

The *Center for Adolescent
Research in Schools*
Interpersonal Skills Group
Manual



CENTER FOR ADOLESCENT
RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS

Moving Youth Toward Success

The *Center for Adolescent Research in Schools* Interpersonal Skills Group Manual

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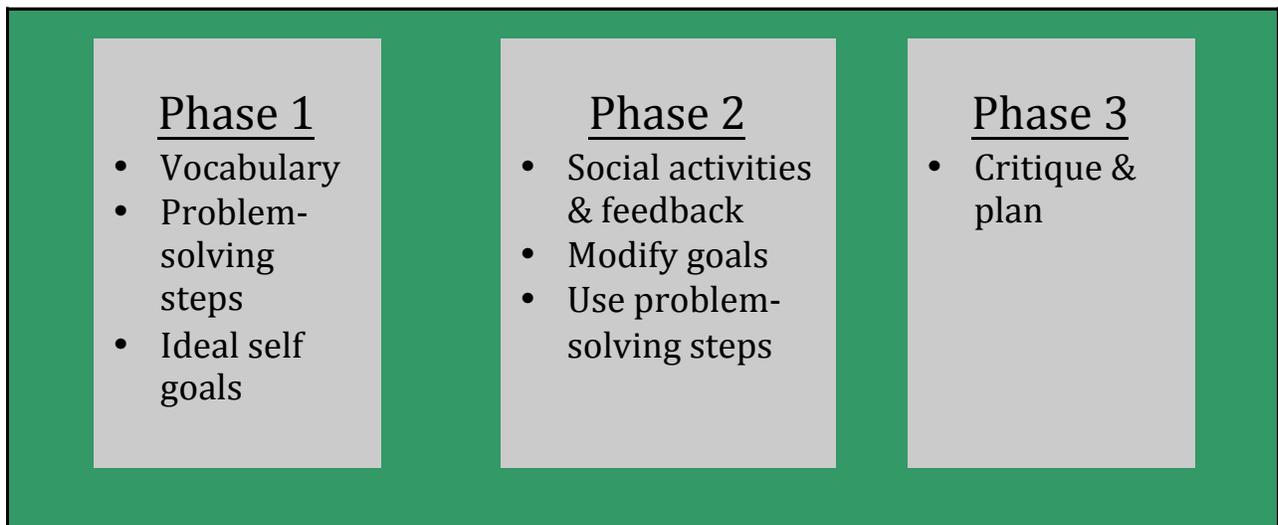
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OVERVIEW OF ISG INTERVENTION

Interpersonal skills group (ISG) interventions are typically provided during 30 minute sessions twice a week or ISG can also be conducted during one 45-50 minute academic block each week. ISG should have no more than four students participating in the group per session leader and sessions should take place in a location where confidentiality can be ensured. The group leader should review confidentiality practices with the students prior to the start of the group. The purpose of ISG is to help students improve relationships with peers and adults. This process takes place over three phases, which are described below.



Phase 1

During the first phase (Steps 1-10), all students learn the ISG vocabulary terms, problem solving steps (WILBUR), and create ideal self goals. After all students have passed the vocabulary and problem solving steps quiz and have created two ideal self goals with operational definitions, the group moves to Phase 2. The first phase of ISG can be completed as individual sessions between a student and session leader, or they can be completed as a group.

Phase 2

During the second phase (Steps 11 & 12), students participate in sessions of social activities and feedback. Throughout these sessions students will be prompted to use problem solving steps learned in phase one. This phase is complete after approximately 12 sessions or when students have mastered their ideal self goals.

Phase 3

During the third phase, students who have mastered both (or all) of their ideal self goals participate in Critique and Plan sessions. Critique and Plan sessions are individual conversations between a student and a session leader focusing on the application of behavior consistent with ideal self goals in daily activities.

Materials

It is important to track each student's progress throughout the intervention, so consider having an ISG folder for each student. These folders will contain all student and session leader ISG Rating Cards, a Mastery Tracking Form, Critique and Plan forms, and the student's list of ideal self goals and operational definitions. These forms and explanations of each form are located beginning on page 36 in the Appendix. Session leader should ensure these folders are maintained, and should store the folders in a locked filing cabinet in a secure location when they are not being used.

In each student's folder:

10 Index Cards

1 Problem Solving (WILBUR) Handout

1 Vocabulary Handout

1 ISG Quiz

At least 3 ISG Rating Cards

3 Critique and Plan Forms

1 Mastery Tracking Form

FORMAT OF ISG

ISG is designed to be flexible to meet the needs of school personnel and students. There are several acceptable variations of the timing and format of ISG sessions.

- **Timing**
 - ISG can occur for between 30 and 90 minutes per session. The length of the session will determine the amount of material addressed within the session. In order to allow this flexibility, individual sessions are not described in the manual (other than the first 2 sessions). Instead material is provided for each phase and session length may vary depending on availability.
 - ISG should not be shorter than 30 minutes per week and occur at least once a week. However, ISG can occur more frequently.
- **Group Format**
 - The phase one and phase two sessions described in the manual take place in a group format. Therefore, students begin and end the ISG intervention at the same time. Phase three of the intervention takes place as individual meetings between a group leader and student.
- **Individual Format**
 - Although activities are described in a group format, activities in phase one and three may take place as individual meetings between a group leader and student. The phase two activities must be provided in a group format. It is possible for individuals to be entering and exiting phase one at different time points as some students may be delayed in joining the group and some students may master the phase one material ahead of others. Once at least three students have mastered the material in phase one, the group leader may start phase two with them and add other students to the group as they complete phase one. Additional students who join the group later than the others may begin and complete phase one individually, and then join an existing phase two group. Once a student has attended the required number of phase two steps, the student moves on to phase three, which occurs individually. The group in phase two continues to occur, and students may rotate in and out as they move through the phases.
- **Multicultural Applicability**
 - This intervention is intended for students of various racial, ethnic, religious, sexual orientations, and economic classes. In order for the group to be effective with a diverse group of students it is important for the group leader to maintain a respectful approach to individual differences and be aware of his/her own biases.

