame and become "shame resilient." Here is a summary of the focus of each weekly session. Each activity has a creative arts component (you will be able to select how you want to express yourself, i.e., art medium, poem, story, song, dance, writing, etc.).
 - Week One: Community: Creating a 'Village of Safety'
 - Week Two: Knowing, Being, and Celebrating Your True Self
 - Week Three: Creative Shame Resiliency I
 - Week Four: Creative Shame Resiliency II
 - Week Five: Developing a Narrative: How Shame Took Root and Uprooting It
 - Week Six: Review, Present Moment Awareness, and Maintenance Plan

Demographic Form

Confidential Background Questionnaire

1. Age _____
2. Gender (Circle One): Male Female Other _____
3. Please circle one of the following to indicate your primary ethnic identity:
 - a. African American
 - b. Asian American
 - c. White, non-Hispanic
 - d. White, Hispanic
 - e. Middle Eastern
 - f. Bi-racial: _____
 - g. Other: _____
4. Do you have a disability (Circle One) Yes No

If yes, would you share what the disability is?

5. What is your religion/spirituality?
6. What is your country of origin?
7. Parent's country of origin? (if you know)
8. Grandparent's country of origin? (if you know)
9. Sexual orientation:
 - a. Heterosexual
 - b. Part of the LGBTQI communities

10. Have you ever experienced teasing, bullying, or other forms of aggression or interpersonal violence? (Circle One): Yes No

If yes, did this result in feelings of shame about aspects of yourself? (Circle One): Yes No

11. What kind of area were you raised? (Circle all that apply): Rural Small Town Suburban
Urban Other:

- a. Marital status:
- b. Married
- c. Separated
- d. Divorced
- e. Never married
- f. Other _____

12. Marital status of parents

- a. Married
- b. Separated
- c. Divorced
- d. Never married
- e. Other _____

13. Do you work? (Circle One): Yes No

If yes, what do you do (paid or otherwise)

14. Any other demographic information you'd like to share:

Thank you!

To get a general idea of a symptom severity, we give potential members the DSM-5 Cross

Cutting Level One Symptom Measure and WHODAS inventories (available online). We discuss any high items with members. Members with items that are high should also be in individual counseling to receive the level of support they need (ACA, 2014).

Session 1 Handout

Key Message: You can cultivate a quiet heart and find safety anytime.

Commitment to make your core self: No harshness at all.

Key Points

1. Feeling safe, accepted, valued, included, and loved is a normal, human biological-emotional need (Farrel & Shaw, 2018).
2. Shame is the opposite of feeling safe, accepted, valued, included, and loved as we are (Brown, 2013). All people experience shame at times, and it makes sense that we do. We have not always been treated with loving-kindness by others or ourselves.
3. Shame activates the central nervous system's fight, flight, and freeze response and a set of rapidly firing intolerable thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations (Brown, 2006).
4. Because shame is intolerable, we sometimes develop coping mechanisms (CM) to manage it that do not meet our needs for connection and acceptance (Farrel & Shaw, 2018).
5. When we take the time to connect with our core self, calm our bodies, come back into the present moment, and sort out our minds, we can think clearly and respond to ourselves with the same loving-kindness and compassion we give to others. In addition, quieting our bodies and minds enables us to figure out what we need and how we can meet our needs in a manner that aligns with our true self and values (Neff et al., 2018).
6. The "Window of Tolerance" (WOT) is the range of activation where we feel we can function well. CM may give us a "faux window," a semblance of being in the WOT when we are not. Grounding or anchoring skills help us return to our genuine window. Breathwork, learning to control the speed of the in-breath and out-breath, is critical for regulating the nervous system (Jill, 2017).

7. The anchoring activities we will learn today enable us to calm and soothe our bodies when we become activated. The more we practice them, the better we will get at deactivating fear and shame (Siegel, 2010).

Creative Activity: Anchoring

Deep Breathing:

Instructions: Let us begin by closing our eyes and focusing on our breath. If closing your eyes is not comfortable for you, please find a spot in the room to focus on. As we begin noticing our breath, slowly and deeply take in a breath for four (4) counts ...1...2...3...4..., hold your breath for seven (7) counts ...1...2...3...4...5...6...7..., and slowly and thoroughly exhale for eight (8) counts ...1...2...3...4...5...6...7...8. As you breathe, allow your stomach to rise...not your chest. We want to take full, deep breaths. Again, let's take in a breath for four (4) counts ...1...2...3...4..., hold for seven (7) ...1...2...3...4...5...6...7..., and slowly and thoroughly exhale for eight (8) counts ...1...2...3...4...5...6...7...8...

Note to group leader: Continue this activity for 2-3 minutes. The most important part of this activity is the exhale to activate the parasympathetic nervous system.

Systematic Relaxation:

Instructions: Let us begin by closing our eyes and focusing on our breath. If closing your eyes is not comfortable for you, please find a spot in the room to focus on. Notice the top of your head. Notice any sensations or tension that you may have there. Gently allow relaxation to come to the top of your head. (Pause) Now, move your attention to your forehead. If you feel tension there, soften the experience by imagining that you can breathe into this part of your body. (Pause) Now, let's move to our eyes. Notice any tension there. Soften the muscles around your eyes. Allow the relaxation to come in. If you notice your mind wandering, that is okay. Gently bring your attention back to your breath and allow calmness and relaxation to fill your body.

