

# Small Group Action Plan

**School Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ High School

**Group Name:** Men Passionately Pursuing Purpose (MP3)

**Target Group:** Black male student athletes at risk of over identifying with their athletic role to the detriment of other identities (e.g., academic, etc.).

**Data to Identify Students:** Counselor, teacher, and coach referral

**Goals:**

- Students will reflect upon the role of sports in their lives.
- Students will outline specific steps to ensure a multidimensional sense of self.
- Students will identify accountability partners to support their pursuit of purpose.

School Counselor(s)	
ASCA Mindset and Behavior Standards	<p><u>Mindset Standard 2</u> – Self-Confidence in ability to succeed</p> <p><u>Mindset Standard 4</u> - Understanding that postsecondary education and life-long learning are necessary for long-term career success.</p> <p><u>Behavior Standards:</u></p> <p>Learning Strategy 7 - Identify long- and short-term academic, career, and social/emotional goals.</p> <p>Learning Strategy 8 - Actively engage in challenging coursework</p> <p>Self-Management Skill 7 - Demonstrate effective coping skills when faced with a problem</p> <p>Self-Management Skill 8 - Demonstrate ability to balance school, home, and community activities</p> <p>Social Skill 2 - Create positive and supportive relationships with other students</p> <p>Social Skill 3 - Create relationships with adults that support success</p>
Outline of Group Sessions to be Delivered	<p><u>Session 1: Introduction</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counselor explains purpose and goals of the group</li> <li>• Students and counselor create group rules</li> <li>• Begin building rapport through structured activities.</li> </ul> <p><u>Session 2: Discovering Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share family genograms</li> <li>• Discuss internal/external assets</li> </ul> <p><u>Session 3: Who am I without the ball?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is athletic identity?</li> <li>• What does it mean to pursue purpose?</li> </ul> <p><u>Session 4: Men Passionately Pursuing Purpose</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share statements of purpose</li> <li>• Group reflection on how best to use 720 high school days</li> <li>• S.M.A.R.T. goals</li> </ul> <p><u>Session 5: Control Issues</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss what is out of and in our control</li> </ul> <p><u>Session 6: Choose Today</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review what is in our control and further discuss answers to generated questions</li> <li>• Connect answers to participants’ existing strengths (Session 2).</li> </ul> <p><u>Session 7: Teammates Matter</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss accountability</li> </ul> <p><u>Session 8: Closure</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students complete post-assessments</li> <li>• Facilitator observations about growth in participants</li> </ul>
Resources Needed	Session 1: Paper, pen/pencil

	Session 2: Paper, pen/pencil Session 3: Large Dry/Erase board, chalkboard or flip chart Session 4: Computer, projector, and screen Session 5: Paper, pen/pencil Session 6: Notebook, pen/pencil Session 7: Paper, pen/pencil Session 8: Paper, pen/pencil
Process Data	8-10 students will participate in this intervention
Perception Data	Participant narrative about how they are different as a result of having participated in the group and AIMS results
Outcome Data	Attendance, behavior, and/or achievement

### Pre-Group Preparation Outline

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess need for group with counselor input.</li> <li>• Identify potential members.</li> <li>• Determine suitability of potential group members through individual pre-screening.</li> </ul>
Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet with potential group members to identify suitability for the group. Assess if students have interest in joining the group, are willing to participate and can commit to follow the group rules and adhere to confidentiality (Greenberg, 2003).</li> <li>• Send an email to teachers or meet with them in person to explain the general purpose of the group, and confirm that students are responsible for any work that they miss when out of class for group activity.</li> <li>• Have teachers of all qualified and potential group members complete the learning behaviors scale pre-assessment (Myrick, 2003).</li> <li>• From the students who qualified after pre-screening process, randomly choose a 8-10 to participate in the group. For those students who are not selected, complete the same pre-assessments for them, as they will serve as a control group for research purposes, and receive the group intervention the following semester.</li> <li>• Create group objectives that align with the ASCA Standards.</li> </ul>

### Session 1: Introduction to the Group

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group members will learn about the purpose of this group and confidentiality.</li> <li>• Group members will create and commit to following the group rules.</li> <li>• Group members will begin to develop rapport with each other and with the counselor.</li> </ul>
Materials	Paper, pen/pencil
Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the purpose of the group and ask if students have any questions.</li> <li>• Explain confidentiality – stress the importance of keeping the topics discussed by other group members private. Provide examples of what is and is not appropriate to share. Ensure that group members understand before continuing with the session.</li> <li>• “What’s in a name?” icebreaker – Participants will share how they got their name with the rest of the group</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group members and counselor discuss what they consider the components of a successful group (i.e., group norms) (Gladding, 2011; Greenberg, 2003)</li> <li>• “What’s in your world” activity – On a sheet of paper, group members will pictorially depict their “worlds.” No further direction is given – it is purposely an open prompt. After 3 minutes, each participant will share his story with the rest of the group. Facilitators participate as well. Group members can also share what their worlds have taught them about being a Black male. Facilitate a discussion around how our worlds shape the lenses through which we view and experience life (.e.g., education, friendships, etc.).</li> <li>• Group members answer the question “What does it mean to be passionately pursuing purpose?”</li> <li>• Homework: Genogram – Participants will try to go back at least 2 generations – include siblings, parents, aunts, and uncles, etc. Note strengths within individual family members. Participants may have to talk to other family members to complete this assignment.</li> </ul>
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**Session 2:  
Discovering Strengths**

