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SOUTHERN SUDANESE YOUTH GROUP

*A therapeutic group approach for
supporting young men to adjust to
the new cultural environment*

August 2006

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1. Introduction

It was identified through the work at the Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne) (MIC) that there was a need to work with children and young people to assist them in their settlement, in particular, to support them to cope with school and to understand the new cultural environment in Australia. This was particularly important for children and young people from refugee backgrounds who had experienced trauma, disrupted schooling and language and cultural barriers.

In 2004, the Migrant Information Centre in partnership with Wesley Resilient Kids and the Foundation for Survivors of Torture developed and facilitated a children's program entitled "Cool Kids and Rainbows" for refugee children aged 5 to 8 years and 9 to 12 years. This program includes weekly 2-hour sessions over two school terms using play, role-plays and craft activities to explore emotions, develop day to day coping strategies and social skills for making friends in a diverse cultural environment.

The program was highly successful and both parents and teachers reported an improvement in the well being of children who participated in the program. The children enjoyed the program and all who participated were eager to continue to meet after it had been completed. The program has continued and family support service providers, teachers, parents and children themselves, request to be included in future programs.

The success of this program provided the impetus to develop a settlement program targeted at refugee youth and this report provides a description and evaluation of the program developed for Sudanese young men in the Eastern Region of Melbourne in 2005.

2. Background

The program for young, refugee men from Sudanese backgrounds was developed in partnership with a welfare student completing a Diploma in Community Development at Chisholm TAFE Dandenong and staff members from the Migrant Information Centre and Anglicare Meridian Youth and Family Counselling Service in Box Hill.

This partnership provided an opportunity for identifying the needs of young people through research and developing the program to meet their needs as well as establishing linkages with workers who could provide on-going support to the young people. The Migrant Information Centre

could provide on-going settlement support and Anglicare could provide counselling and family support where necessary.

The facilitators had different professional backgrounds and varied knowledge of Sudanese culture and experience in working therapeutically with clients. A key factor in being able to work together towards a common goal was clear communication. Regular meetings enabled facilitators to clarify goals, roles and different perspectives.

The program aimed to provide a safe group forum for young men from Sudanese backgrounds to discuss their experiences as refugees both overseas and in Australia as well as settlement issues and to develop strategies for adjusting to their new cultural environment in Australia.

3. Research design

As part of this research, the welfare student conducted two focus groups with Sudanese young people aged 15 to 25 years – one with young men and the other with young women. The aim of this research was to identify the settlement issues confronting Sudanese youth in Australia. This information was then used to develop the program to meet the needs of the young people, in particular, the idea of providing an opportunity for a friendly game of soccer as well as the themes for group discussions.

The research model for conducting this pilot was Participatory Action Research. The young men who participated in the focus group became a Critical Reference Group. The group provided ongoing feedback and review not only for the research but also the group program as all the members of the focus group participated in the program.

The documentary “The Lost Boys of Sudan” was used to encourage discussion as the research identified that many of the issues impacting on young people in Australia were similar to the issues that impacted on the young men depicted in the film in the USA. The film provided a safe environment to discuss sensitive issues as participants were able to discuss the lives of the characters in the documentary objectively. Participants could include their own personal stories when they felt safe to do so.

4. Target group

The program targeted young men aged 15¹ to 25 years from Sudanese backgrounds who migrated to Australia within less than five years as refugees and resided in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne. A maximum number of 16 youth participated in the program.

A separate program will be developed to meet the needs of young women.

5. Program description

The program was held after school hours at 4pm to 6pm weekly for 8 weeks. The day of the week was chosen according to the availability of the venue as well as the facilitators. The research indicated that young men wanted to access social and recreational activities after school hours and that soccer was the preferred sport for Sudanese youth. As a result, the Mitcham Baptist Church was approached to provide the venue, which included an indoor soccer facility as well as meeting rooms and a kitchen to prepare food and refreshments. Volunteers from the church also participated in the soccer component of the program.

