**Transition Group for High School Students**

There were three groups of students: freshman, sophomores, and a combined group of juniors and seniors. The groups were made up of students who had transferred in the past year. For the first week, the freshman group met for their first session. The same thing happened next week for the sophomores and the week after for the combined juniors and seniors group. After the three week initial sessions, those who were still interested in the group made a fourth, combined total group. That group then met for six more meetings.

*Goals for Group:*

* Help transfer students become comfortable in the school overall.
* Let them be aware of the guidance office and their role and services.
* Help them build friendships in school.
* Get to know other students in their same situation.
* Know about school activities and sports.

*Session 1:*

During the first meeting, the students were given a survey based on the goals to see how well adjusted they were to the school. They then made a circle and tossed a ball around that had questions about themselves and how adjusted they were to the school. When they caught the ball, they introduced themselves and answered one of the questions. (The questions are attached.) They then passed the ball to someone else. After the ball had gone around once, we talked about the hardest part of transitioning into a new school. One student mentioned how hard lunch is, so we found out who was in what lunch so that they could have someone to sit with. The sessions had 18, 15, and then 3 group members during the session.

*Session 2:*

The combined group met, and there were 8 students. There was a short set of questions about rating themselves on how they are now and how they want to be in the future on things like having new friendships, feeling comfortable talking to new students, feeling involved in the school, etc. The questions are attached. After the students answered the questions, they went over their answers and just talked about the various issues they were having.

*Session 3:*

The combined group met, and the same 8 students came. We talked about three different zones: comfort zone, challenge zone, and panic zone. The comfort zone is when people feel very comfortable. People do not feel anxious while in this zone and find it easy to accomplish whatever activity they are engaged in. The challenge zone is when people feel somewhat challenged. Although these people will notice that they feel a bit anxious, they still find that they are capable of accomplishing these tasks. The third zone is the panic zone. In this zone, people feel virtually helpless because they are confronted with a task for which they are unprepared or haven't the experience. They know they have little chance of succeeding, and the mere thought of the activity brings on panic. The students were given an activity sheet where there were columns with each zone, and the students were asked to fill in different situations for each zone. There was a giant piece of paper that listed the three zones, and when the students were done with theirs they had to each put one on the paper. After they were done, we discussed how different students were comfortable with different things and things that could be done to get to the comfort zone.

*Session 4:*

The students formed groups of three and instructed to sit back-to-back in a circle, facing outward. Each student was given a sheet of drawing paper and a pencil and markers. I called out a series of shapes for them to draw on the paper. They could put the shapes anywhere on their sheets. Students weren’t allowed to talk during the activity or look at one another’s drawings. When they finished, each of them described his or her drawing to the other two. Students who were reproducing the drawing could ask questions if they need to clarify. When the drawings were finished, the students then faced one another and compared their drawings with the originals. We discussed what happened while they were describing their drawing to the other students in the group, whether it was easy or difficult to understand the descriptions as each student gave them, what the activity had to do with listening, and why it’s important to listen to others. This activity was done in response to a problem in the group with several members overshadowing a few who seemed hesitant to contribute to the group. This activity was done in order to help other recognize the importance of listening in a fun way without constantly disciplining them.

*Session 5:*

The session was opened up by discussing the meaning of the quote “To have a friend, you must be a friend.” The students then brainstormed the different cliques in the school and wrote them on the list. There was then a discussion about what groups they most identify with, what ones they would and wouldn’t like to be friends with, and the ones they wished they were like. They then discussed how you become friends with someone and how to know what a true friend is. They then discussed and recorded as a group some things that real friends do and don’t do. They were then given different situations and came up with a positive way to deal with them and a negative way to deal with them. The session was ended by discussion of things they learned about themselves, how their viewpoint on the quote had changed, and how they’ll used the information they’ve discovered.

*Session 6:*

This session was focused on relational aggression. The group started out talking about what exactly relational aggression is and how they define it. We discussed a list of examples of relational aggression, which is attached. They then drew the different scenarios out of a hat as well as roll the dice. If the sum of the two numbers was even, they had to give a real life example of that type of relational aggression. If the sum of the two numbers was odd, then the person to the left had to give a real life example of that type of relational aggression. If they rolled doubles, the topic was up to the group to discuss for a few minutes. The session was ended with discussion about why people are relationally aggressive, what they can do to prevent relational aggression and what they had learned from the session.

*Session 7:*

This was the last group meeting. This meeting was more of a relaxed meeting and was just about processing the group and discussing things that they had learned during the semester. The students were given a sheet of paper where they wrote down three facts about themselves. They then had to guess which sheet belonged to which person. The goal was to try to see how much they’ve learned about each other and see the progress they’ve made with the friendships within the group. There was then a discussion about the progress they’ve made, what they’ll take away from the group, and how to apply what they’ve learned within the group to their real life school situations.

Activity 1: Questions on ball

* What is your favorite subject in school? What is your least?
* What was the hardest part of transferring?
* What type of music do you like? What are your favorite artists or bands?
* What was your school like before you transferred?
* If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go and why?
* What is your favorite television show?
* Do you feel comfortable at WMHS?
* Tell us an interesting or unique fact about yourself.
* What’s your favorite fast food restaurant?
* Do you have any pets? What are their names?
* Do you like to read? What is your favorite book?
* Are you in a club or organization? If not, would you like to be?

Activity Sheet 2

**What Does it Take and What do I Need to Succeed at WMHS?**

The following is a list of factors that can influence your success at WMHS. Rate each item from **1** to **5**: **1** is weak, not something you do well; **2** means you can do it sometimes; **3** is in the middle, you can do pretty well when you try; **4** you're pretty good at it but could still even be a little better; **5** is well-developed, a pretty reliable strength for you. Rate where you are now, and where you would like to be or think it is important for you to be in the future.

I am able to:

**Now Future**

**\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_** 1. Start conversations with students I don't know and develop new

friendships.

**\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_** 2. Handle times when I feel awkward, shy, embarrassed,

depressed, lonely, rejected, and a failure and the new environment.

**\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_** 3. Hold up under the stress and pressure of transferring.

**\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_** 4. Feel comfortable with talking to other students, teachers and counselor

about the struggles I’m having.

**\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_** 5. Feel comfortable with the change in academic and discipline styles.

**\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_** 6. Have new friendships and feel comfortable socially at WMHS.

**\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_** 7. Figured out how to handle the change in the function of friendships at

your old school

**\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_** 8. Feel involved in the school through things like clubs, sports, or

organizations.

**\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_** 9. Know others who have transferred and who are in your similar

situation.

**\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_** 10. Feel overall satisfied with yourself and the changes you’ve had to

make.

Activity Sheet 3

**MY ZONES**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Comfort Zone | Challenge Zone | Panic Zone |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |