

Motivation & Resistance

Difficulties and disturbances can of course arise in the ART group from time to time. It would be strange if this did not happen. As a rule, the participants are part of the ART group precisely because they have problems with disruptive and acting out behavior. An important question to ask is whether it is possible to prevent and manage disturbances in the group.

Resistance

You can expect to encounter everything from active resistance to hyperactivity and passivity. It can absolutely happen that participants behave hostilely, negatively and questioningly. Arnold Goldstein (1998) categorizes the resistance one might encounter in ART groups:

Resistance and Disturbances

- Inactivity, Apathy
- Hyperactivity, Restlessness
- Active Resistance Refusal
- Aggressiveness, Acting, Threat
- Passive Aggressiveness
- Cognitive Deficiencies, Incapacity
- Emotional Disorders, Bizarre Behavior

Encountering resistance is perfectly normal and not something to despair over. Rather, it is a matter of finding out where the young person is in life and adapting the efforts accordingly.

Conditions for change

In his book *Reducing Resistance; Methods for enhancing openness for change* (2001), Goldstein highlights seven factors that appear to be important prerequisites for change.

- 1) The individual feels that a change is necessary
- 2) There is a willingness to expose oneself to the emotional pain that a change can bring
- 3) An awareness of the nature of the problem. The client has an understanding of how the problem is connected and what needs to be done
- 4) There is a willingness to actively confront the problem
- 5) One is prepared to make an effort to address the problem
- 6) There is a hope and belief that it can get better
- 7) There is social and interpersonal support for the change

What is motivation?

Humans constantly strive for, more or less, conscious goals. Motivation is a psychological term for the factors that awaken and direct behavior toward different objectives. There is usually a distinction between primary and secondary motivation. The former is biologically rooted and has to do with our survival, the secondary is more shaped by our culture and learning history.

Why do we do certain things to achieve certain goals? Circumstances in both the individual and the environment elicit motivation to act towards different goals. It is common to distinguish between *external* and *internal* motivation. The external can consist of reinforcing consequences that are linked to desirable behaviors. The inner motivation stems from the needs of the person himself. Our task as trainers is to find things that arouse the need and desire to attend and participate in the training. A combination of internal and external motivational strategies is recommended. Especially in the initial stage, it can be valuable to arrange some kind of reinforcement. Lacking motivation or drive, it is quite pointless to conduct any kind of active treatment. Studies (Howell & Day) show that "Treatment readiness", therapeutic alliance and the possibility of booster sessions are three crucial variables for successful treatment.

Strategies to increase motivation and reduce resistance

A) Preparations

It is largely a matter of being one step ahead and preparing the young people to participate in ART training. There are a number of things you can do to lay a good foundation. It is important to make sure that the young person is prepared and positive about what is to come before you get started. Here are some suggestions on what to do to prepare participant

1. Inform participants about what ART is, both individually and in a group setting.
2. Describe the purpose of the ART training and link it to each youth's specific problems and goals.
3. Communicate that the purpose is to offer new options, not to remove their old behaviors. The goal is to broaden their behavioral repertoire, which they are free to use
3. Describe the procedures used. Compare this to how we learn other skills such as playing football, guitar, golf or computer games. Find examples that participants have their own experience with.
4. Describe the benefits of participating in ART training.
5. Help the youth to set personal goals. Break down long-term goals into sub-goals that are concrete and possible to follow up