The 8-week program included one hour of soccer followed by an hour of group discussion. The program aimed to support the settlement of Southern Sudanese young people living in Australia following their different experiences of war, refugee camps and migration. The facilitators included a male Southern Sudanese refugee from the Migrant Information Centre² and a male counsellor from the Anglicare Meridian Youth and Family Counselling Service. The female Community Projects Officer at the MIC contributed to the planning and evaluation of the program but did not attend weekly sessions because it was considered that male facilitators would be more culturally appropriate to encourage discussion of sensitive issues.

Soccer was chosen as an activity to begin the session as soccer is a popular sport with Southern Sudanese youth and it was anticipated that providing opportunities for a friendly soccer game would encourage ongoing commitment to attend all sessions.

Volunteers from the church were keen to participate in the program to meet the young people and to encourage them to join other soccer

¹ The youth were targeted from 15 years as that is the age that boys become men according to Sudanese culture.

² The research student was employed by the MIC to co-facilitate the program.

activities at the church. However, they were originally asked not to attend the group until the facilitators could confirm that the Sudanese youth were happy for non-Sudanese people to participate in the program. The group requested the discussion sessions only include Sudanese youth so the church volunteers were invited to referee the soccer games each week.

The discussion group format was used to reflect Southern Sudanese culture where men sit around fires in the evening to eat together and discuss important family and village issues. Weekly themes for sessions were selected from the issues raised by the focus group and weekly feedback from participants, together with input from the wider Southern Sudanese community and group facilitators. (See Appendix A for an outline of the weekly programs.)

Following each weekly session, the facilitators and the Project Worker from the Migrant Information Centre met to reflect on the previous week's session and to plan the next session.

6. Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation of the program was developed from the reflections of the facilitators and feedback from the youth and church participants (see Appendix B for information on the feedback from the youth). Youth were asked to describe what was good and bad about the group, what was helpful about coming to the group and what would make the group better. The youth discussed these issues in the large group as well as by writing their responses privately. In addition, one of the facilitators interviewed the Youth Pastor at the church to gain an understanding of his parishioners' expectations and reflections on their involvement in the program.

7. Key Learnings

A number of key learnings which are discussed below emerged from the program. These issues related to:

- The nature of the program – information, discussion or therapy?
- Group rules and culture
- The effect of trauma on group behaviour

7.1 The nature of the program

7.1.1 Group activities

The group program included 1-hour of soccer and 1-hour of discussion that reflected Sudanese culture as young people came together after playing soccer to discuss issues that were affecting them. In the Sudan, such discussions to resolve issues for the community take place in the evenings when the men sit together around the fire place after they have shared the evening meal.

After soccer, refreshments were served and issues were raised for group discussion. From week 2 to week 6, segments of the documentary "Lost Boys of Sudan" was used to encourage discussion on specific themes such as the migration experience, the refugee experience, trauma, grief and loss and culture shock. The impact of these activities is further discussed below. However, in relation to the overall program, when asked what was good about coming together, comments included:

Getting to know each other especially people you have never met before
Time was offered for both soccer and discussion
To come to understand each other and meet new friends
To learn where one can get help
Learning how to build your life in a new culture

(i) Soccer

The young men were keen to play soccer because it offered them social and recreational opportunities after school. Overwhelmingly, young people requested that the soccer programs continue and some made suggestions about how the soccer program could be improved.

Give more time in the playground – more time for soccer
A group of five could play every alternative week
I want the current soccer program to continue
We need an outdoor soccer team which plays against other teams
There should be soccer for young people under 15 years

Some young men when asked to describe what was bad about the program expressed concerns about the need for stricter rules and more time to play soccer. As one young man identified – "some people were becoming angry while waiting for their turn to play"³. Other suggestions for future activities included playing basketball and providing sessions to develop youth music.

³ Soccer was played by small groups which changed over a period time.

Most importantly, one of the factors contributing to group cohesion during discussions was that everyone (including the leaders of the group) had just participated in the soccer together. This helped the whole group to engage with each other as they were able to participate initially in a non-threatening activity.

The experience of playing soccer together was used as a metaphor for understanding experiences of living in a foreign culture. This was done by drawing out links between experiences people had had during soccer and migration and trauma related issues during discussion.

(ii) “Lost Boys of Sudan”

Viewing this film seemed to help the young men discuss difficult topics. The film enabled them to begin discussions about the film and then to reflect on how this related to their own situation. It was a far less threatening way to discuss sensitive topics than requiring the young men to begin with their own stories.

The film seemed to normalise a lot of their experiences. They were able to reflect on the characters decisions, dilemmas and challenging circumstances and possibly develop empathy for the characters as well as for themselves, and their friends' situations. One young man identified the learning from the movie “Lost Boys of Sudan” as one of the helpful aspects of coming together as a group and as another young man stated:

I had fun and enjoyed watching the movie “Lost Boys of Sudan”.

(iii) Information Group, Discussion Group or Therapeutic Group?

The research identified that young men from Sudanese backgrounds want to play soccer. As a result, soccer provided the impetus for encouraging attendance each week to the program. However, by promoting soccer as part of the program, it meant that new members joined the group weekly including those who were not part of the target group. This impacted on the discussion as new members did not understand or accept the group rules identified in the first session.

This also impacted on the facilitators who struggled at times with understanding the nature of the group i.e. whether the group was a discussion group, information group or therapeutic group. The program was developed as a therapeutic program. However, by having young people move in and out of the group and different people having vastly different expectations of the group, it was impossible to use people's responses to each other therapeutically. Rather facilitators were

restricted to requesting people consider the impact of their behaviour on others and inviting group members to consider why they were responding in such energetic ways to discussion topics.

(iv) Discussion topics

A central principle that was used in running this group was to consult with the youth, their parents (as part of the general Sudanese community) and other members of the Southern Sudanese community to identify topics for discussion.

It was interesting that some of the clearest feedback from the youth was that they found some areas covered helpful such as trauma, but when they were asked about this initially most reported that this was not an important topic. Just how important talking about traumatic experiences was for participants is indicated in one young man's reflection on the best part of participating in the group: "We were able to talk about things that could not be talked about."

This is indicative of the fact that some of the issues are difficult for youth to talk about (such as trauma and grief) and that facilitators needed to be assertive about keeping these topics on the agenda.

However, due to time constraints, the group did not address wider community concerns about behaviour problems community leaders associated with some young people. Topics such as conflict between parents and adolescents and the availability of independent Centrelink payments for young people which the parents believe encourages family breakdown were not discussed.⁴

While the group was able to have input into difficult personal experiences such as grief and trauma, the group was also limited in how much it could address because not all members had clearly consented to participating in a therapeutic group. At times group member's responses to these issues reduced the level of safety and trust in the group making it inappropriate to proceed with these conversations. While this behaviour was responded to with a therapeutic approach this was greatly limited by the group not being a therapeutic group in nature as discussed earlier in this report.

⁴ These issues will be addressed in a future program as part of the Migrant Information Centre's Humanitarian Relationships Program funded by the Department of Family and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

7.2 Establishing Group Rules and cultural responses

A major factor for facilitating effective group programs is establishing group rules so that participants have clear expectations and instructions for group behaviour. New participants required facilitators to give clear instructions each week and not to assume that the group format was familiar to all participants. For example, when asking people to break into small groups for discussion, facilitators needed to be overt about what their expectations of them were.

Nevertheless, punctuality, respect and safety within the group and defining the target group emerged as issues throughout the program.

7.2.1 Punctuality

A constant factor during the group sessions was that group members would arrive up to an hour late. Arriving late is common in Sudanese culture and some youth were late because they had to fulfil family obligations such as taking younger members of their family home from school before coming to the program.

The timetable was maintained even if latecomers were unable to play soccer before the discussion group commenced. The program commenced on time and finished on time regardless of the time participants arrived.

Although the youth were keen to play soccer, the discussion group component was considered by the facilitators as the program priority to meet the overall aim of supporting young people to adjust to living in Australia. In addition, despite the general consensus that it is not part of the Southern Sudanese culture to arrive on time, many of the youth were frustrated by others lack of punctuality.

Two young people identified the lack of punctuality as an issue for the group and only one young person complained that the "Time for discussions was longer than the time allowed for soccer".

7.2.2 Respect and safety within the group

There were times during the group that the Australian born facilitator believed that the youth acted disrespectfully towards each other even when discussing sensitive topics. Changed membership contributed to this as painful and personal topics were discussed without all members of the group understanding the boundaries and giving their consent to participate in these conversations.

As a result, a number of participants identified that the factors that were bad about the program related to the behaviour and lack of respect of some participants to others.

*There were too many arguments
People insulted each other
Not respecting each others views
Some people seem not to follow the trend of arguments
Some of the arguments raised by some members were irrelevant to the issues on the table*

This view was not always shared by the Sudanese born facilitator who felt that it was culturally appropriate for young men to challenge each other and discuss their views openly including offering their opinion about another individuals reaction to their own experience. This view was also shared by others who believed that the group was "friendly and played peacefully trying not to hurt each other".

7.2.3 Inclusion and exclusion of people who were not in the target group

The group targeted Southern Sudanese youth aged 15 to 25 years. However, younger boys attended and had to be asked to leave which prompted one young person to state in the feedback that: "Young people under the age of fifteen years should be advised to keep away."

In addition, during the first session, the young people were asked if they would like the group to be exclusively for Southern Sudanese youth or if they would like to involve other interested parties. Participants clearly stated they wanted only Southern Sudanese youth in the group.

However, as the weeks went on there were two non Sudanese youth who requested to come to the group despite the group rule. When the group was asked if they could join the group, all stated that they would allow those individuals to join the group.

It seemed that the decision to let these people in was based on peer pressure from other youth in the program and that other non Sudanese youth were excluded who may have had a more constructive impact on the group. This was particularly relevant for volunteers from the church who supported the soccer but were advised by the facilitators that they could not participate in the group discussion. In their feedback the Youth Pastor stated that:

Of those that did help out, I think there would have been more ownership had they been able to sit in on the discussions. I think there was a sense of "Do they really need us here?" at times. Having said that, there was also

an awareness of needing to respect the sensitivities of the Sudanese guys, so it's not a big deal. Overall, we're simply glad we were able to help out.

Perhaps we could link it more closely with our Thursday soccer comp next time (not sure how) or maybe link it with one of the school programs we run.

In relation to the non Sudanese youth, the facilitators allowed them to participate. The youth had agreed that they could stay for the discussion and as there had not been constant group membership in the program so that all participants had heard the group rules, many of the other boys had no idea what they would be involved in prior to coming to the group. Therefore it seemed inappropriate not to allow these boys to participate.

7.3 Effect of Trauma on Group Behaviour

A very clear pattern that was observed was that when difficult and personal topics were discussed, there was a general group response of increased unsettledness, increased speech making, decreased tolerance for differing perspectives and an increase in disrespectful behaviour towards each other.

This is best illustrated by a boy who adamantly stated that trauma was not important and that the group definitely did not need to talk further about it. As the weeks went on, he would become increasingly disruptive when issues of trauma and grief were discussed. Throughout the sessions he struggled to listen to different perspectives and responded with statements which offended other boys such as "whatever happens is in God's plan" and "I survived because God chose for me to survive". The facilitators asked him to respect the views of others and allow them to speak. However, he continued to be disruptive when the subject of trauma was discussed and in a later session he reported that he had watched his brother being murdered.

In addition, long term trauma may have affected the capacity of some young people to co-operate with others. It seems that even discussing difficult topics like trauma can result in quite extreme competitiveness. Years of having to compete to stay alive, watching people die around them, watching people being killed or people experiencing torture effects different people in different ways. For some, it may be difficult to respect Australians who have not lived through these experiences and to come to terms with the injustice.

Trauma, loss and grief would be best addressed in a smaller therapeutic group where participants have clearly given consent for their participation and there is sufficient time to address both the topic and group participants' responses to it.

Nevertheless, facilitators believed that the main success of the group was providing an experience for the young men where they could talk about their experiences related to war, migration and the refugee experience, hear from their peers about their experiences and receive information which normalised some of their responses to these experiences. This was confirmed through feedback from participants who stated that what was good about the group included:

Discussion on trauma reflected our culture where things are discussed in the community
Shared feelings and experiences
Discussion on how we could deal with some of our personal problems such as stress/trauma

7.3.1 Connecting with the youth

The counsellor was the primary facilitator of the group discussion. A strategy which seemed to be helpful for the group was for the counsellor to role model group participation. This involved talking openly about his experiences, fears and learnings from the group and discussing his own experiences, reflections and responses with the youth.

This involved discussing his limitations in running the group, what he had learnt from the young people and thanking them for being patient with him as he endeavoured to learn how to be helpful to them. This also required him speaking about being the only white person in the group, and the only person who had never been to Sudan. He acknowledged that he could only talk about things he had learnt from his own life experiences.

By being clear about differences and limitations, he was then able to identify what he did have to offer the group. He talked about his work with people from many cultures who had some similar experiences to them. He said that he had some ideas they might find helpful and that they were free to use what they wanted to use and to leave behind what was not helpful to them.

Each time this strategy was used the young people seemed to respond well and there was a reduction in the sense of facilitators trying to compete for control of the group.

This is the reason that each week the counselor would share his experiences of the previous week, what he had learnt and what he was hoping the group could accomplish in the current week.

7.3.2 Process activities

A process activity is where group members participate in an activity and then compare their experience of the activity to a broader life experience or topic. The facilitators attempted to run a process activity in one session which was unsuccessful. The young men responded by being confused and disinterested in the immediate activity preferring to examine the topic itself directly.

It seemed that process activities were not culturally appropriate and as a result indirect strategies were not effective. As the counselor identified: "The best results were achieved from a format which was predictable week to week, was relevant to the experiences of the young men and gave them information to consider."

8. Conclusion

The program provided a valuable forum for offering recreational and social opportunities as well as an environment to discuss issues that would "normally" not be discussed. As one young person stated: "I felt like I was doing something every Wednesday evening."

As identified by other young people, their participation in the program enabled them to:

Get to understand each other

Learn how to think

It offered us an opportunity to learn about the characters of each other

Come together and share ideas and experiences

Encourage each other

Nevertheless, future therapeutic programs need to build on the learning and provide clear boundaries, regular attendance by participants and clear group structure. As this program indicated, like social and recreational groups, information and discussion groups are also important and sessions can be provided and promoted within the wider community.

The next section of this report focuses on implications for future groups. Issues to consider when developing a group to help young men adjust to a new culture, develop strategies for coping with migration and refugee experiences that include trauma and loss, will be discussed.

9. Future Directions

9.1 Group Structure

It is important when planning a therapeutic group that group numbers are small (6-10 participants) and that social and recreational activities such as soccer are not seen by the participants as the major focus of the program.

A therapeutic group would benefit from being a closed group of no more than 10 participants with clear consent given at the beginning of the group to the range of topics to be covered in discussions.

If the group is discussion based then the group could still be an open group but would require clear information to the young people prior to their participation. If the group is an information group then the youth should not be encouraged to share personal information due to the lack of capacity to use people's responses to this in a helpful way. One young person suggested that the program include information on homelessness in a future program.

9.2 Group Leadership

It is part of the leadership role in the group to have significant involvement in setting the agenda for the group. This involves introducing topics that group members may not feel are important but have been identified by other community members as important.

9.3 Group membership

Therapeutic groups need to be closed groups with absolute boundaries around who is and is not part of the group. If the group is a discussion or information based group then a wider invitation can be made for others to participate in the group.

9.4 Communication and partnerships between agencies

To ensure the success of this type of program, facilitators learnt that regular meetings between staff and volunteer agencies involved were essential. These meetings provided a forum to assess progress and evaluate each service provider's experiences and understandings of each session of the program.

The roles of each agency and community group participating in the program needs to be clarified and must be included in the planning for each session as well as the program as a whole.

9.5 A therapeutic approach to behaviour

For this model of group work to be helpful to young people it is important that the group facilitators respond to disruptive and disrespectful behaviour in a way that provides the youth with opportunities to reflect on the causes of this behaviour. Facilitators can then invite them to consider alternative behaviours and responses that may be both beneficial to relationships within the group and peer relationships in the wider community.

