



# Therapeutic Group Models

Mutual Aid Groups

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SOWK 487w  
Spring 2025

# Agenda

## Plan for Week 12

What are mutual aid groups

Dynamics of mutual aid groups

The phases of helping within the mutual aid process

Facilitation of mutual aid



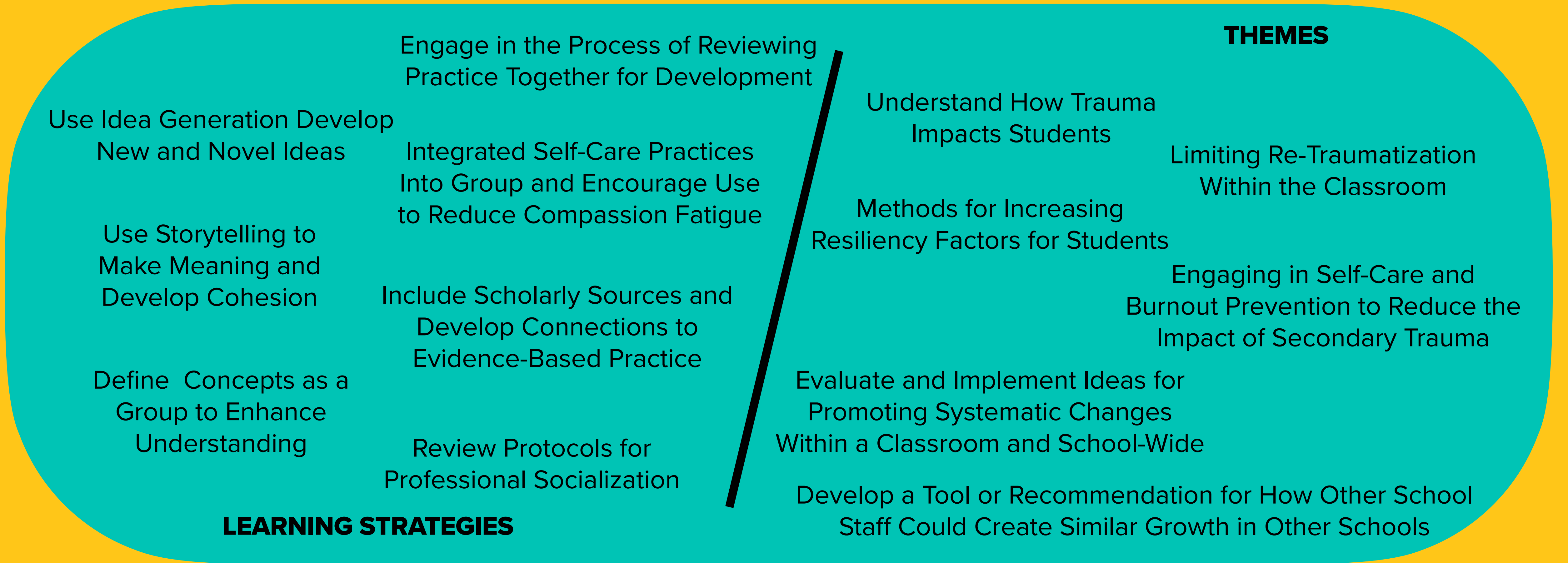
The background of the entire image is a rustic wooden plank texture. In the top-left corner, there is a portion of the American flag, showing the stars and stripes. The main title 'OUR AMERICA' is centered in a large, bold, white serif font. The word 'OUR' is in a solid white color, while 'AMERICA' has a subtle American flag pattern overlaid on it. Below this, the words 'WITH LISA LING' are written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font, with 'WITH' and 'LING' in a slightly lighter shade than 'LISA'.

# OUR AMERICA

WITH LISA LING

**Our America with Lisa Ling**  
Transgender Support Group Meeting







**SUPPORT  
GROUP USING  
MUTUAL AID**

**“I don’t have a place that I  
feel comfortable”**

**— Angelica**

**“It’s like a support group”**

**— Shaniqua**

**Emily added that this group  
has been a positive outlet to  
address things and be around  
people with the “same  
mindset.”**

**Roles of a Facilitator in a  
Support Grope from Kurtz  
(2017)**

- A facilitated the group
- Group engages in consulting, linking, and supporting
- Maintaining helping factors that include promoting feelings of similarity, acceptance, and support

**FOUNDATIONAL ASPECTS OF  
THE TRAUMA-INFORMED PLC**

(Campbell, 2023)

# Dynamics of Mutual Aid

## Creating Many Helping Relationships

- Sharing data
- “All-in-the-same-boat” phenomenon
- Dialectical process
- Discussing taboo areas
- Developing a universal perspective
- Mutual support
- Mutual demand
- Individual problem-solving
- Rehearsal
- “Strength-in-numbers” phenomenon



# Sharing Data

Life Experiences

Knowledge

Views

Values

(Shulman, 2020)



