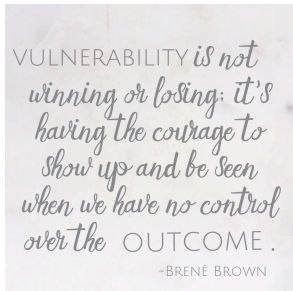


JANUARY LEADERS MEETING

GROUP DYNAMICS: CREATING SAFE, BOLD SPACES THAT FOSTER GROUP VULNERABILITY

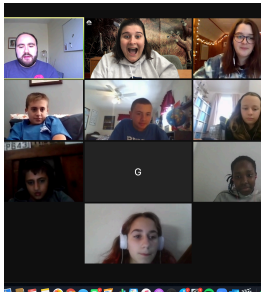
HOW DO I GET MY STUDENTS TO SHARE WITH VULNERABILITY IN MY GROUP?



CREATING SAFE, BOLD SPACES THAT FOSTER GROUP VULNERABILITY

I HATE ZOOM!!!

- ▶ Our current online only group model makes group vulnerability even more challenging
- ▶ We might not have any control the medium where our groups take place, but we do have control over two things:
 - ▶ How we chose to structure our groups
 - ▶ How we chose to respond to our group members



EXAMPLES OF DYNAMICS THAT SEEM TO DISCOURAGE GROUP VULNERABILITY

- ▶ The over-sharer
- ▶ The under-sharer
- ▶ The multi-tasker
- ▶ The unwanted guest: Silence

THE OVER SHARER

- ▶ Seem to have a personal story or example for every single possible question
- ▶ Eager to raise their hand
- ▶ Enjoy commenting on other student's comments that might not even be related to the topic

THE UNDER SHARER

- ▶ Will share only when called upon
- ▶ Shares with as few words as possible
- ▶ Rarely volunteers for anything
- ▶ Will likely keep their camera off as much as possible

THE MULTI-TASKER

- ▶ Clearly has other things on their mind like an iPhone game, a tiktok video or spamming the chat on Zoom
- ▶ Is visibly disconnected on camera or choses to keep their camera off.
- ▶ Asks "Can you repeat the question" with frequency
- ▶ **Far more students might fall into this category due to our digital ministry offerings
- ▶ It's easy for a student to appear as an under-sharer, when in fact they might be a multi-tasker (especially those who are shy)

THE UNWANTED GUEST: SILENCE

- ▶ Silence can absolutely function as a group member
- ▶ "Deer in the headlights" moments when students do not share
- ▶ Silence can also discourage others from sharing, as students might feel awkward in the silence—but also just as awkward breaking the silence

THE OVER SHARER

- ▶ Do not discourage them to share by ignoring their raised hand or saying "lets call on someone else instead"
 - ▶ Instead, try to limit each student's sharing to 30 second increments or less—you can even use a timer!
- ▶ Ask if others have comments on what they have shared
- ▶ Re-frame any irrelevant sharing and help to encourage on-topic sharing
- ▶ Equip the student by having the read the question or help them re-route their energy away from themselves or towards a group member—have them call on another student
- ▶ Learn when to say: "let's talk about that later"
 - ▶ If a student is sharing something that is deeply personal, troubling, or hints that they are in danger of hurting someone or being hurt themselves, quickly intervene and create space to talk with that student away from the group setting. Notify your student ministry director asap.

THE UNDER SHARER

- ▶ Give the group time before each question to think and write potential answers (Think, Write, Share)
- ▶ Encourage the usage of the “private chat” feature while on zoom and share the student’s answer
 - ▶ Have one leader running the video, another leader navigating the chat
- ▶ Do not publicly call on them to share spontaneously– this heightens anxiety and will likely discourage future sharing
 - ▶ If you would like to hear from them, say their name before you ask the question. This works if it is very hard to get any student to start sharing. Model: “Hey Taylor, I would love to ask you a question”.
- ▶ Implement more activities where each student gets the opportunity to share, such as an ice breaker or a “go around”

THE MULTI-TASKER

- ▶ Do not be afraid to ask a student to “be present” during a zoom call
 - ▶ Tell them to put their phone away, close any browsers on their computer, or turn on their camera. They might not respond well, but keep trying.
 - ▶ Private message a kid who is spamming the chat and ask them to stop
- ▶ Ask students to stay on camera and unmute during discussion times–this allows you to see one another and limits the amount of noise that each student can make when they are not sharing.
 - ▶ “its okay that your camera is off but I still really want to know that you are there”
 - ▶ “Sometimes its hard for me to know if you are participating because I cant see you. Please try and share with us in the chat or via camera”
- ▶ Refer back to your small group covenant often–did your students agree to be present for the 60 minutes a week they are with their small group? If not, revisit that and help students re-commit.

THE UNWANTED GUEST: SILENCE

- ▶ Acknowledge the silence, do not try to avoid it
- ▶ Think carefully before filling the silence with your own voice
 - ▶ This can be our natural tendency, but it can really take away the agency that we are trying to give to the students in their sharing
 - ▶ When you do share in the midst of silence, share a short, relatable story and ask for immediate feedback (“Other stories? Thoughts? Feelings?”)
- ▶ Do a check-in mid conversation: “How are we feeling about this video or this topic on a scale of 1-10” or “How are we feeling tonight, tired?”
 - ▶ This might unveil that the question is a little too complex for students or too simplistic and might require more explanation from you
- ▶ Use the silence for your advantage and ask students to take a few minutes to think or write before they share

A ROLE-PLAY ACTIVITY

- ▶ Two Group Leaders
- ▶ The over-sharer
- ▶ The under-sharer
- ▶ The multi-tasker
- ▶ Discussion Question: Is a hotdog a Sandwich?

SILENCE!!!

CAMPUS TIME: ROLE PLAY DEBRIEF

- ▶ What were some of the good things that the group leaders did in this role play?
- ▶ What were some ways that they could improve?
- ▶ Do you see each group dynamic (silence, over-sharer, under-sharer, and multi-tasker) present in your groups?
- ▶ Which group dynamic is the most challenging for you as a leader?
- ▶ What are some of the practices that you learned today that you want to try with your group next week?
