

- Too much complaining and whining. Refocus the group from negative to positive. Give members a task, such as listing common and unusual ways of solving shared problems.
- Too much "Dial-a-Fix." Do current or prospective members use the phone to get over a crisis and then decide they don't need the meeting? The group's contact person can be supportive but may wish to invite callers to work on their problems at the next meeting.
- The wrong what, where, and when. Be sure that the programs, meeting place, time, and frequency match the needs of your group.

## HOW DO WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

"Where are we going, and why are we in such a hurry to get there?"

— Erma Bombeck,  
syndicated newspaper columnist

Some groups make the mistake of measuring their success only by the number of people present. Consider using these other yardsticks to measure what your group has accomplished:

- Members giving and receiving emotional support on a regular basis;
- "Older" members helping out newcomers;

- Members suspending judgment of others and providing unconditional warmth and acceptance; and
- Members "graduating" from the group or the group achieving all its goals and no longer needing to meet.

## RESOURCES

This booklet has given you the basic tools to build your group. Here are some other helpful resources which can often be found in local libraries and are for sale from the sources listed below.

Edward Madara & Barbara White, *The Self-Help Group Sourcebook*. It's a comprehensive listing of national self-help groups in the USA. A new edition is printed every two years and costs about \$10; it is available by calling the American Self-Help Clearinghouse in New Jersey at 973-326-6789. You may also find most of the book on the web at [www.selfhelpgroups.org](http://www.selfhelpgroups.org).

Si Kahn, *Organizing: A Guide for Grassroots Leaders*. A book on organizing techniques for self-empowering organizations. Available for \$50 post-paid from the National Association of Social Workers (800/227-3590).

SupportWorks has published a companion booklet for those interested in telephone groups. It's called *Creating Successful Telephone Conference Support Networks*. For info, call SupportWorks at 704/377-2055 Monday through Thursday 9 a.m. - noon Eastern time.

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"A self-help group can be started by anyone with a bit of courage, a sense of commitment, and a good dose of caring."

— Edward Madara,  
Executive Director of the  
New Jersey Self-Help Clearinghouse