This involves being aware of how young people react to feeling uncomfortable, angry, and frustrated as well as other important emotions and being able to contain the behaviour and use it as information to be discussed respectfully within the group. This work can only be done by providing the clear parameters of a therapeutic group.

The importance of providing this environment was reflected in the responses of some young people who, when asked what would make this group better, suggested that:

People should avoid arguments

People need to listen when a person is talking

People must work in co-operation

People must behave themselves well

Understanding each other and respecting the opinions of others

Appendix A – Outline of Weekly Program

Soccer

The youth played soccer for the first hour splitting into two teams and playing against each other. The soccer hour followed the same format each week. However, if there were too many people for two teams the group split into three teams and rotated every three goals. The game was refereed by a church representative and weeks when they did not attend, the game was refereed by the Sudanese facilitator.

As the soccer followed the same format each week, it is not included in the weekly program description.

Week One – Getting Started

The facilitators and the Youth Pastor at the church introduced themselves to the group and provided a brief description of the role of the agencies involved in the program. The purpose and outline of the program was also provided as well as a short overview of the situation in Southern Sudan to orient the non Sudanese in attendance.

Following soccer, the youth then met for the discussion group. Participants introduced themselves to the group by saying their name, their tribe, where they lived and how long they had lived in Australia.

The purpose of the group and rules and guidelines that needed to be in place for the group to be helpful was discussed as well as the issues they felt they wanted to address through the program. The topics identified in the research were introduced to the group as a starting point for the discussion.

Week Two – Expectations of Migration

The discussion session began by feeding back to the group what had stood out to facilitators from the previous session. Challenges that would be faced by the group were discussed and facilitators thanked the young people for their participation.

Over the next four sessions, the youth watched parts of the documentary film “Lost Boys of Sudan”. This is a documentary following two young men in their journey from experiencing the civil war in Southern Sudan, living in refugee camps and finally moving to the USA as part of a refugee program. In the second week, the youth watched the section of the film

which depicted the civil war in Southern Sudan and the two young men living in the refugee camp.

This was followed by the boys breaking into groups of three and four and discussing what they missed about life in Sudan, what they expected life would be like in Australia prior to their migration and how life in Australia differed from their expectations. Following their small group conversations they reported their discussion to the whole group.

Week Three – Experiences of Migration

The facilitators began the session by providing feedback to the group about their understanding of the discussion from the previous week and asking them to recall anything that they thought was important.

The video segment from “Lost Boys of Sudan” about arriving in the USA was shown and participants joined smaller groups to discuss the following questions:

1. What were some things that seemed strange to you when you arrived in Australia?
2. Do you find education and learning English easy or difficult?
3. Is it easy to make friends in Australia? What are some of the ways that you have been able to make friends in Australia?

Week Four – Reflections on the Refugee Experience

The third section of the “Lost Boys of Sudan” about settlement was shown which took up almost the full hour of the session leaving little time for conversation.

However, there was a short group discussion about the difficulties that Sudanese youth face living with memories of refugee camps, having friends and relatives in refugee camps and memories of friends and families who died in refugee camps.

Week Five – Identifying Trauma and Group Safety

During the session participants were asked to comment in the larger group about what stood out for them from the previous week? This discussion was followed by viewing the final segment of the documentary about the settlement experience of the two youth depicted in the film.

The topic of trauma was then introduced and defined and linked with the experience of the youth in the documentary. Participants were asked to identify the word for trauma in their culture and how it translated into English and why trauma might be a focus for group discussion.

The facilitator advised participants that the definitions provided were western ideas of trauma and that they could take and leave what they liked about the concept. The group discussed the idea that trauma seems to be difficult to talk about and that this was often for good reasons.

An activity was then introduced called a "blind walk". This involved the facilitator being led around the room with his eyes shut by a Sudanese youth entrusting the youth to take care of him. The facilitator then discussed his experience and asked the group to discuss what they believed the experience was like for him.

A number of boys were asked to take the "blind walk" with the facilitator as guide. The whole group then discussed the following questions:

1. What was it like?
2. What would it have been like if the facilitator had not been trustworthy?
3. What sort of things do you do when you get uncomfortable?