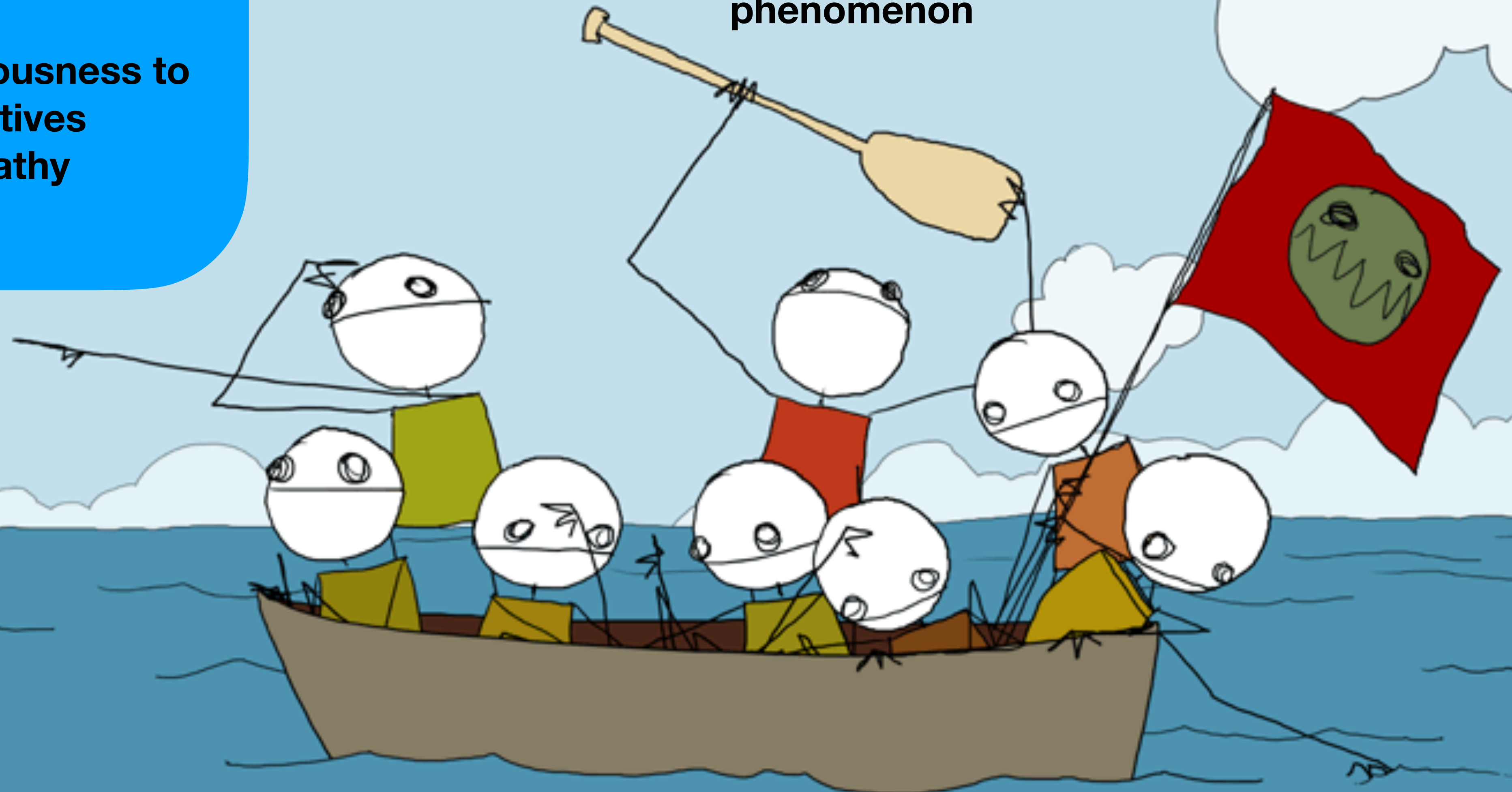
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# “All-in-the-Same-Boat”

phenomenon

- Expands members perspectives
- Helps members universalize their life struggles
- Raise level of consciousness to expand their perspectives
- Develops group empathy support





# Dialectical Process

*Open place for a debate of ideas*

dialectical | ˌdɪəˈlektəkəl |

adjective

<sup>1</sup> relating to the logical discussion of ideas and opinions: dialectical ingenuity.

<sup>2</sup> concerned with or acting through opposing forces: a dialectical opposition between artistic translation and transcription.

“Group members can listen as one member presents the *thesis*, and the other the *antithesis*. As each member listens, he or she can use the discussion to develop a personal *synthesis*. (Shulman, 2020, p. 347)



# Discussing a Taboo Area



“A mutual-aid process in which one member enters a taboo area of discussion, thereby freeing other members to enter as well”

Photo by [Tech Nick](#) on [Unsplash](#)





# Developing a Universal Perspective

“A mutual-aid process in the group in which members begin to perceive universal issues, particularly in relation to oppression, thus allowing them to view their own problems in a more social context and with less personal blame.”

p. 384

- A special case for “all-in-the-same-boat.”
- Can be related to oppression and recognizing the systematic nature
- Fits within the concept of consciousness-raising groups

## **Mutual Support**

The acceptance and caring of the group

p. 378

## **Mutual Demand**

“A mutual-aid process in which group members offer each other help by making demands and setting expectations on personal behavior.”

p. 379

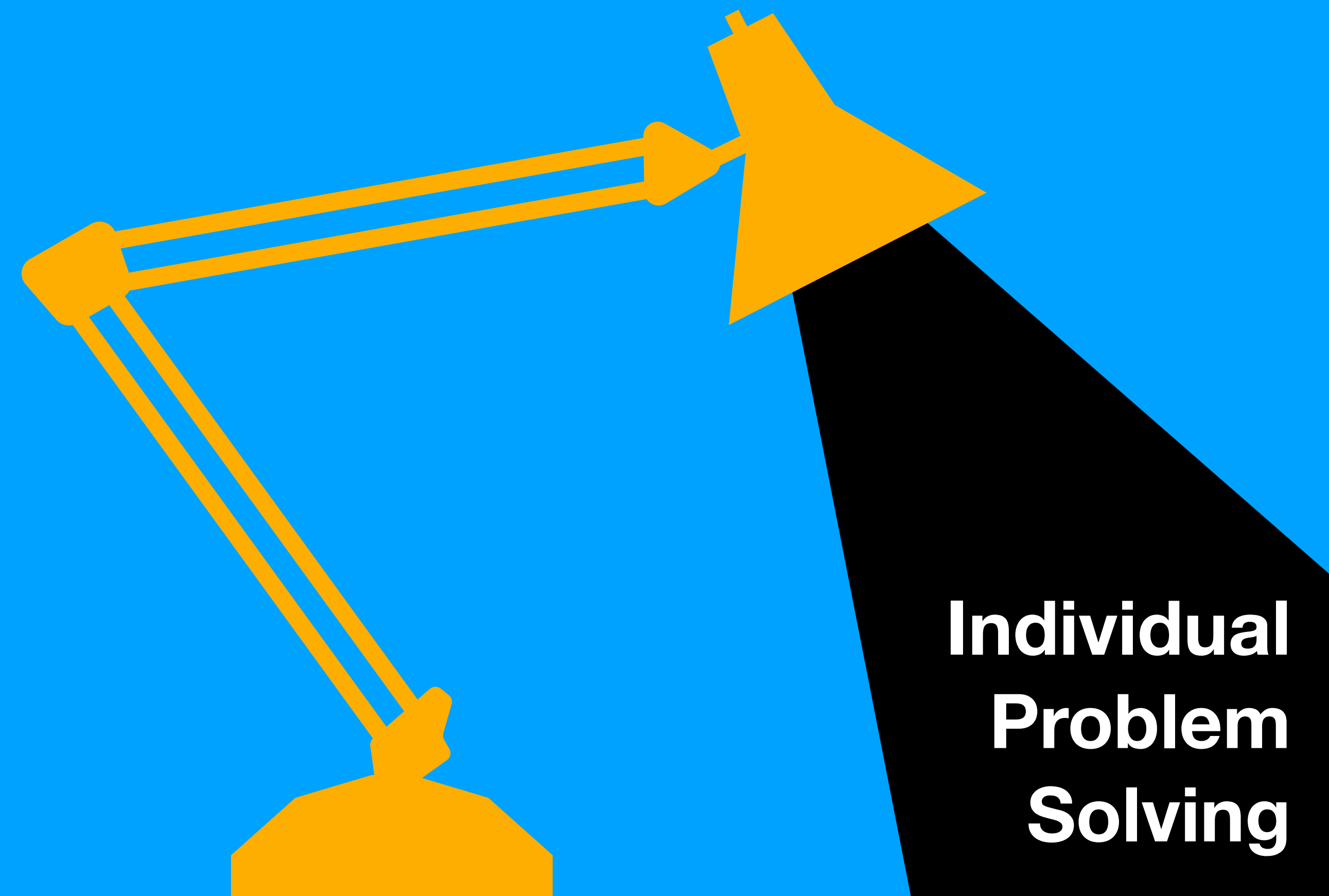


Make individual associations

Share feelings and connections  
with group members

It is easier to see the problems of  
someone else than the self

The learning process to improve  
problem-solving.



“The group becomes a safe place to risk new ways of communicating and to practice actions the group member feels may be hard to do”

p. 381

# Rehearsal



The mutual-aid process in which group members are strengthened to take on difficult tasks (such as challenging agency policy) through the support of other group members



# **“Strength-in-Numbers”**

**phenomenon**

(Shulman, 2020)



# Tasks, Methods, and Skills

## Used in Mutual Aid Groups

- Directs group members to each other
- Identifies and focuses on salient themes
- Encourages and reinforces cooperative mutual support norms
- Engagement members to participate in collective activities
- Give participants the ability to do rehearsal





**Facilitate a group to help facilitate mutual aid of the members focused as a group of students.**

- Directs group members to each other
- Identifies and focuses on salient themes
- Encourages and reinforces cooperative mutual support norms
- Engagement members to participate in collective activities
- Give participants the ability to do rehearsal

# Mutual Aid for Students



# Mutual Aid Groups

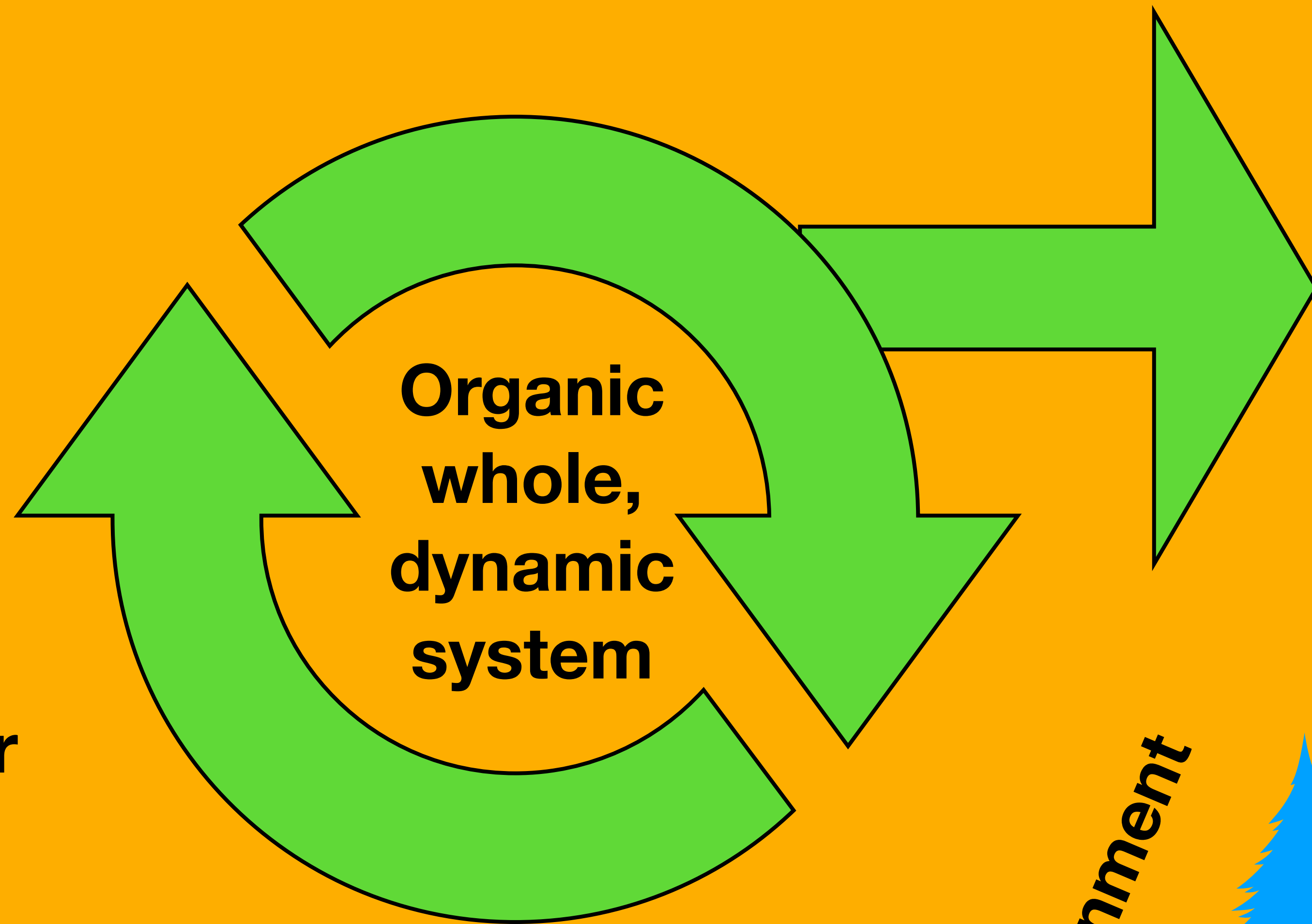
## Vulnerable and Resilient Populations

- People dealing with traumatic experiences
- Grief
- AIDS
- People with mental health difficulties
- Health care settings
- People with alternative sexual orientation
- Immigrants and refugees
- People contending with intimate partner and other violence
- Sexual abuse
- Homelessness
- Older elderly people and their caregivers
- Isolated and physically and emotionally challenged group members