Note to group leader: Continue this script through the various parts of the body: Cheeks, mouth, jaws, neck, back of the head, entire head, shoulders, upper arms, biceps, forearms, wrists, hands, fingers, upper back, lower back, chest, stomach, waist, hips, pelvic area, bottom (seat), upper legs, knees, lower legs, ankles, feet, toes, and entire body.

When you are ready, gently open your eyes and take in a good breath.

Imaginal Safe Place:

Instructions: Let us begin by closing our eyes and focusing on our breath. If closing your eyes is not comfortable for you, please find a spot in the room to focus on. Next, visualize opening a door that leads you to a calm, safe place in your mind. This safe place can be a memory, a place you would like to visit (e.g., beach), or an imaginary place. As you create this safe space, focus on what you see (pause), hear (pause), feel (touch; pause), smell (pause), and taste (if anything; pause). Allow yourself to feel this experience deeply within your body. Take your time to enjoy this calm, safe place.

Note to group leader: Take time to move through the five senses. Take time to accentuate each sense by exploring the various aspects. For instance, notice what you see, the colors, shapes, lighting.

Self in Safe Place Depiction:

Instructions:

1. Visualize and depict your safe place in the center of a sheet of paper with the art supplies.
2. Depict yourself in your safe place where you feel safe and loved just as you are.
3. Note that it does not matter what your art looks like.
4. Allow yourself to feel this experience deeply within your body.
5. Take your time to enjoy this calm, safe place.

After each anchoring skill, take time to process the participants' experiences.

Questions to consider asking participants during the processing rounds: What did engaging in this activity feel like for you? Is there anything you can do to make these activities more effective in calming and soothing you?

Distribute the NICABM Window of Tolerance (WOT) handout (NICABM, 2019). Briefly describe the Window of Tolerance and discuss the role of using anchoring skills instead of CM to return to the WOT when dysregulated.

After processing, conduct a closing round: In a few sentences (i.e., 2-4), what was most meaningful to you in our session today? What do you want to remember and practice between sessions? Is there anything you want to say to another member of the group to encourage and support them?

Before closing the session, provide group members with a copy of the Trigger Processing Chart to practice anchoring skills and monitoring and modifying fear and shame between sessions. The chart's purpose is for members to begin to conceptualize the link between fear and shame triggers and corresponding thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations, and to use the "tools" they will learn in CAPG to

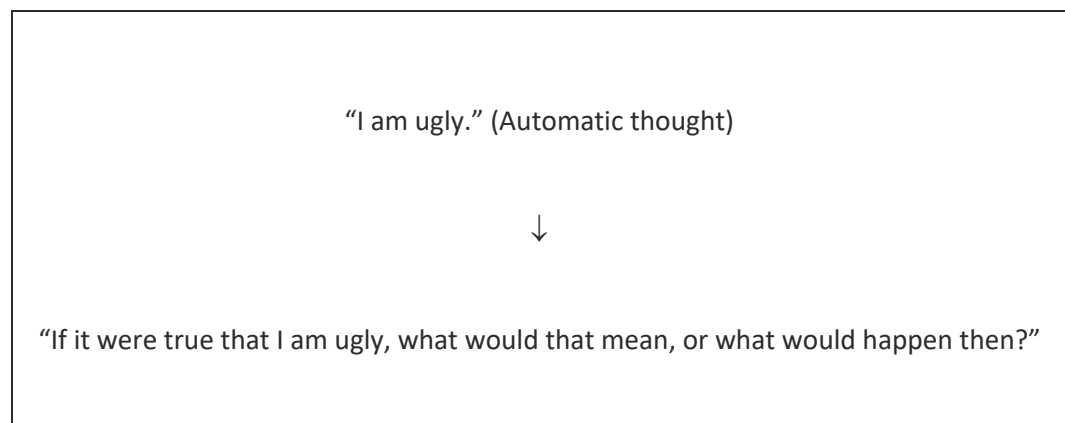
"deactivate" fear and shame symptoms.