I. RATIONALE

Helping students improve their social functioning can be a difficult challenge, but one that warrants considerable effort as social impairment increases the risk that youth will have poor outcomes. Students with behavioral problems tend to do many things that alienate them from peers and adults (i.e. immature behavior, pestering, bossiness, apathy, and trying/ failing to be funny). Furthermore, their academic struggles and disruptive behavior also contributes to their alienation. Simply teaching them to do these things correctly will, at best, provide a short-term benefit. Rather, it is important that students understand and recognize the connections between their behaviors and the social contingencies that follow. If a session leader can teach a student to recognize and understand these contingencies, the naturally occurring contingencies may shape the student's behavior to a much greater extent than would teaching skills through direct instruction. Below are some specific ways students with behavioral problems struggle socially:

Understanding Cause and Effect Relationships in Social Situations: Studies have demonstrated that many socially impaired youth do not do as well as other youth at recognizing cause and effect relationships in the context of social behavior. In order to learn from the contingencies that shape social behavior, it is critically important that one understand cause and effect relationships as these are the connections between reinforcement and punishment and the social behaviors that lead to them. If students do not understand the relationships, they are unlikely to learn from the naturally occurring social contingencies and may misinterpret many social interactions. At least partially because of not recognizing cause and effect relationships in social behavior, students may frequently fail to see the relationship between their behavior and its consequences. Similarly, they may also fail to see these relations in the actions of others.

Recognizing Social Cues: Students may have difficulty recognizing subtle social behaviors as meaningful in interpersonal dynamics. As a result, they often miss a large portion of the communication that occurs in social situations. This problem can result from the student not attending to the cue or misinterpreting it.

Ineffective Problem Solving Skills: A common intervention for children with social impairment involves teaching them social problem solving steps. This is based on the findings of studies that reported that many socially impaired children are very poor at using problem solving procedures when making decisions about their social behavior. Students with ADHD and related behavior problems are unable to generate as many feasible solutions to social problems as their peers.

Impulsivity and Poor Emotion Regulation: Many students have difficulty regulating displays of emotion. Anger, distress and frustration are often expressed to a degree that appears out of proportion to the actual situation. They may also behave impulsively in social situations, failing to anticipate the consequences of their behavior and leading them to wish they could "take back" a comment with negative consequences.

II. GROUP LEADER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP

In the context of ISG, the principal responsibility of the group or session leader is to coach students with the primary goal of helping them recognize the social consequences (both good and bad) of their actions and plan for effective social behavior in the future. These interactions occur when session leaders give specific feedback on student social performance, and also in discussion of potential interpersonal goals and relationships outside of the ISG. Group leaders should use their understanding of social impairment in students to guide their interactions when coaching. **It is critical that session leaders refrain from lecturing, making judgment statements, or attempting to ‘train’ specific social skills because these efforts are rarely effective,** and in fact might interfere with the goals of the student. Instead, session leaders should use a questioning strategy (e.g., open-ended questions, linking, and connecting current behavior to student generated goals) to encourage students to identify those behaviors that help them meet their goals, and avoid behaviors that move them away from their goals. Below are some example questions that leaders might use to help students target and meet specific goals.

Encourage the student to repeat or amplify behaviors that have worked in the past: Even students with serious social impairment experience success occasionally. One of the goals of the session leader is to help the student focus on those instances and identify the specific behaviors that led to success. A student who complains about his teacher in January probably has a history of coping with the teacher at previous times. The session leader might ask: What was going on when you were coping better? What were you doing differently in September? What do you do on ‘good days’ that you could also do on ‘bad days’?

Prompt hypotheses about why people act the way they do: When the student talks about social events, important details are often missing or the description is unclear because the student does not completely understand the behavior-consequence connection. In such situations, session leader can ask: I’m confused, why did ____ do that? What makes ____ doubt you? I wonder why ____ got so upset? So what are they likely to do next?

In short, the session leader’s aim is to help students develop clear goals for future social interactions based on past experiences. The assumption is that it is easier for the student to build on previous *successes* rather than trying to reinvent herself or develop a whole new set of social skills. These latter goals are almost sure to strain the counseling relationship, yet still result in student failure and frustration. Thus, the session leader switches the focus from *problem* to *solution*. For example, the session leader might give the student a “homework” assignment between sessions and then revisit progress at the next meeting. Success is praised (e.g., “I’m impressed with what you were able to do!” Or “What does it say about you that you were able to do that?”), and unresolved problems are revisited and reworked.

Begin each new session with energy and enthusiasm: Make the beginning of each group session fun and get the students excited about the activity for the day. Review concepts from the previous session as needed.

III. Frequently Asked Questions

1. Are there students who should not participate in ISG?

Although ISG is recommended for students with social impairment, there are some students for whom ISG is not appropriate. For example, students who are overly aggressive or defiant may compromise the dynamics of a group. Once a student has started the ISG intervention, they may be removed from the group if they display behavior that compromises the ability of the other students to participate in the group or if the session leader believes the ISG intervention is not beneficial for the student. If possible, work 1 on 1 with the student on phase one vocabulary and skills and then try to include the student again during the second phase.