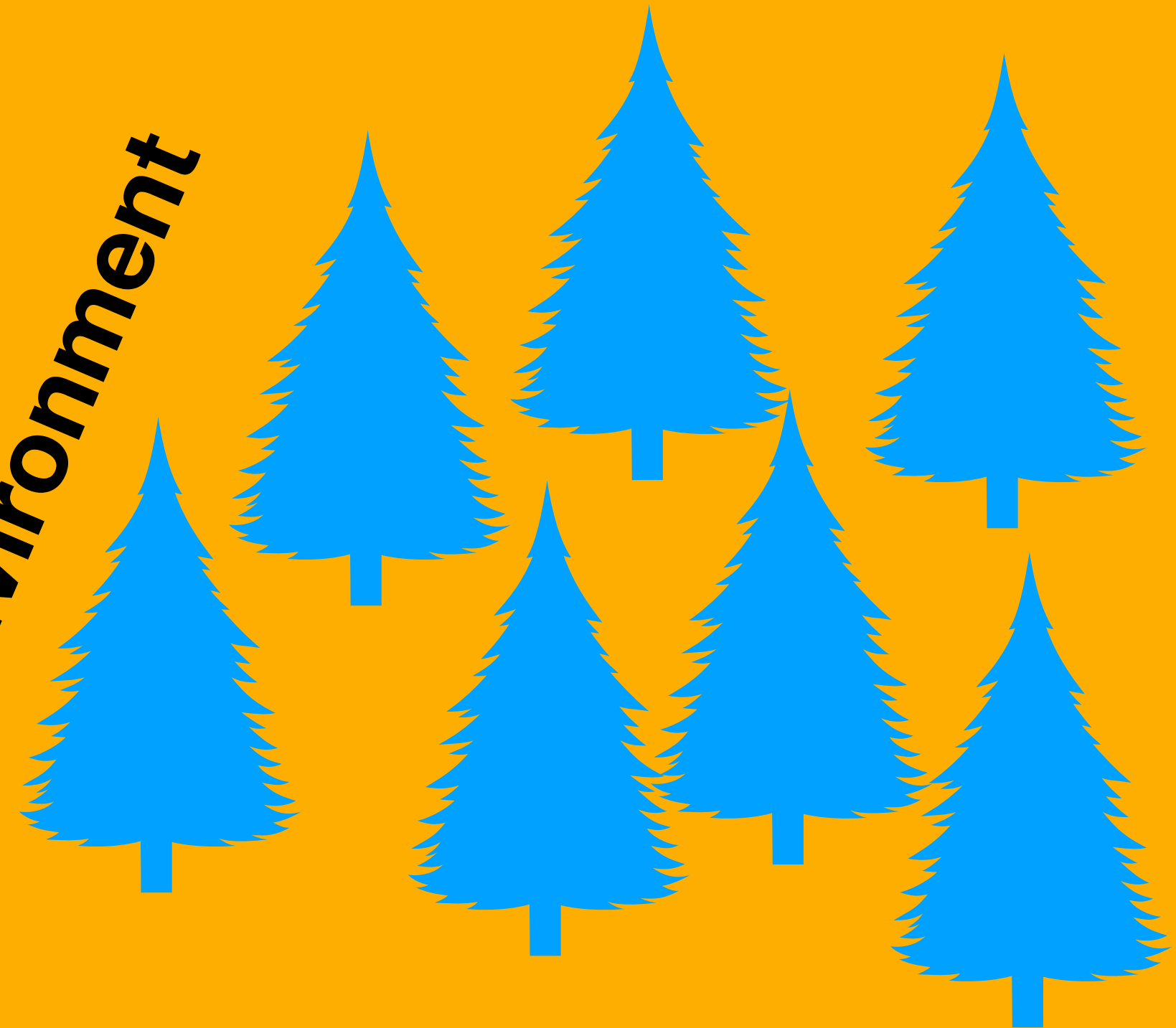


**Social Worker**



**Health,  
growth, &  
belonging**

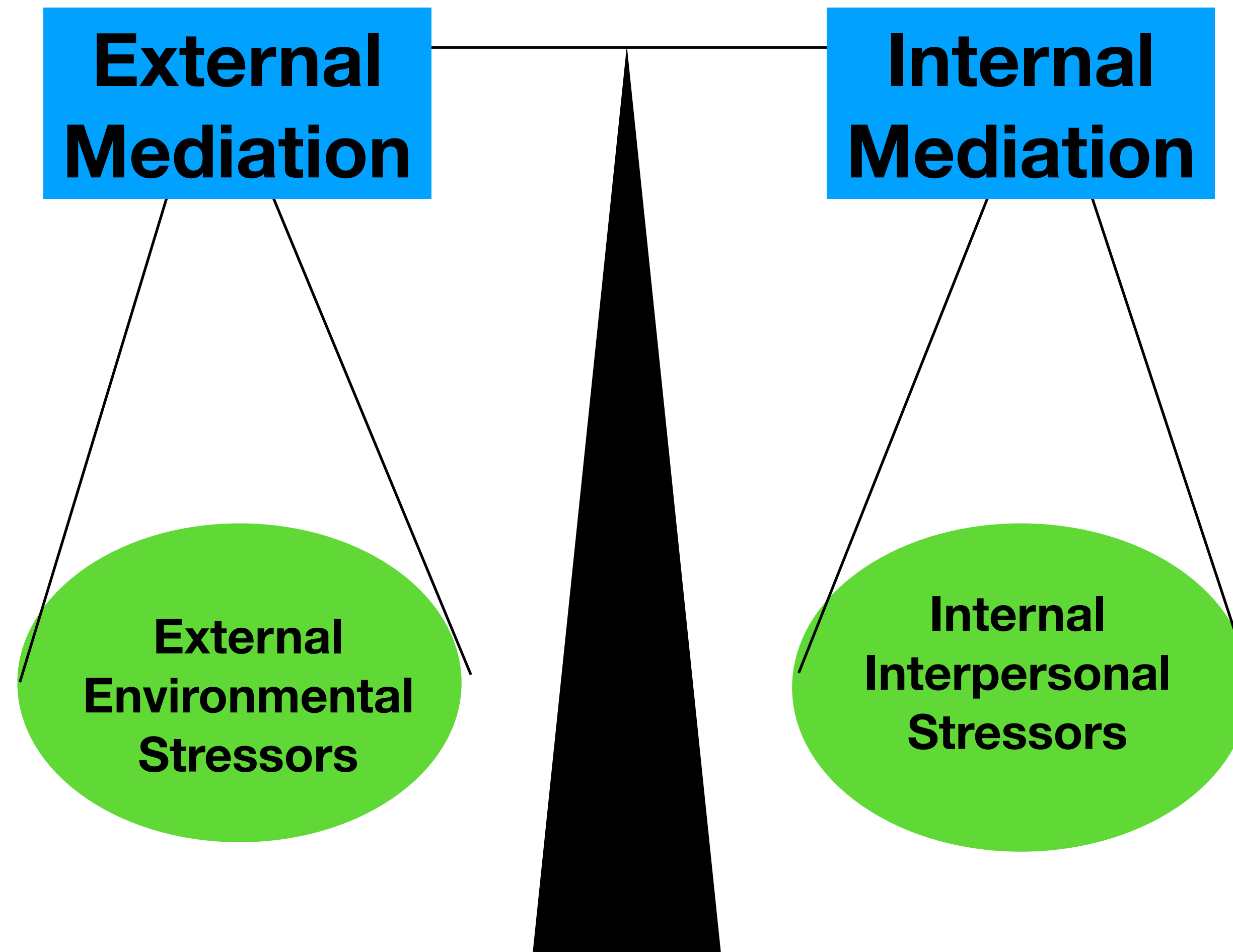
**Environment**



# Mediating Function

(Schwartz, 1961 as cited in Gitterman, 2017)

# Mediating Function





# Ten Common Obstacles in Mutual Aid Groups

- Not for this (group/place/type of person)
- The group does not seem to have any sense of we-ness
- The group has no clarity or direction
- A hidden agenda drives the facilitator's actions
- Individual problem-solving leaves most of the members silent most of the time
- Problem-solving leaves most of the members silent most of the time
- Central authority dominates process
- Too much sameness/not enough stimulation in the group
- No sense of apparent progress in achieving the group's purpose

# Phases

## in Mutual Aid Groups

Working in small groups, discuss the following:

In what ways did the group leader help move the group from the beginning through the ending and transition phases of group work?

### Case Study 7-1

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A Mutual-Aid Support Group for Persons  
