

GROUP HANDOUT 17.2

Healing the Inner Child: Guidelines for Roleplay

Decide who will be the first Speaker to describe their childhood experience. The other person will serve as Listener.

ONE: ROLEPLAY CHILD

Speaker: Imagine yourself at the age when you experienced this event. Use the child's voice to tell your listener:

1. How old you are,
2. What the setting was,
3. Who was involved,
4. What actually (factually) happened, as well as
5. Your interpretation of the event

In other words, as a child, what would you be telling yourself about the event, about what you did or about what happened to you during the event?

Listener: Receive the Speaker empathically, focusing on and reflecting back the needs underlying each of their statements. Continue until Speaker is satisfied that they have been fully heard.

TWO: ROLEPLAY ADULT

Speaker: Tell the Listener how your interpretation of this childhood event affects your current life.

Listener: Listen to the Speaker with full attention, guessing and reflecting back the needs behind each statement. Continue until Speaker is satisfied that they are fully understood.

THREE: DEBRIEF TOGETHER

Listener: Encourage the Speaker to share their experience of this activity by asking questions such as the following:

- a. In what way, if any, was it helpful to be heard and to hear yourself and your needs as a child?
- b. In what way, if any, was it helpful to have another person hear how your childhood experience continues to exert an effect on you today?
- c. What need(s) would you like to meet as the adult you are today?
- d. How are you feeling right now?