2. How many sessions of ISG are necessary?

Preliminary findings indicate that students who master their ideal self goals have larger decreases in social impairment at the end of the intervention as compared to students who do not. Additionally, students do not typically master their ideal self goals until after at least 12 hours of Phase two ISG sessions. The ISG schedule of sessions is based on these findings. If a student is absent for more than 2 hours of ISG, the likelihood that this student will be able to master his or her goals is greatly decreased; therefore, if possible, students should attend make-up ISG sessions or continue in phase two beyond the number of indicated sessions until they master their ideal self goals.

3. How should I handle disruptive behavior within the group?

If students are exhibiting disruptive behavior within ISG, the group leader may need to use behavior management techniques to decrease the disruptive behavior. Several behavior management techniques are described in the School Mental Health Manual (See handout on Group Management).

4. How do I know if an ideal self goal is good or bad?

Good ideal self goals are ones that can be measured within the context of the group. These goals help the student improve his or her social functioning and ability to get along with peers and adults. Examples of good ideal self goals include wanting to be seen as funny, a leader, friendly, and nice. There are some ideal self goals that may be good, but cannot be measured within the context of the group, such as to be seen as athletic. Although the group may sometimes participate in sports, a student will not always be able to be rated on this goal. Therefore, the student should be encouraged to come up with additional goals that can be assessed in group. If a student creates a goal that seems silly, such as to be seen as a gangster, the group leader should try to redirect the student to positive aspects of a gangster (such as being a leader). If a student insists on keeping a goal that seems silly, the group leader should allow the student to keep the goal. The majority of the time students will self correct and abandon goals like this one after receiving low ratings on their performance, and create relevant ideal self goals. It is important to reserve judgment and value statements regarding students' choices. The goal is to encourage critical thinking, creativity and identity development.

PHASE ONE

INTRODUCTION

Leader: Write your agenda for ISG on the board at the beginning of each session.

For example, if you plan to go through Steps 1 and 2 during this session write: “Introduction to the group” and “establishing expectations” on the board. Sessions in Phase One may begin with an ice-breaker and/or a review of the previous session content.

STEP 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE GROUP (5 min.)

Welcome to ISG! We are very glad that you are here. To get our group started, we are going to introduce the leaders and tell you a little about us, and we will go around the room and each of you can tell us your name. After we introduce ourselves, we will talk about the group for a couple minutes and answer any questions you might have. We will be meeting [tell times and days] and doing fun activities and group games. We will be focus on how to get along with other people and you will be given feedback on your behavior during our activities. Do you have any questions?

Leader: Once everyone has introduced themselves, begin by talking about the types of things the students will be doing in ISG. Tell them how often your group will meet, what time the group will meet, and how long you will meet at each group. Explain that they will participate in fun activities, like sports and group games, and given feedback on their behavior during these activities. Discuss confidentiality with the students and the importance of not sharing conversations that occur in the group with anyone outside of the group. Answer any questions that the students might have about ISG.

Because this is the first day, we're going to spend some time playing a game and getting acquainted with each other. Pick an ice-breaker activity to play (see page 47 for ideas).

STEP 2. ESTABLISHING EXPECTATIONS FOR GROUP (10 min.)

It is important to establish group expectations, routines, and consequences/contingencies with students in order to prevent disruptive behaviors and to maximize group time. Expectations need to be established during the first session. The group leader(s) and students should generate ideas about group expectations and define them. In addition, students can create a poster of group rules if desired (see materials on group rules).

What are some expectations or rules that help people function well together in groups? Can you tell me why [the rule they offer] is a good idea? What should happen in group if a student has trouble following a group expectation?

If students have trouble coming up with rules or consequences for following rules, prompt with some ideas. Ideas for rules include maintaining confidentiality, using respectful language, one person speaking at a time, not judging what others say, and active participation. Ideas for consequences may include problem solving one on one, and teacher or parent contact. Discuss reinforcements for following expectations and engaging in tasks appropriately. Provide praise and positive feedback when students actively participate and follow group expectations (tangible rewards and point systems may be used).

VOCABULARY

STEP 3. VOCABULARY (10 min.)

Materials Needed:

1. *Vocabulary Handout*

We are going to learn some vocabulary words that we are going to use during our time in this group. Today we are going to tell you the words and what they mean, and then you will work on memorizing the definitions of the words. It is important that everyone memorizes all of the words and definitions. When you are ready you will take a quiz on these words. Before I tell you what each of them mean—let’s go through them together and see if any of you know the meanings already.

Leader: Present the vocabulary words listed below one at a time. Write each word on the board, and have the students try to define the word. After determining the extent to which any of them are already familiar with these words, provide them with the vocabulary handout (page 42 in appendix). Review the definitions on the handout and write a definition on the board by each word. Try to use the students’ words when writing the definitions.

Vocabulary Terms and Definitions

Ideal Self - This is our image of what we would like other people to think about us. This is who we aspire to be or be like and includes goals about ourselves and who we want to become.

***Explanation of ideal self:** A list of adjectives and phrases that describes the person we would like to be. The image is ideal because people may not completely become their ideal self, but frequently strive for it. The ideal self can change over time as we modify and refine this image.*

Real Self - This is a description of what people really think of us.

***Explanation of real self:** A list of adjectives and phrases that describe how others perceive us. The self can also change as we change our behavior. It changes slower than behavior, because others’ impressions are subject to a “reputation bias.” People form impressions of others based on past experience. To change these perceptions, one must consistently demonstrate significantly different behavior for a sustained period of time so that peers’ old memories can be replaced with new information.*

Reinforcement - Reinforcement follows a behavior and increases the likelihood that the person will exhibit the behavior again.

***Explanation of reinforcement:** For example, a student might get a few dollars after cleaning his/her bedroom, increasing the likelihood he/she will clean it again.*

Punishment - Punishment follows a behavior that decreases the likelihood that the person will exhibit the behavior again.

***Explanation of punishment:** For example, if a student stays out past curfew, he may lose the privilege of watching television.*

STEP 4. PROBLEM SOLVING--WILBUR (5 min.)

Materials Needed:

1. *Problem Solving Step Handout*

We are also going to learn the six steps of problem solving that we are going to use during our time in this group. Today we are going to talk about the six steps, which we call WILBUR, and next you will work on memorizing the steps. It's important that everyone memorizes all of the six steps, and we will quiz you on these steps.

Leader: Write the six problem solving steps (WILBUR) listed below on the board, and review each one with the students. Provide them with the WILBUR handout (page 43 in appendix). When you are finished, present the students with the sample problem below. Walk through the problem solving steps with the students for this problem. Be sure to include all of the students in the discussion, and remind them that there are often many different ways to handle a problem. If students offer silly solutions, allow these to be written on the board and discussed. If you proceed through the process correctly, silly solutions are likely to be eliminated when they select the "best" solution (#4).

Today we are going to walk through WILBUR for the following problem: Matt is upset because he found out one of his friends was saying bad things about him behind his back.

What are the steps we need to follow in order to work through this problem?

Leader: Once the students have identified the 6 steps of WILBUR, go through each step individually and have the students generate answers to each step of WILBUR.

WILBUR

1. What is my problem?
2. I want a solution that will...
3. List some ideas of things I could do to solve the problem.
4. Best solution is ...
5. Use the solution.
6. Rate the effectiveness of the solution

STEP 5. FLASHCARDING VOCABULARY AND WILBUR (15 min.)

Materials needed:

1. *Handouts for vocabulary and problem solving*
2. *Pen or Pencil for each student*
3. *Ten index cards for each student*

Now we are going to review the vocabulary terms and problem solving steps that we discussed. I am going to give you index cards and I want you to write one vocabulary word on the front of each index card and the definitions for the words on the back. When you write the definitions, try to do it in 7 words or less. For

example, for the word “real self” you could write “how others see me” on the back of the card. Once you have written all of the vocabulary words and definitions on index cards, I want you to write each of the letters for WILBUR on the front of index cards, and the corresponding problem solving step on the back of the card. For example, for the first problem solving step you would write the letter “W” on the front of the index card and on the back you would write “What is the problem”. You should have a total of 10 index cards when you have written all of the vocabulary words and problem solving steps. When you have finished creating your cards, review them alone or with someone else in the group until you have memorized all of the definitions and steps. Practice by looking at the front and trying to remember what is written on the back before flipping the card and checking. Let one of the group leaders know when you are ready to be quizzed on the definitions and problem solving steps and we will give you the quiz. Any questions?

Leader: Make sure the students have the handouts with the vocabulary words, definitions, and problem solving steps (WILBUR). The students should make the flashcards and study until they are ready for the quiz. Let the students know they have approximately 25 minutes for this activity. The group leader may wish to make the cards ahead of the group session to optimize the amount of time spent practicing. You can also use the cards to create memorization games like Concentration or “ISG Bee” (like spelling bee). The students may quiz each other in preparation for the quiz, or may work alone.

An alternative method for creating flash cards is below.

Fold-over Technique

1. Create templates for each student for both the problem solving technique (WILBUR) and vocabulary words (e.g., real self, ideal self, etc) according to the following diagram

Front Side of 8.5x11 paper		Back Side of 8.5x11 paper	
	Problem Solving WILBUR	List Steps	Example
	W		
	I		
	L		
	B		
	U		
	R		

Front Side of 8.5x11 paper		Back Side of 8.5x11 paper	
	Vocabulary	Picture Reminder	Definition
	Ideal Self		
	Real Self		
	Reinforcement		
	Punishment		

2. After the relevant lessons, have students complete the back sides of the templates (e.g., list steps, example, picture reminder, and definition) in their own words and illustrations.
3. After completing the back side of the papers, have students fold each paper in half lengthwise along the mid-line you provided.
4. Students should then cut along the dashed line. Doing so creates a tool the student can use to study the vocabulary words by reading the word or letter on the front of the folded paper and then flipping it over to study the definition and illustrations they have drawn/written to help them remember.

STEP 6. ISG QUIZ (10 min.)

Materials Needed:

1. *ISG Quiz for each student*
2. *ISG Mastery Tracking Form*
3. *Activity for students who complete the Quiz early*

When you are ready to take the quiz, please let a group leader know. We will give you the quiz and you can work on it until the end of the session.

Leader: The quiz for the vocabulary terms and problem solving steps is located on page 44 in the Appendix (or the alternative quiz/activity in the Appendix page 46), and the answer sheet is on page 45 in the Appendix. Once the students complete this part of the quiz, the session leader should ask the students to explain why the ideal and real self may not be the same and list two examples of social behaviors that they find to be reinforcing and two examples of social behaviors that they find to be punishing. In order to pass, the student must correctly provide all definitions and answer the other two questions to a level commensurate with his/her age and ability. The group leader should not to give any clues or information to assist answers.

If many students in the group have difficulty with this task, then it is acceptable to create a matching task. The vocabulary words and problem solving steps can be listed on the left and the definitions on the right. The definitions should be listed in an order such that they are not next to the word they define. The students can pass this quiz by connecting the words to the proper definitions.

Additionally, the group leader should give the student a problem and ask him/her to hypothetically proceed through the steps. In order to pass, the student must correctly define the steps and accurately proceed through the hypothetical example. The group leader should not give clues or information to assist with the answers. Record the date of mastery on the student's ISG Mastery Tracking Form located on page 40 in the Appendix.

When students are ready to take the quiz, they should take it in a separate part of the room from the students who are still studying. The students who are studying must do so silently once a student has begun their quiz. Once students finish the quiz, they should be allowed to quietly interact with each other or participate in an activity (i.e., playing a board game).

If half of the students in the group pass the quiz, the entire group can proceed to Step 7. However, if less than half of the students in the group do not pass the quiz, the students who did not pass the quiz should continue to study and practice and then repeat the quiz. The students who passed the quiz should assist the other students in using flashcards to learn the vocabulary terms and problem solving definitions.

STEP 7. PROBLEM SOLVING with WILBUR (25 min.)

Next, we are going to review the problem solving steps and then work through a problem together as a group. To start, each of you should write a problem that makes it hard for people to be seen by others like they would like to be seen. In other words, give an example of someone who is having trouble having others see him or her as her ideal self. If you would like your problem chosen first, put a star next to it. We will then choose one problem and use the problem solving steps, WILBUR, to work through the problem together. If we do not choose your problem and you would still like to talk about it, you can talk to your session leader about the problem and use WILBUR to work on the problem.

Leader: Have the students write a problem on a piece of paper and collect all of the problems. If there is a star by any of the problems, begin with that problem. If there is no star, choose a problem that students are most likely to face. If there are multiple problems with a star, choose the one you think would apply to the most students or is the most pressing problem. If there are no appropriate problems, then create a fictitious problem for this activity.

Now we are going to work through a problem together.

Leader: Once a problem has been selected, the session leader and students should work through each of the steps. Below ("WILBUR Problem Solving Steps") are detailed

instructions regarding each of the six problem solving steps. The session leader should review all of the information at each step with the students and prompt the students for additional information.

It is also important for the session leader to emphasize that we only have control over our own behavior and that these problem solving steps should be used with the “W” in mind-what is MY problem. We cannot fix others' behavior or problems- sometimes we can use our behavior to impact others-but the focus should be on behaviors or problems that we can directly impact. Finally, the session leader should be sensitive to diversity issues that may arise within the problem solving group.

In subsequent problem solving discussions, session leaders can break the students into smaller groups to work through problems. Session leaders should monitor the students' activities, but should allow the students to generate their own answers to each step. At the end, each group should present their use of WILBUR to the entire group. Session leaders may ask the group questions regarding why they chose to answer each step in a certain way.

WILBUR Problem Solving Steps

Step 1: What is my problem?

The students should be able to define the problem in specific operational terms. Prompt the group to state problems in terms that define how the problem interferes with the student. Then, have students indicate the unwanted consequences that are being threatened or enacted.

Example: If Jade is upset with the manner with which a teacher is disciplining her, she should state the problem in the first person, using an “I” statement. The problem statement might be “My problem is that I frequently have to spend time in after-school detention.” The problem statement would NOT be “Mrs. Smith always puts me in suspension!” because this does not describe why it is a problem for Jade. When conducting social problem solving discussions, identify the person with the problem unless they wish to remain anonymous.

Step 2: I want a solution that will ...

This stage of the problem solving process requires the student to identify what it is that he or she would like to happen. The resolution statement generated in this step should answer the question, *what would have to occur for the student to know that the problem has been resolved?* Have the group consider the potential impact of the resolution on the real self and determine whether this resolution would bring real self and ideal self closer together or further apart.

Example: The resolution statement for Jade's problem might be “I won't have to spend time in after-school detention anymore”.

Step 3: List some ideas that I could use to solve the problem.

This step is a brainstorming process. Have students creatively generate ideas without evaluating them. The only criteria should be that solutions must result in achieving the resolution statement.

This step is completed when the student has a set of choices for achieving his or her resolution statement. Again, criteria are not stringent; the choices may not be very good. If the student gives a problematic statement (i.e., bring a gun to school), the solution should be written on the board with the others and should not be evaluated until the next step.

Step 4: Best solution is...

This step requires that the students evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of each of the potential solutions generated in the previous step. Address each generated solution one at a time and prompt the students to consider all of the social consequences of the solution. Direct the group to connect how implementing each solution might impact the student's real self. Prompt the group on this point by asking:

- *What are the risks to the student's real self?*
- *How do these risks compare to the risks associated with the other solutions or with ignoring the problem?*

Have students evaluate these solutions and select one or some combination of ideas. Even when there are no good solutions, the student should select a best solution. Do not guide the student to a solution, nor judge their choice. It can be useful for students to try solutions that are likely to be ineffective in order to learn how to make wise choices.

The only time a session leader should interfere with a student's selection of a solution is if the implementation of the solution would pose a safety risk for the student or someone else, or if it would lead to the student getting in trouble. After the student selects a solution to try, work with him or her to specifically determine how they will know if the solution worked.

Step 5: Use the solution.

The students should describe how they might implement the selected solution.

Step 6: Rate the effectiveness of the solution.

When demonstrating the use of WILBUR, have students evaluate the hypothetical outcomes of the practice example. It can be helpful to ask students how they would handle different hypothetical outcomes, and how they would rate them.