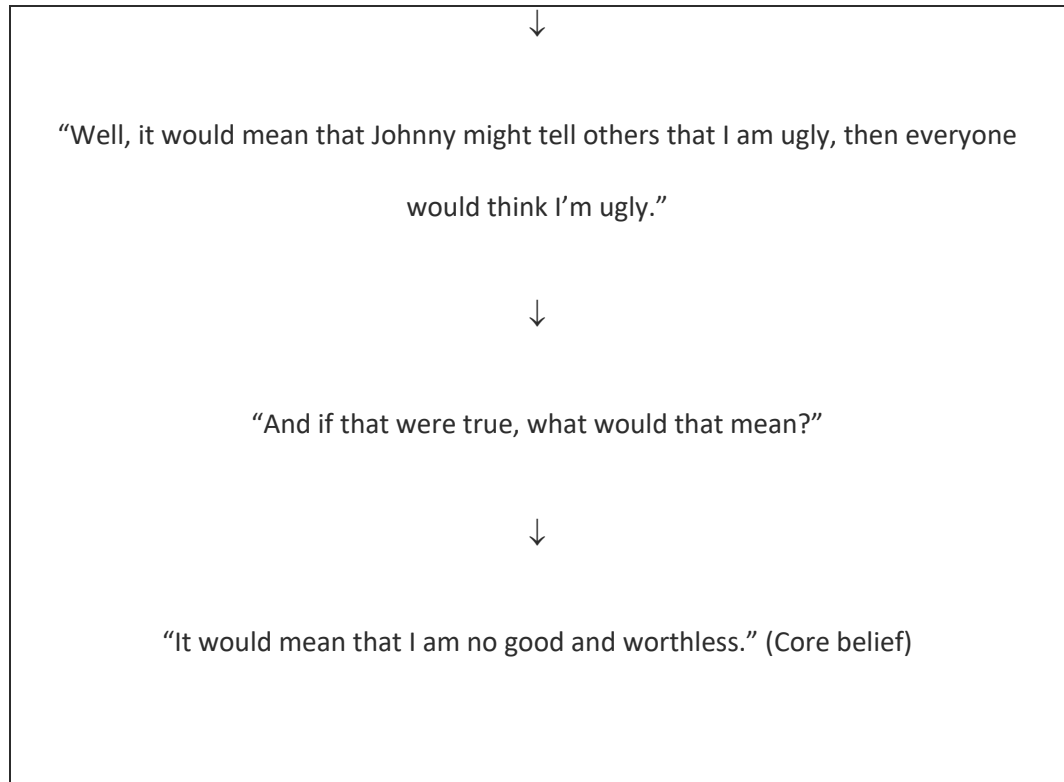
The CAPG Trigger Chart

Instructions: We will use this chart to process fear-shame-provoking experiences from the week. To practice, select an event that triggered fear-shame for you this week. Take time to record and process each column as outlined on the form. In Column 1, record the date and time of the disturbing event. In Column 2, briefly describe the disturbing event. In Column 3, record the feelings you had during the event and rate the distress level of each feeling using the SUDS scale (Wolpe, 1969). SUDS stands for Subjective Units of Distress and provides a fear-shame level rating from 1-10, where 1 means little or no fear-shame and 10 is the highest level of fear-shame. In Column 4, list the automatic thoughts you had. Selecting the most disturbing thought first, use the Downward Arrow Technique to get to the core fear-shame provoking belief (Beck, 1995). Getting to the core beliefs under the surface thoughts will help you understand why you feel so distressed.

Figure 1

Example of the Downward Arrow Technique





Once you identify the core, rate the Belief Level (BL) (Barlow, 2014), in other words, how true the core belief feels based on a 1-10 scale, where 1 means untrue and 10 means completely true. Now, we will practice lowering the SUDS and BLs. First, imagine the disturbing event and the thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations. Next, focus on the core disturbing belief and how uncomfortable you feel. Refocus on your safe place after a moment or two [the leader takes the group through all four anchoring skills described above]. Now, [after anchoring is complete] in Column 5, write down the anchoring skills just used. Notice if you feel safer and less anxious. Ask yourself what would help me feel even safer? What do I need regarding this trigger to feel safe, peaceful, and unashamed? Do I need to connect with a loving friend? Go for a walk? Journal? Listen to or play music? Be out in nature? Apply a spiritual or cultural practice? Finally, in Column 6, re-rate the SUDS for each feeling charted in Column 3 and the BL for each thought charted in Column 4. After completing this with the most disturbing

thought, do likewise with other thoughts related to the triggered fear-shame.

Figure 2

The CAPG Trigger Processing Chart with Columns 1-4 completed (Sosin & Rockinson-Szapikw, 2016, p.39)

Column 1:	Column 2:	Column 3:	Column 4:	Column 5:	Column 6:
Date and Time	Disturbing Event (External [interpersonal situation] or Internal [i.e., memory, thought, feeling])	Feeling/s with Significant Units of Disturbance (SUDS) (Rate: 1-10)	Automatic Thought/s Images with Belief Levels (BL) (Rate: 1-10)	Creative Exposure (or use of other bio-psycho-social-diversity tools) Used to Decrease SUDS and BL	After Creative Exposure (or use of another tool) (SUDS & BL Rate 1-10)
Late September	“Vulture” incident	Fear and Panic SUDS: 10 Shame SUDS: 10 Unworthiness SUDS: 9	I am ugly BL: 8 I am fat BL: 8 I am worthy of being treated this way BL: 7 I am unsafe BL: 9		

Window of Tolerance

Hyperarousal

The 'fight or flight' response in which you experience intense anger or anxiety and feel that you are not in control. You feel overwhelmed and unable to cope with the intense emotions.

Dysregulation

You start to feel upset, angry, anxious, or overwhelmed. It feels like you are starting to lose control and it is difficult to regulate your emotions.

Window of Tolerance

You feel regulated and calm in your body. You can cope with stressors and circumstances and can use healthy coping tools. You can stay focused. This window becomes narrower as a result of trauma, and can expand as a result of treatment and connection.