With AIDS in Early Substance  
Abuse Recovery

LAWRENCE SHULMAN

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Persons with AIDS who are in substance abuse recovery struggling with similar concerns can gain support and resources through mutual-aid groups. This case study illustrates the social worker's methods in enhancing mutual aid among participants in an intensive, 8-month, weekly group held in a residence sponsored by an AIDS Action Committee.

#### *Questions*

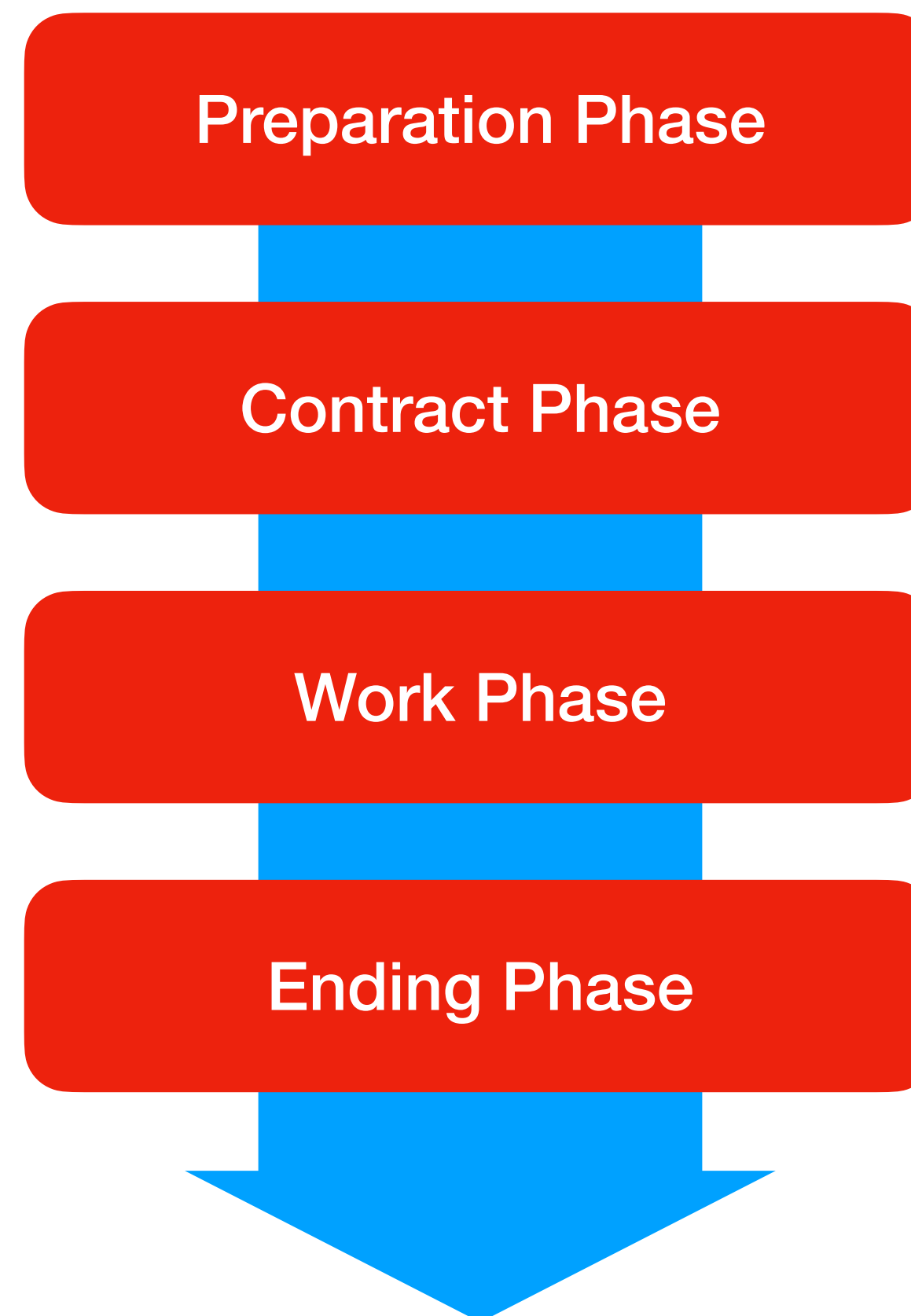
1. What skills are evident in the group leader's approach to working with the group and the individuals in the group?
2. What types of follow-up and supplementary services would be appropriate for clients during the life of the group and after completing the group?
3. How did the group leader address the issue of the group member-group leader dynamics referred to as the *authority theme* early in the first sessions?
4. What did the group leader do to create a "demand for work" in the group during the fourth session when he recognized the illusion of work?

(Shulman, 2014)

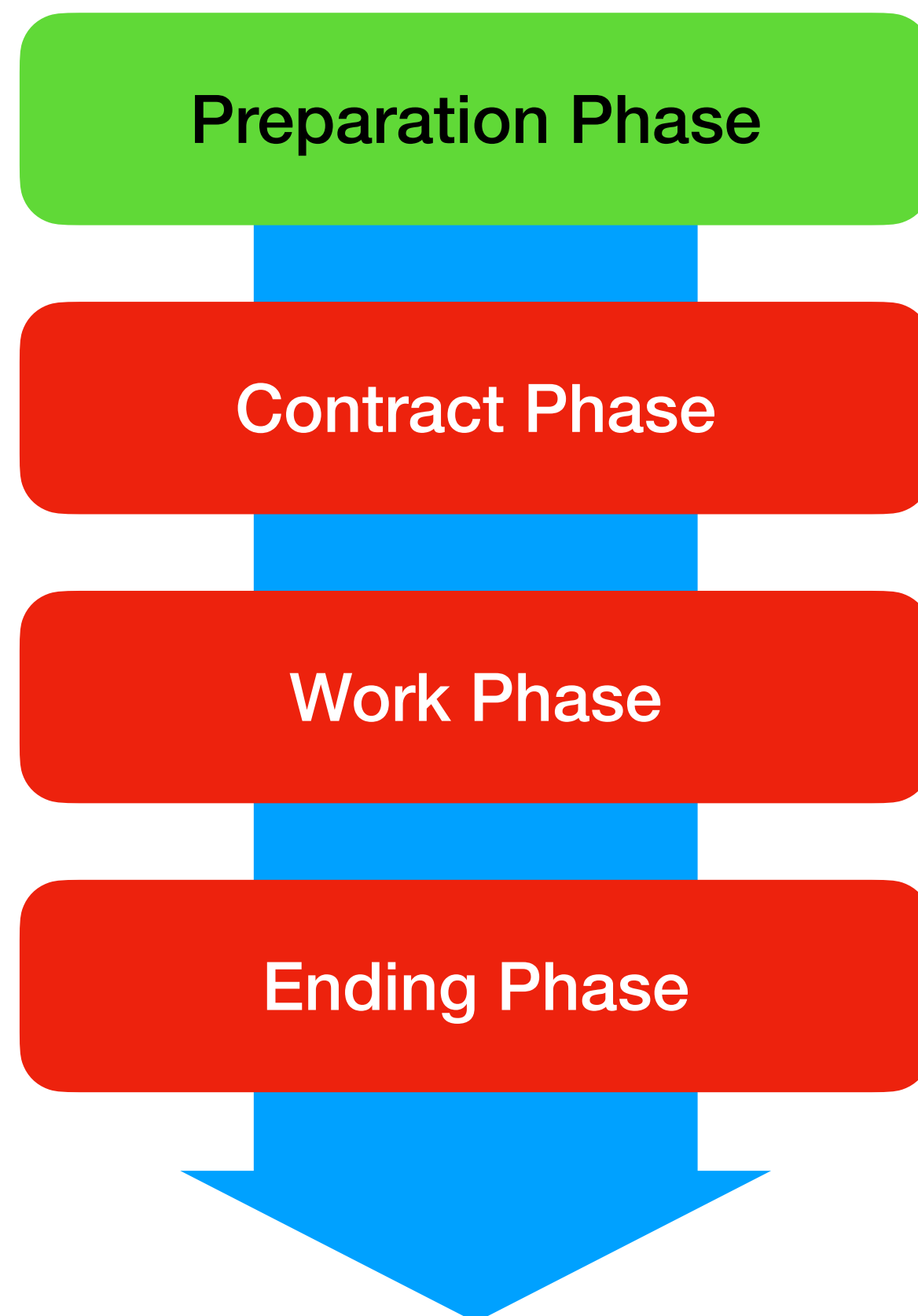


# Phases of Helping

## In a Mutual Aid Group



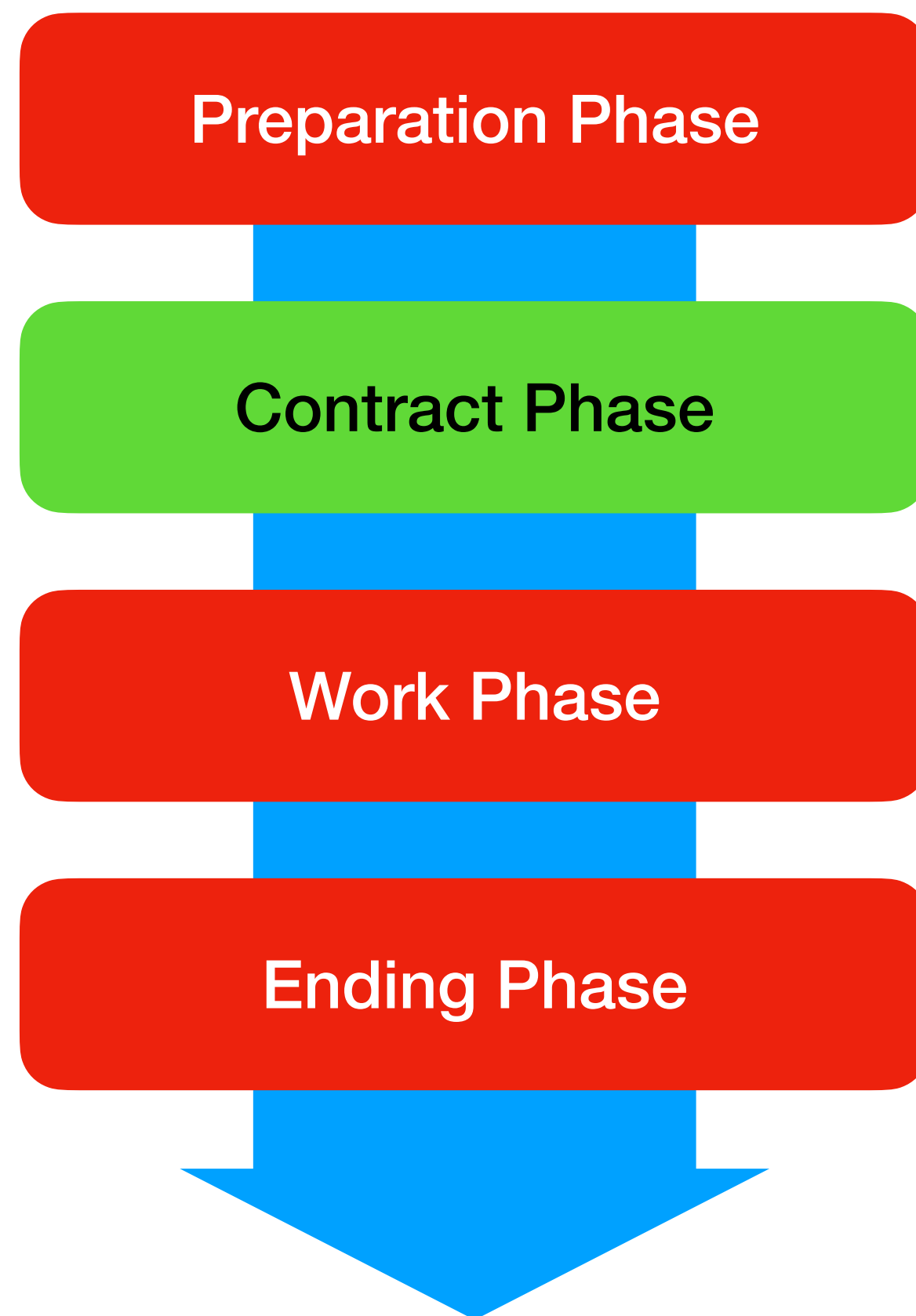
# Phases of Helping In a Mutual Aid Group



- Organizational and work preparation
- Group dynamics and functions preparation



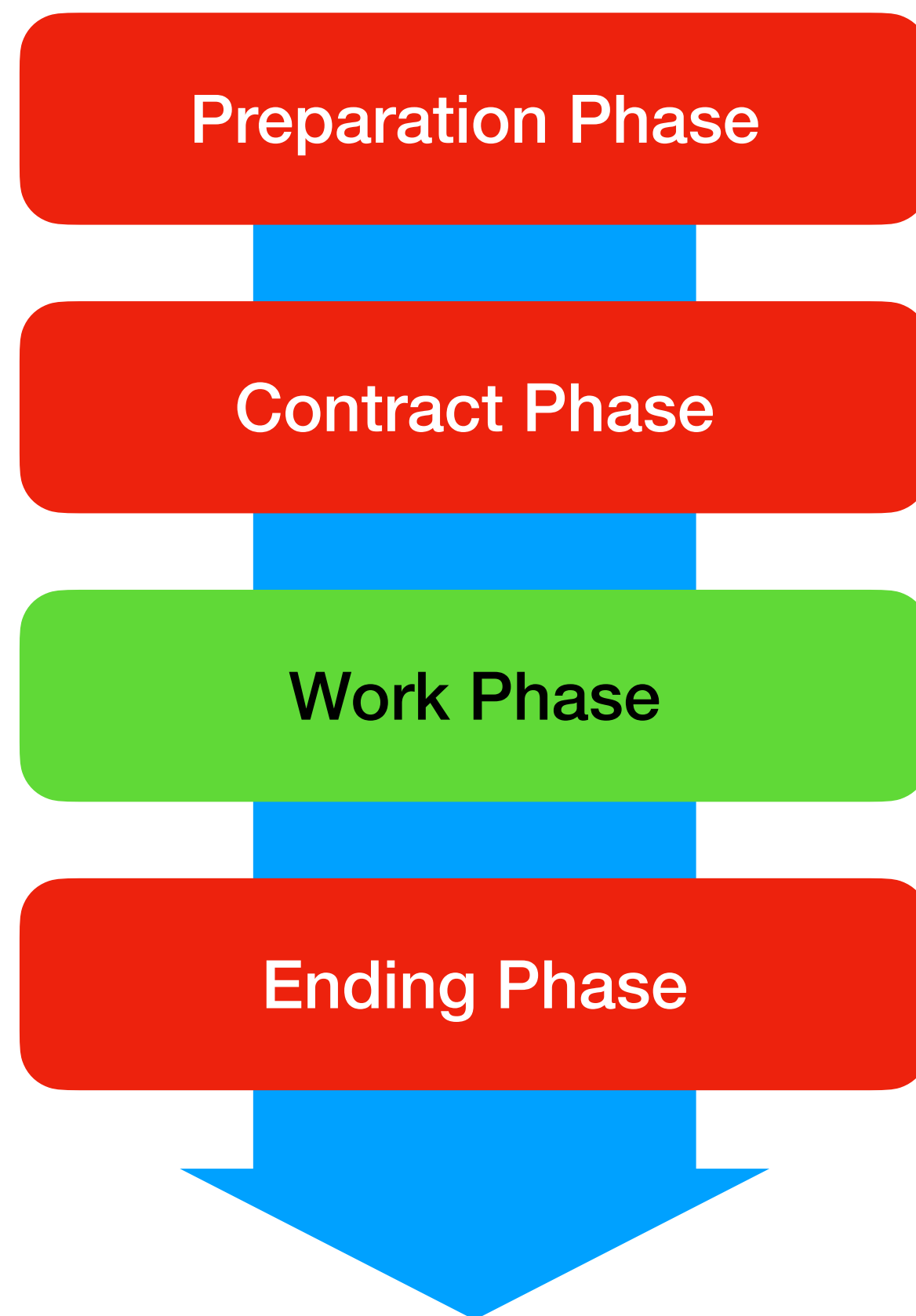
# Phases of Helping In a Mutual Aid Group