When using WILBUR during group to re-evaluate the success of a student's real-life problem-solving example, it may be helpful to start each problem solving discussion by asking the student whose problem was addressed in the previous session to report on his or her attempt to implement a solution. Have the student share the following:

- Rate the extent to which he or she actually achieved the resolution statement defined at the last session. Again, it can be helpful to ask the student how they would have handled a hypothetical response to their solution.
- Report on whether resolving this problem caused other problems and how it impacted his or her real self.
- If the attempted solution created additional problems or if it did not achieve the desired goal, guide the student to return to the first step and repeat the problem solving steps.

IDEAL SELF GOALS

STEP 8. IDEAL SELF GOAL CONVERSATION (20 min.)

Materials needed:

1. *Pen or Pencil for each student*
2. *Paper for each student*
3. *ISG folder for each student*

Now we are going to talk about the vocabulary term “ideal self”. Who can tell me the definition of ideal self? Okay, now that we know that idea self is how we want others to see us, let’s talk about people we admire. Everyone think of a name of at least one person you admire. This person may be real, fiction, a character on TV, a relative or anyone.

Now that we have a list of people, we are going to talk about why you admire them. Why do you admire the person you named? How does the person behave that makes you think they are (insert adjective here)?

Okay, now think about how your impression of the person would change if he/she acted in a way that was the opposite of how you viewed him/her?

- **Would the person have to act this way over and over again to change your view?**
- **Are there some behaviors that people only have to do once to change a reputation and others that one would have to repeat frequently in order to change what you think of them?**
- **Is it easier for people to improve their reputation or damage their reputation?**
- **What does this have to do with “real self”?**

Leader: The people the students admire can be adults, peers, fictional, living or deceased. Write the names of the people on the board. The adjectives describing why students admire the people should be listed on the board next to each person’s name. After students have listed adjectives describing why they admire each person, the session leader should ask how the person behaves that makes the student see that person that way. For example, if a student says he admires his grandfather because he is brave, the session leader should ask “What does your grandfather do that makes you think he is brave?” In other words, what does the person do that leads to people viewing him/her in a particular way. This information does not need to be recorded on the board. The remainder of the questions can simply be discussed with the group. Everything that is recorded on the board should also be recorded on a piece of paper so the conversation can continue as needed into another session. If students state negative role models, such as Adolf Hitler, the session leader should ask questions and try to redirect the student to some positive aspect of the individual, such as Hitler was a leader. Session leaders should still write the negative role model on the board, but should continue prompting the student for positive aspects of that role model. In addition, students may state names from popular culture that are unfamiliar to the leader or may have a poor reputation. Similar to the previous example, the leader should try to refrain from making judgments and simply

try to have the students generate positive characteristics of the named individuals. Further, if a student says that he/she idolizes an individual for his/her money or fame, then the group leader may ask the students why these things are important and what they indicate about the person (e.g., success). These terms may be suitable for an ideal self goal.

Continue to think about these characteristics and consider ones that you might like others to use describe you.

Write/keep the list of people and characteristics that were identified in the ideal self discussion on the board for the students to view during ideal self goal development.

STEP 9. CREATING IDEAL SELF GOALS (20 min.)

Materials needed:

- 1. Pen or Pencil for each student*
- 2. ISG folder for each student*
- 3. ISG Mastery Tracking Form*

Now that we have talked about people you admire and what you admire about them, I want you to think about how you would like other people to see you. Write down on your paper a few things that you would like other people to think about you. (stop and allow students to write characteristics).

Now I want you to write behaviors that you would have to exhibit for others to think of you that way. You should have at least three behaviors per ideal self goal. Let a session leader know if you need help coming up with ideas for your ideal self goals or the behaviors that go with each goal.

Leader: When the students are creating their ideal self goals, session leaders should proceed through the group offering guidance, suggestions, and feedback to the goals being prepared by the students. It is important to allow them to create whatever goals they want, even if these goals seem silly. If a student creates goals that are seemingly inappropriate, the session leader should attempt to redirect the student to more appropriate goals. For example, if a student creates a goal of “I want to kill people”, the session leader should ask the student why they want to be seen that way. The student may respond with “people will leave me alone” and the session leader can then work with the student to come up with other ways for the student to be left alone. The idea is to continue to ask questions to redirect the student to his or her real goals. However, if the student insists that his or her goal is to harm someone, the session leader should assess the immediate risk of harm (intensity, duration, and frequency of thoughts, identified person, plan, means to implementing plan, intent) and follow school procedures regarding threats to harm self or others. Some students will need more assistance with this task than others.

It is important to remain calm and supportive if a student is having difficulties with this task. In some cases, it may help to refer back to the person they admire and the reasons

given for admiring them to help prompt a student. If a student refuses to create ideal self goals, the session leader should work with the student to try to create goals. If the student still refuses, the session leaders should inform the student that the session leader will choose goals for the student until the student identifies his/her own goals. Once the students have chosen their two or three ideal self goals, they should record these and the behaviors associated with the goals on the ISG Mastery Tracking Form (Page 40). The ISG Mastery Tracking Form should be kept by the group leader.

It is common for students to simply select synonyms for the operational definition of an ideal self goal. For example, if a student wants to be seen as “friendly”, the student may choose propose “being nice” as the operational definition. The leader should help the student identify behaviors that can be observed that would lead others to perceive of him/her as friendly instead of the label “being nice”.

Examples of an Ideal Self Goal with Operational Definitions:

I want to be seen as friendly.

- **I will only say nice things to others.**
- **I will offer to help whenever anyone needs assistance.**
- **I will start a conversation with at least two people in the group.**

I want to be seen as a leader.