The purpose of the activity was to provide an experience in which people were uncomfortable (in a safe environment) and to discuss parallels of this experience in their broader life experiences.

Finally, as a whole group the following questions were discussed.

1. What is trauma?
2. How would you know if you were experiencing trauma?
3. What are some ways you can help yourself or a friend if you or them are experiencing trauma?
4. How do you deal with your traumatic memories? What other ways are there that you could deal with these memories?

Week Six - Grief

The facilitator began the session by talking about the experience of the previous week and which of the ideas had stood out. The youth were then invited to share their responses to the previous week's session.

Participants divided into small groups to discuss the following questions and then feedback to the large group:

1. What grief might the two characters in the film have experienced?
2. What problems can occur if people don't accept their grief?
3. What can you do that is helpful for grief?

Week Seven – Culture Shock

As in week six, the facilitator began the session by talking about the experience of the previous week and which ideas had stood out. The youth were then invited to share their responses to the previous week's session.

Participants went into small groups to discuss the following questions and then reported to the large group:

1. What is culture shock?
2. What are the good things about living in a new culture?
3. What are the difficult things about living in a new culture?
4. What things might you notice about yourself or a friend if they were finding it difficult to get used to a new culture?
5. What can you do to look after yourself when this is difficult?
6. What have you found works well to help you adjust to a new culture?

Week eight - Evaluation

As in week seven, the facilitator began the session by talking about the experience of the previous week and exploring aspects of the facilitator's perspective that stood out to them. The youth were then invited to share their responses to the session.

Following this discussion, the facilitator provided feedback about the program and what they had learnt through meeting together. Group members were then invited to share what they felt they had learnt from the program.

A group discussion was held to comment on the following questions and then participants were asked to respond to the same questions privately by writing down their responses.

1. What was good about the group?
2. What was bad about the group?
3. What was helpful about coming to the group?
4. What would make this group better?

Appendix B – Feedback from the Sudanese Youth

Responses to feedback questions

The responses have been transcribed in the boys' own words.

What was good about the group?

- “Get to know each other specially people you have never met before”
- “Getting to understand each other”
- “Learning how to think”
- “Playing peacefully and trying not to hurt each other”
- “Had fun and enjoyed watching the movie “ ‘Lost Boys of Sudan’ ”
- “Discussion on how we could deal with some of our personal problems such as stress/trauma”
- “People trying to keep time”
- “Time was offered for both soccer and discussion”
- “It offered us an opportunity for us to learn the characters of each other”
- “Shared feelings and experiences”
- “Discussion on trauma reflected our culture where things are discussed in the community”
- “Young Sudanese were friendly”
- “We were able to talk about things that could not be talked about”

What was bad about the group?

- “Some people were not keeping time”
- “Time for discussions was longer than the time allowed for soccer”
- “There were too many arguments” “People insulted each other”
- “No rules for soccer”
- “Not respecting each others views”
- “Some people seem not to follow the trend of arguments”
- “Some of the arguments raised by some members were irrelevant to the issues on the table”
- “Time allocated to play soccer was not long enough”
- “Some people getting angry while waiting for their turn to play”

What was helpful about coming together?

- “To come to understand each other and meet new friends”
- “To learn where one can get help”
- “Learning how to build your life in a new culture”
- “Coming together and sharing ideas and experiences”
- “Learning from the movie “ ‘Lost Boys of Sudan’ ”
- “The members of the group tried to encourage each other”

- "I felt like I was doing something every Wednesday evening"

What would make this group better?

- "Give more time in the playground" – more time for soccer"
- "Include other topics for discussion – such as homelessness"
- "A group of five could play every alternative week"
- "People should avoid arguments"
- "People need to listen when a person is talking"
- "People must work in co-operation"
- "People must behave themselves well"
- "Understanding each other and respecting the opinions of others"
- "There is need to have more strict rules"
- "Young people under the age of fifteen years should be advised to keep away"

Recommended activities:

- "Want the current soccer program to continue"
- "Basketball"
- "Develop youth music"
- "There should be soccer for young people under 15 years"
- "Need an outdoor soccer team which plays against other teams"