6. Tips! Use Life Compass to identify values in life. Life Compass is a tool developed in the therapy form ACT (*Acceptance and Commitment Therapy*). Making a life compass is about finding out what you want in your life. A value means a direction in life that you want to strive towards. Actions are activities that move us towards our goals and what we value in life. What steps can I take in my valued direction?
8. Find out in what phase the young person is in the "wheel of change". (Prochaska & DiClemente) Is the child considering changing something in his life? What does the motivation look like? The *Readiness to Change Questionnaire* (RCQ) form is a useful instrument.
9. Use Motivational Interviewing (We recommend that everyone attend a training course in MI). This is especially important if young people are hesitant, skeptical or unwilling. Trying to persuade someone through argument or debate usually only leads to an increase in resistance. It is important to strengthen the young person's desire for change.
10. Establish as good a relationship/alliance as possible with the young
11. Involve and collaborate with parents and family as much as possible. It can be absolutely crucial to keep parents informed and to get their agreement to work with their children.
12. Negotiate the skills and content of the program. Let the young people choose which skills to include. If the skills they have chosen produce positive results, the motivation increases.
13. Use peers as models and co-trainers
14. Establish clear rules together with the participants. It is desirable that rules be largely determined by the members themselves. This increases the responsibility for following them. Be sure to link desirable behaviors to positive consequences.
15. "*Catch them being good*" is a vital principle emphasized by Professor Goldstein. Give children quick praise and attention when they do good things. This should initially be done every time and immediately, with statements that directly link the praise to the behavior. Praise results in positive emotions, makes children like themselves, provides more harmonious relationships, and facilitates the learning of new skills.
16. Make sure that there is reinforcement for desirable behaviors and remove reinforcement for inappropriate behaviors.
17. Use some form of reinforcement system (token economy, level or point system). Reinforcement in some form is a must when learning new behaviors. When a behavior leads to favorable consequences, the behavior will strengthen and increase in

probability. Applying this principle is probably the single most important thing in treatment work

18. Involve and train "transfer coaches". It is important that colleagues and other staff are enthusiastic and involved in the training.
19. Convey your own positive expectations

B) When problems arise in ongoing groups

A lot of it is about having good foresight and a clear basic structure. Of course, you will still encounter all sorts of resistance and disturbing elements. Try to see difficulties that arise as a predicted challenge. What can you do when tricky incidents occur?

1. Capture the moment of learning! ("*The teachable moment*" - an expression that Goldstein embraced). Consider situations that arise, not as problems, but as opportunities for learning social behaviors. Try to turn aggressive incidents into learning opportunities
2. "Roll with the resistance". Avoid communication obstacles. Manage resistance with MI tools (if you've learned this)
3. Do an analysis of resistance and problem behaviors. Why is it taking place? What is the function of the behavior? What factors trigger the problem? What does the person want to achieve or avoid with their behavior?

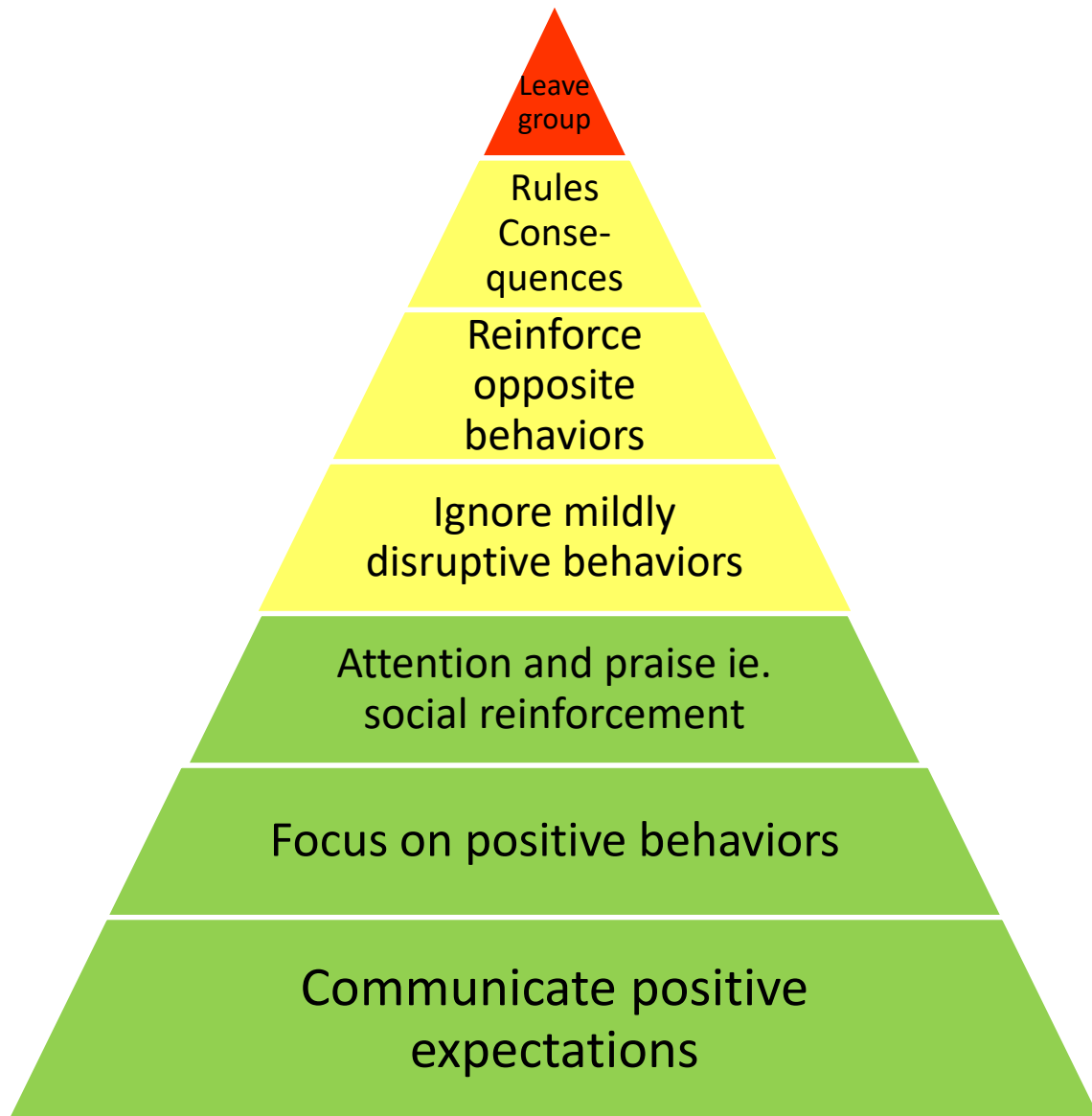
If the analysis shows that the task is too difficult:

1. Make the role-play shorter.
2. Reward small advances in the youth.
3. "Prompt" the lines for the youth.
4. Let the youth read a script depicting the behavioral steps.
5. Let the youth start by playing with the actor.
6. Let the youth start by sitting down
7. Let the youth start by watching

If the analysis shows that there is some kind of threat in the picture:

1. Provide more modeling.
 2. Postpone the youth role-play to last.
 3. Give the youth security. Trainers must act as protectors
 4. Respond to young people with support and encouragement
 5. Listen carefully to what young people find threatening.
 6. Restructure (reformulate) what young people perceive as looming
4. Act according to the "pyramid of intervention"

The Intervention Pyramid



The different stages of the pyramid are a way to show how to act to prevent and manage disorders in the group. The ART leader should mainly focus on the positive behaviors of young people instead of the negative ones. Spend the most time on what is at the bottom of the pyramid. Strive for good cooperation to forge a good alliance.

If you need to intervene against disruptive behaviors - act calmly and consistently!

Concrete suggestions for managing the group

The lesson format

- Functional arrangement of the room
- High and clear structure in the ART Group
- Clear, positive and agreed rules
- Remind of common rules and their consequences
- Post the rules on the wall so they are visible
- Positive strengthening of compliance and active participation
- Use of token or point systems
- Shape and reinforce small steps, ignoring nonsense
- Reduce the group size if necessary
- Remove disruptive stimuli inside and outside the room
- Start the lesson with a relaxation exercise to slow down the group down and increase concentration
- Take small micro breaks in just a few minutes if necessary

Trainers

- Proactive and responsive trainers.
- Strive to always run a group with two trainers
- Safe and consistent leadership
- The co-leader actively moves in the group providing physical prompts and guidance
- Trainers can enthuse young people by making the training varied and fun
- Convey positive expectations to group members
- Trainers are models of social skills themselves
- Trainers have good communication skills (ability to listen actively, reflect, confront with I-messages, ignore, have good problem-solving skills, can provide positive reformulation)
- Give concrete, clear and concise instructions
- Trainers can handle provocations themselves without yelling or shutting down
- Use of individual discreet reprimands
- All other "transfer coaches" support and contribute to the ART climate
- Pre-group talk (positive I- message)
- Keep pace and activate the entire group
- Modeling and role-playing are short and clear
- Good knowledge of learning theory

Participants

- Young people are properly informed and motivated in advance
- The skills were negotiated with the group members in advance
- Every youth has individual goals set
- Use skilled peers as role models and assistant coaches
- Collaborate with parents and family (conversations, letters, visits, before returning home)