- **I will offer to assist group leaders any time they need help.**
- **I will raise my hand to answer at least one question.**
- **I will set a good example for the rest of the group by participating appropriately in group.**

STEP 10. PROBLEM SOLVING with WILBUR (25 min.)

We are going to review the problem solving steps again and then work through a problem together as a group. To start, we are going to have each of you write a problem that makes it hard for people to be seen by others like they would like to be seen. In other words, give an example of someone who is having trouble having others see him or her as her ideal self. If you would like your problem chosen first, put a star next to it. We will then choose one problem and use the problem solving steps, WILBUR, to work through the problem together. If we do not choose your problem and you would still like to talk about it, you can talk to your session leader about the problem and use WILBUR to work through the problem.

Leader: Have the students write a problem on a piece of paper and collect all of the problems. If there is a star by any of the problems, begin with that problem. If there is no star, choose a problem that students are most likely to face. If there are multiple problems with a star, choose the one you think would apply to the most students or is the most pressing problem. If there are no appropriate problems, then create a fictitious problem for this activity.

Now we are going to work through a problem together.

Leader: Once a problem has been selected, the session leader and students should work through each of the steps. Below (“WILBUR Problem Solving Steps”) are detailed instructions regarding each of the six problem solving steps. The session leader should review all of the information at each step with the students and prompt the students for additional information.

It is also important for the session leader to emphasize that we only have control over our own behavior and that these problem solving steps should be used with the “W” in mind- what is MY problem. We cannot fix others' behavior or problems- sometimes we can use our behavior to impact others-but the focus should be on behaviors or problems that we can directly impact. Finally, the session leader should be sensitive to diversity issues that may arise within the problem solving group.

In subsequent problem solving discussions, session leaders can break the students into smaller groups to work through problems. Session leaders should monitor the students' activities, but should allow the students to generate their own answers to each step. At the end, each group should present their use of WILBUR to the entire group. Session leaders may ask the group questions regarding why they chose to answer each step in a certain way.

WILBUR Problem Solving Steps

Step 1: **What is my problem?**

The students should be able to define the problem in specific operational terms. Prompt the group to state problems in terms that define how the problem interferes with the student. Then, have students indicate the unwanted consequences that are being threatened or enacted.

Example: If Jade is upset with the manner with which a teacher is disciplining her, she should state the problem in the first person, using an “I” statement. The problem statement might be “My problem is that I frequently have to spend time in after-school detention.” The problem statement would NOT be “Mrs. Smith always puts me in suspension!” because this does not describe why it is a problem for Jade. When conducting social problem solving discussions, identify the person with the problem unless they wish to remain anonymous.

Step 2: **I want a solution that will ...**

This stage of the problem solving process requires the student to identify what it is that he or she would like to happen. The resolution statement generated in this step should answer the question, *what would have to occur for the student to know that the problem has been resolved?* Have the group consider the potential impact of the resolution on the real self and determine whether this resolution would bring real self and ideal self closer together or further apart.

Example: The resolution statement for Jade’s problem might be “I won’t have to spend time in after-school detention anymore”.

Step 3: List some ideas that I could use to solve the problem.

This step is a brainstorming process. Have students creatively generate ideas without evaluating them. The only criteria should be that solutions must result in achieving the resolution statement.

This step is completed when the student has a set of choices for achieving his or her resolution statement. Again, criteria are not stringent; the choices may not be very good. If the student gives a problematic statement (i.e., bring a gun to school), the solution should be written on the board with the others and should not be evaluated until the next step.

Step 4: Best solution is...

This step requires that the students evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of each of the potential solutions generated in the previous step. Address each generated solution one at a time and prompt the students to consider all of the social consequences of the solution. Direct the group to connect how implementing each solution might impact the student's real self. Prompt the group on this point by asking:

- *What are the risks to the student's real self?*
- *How do these risks compare to the risks associated with the other solutions or with ignoring the problem?*

Have students evaluate these solutions and select one or some combination of ideas. Even when there are no good solutions, the student should select a best solution. Do not guide the student to a solution, nor judge their choice. It can be useful for students to try solutions that are likely to be ineffective in order to learn how to make wise choices.

The only time a session leader should interfere with a student's selection of a solution is if the implementation of the solution would pose a safety risk for the student or someone else, or if it would lead to the student getting in trouble. After the student selects a solution to try, work with him or her to specifically determine how they will know if the solution worked.

Step 5: Use the solution.

The students should describe how they might implement the selected solution.

Step 6: Rate the effectiveness of the solution.

When demonstrating the use of WILBUR, have students evaluate the hypothetical outcomes of the practice example. It can be helpful to ask students how they would handle different hypothetical outcomes, and how they would rate them.

When using WILBUR during group to re-evaluate the success of a student's real-life problem-solving example, it may be helpful to start each problem solving discussion by asking the student whose problem was addressed in the previous session to report on his or her attempt to implement a solution. Have the student share the following:

- Rate the extent to which he or she actually achieved the resolution statement defined at the last session. Again, it can be helpful to ask the student how they would have handled a hypothetical response to their solution.
- Report on whether resolving this problem caused other problems and how it impacted his or her real self.
- If the attempted solution created additional problems or if it did not achieve the desired goal, guide the student to return to the first step and repeat the problem solving steps.

PHASE TWO

ISG SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AND FEEDBACK

STEP 11: ISG Social Activities and Feedback Sessions (30 min.)

