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August 10, 2006

Welcome to the group. We will be meeting each Tuesday night from 6:00 until 7:30. The purpose of the group is to meet the needs of its members, and it will be the responsibility of the members of the group to bring in issues of importance to them. The group setting provides members not only an opportunity to talk about interpersonal concerns, but also to observe how they relate to other people. It is a place try out new, and hopefully more functional, ways of relating. How helpful the group will be depends primarily on what you, and the other group members, are willing to give. The following are some guidelines which should be understood and accepted by all:

1. The cardinal rule is confidentiality. **Who is in the group, and anything said in group, must be kept strictly confidential.** Only if this is clearly understood and accepted by all can a safe environment be provided. This should not preclude a group member from sharing with someone outside of group what he or she has learned.
2. The general focus of the group is 'relationships with other people', which covers a lot of territory. By suggesting this general focus, however, I do not wish to exclude any topic that is of importance to a group member. Current issues, issues from the past, as well as issues related to the therapist or group members, are all appropriate. **The group's agenda is set by its members.**
3. Friendships between group members, 'getting together' outside of group, and especially sexual or romantic relationships between group members, are strongly discouraged. This is, again, so that the group environment can be experienced as safe. If members do talk or get together outside of group, it is expected that this will be shared with the group. **Anything that occurs among the members of the group is the group's business.**
4. **The group counts on the regular attendance of all of its members.** If a member plans to miss a group, it is expected that this will be shared with the group in advance. If an emergency occurs during the week prior to a group, which prevents a member from attending, please call me so I can inform the group. Members will be allowed up to three absences per quarter at no charge. (Quarters are January—March, April—June, July—September, and October—December.) Additional absences will be billed at the usual rate.
5. New members will join the group from time to time, and old members will leave the group when they are ready. Prospective members should be aware, however, that **this is intended to be a long-term group.** This kind of therapeutic work requires intimacy and trust, which takes time. To maintain a stable group, I will inform the group when I plan to introduce a new

member, and I will endeavor to introduce new members in a manner that is not disruptive to the group process. When a member plans to leave the group, it is expected that the member will discuss his or her plans with the group, so the group can appropriately respond to the member. For the sake of group stability, and so there will be an adequate opportunity for discussion, members planning to terminate from the group are requested to give at least three weeks notice. I will also give at least three weeks notice when I plan to bring a new member into the group.

6. Statements of account for the previous month's charges will be distributed at the first meeting of the following month. Bills are due and payable in full at or before the second group meeting of the month, unless other arrangements are made with me. Any financial questions or problems should be discussed with me promptly.

7. I hope that your work in the group will be rewarding and productive. I look forward to you joining us.

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