Dysregulation

You start to feel zoned out, shut down, or disconnected. It feels like you are starting to lose control and it is difficult to regulate your emotions.

Hypoarousal

The 'freeze' response in which you are zoned out, disconnected, unaware, or numb. This is not a conscious decision you make.

(NICABM, 2019)

Session 2 Handout

Theme: Knowing, being, and celebrating your core identity.

Opening Round: In a few sentences (i.e., 2-4) please share your reactions and thoughts that emerged about and since our last session.

Key Message: It takes courage, loving-kindness, time, and support to know and live in and from our authentic selves.

Commitment to make to your core self: I will practice responding to myself with loving-kindness. I will make every effort to soothe and calm myself. I will fight the good fight to know, be, and celebrate my true self.

Key Points:

1. The anchoring techniques we learned last week help to regulate our Autonomic Nervous System when fear and shame activate (Jill, 2017). By practicing these skills regularly, we can learn to cultivate a quiet heart when we feel fear or shame.
2. Because fear and shame feels intolerable, sometimes we turn to maladaptive coping mechanisms (CM) to help soothe ourselves. This group is safe to talk about these behaviors no matter what they are. We can support and encourage one another to shift from automatic coping to healthy coping that meets our real emotional needs.
3. When shame activates, we have an opportunity to soothe ourselves and “get back to” our core, healthy self. Our core, healthy self is always with us. In this group we will explore, celebrate, honor, and encourage one another to have the courage to know and be ourselves (Brown, 2006). Knowing who we are helps us to “get back home” (back in to the “Window of Tolerance”; NICBM, 2019) more quickly when shame activates. We know who we are and who we aren’t.

4. In order to be our healthy, core selves, we need to know, value, and have support to be our true selves. Today's creative arts activity helps us to discover, explore, and honor our core self by sharing aspects of our identity with one another.
5. It takes courage, loving-kindness, time, and support to know and live from who we are in this world.
6. Today's creative and expressive arts activity is derived from a narrative therapy exercise called The Tree of Life (Denborough, 2014).
7. Once you get a sense that everyone understands the key points, present the creative activity.

Creative Activity: Connecting with, Celebrating, and Sharing the "Rest of the Story" Through Creative and Expressive Arts

Instructions:

Let's begin with the set of anchoring skills learned last session: deep breathing, systematic relaxation, and safe place. Next depict a tree of strengths and beauty:

Start with an outline of a tree and branches. Include the following on your tree:

1. The Ground: Life giving persons and the foundational support that give/gave you (can be spiritual, heroes in your life, people from whom you've learned (i.e., mentors, authors, books, courses [classes], teachers, characters in movies/books, friends, pets).
2. The Roots: Life giving aspects of your culture, ethnicity, values, beliefs, morals that shaped your youth.

3. The Trunk: Your skills, talents, things you find refreshing and fun (ways you like to play), strength and courage you see in your life history and today (travel abroad, acts of kindness, serving others, love and generosity, vocation, hard work, accomplishments, education, etc.).
4. The Branches: Your aspirational dreams, wishes, hopes, and goals (personal or professional).
5. The Leaves and Flowers: the kind, affirming, and life-giving things people have said about you or the way you sensed they feel/felt about you-draw on people across the whole of your life; picture their smiling faces. Also, the material and/or aspirational attributes (i.e., creativity, humility, courage, love, etc.) write down their names.
6. The Birds: What you want to take flight from your life: fruit you want to bear in terms of characteristics, the legacy you want to pass forward to others (can be on the tree or flying around).
7. Your tree is something you can add to overtime as you become more aware of the remarkable you that you are and are becoming (Denborough, 2014).

Prior to the closing round ask group members to make the following commitment to their core self: "I will value time observing my thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations. I will practice responding to myself with loving-kindness. I will make every effort to soothe and calm myself. I will fight the good fight to know, be, and celebrate my true self."

Closing Round: In a few sentences (i.e., 2-4) what was most meaningful to you in our session today?

What do you want to remember and practice between sessions?

Reflective Survey: Please send back the reflective survey before the next session.

Session 3 Handout

Theme: You can learn creative tools to strengthen and honor your core self, respond to your feelings with loving-kindness, and find relief from shame.

Opening Round: In a few sentences, please share your reactions and thoughts that emerged about and since your last session.

Key Message: You can patiently explore, understand, and compassionately respond to your feelings.

Commitment to make to your core self: I can take time to connect with myself. I can respond to myself with compassion, patience, and loving kindness.

Key Points:

1. In this session and the next, we learn tools to help us creatively monitor the energy and attention of our mind and nervous system (Siegel, 2010; 2017) so that we can decrease fear and shame. This entails (a) practicing soothing our minds and bodies when fear and shame activates so we can think and feel clearly; (b) taking time to sort out our thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations; (c) feel and validate (accept) our feelings; and (d) determine what we need and meet our underlying emotional needs.
2. It takes courage, support, time, and energy to learn and use these tools. All people should be treated with loving-kindness. Know that you have the right to have a relationship with yourself and others that is loving and kind (Neff & Germer, 2017; Neff et al., 2018).
3. Feelings (i.e., sad, mad, glad, afraid, shame) are biological. When activated they “message us” that there may be something we need to attend to.