Materials needed for this session:

- 1. ISG Card for each student*
- 2. ISG folder for each student*
- 3. Game or project materials for social activity*

I. INTRODUCTION/IDEAL SELF GOAL REVIEW (5 min.)

Welcome back! Today we are going to review your ideal self goals and definitions and then play a game/ do an activity. Group leader(s) will talk to you about your ideal self goals and definitions. Be sure to ask them if you have any questions about your ideal self goals or definitions.

Leader: Each session leader should meet with his or her assigned students and briefly review the student's ideal self goals and corresponding definitions.

II. SOCIAL ACTIVITY AND FEEDBACK (25 min.)

Now we are going to play a game/do an activity. During the activities, a group leader will take you aside for a minute or two to talk to you individually about how you are doing on your ideal self goals within the group activity. You will rate your behavior and your session leader will rate your behavior. After you each rate your behavior, you will share your ratings with each other and talk about why you each rated the behavior the way you did. We will do this at least twice today. Any questions?

Leader: The purpose of social activities and feedback is to help the students recognize social cues and learn to respond with appropriate and successful social skills. Social activities and feedback phase of the intervention emphasizes coaching and practice. Very little time should be spent discussing or "processing" (no more than 2 minutes). Students should spend as much time as possible conducting the practice activities described below:

1. Students should be given an activity that approximates developmentally appropriate social activities. Suggestions for these activities are listed beginning on page 49. Games should be changed or rotated each session to provide opportunities for practice in different contexts.
2. During the activity, session leaders should watch students and listen closely to identify behaviors exhibited by the student that relate to the students ideal self goals. These behaviors can be positive, negative, or neutral. Specifically, the session leaders should record instances of the student exhibiting target behaviors as well as behaviors that are counterproductive in relation to the goals. Session leaders should also focus on the reaction of peers to the student's target behaviors.

3. Approximately every 10 minutes the session leaders should take one student aside to briefly rate the student's behavior in relation to the student's ideal self goals. The session leader and student should each independently rate the student's performance. These ratings should be rated on the scale located on the Session leader and Student ISG Card (-3 to +3) and recorded on the Session leader and Student ISG Card. (See page 30 for an example of a completed card).
4. Once the session leader and student are finished rating the behaviors related to the ideal self goals, the session leader and student should share their ratings with each other. The session leader can begin the feedback process with open-ended questions, such as "How do you think you did"? If the student accurately assesses his or her performance and provides details to defend his or her ratings, the session leader should tell the student that he or she agrees with the student's ratings. If the session leader does not agree with the student's assessment, the session leader should share his/her rating of the student's behavior.
5. Whether the session leader and student agree or not, the session leader should ask the student to identify specific behaviors that led to the student rating him/herself in a particular manner. The session leader should do the same.
6. The session leader should focus some discussion on the reaction of peers to the student's behavior. This will help the student learn to focus on these reactions in future activities and feedback sessions.
7. Before ending the feedback session, the session leader should make specific suggestions or solicit specific suggestions from the student about behaviors he/she can exhibit in the next observation period to improve the ratings and make his/her behavior consistent with the ideal self goals.

STEP 12: MASTERY OF IDEAL SELF GOALS

In order to master a goal, a student must have an average ideal self goal rating from group leader(s) of 2 or higher for three consecutive ISG Sessions. Mastery of the ISG intervention is important, as preliminary findings indicate that students who master their ideal self goals have larger decreases in social impairment at the end of the intervention as compared to students who do not master their ideal self goals. A student must master all of his/her ideal self goals before moving to phase three.

If a student has mastered all of his or her goals by the end of 12 sessions of Phase two, the student should then meet proceed to Phase three for the "Critique and Plan" sessions. If a student has not mastered his or her ideal self goals at the end of 12 sessions of Phase two, the session leader should NOT proceed to the "Critique and Plan" sessions. Instead, the session leader should continue sessions that focus on Phase Two activities.

ADDING OR MODIFYING IDEAL SELF GOALS

It is important to note that during ISG discussions it is not unusual for the student to decide to modify his/her ideal self goals or add a new one. Sometimes students discover that applying the same couple of ideal self goals to every situation is not appropriate and some situations call for other goals. If this occurs, follow the **Adding or Modifying Ideal Self Goals** procedures below.

Possible changes:

- Change the goal?
- Change the operational definition of the goal?
- Change the mastery score (temporarily)?
- Give incentives for incremental improvement?
- Change frequency of the behavior within the operational definition?

Adding or Modifying Ideal Self Goals Procedures

The session leader should begin every session enthusiastic about the student's current goals. Do not prompt or question whether goals should be changed. Follow the instructions below if a student exhibits any of the potential prompts for adding or modifying goals.

Identifying Prompts to Change Goals

When following the normal procedures for ISG generalization, session leader should consider adding to or modifying goals if the student:

- Makes statements indicating that he/she feels awkward about the rating or unsure that the goal pertains to the situation being discussed.
- States that a goal does not apply to a situation or is no longer appropriate for them.
- Asks to change or add goals.

If a student makes statement that fit any of these criteria, then a session leader should suggest that it may be time to modify goals or add a goal; however, session leaders should be aware that students are likely to attempt to change their goals the first time they feel challenged. Session leaders should say things that make the reconsideration of ideal self goals seem like a valuable progression. They may make statements like, "That's a good point. Sometimes students need to change goals as they mature.", or, "I am glad that you realized this. Some goals may be appropriate for some situations and not others." These statements are intended to affirm the student's consideration of the relevance and appropriateness of their goals. Session leader should not approve changes to goals that appear to be inconsistent with the best interests of the student's development.