- Clear and mutual agreement
- Member reactions to services

# Phases of Helping

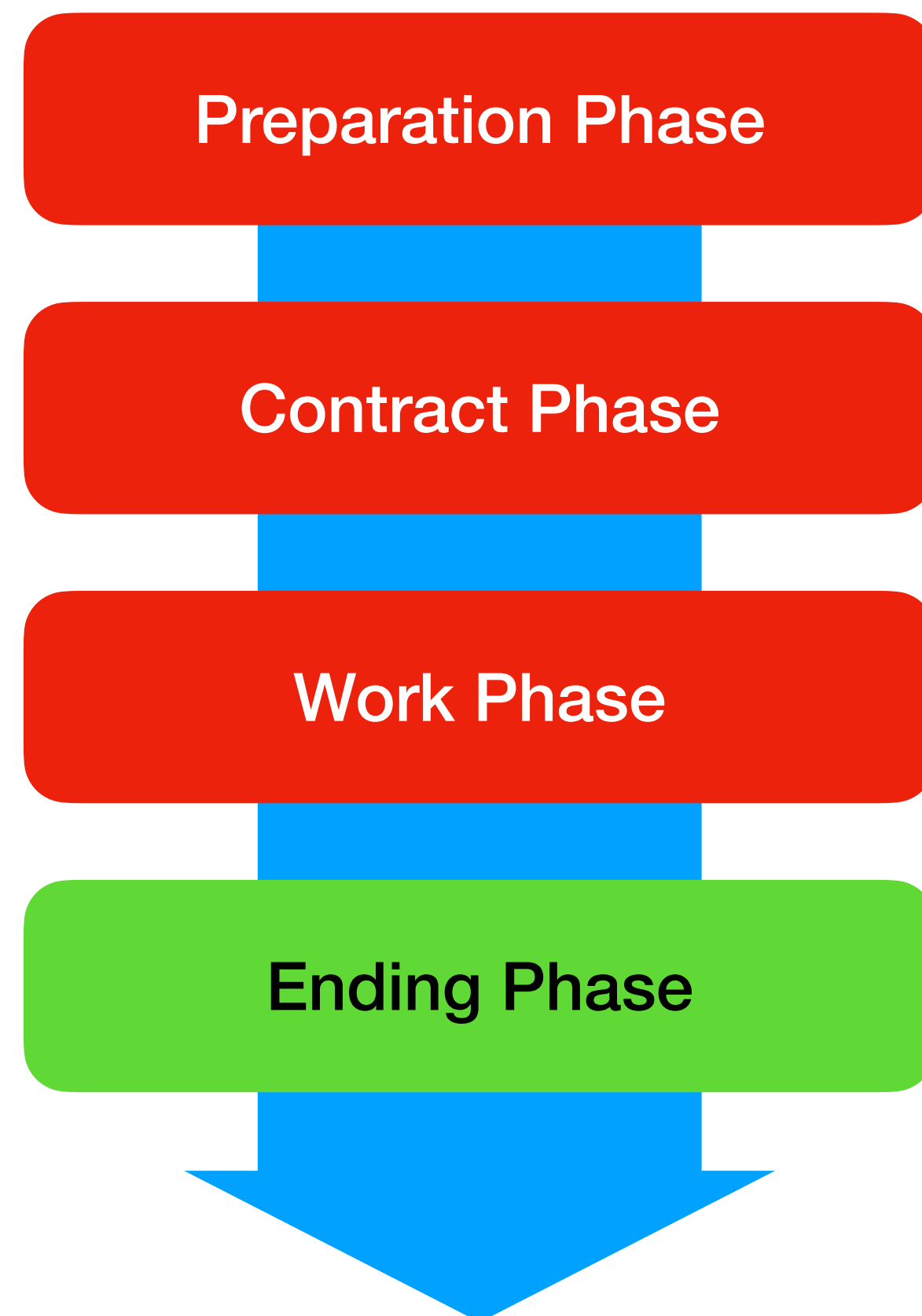
## In a Mutual Aid Group



- Find common ground
- Detecting and challenging the obstacles
- Contribute
- Defining the requirements and limits



# Phases of Helping In a Mutual Aid Group



- Managing feelings
- Future planning

# Amount of Facilitation

In Mutual Aid Groups





# A-03: RESEARCH PAPER TO INFORM GROUP PRACTICE

Designed for students to demonstrate their ability to apply knowledge gained by reading peer-reviewed journal articles and other quality sources of information.

- Discussion, synthesis, and analysis of the findings of the research
- Examination of how the research findings relate to each other, it is helpful to look for themes in the articles and base your paper around those themes
- Use of examples about how the information provided should be applied to practice with groups
- Understanding of how to apply the information to the knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies

Description	Highly Developed
Use of peer-reviewed evidence-based research.	All of the sources come from come from peer-reviewed journals or other more highly academic sources.
Translating research evidence to informed discussion regarding practice and service delivery.	The paper synthesizes research. The majority of the paper is taken up by paraphrasing this research and directly discussing how it can relate to service delivery. It potentially has one or two direct quotes for parts that are useful to be implemented as a direct quote.
Apply knowledge of human behaviors and social environment [HBSE] or other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to interventions with clients and constituencies	The paper clearly discusses at least one theory from HBSE <a href="#">[1]</a> or other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in depth and applies it to the content. A discussion of the theory, how it is end implemented, and how it could be applied is present.
Apply knowledge of person-in-environment to interventions with clients and constituencies	The paper discusses ecology and needs and how the topic can affect various parts of a client or constituent's life. Discussion shows evidence of the author's ability to take an ecological perspective <a href="#">[2]</a> .
Apply knowledge of other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks interventions with clients and constituencies	Knowledge regarding other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks are included in the discussion regarding the intervention.
APA Formatting: Tone (preferred terminology, formally written, and appropriate use of the first person)	The paper is written using third person, does not use colloquial phrases, and topics are clearly described in a way that the reader can understand. The paper appropriately uses APA writing conventions (i.e., numbers, quotes, abbreviations, etc.)
APA Formatting: Page Format (paper sections, headers and footers, page layout, and spacing)	The paper has no found problems related to APA formatting. The paper includes a title page, an abstract if required by the syllabus, a title at the beginning of the paper, and a reference page. The headings for these pages are correctly labeled. The paper is double-spaced.
APA Formatting: Reference List (reference style and formatting)	The reference list looks like an APA reference list (i.e., double spaced, hanging indent, author's names are correctly formatted). The reference list includes proper use of italics, and appropriate information is included in each of the entries with proper formatting. The appropriate type of reference list entry is used for each reference.
APA Formatting: In-Text Citation (inclusion of style and formatting)	In-text citations are used in all parts of the paper that are the writer's original ideas as necessary. The in-text citations are formatted correctly and include all of the necessary information. Variation of citation styles are used in the writing.
Spelling and grammatical (grammar and writing mechanics)	Grammar and writing mechanics are properly adhered to.
Timeliness	Paper submitted prior to the deadline listed in the description.
Length	The paper is within the described word length.

[1] These theories of HBSE are not limited to the following, but include strengths perspective, ecological perspective, feminist perspective, and systems theory.

[2] The fit of the person in the environment (especially their biology, individual psychology, and social connections) and how those parts connect with the environment especially in aspects related to interface, interdependence, transaction, and energy, adaptation, and coping.