4. If a need (love and security, validation of feelings and needs, autonomy and identity, realistic limits, and spontaneity/play/refreshment; Farrel & Shaw, 2018) arises, we can learn to effectively meet the need.
5. When needs go unmet, feelings and beliefs related to them may get “buried alive,” waiting for closure. In these cases, coping mechanisms (CM) may kick in to give us a sense of faux security. CMs don’t meet the actual need; however, they temporarily make us feel safe (Farrel & Shaw, 2018).
6. We can learn to slow down, assess what our feelings are telling us, and respect and meet our needs according to our healthy, adult values. Today’s creative activity will help us with this.
7. When learning to respond to our needs and attend to our core self, meaning and purpose can be fostered through the use of diversity affirming creative and expressive arts.

Today we will learn a creative way to monitor internal activity called the *Creative Exposure Intervention* (CEI) (Sosin & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2016). The CEI enables us to monitor shame triggers, attend to the thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations activated by them, and to compassionately bring ourselves back into our “Window of Tolerance” (WOT) (Ogden et al., 2006). This allows us to go through the “tunnel” of our experience instead of avoiding it and resorting to CM. Each time we take the time to attend to this process and meet our emotional needs in adaptive, compassionate, values-based ways we become stronger; remaining in our WOT enables us to receive, process, and integrate information effectively (Siegel, 2010).

Creative Activity: The Creative Exposure Intervention (CEI)

Instructions:

1. Visualize and depict your safe place in the center of a sheet of paper with art supplies.
2. Activate a shame trigger by remembering a recent time when you felt shame.
3. Attend mindfully to your thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations.
4. Express this memory on paper on a “movie screen” outside of your safe place, including the disturbing thoughts and feelings activated.
5. Thoughts: Depict these any way that truthfully represents them. For each disturbing thought use the Downward Arrow (see session one) to get to the root of these. Using the downward arrow technique to unearth core beliefs validates the intensity of the fear and shame. As usual, it does not matter what your art looks like, it is for you.
6. Feelings: In addition to the thoughts, depict or write out the feelings, emotions, and body sensations you had at the time of the memory. Notice if there is a harsh, shaming voice within you. Notice where in your body you feel these sensations. Try to bring space to it, soften it, and compassionately observe it. Don’t move away from the pain. Compassionately and curiously sit with it as you would a beloved child.
7. Relax again, focusing back on your safe place. From there, reflect on what you depicted. Consider how you might lovingly and kindly soothe yourself regarding this disturbing event. For instance, what would you say to someone you love who shared this experience with you? How would you respond if someone you loved had these thoughts in response to this shaming event? How would you help them with the disturbing feelings they were having? How can you bring warmth to soften and soothe the distress so as to meet your need for unconditional love and safety? Ask yourself, “What do I need?”

8. Additionally, consider how you might bring hope, peace, meaning, and love into this moment by applying a cultural or spiritual practice that you enjoy: “Is there a way I can apply a cultural or spiritual practice that I enjoy?” “Is there a way I can apply a cultural or spiritual practice that might foster a sense of hope and peace even in the midst of this distress?” You may want to find a song that reflects your experience or write one. Perhaps you feel like moving, dancing, or shaking off the feelings. You may want to write a poem, journal or have an imaginary conversation with someone to express your thoughts and feelings.
9. Next, artistically depict the answers to these questions around the safe place using the art supplies in any way you feel moved to. Continue depicting the depth of your experience until you feel complete.

Closing Round: In a few sentences (i.e., 2-4) what was most meaningful to you in our session today?

What do you want to remember and practice between sessions?

Reflective Survey: Please send back the reflective survey before the next session.

Session 4 Handout

Theme: The theme of session four is accessing compassion and protection. Fear and shame can't stand up to loving-kindness and emotional safety.

So far in CAPG we learned anchoring skills to find peace and safety whenever we need to. The more we practice breathing deeply, relaxing our bodies, and being in an imaginative safe place the better! We also depicted and shared our core self. Our awareness of the beauty and uniqueness of our selves will continue to develop and evolve over time. Last week we learned the Creative Exposure Intervention (CEI), an activity to help bring peace to your mind and body when you feel fear and shame.

Key Message: We can cultivate a quiet heart when fear and shame activate. We can get back to feeling safe and lovable. We can figure out what we need and connect with ourselves and others who are safe and loving.

Commitment to make to your core self: It is good to respond to myself with compassion, truthful limits, patience, and loving kindness.

Key Points:

1. When we practiced the CEI last week, we anchored ourselves and then depicted ourselves in safety. Then, we remembered a recent fear-shame trigger. We put words and symbols to the thoughts, feelings, and body sensations that activated at that time. We used the downward arrow technique to connect with the core belief fueling the shame. This validated our sense of terror. We practiced lovingly connecting with ourselves to determine what we needed to feel safe again. We thought, "what would we say to or do with our own beloved child or best friend if they were experiencing this sense of fear and shame?" We also discovered that it is not easy to monitor and modify

fear and shame when our bodies are hyper or hypo aroused. The thinking part of our brain goes “offline” when the fight-flight response sets in. Additionally, a critical, shaming internal voice often sets in when we are in this vulnerable state (Farrel & Shaw, 2018).

