



Shared Reading Theory of Change

Activities

Shared Reading Groups

Weekly 1-2 hour-long facilitated sessions in which a reader leader and group members read and discuss a piece of great literature out loud together

During the session, the Reader Leader will:

Gently encourage group members to share personal responses sparked by the text

Assist group members to to 'go deeper,' exploring thoughts and feelings outside of our default modes of being

Encourage and model deep, experimental thinking and critical response

Set and ensure a slow reading pace

Re-read key pulse points in the text and encourage group members to reflect on them

Listen to and validate Group members' contributions

Draw links between different Group members' contributions

Encourage Group members to build on each other's contributions and create meaning together

Intermediate outcomes

Group members have something stimulating to look forward to each week

Group members have a shared and live emotional experience

Group members get out and do something with other people who may be very different to them on a regular basis

Group members identify and connect with the text and each other

Group members are able to explore and utilise positive and negative thoughts, feelings and experiences

Group members can share more intimate 'below the surface' thoughts and feelings with each other

Group members discover / rediscover ways to think differently about literature, themselves, and others

Group members become more attuned to their own thoughts, feelings, reactions, and biases

Group members are distracted from their day to day worries / regular thought processes

Group members feel stimulated and engaged

Group members are able to connect with the text in a more meaningful way

Group members feel listened to and valued

Group members form meaning and tackle challenges together as a group

Group members offer each other support

improved social connections

Group members have more and deeper social connections

Group members are less lonely

improved psychological wellbeing

Group members are exposed to reading as a potential coping mechanism

Group members are more empathetic

Group members are more self-aware

Group members feel better

Group members have a greater sense of self-worth

Increased sense of purpose

Group members feel a sense of accomplishment

Group members feel empowered and more confident in their abilities

Group members recognise that they have something to offer to others

Ultimate goal for group members

Wider ambition

Group members are better able to support themselves and others

Stronger and more supportive communities

Assumptions

1. The literature is appropriate for the context / personal circumstances of the group – providing a 'just right' level of challenge
2. The literature is printed and read clearly
3. Group members are given the space to open up, as and when they are ready to
4. Group members are there because they want to be there
5. Interactions between group members are respectful
6. Group members acknowledge the support they have been offered

Key ingredients for successful groups

- Great literature, i.e.:
 - Real human feeling
 - Stimulating
 - Encourages some stretch
 - Selected with the needs and experiences of the group in mind
- An informal and welcoming environment
- Skilled reader leaders who are familiar with the text and able and utilise group member contributions
 - Models meaningful engagement
 - Manages critical / unhelpful behaviour
 - Listens attentively
 - Kind but bold
 - Creates a safe and welcoming environment
 - Ensures group members aren't aggressive, dominant etc.
 - Creates and develops connections between the discussion and the text
- Voluntary participation
- Self-directed discussions