2. This week we will bring images of loving and protective figures into our Safe Place (Parnell, 2013) and learn a tool to help us respond to ourselves with compassion and loving-kindness (Neff et al., 2018). When we are in the presence of someone who loves us and shines their face of love upon us, feelings of fear-shame recede (Parnell, 2013).
3. You are worthy of love, protection, honoring, truth-based mentoring, validation, and rest/refreshment/play. These are normal, human, life-long emotional needs (Farrel & Shaw, 2018).
4. Although the world can be harsh at times and feel like an unsafe “holding environment,” (Winicott, 1984) we can learn to cultivate a quiet core self. We can get back “home” to love and safety (Siegel, 2010).
5. Session four also focuses on how past and future-oriented thinking, as well as self-criticism, impact fear-shame. Self-criticism activates the threat response, which then triggers coping mechanisms that do not meet our actual needs (Farrel & Shaw, 2018).
6. We can learn how to bring our focus back to the present moment when fear and shame activate. We can learn to monitor self-criticism and transform it into self-compassion (Neff, et al., 2018).

Creative Activity 1: Safe Place with Loving, Protective Person(s)

Instructions:

We'll begin with a time of anchoring, as done in the CEI, including depicting yourself in Safe Place. Next, we will invite into your Safe Place a person or persons (i.e., from your present life, history, imagination, culture-spirituality) who you feel unconditionally loves and protects you. Imagine this person or persons loving, smiling face shining on you. Experience their desire to protect you from all harm and all who would harm you. See if this soothes and calms you. Depict this experience any way you'd like. If no one emerges for you right now, no worries, just focus on letting a sense of love and safety encompass you. A loving and protective person may emerge later or even on another day.

Following the art activity, allow members to briefly share what they are comfortable sharing about the experience with the group. If the group is larger than five or six, pair members up to take turns listening and sharing.

Creative Activity 2: The Creative Self-Compassion Tool (CSCT)

To prepare group members to use the CSCT, provide the following, or similar psychoeducation:

Psychoeducation:

When anxiety is activated, we think in black and white or all-or-nothing ways (Barlow et al., 2011). We worry about what we did in the past or think about possible catastrophic events in the future. If we listen carefully to the content of these thoughts, we will likely notice that it is often unkind and critical, like a demanding and harsh bully (Farrell & Shaw, 2018). Oftentimes, we do not realize it as bullying, but it is. Like all forms of bullying, it causes a tremendous amount of emotional pain. However, we can learn to observe and modify these negative automatic thoughts as we notice them.

In this group, we are learning to observe fear-shame thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations, and modify them using calming, soothing skills. Today, we want to start cultivating a calm, present-

focused and compassionate relationship with ourselves. Research reveals that these mindfulness and self-compassion skills are vital to shame resiliency (Neff & Dahm, 2014). Mindfulness is having “a non-judgmental, receptive mind state in which one observes thoughts and feelings as they are, without trying to suppress or deny them” (Neff, 2020, para. 3). Self-compassion involves “being warm and understanding toward ourselves when we suffer, fail, or feel inadequate, rather than ignoring our pain or flagellating ourselves with self-criticism” (Neff, 2020, para. 1). Instead of engaging with “the bully,” we can learn to engage with ourselves with mindfulness and self-compassion. We can conceptualize this as activating the healthy adult part of ourselves to connect with and calm the vulnerable child-like part of ourselves (Farrel & Shaw, 2018).

The Creative Self-Compassion Tool (CSCT)

Instructions:

Visualize and depict your safe place in the center of a sheet of paper with art supplies. Next, remember a recent time when you felt fear-shame. Focus your attention on the thoughts you had during that anxiety provoking event. Notice thoughts that are self-critical, demanding, perfectionistic, judging of self or others, or past/future-oriented. Observe the impact these thoughts have on your feelings (bodily sensations) and emotions. Depict, using the art supplies, the thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations that represent the critical attitudes toward the self that emerged on the left side of your paper. Reflect on how these attitudes keep you from being in the present moment and compassionately accepting yourself and others. Next, gently and lovingly see yourself as complete, whole, and free from any worry or judgment as you focus back on your safe place. Practice self-calming techniques to bring peace to your thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations. On the right side of the paper, use the art supplies to depict compassionate responses to each of the specific critical attitudes that you wrote on the left side of the paper. To help with this, ask yourself questions like, “How would I

respond to my best friend? What would I say to a child I dearly love?"

Closing Round: In a few sentences (i.e., 2-4) what was most meaningful to you in our session today?

What do you want to remember and practice between sessions?

Reflective Survey: Please send back the reflective survey before the next session.

Session 5 Handout

Theme: Identifying how shame took root, and how, together, we can bring it into the light.

Opening: In a few sentences, please share your reactions and thoughts since last session.

Commitment to make to your core self: Experiences of shaming cause us to expect to be shamed.

However, at any time, we can choose to be still, know, and embrace the truth of our worth, dignity, and unique beauty.

Key Points:

1. This week, we will focus on how shame took root.
2. The fear-shame related thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations you sometimes have are shadows from the past, triggered by internal and external experiences in the present.
3. At the root of our shame are unkind critical “voices” (from within or without) and memories of being teased, put down in front of others, bullied, or experiencing interpersonal abuse, marginalization, or violence. These memories are stored in our bodies, activate unconsciously, and still impact our current thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and behaviors.
4. Exploring our experiences, understanding the impact they’ve had, and sharing them with caring and supportive people who will also honor our privacy, knits us together (because we’ve all been shamed) and helps us activate and understand the “rest of the story” of who we are.

Activity: Depicting our Shame Story

1. Practice anchoring and depicting your safe place image. What are the thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations you have while in the safe place? Feel them. Depict your safe place (perhaps with your protective and loving beings) in the center of your paper, leaving much room around for other depictions.
2. This next part may be disturbing, but we are all here to support one another and face the pain of the past. Now, watch the movie of how, over your lifetime, shame took root. What were the events, situations, persons, words, looks, experiences that caused you to feel ashamed of yourself?
3. Depict these experiences with words, images, pictures, icons, symbols, poems etc. around your safe place. What thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations reflect the sense of shame in you as a result of these experiences? If you feel highly activated, focus back on your safe place and use anchoring to ground.
4. There are also other influences that cause us to feel ashamed (i.e., the culture, the media, ethnic history, gender, messages about sexuality, etc.). How have these impacted your thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations? Feel the weight of this.
5. Now go back to your safe place: anchor, breathe. See all this and also take space from it. Bring compassion in, and re-ground yourself in your safe place.
6. Sharing: What stands out to you from this activity? How can we support you as you fight the fight against shame?

Closing Round: Share your “take-home” message and request for support with the whole group.

Reflective Survey: Please send back the reflective survey before the next session.

Session 6 Handout

Theme: Review, present moment awareness, and maintenance plan.

In this final session, we will develop a maintenance plan to help us continue to live free from the power of fear-shame. The goals for today's session are (1) to review the CAPG experience; (2) learn a final creative tool for fear and shame regulation; and (3) develop an aftercare plan to maintain gains made in counseling and to continue to grow.

Key Points:

1. This week we learn a final tool to bring compassion to ourselves when fear and shame activate called the Embodied Present Moment Awareness Tool. This activity enables us to return to the present when the mind wanders to fearful memories from the past or fearful expectations for the future. Studies show that practicing these skills helps diminish anxiety and shame (Neff & Dahm, 2014).
2. You've worked hard in this group to learn about and practice regulating fear-shame. In order to maintain the gains you've made, it is important for you to keep practicing these tools regularly. Therefore, today, you will develop a personal maintenance plan.

Creative Activity: The Embodied Present Moment Awareness Tool (EPMAT)

Instructions:

Focus inward and allow peace to flow through you in this moment. Notice how this feels throughout your body and what you are sensing. Now, notice what you feel when you sit up straight and feel your feet grounded on the floor, and what you feel when you slightly smile. Next, picture loving-kindness, protection, and safety as a color flowing to

every part of you. Allow yourself to stay focused on being safe and accepted in this present moment. Notice the color of love, safety, and freedom. If your mind wanders to the past or the future, just gently and lovingly bring the focus back to the present moment. Try to deepen this sense of being loved, safe, and free. Using art, take a few moments to depict this feeling.

Next, we will develop a plan for continued growth to sustain a loved and shame-free state of being. For this last activity, depict yourselves in your safe place. Consider biological, psychological, social, spiritual, cultural, and other tools you can use to help you remain in a compassionate, fear-shame free state. Depict these around your safe place.

Final Closing: What was most meaningful about this group, and what do you each want to remember and continue to practice?

Session Evaluation Form

Please take a moment to give me feedback about your experience of this session. Please also use this to determine what you would like to share in 3-4 sentences during our next opening session.

1. Your initials: _____
2. What impact, if any, did the following components of CAPG have on you today? Please feel free to write on the back or on another piece of paper if you want more space.

Opening Sharing: Learning Portion:

(Consider, for example, did the teaching make sense to you? Do you have any questions or suggestions as to how I can be clearer? Other feedback? What did this information mean to you?)

Creative Arts Activities:

Closing Sharing:

How safe did you feel to share with our group today? Is there anything you need to feel safer or more supported?

Any other comments or concerns you'd like to share?

Group Counseling Evaluation

Please provide your feedback about your group experience. Your honest feedback helps us understand your experience and enable us to increase the quality of the group for others. Please email this evaluation back to the leader within one week of the final session.

Please consider each aspect of your experience in the CAPG group and provide your feedback.

- Screening Process:

- Leader's Style and Personhood:

- Group Members and Group Process:

- Group Structure and Guidelines:

- What is the most important thing you learned from being in this group? How will you hold on to this?

- Please Consider each of the following CAPG Session by Session Education and Activities and answer the questions that follow.

Session 1: Creating safety in community and in the body

Session Teaching:

- We have a biological need to feel safe, accepted, and valued. We have a need for identity and autonomy. We need rest and refreshment and realistic limits. When we do not meet these needs, we feel shame
- Shame is intolerable and creates a need to calm and soothe our bodies (SNS to PNS)
- You can cultivate a quiet heart and find safety anytime

Session Components:

- Teaching focused on cultivating safety in our bodies and minds
- Anchoring (4-7-8; SR)
- Safe Place
- Depiction of the Core Self in Safe Place
- CAPG Trigger Processing Chart
- Commitment to your core self: No harshness at all

What, if anything, was helpful to you about this session and why? How can you continue to apply this information to enable you to feel peaceful, safe and loved and accepted as you are (not as you “should be”) when fear-shame activates you?

Session 2: Knowing, Being, and Celebrating Your True Self

Session Teaching:

- We need to know who we are in our core self
- When shame is activated, we need to learn to return to our core self
- It takes courage, loving-kindness, time, and support to know and live from our core self

Session Components:

- Anchor and establish your safe place
- Connect with and depict your core self through creativity, identifying your values and variables that contribute to your core self
- Commitment to your core self: I will observe and accept my mind; respond with loving-kindness; make efforts to soothe and calm myself, to ultimately be and celebrate my true self

What, if anything, was helpful to you about this session and why? How can you continue to apply this information to enable you to feel peaceful, safe and loved and accepted as you are (not as you “should be”) when fear-shame activates you?

Session 3: Creative Shame Resiliency I

Session Teaching:

- Learning tools to creatively monitor the flow of energy and attention of our minds in order to self-soothe, sort out thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations, feel and validate feelings, and meet underlying needs
- Needs include love and security, validation of needs and feelings, autonomy and identity, realistic limits, and rest and refreshment.
- Unmet needs are ‘buried alive’ and need closure; we often use coping mechanisms to temporarily soothe
- We can learn to slow down, assess feelings, and meet our needs

Session Components:

- Teaching to learn to identify our needs

- Creative Exposure Intervention: Depict your safe place, think back to shame triggers, and create spokes from your safe place depiction to depict the shame memories including SUDS, thoughts, and coping responses. Return to your safe place to identify feelings and needs
- Commitment to your core self: Take time to listen to the messages your feelings and bodily sensations are telling you

What, if anything, was helpful to you about this session and why? How can you continue to apply this information to enable you to feel peaceful, safe and loved and accepted as you are (not as you “should be”) when fear-shame activates you?

Session 4: Creative Shame Resiliency II

Session Teaching:

- We experience hyper and hypo-arousal when needs remain unmet, often leading to coping behaviors
- Fear-shame disappears when our emotional needs for protection and unconditional love are met
- You are worthy of love and protection, and can experience these even in our harsh world

Session Components:

- Teaching reviewing past learning including the Creative Exposure Intervention
- Installing loving, protective person(s) in your safe place
- Creative Self-Compassion Tool (CSCT)
- Commitment to your core self: I can cultivate safety and a quiet heart when fear-shame activates. I can identify my needs and connect with others who are safe.

What, if anything, was helpful to you about this session and why? How can you continue to apply this information to enable you to feel peaceful, safe and loved and accepted as you are (not as you “should be”) when fear-shame activates you?

Session 5: Developing a Narrative: How Shame Took Root and Unrooting It

Session Teaching:

- Fear-shame thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations are shadows from the past
- Unkind critical ‘voices’ are at the root of our shame and are stored in our bodies, activated, and continue to impact us
- Exploring, understanding, and sharing our experiences of shame helps us understand the ‘rest of the story’ of who we are; that we are normal and precious and that the environment failed to protect us (not that we are failures).

Session Components:

- Watch “the movie” of how shame took root in your life and depict these shaming experiences around your safe place
- Consider additional factors that caused shame, returning to your safe place throughout
- Sharing with others
- Commitment to your core self: At any time, we can choose to be still, know, and embrace the truth of our worth, dignity, and unique beauty

What, if anything, was helpful to you about this session and why? How can you continue to apply this information to enable you to feel peaceful, safe and loved and accepted as you are (not as you “should be”) when fear-shame activates you?

Session 6: Review, Present Moment Awareness, and Maintenance Plan

Session Teaching:

- Reviewing what you learned in CAPG
- We need internal and external support to sustain living courageously and compassionately from our core
- The Embodied Present Moment Awareness tool can also support us anchoring to safety

Session Components:

- Review CPAG session contents to help remember and apply teaching and activities in the future
- Learn Embodied Present Moment Awareness: Notice peace flowing through your body. Picture loving-kindness, protection, and safety as a color moving through every part of you, allowing yourself to stay in the present moment.
- Develop a maintenance plan to sustain growth of a loved, shame-free state.

What, if anything, was helpful to you about this session and why? How can you continue to apply this information to enable you to feel peaceful, safe and loved and accepted as you are (not as you “should be”) when fear-shame activates you?

Group Structure and Guidelines:

What is the most important thing you learned from being in this group? How will you hold on to this?