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group members will continue to develop rapport with each other and counselors through genogram sharing</li> <li>• Group members will unearth the external assets that exist in their family</li> <li>• Group members will identify the strengths they possess that mirror those identified in their respective families</li> </ul>
Materials	Paper; pen/pencil
Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group members share genogram with other members and facilitators. Sample facilitator thoughts/questions:</li> <li>• What was the process of creating the genogram like for you?</li> <li>• What surprised you?</li> <li>• What strengths do your family members possess? Do you see those strengths in you?</li> <li>• Homework: Write a 125-200 word statement response to this question: “Who am I without the ball“ Control” activity: On a sheet of paper, group members will draw 2 concentric circles (the inner circle will be labeled “in control” and the outer circle labeled “out of control”). Group members will list all of the things in or out of their control in the respective circles regarding their academic, athletic, and career achievements.</li> </ul>

**Session 3:  
Who Am I Without the Ball?**

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group members will reflect upon their identities outside of their sport.</li> </ul>
Materials	Computer, projector, screen
Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants will each share their reflection on who they are without the ball</li> <li>• Facilitator will encourage group members to ask follow up questions to sharers.</li> <li>• Facilitator will gently challenge, as appropriate.</li> <li>• Facilitator will discuss the concept of athletic identity, and the implications, particularly relevant to Black males in sport</li> <li>• Homework: Write a 125 – 200 word statement of purpose.</li> </ul>

**Session 4:  
Men Passionately Pursuing Purpose**

Objectives	Group members will reflect upon how they will pursue purpose during high school.
Materials	Notebook; pen/paper
Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have group members discuss what they think the significance of the number “720” is for them.</li> <li>• Share that it represents the number of days in high school that they have. Facilitator thoughts/questions:</li> <li>• How will students plan to make use of the 720 days of high school?</li> <li>• Keep the focus on what is in front of them, utilizing positive language about the progress they can make.</li> <li>• Encourage students to begin with the end (e.g., graduation from high school) in mind. Ask students what is their “end?” Where do they want to be (at the end of high school, in ten years, etc.)?</li> <li>• Homework: Participants write what dynamics are in and out of their control as it relates to their pursuing purpose.</li> </ul>

**Session 5:  
Control Issues**

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group members will reflect on what is in and out of their control as it relates to their pursuing purpose.</li> </ul>
Materials	Large dry/erase board, chalkboard, or flipchart
Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check in about the overall process of completing the homework assignment (~2-5 minutes)</li> <li>• Group members collectively share their results of the exercise, while one of the facilitators record on the board.</li> <li>• Facilitator thoughts/points:</li> <li>• Acknowledge the “out of control” as real, influential, dynamics on participants’ pursuing purpose.</li> <li>• Resist “blaming the victim” commentary.</li> <li>• Show clips of videos of Black males in sports to illustrate dynamics in and out of our control.</li> <li>• Note the “out of control” forces that impacted their lives, in addition to the results of their “in control” efforts (good and bad)</li> <li>• Character, integrity, and strong work-ethic are examples of what can be added to and emphasized in “in control” elements.</li> <li>• Homework: Generate a list of specific questions about what decisions in our control we could use help managing.</li> </ul>

**Session 6:  
Choose Today**

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group members will understand how to make healthy decisions regarding what is in their control</li> </ul>
Materials	Paper; pen/pencil
Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants share their specific questions about how to manage what is in their control?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Facilitator leads a group discussion addressing the questions</li> <li>○ Facilitator stresses specific strategies for: Self-advocacy; dealing with conflict; responding to inappropriate treatment; communicating with authority;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Homework:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Identify an adult and a peer with whom you can check in at least once per month each to review your S.M.A.R.T. goals and overall progress toward pursuing purpose.</li> <li>○ Write 100-150 word answer to this question, using examples: Why are teammates important?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Session 7:  
Teammates Matter**

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group members will understand the importance of accountability.</li> <li>• Group members will become more familiar with the process of termination and be able to discuss ways to have a successful termination as well as how they can maintain progress once the group has terminated.</li> </ul>
Materials	Paper; pen/pencil
Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants share their answers to the question: Why are teammates important?</li> <li>• Counselor facilitates discussion about accountability</li> <li>• Homework: Have an your adult and peer accountability partners sign the MP3 accountability agreement.</li> </ul>

**Session 8:  
Termination**

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group members will reflect on the progress that they have gained over time in the group.</li> </ul>
Materials	Paper; pen/pencil
Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group members will complete the following post-tests:</li> <li>• Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS)</li> <li>• Participants will sum up in one sentence what the other group members mean to them.</li> <li>• Facilitator will provide the following final thoughts:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 individual compliment/observation of growth/strength of each group member</li> <li>• Revisit meaning of men passionately pursuing purpose</li> <li>• Revisit importance of confidentiality</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

- Admonition for continued progress/follow through

### **Post Group Outline**

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct an outcome evaluation of the group.</li> <li>• Use data driven methods to identify strengths and weaknesses of the group's design and make changes for future groups accordingly.</li> <li>• Report information to stakeholders (e.g. school staff, teachers, parents, etc.).</li> </ul>
Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compare student pre and post-test results. Identify areas that students grew in and areas that they did not. Adjust future group plan accordingly.</li> <li>• Summarize findings from the group using the G.R.I.P. format and present this information to stakeholders such as school staff, teachers, and parents to inform them of the impact that small group counseling can have upon students.</li> </ul>

**Appendix**

**Parent letter**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

An important part of our school counseling program is the time we spend working with students in small groups. These small groups can help students acquire new, valuable skills in an environment that is conducive to providing positive peer interactions.

We are interested in your son participating in a group counseling experience entitled Men Passionately Pursuing Purpose (MP3). This experience is designed for high school student-athletes who have an incredible capacity to be leaders in both academic and athletic arenas, but who have yet to realize that potential.

The mission of MP3 is to promote the identity development of high school Black male student-athletes through group counseling. Intended outcomes include: increased positive identity, academic self-efficacy, and learning behaviors.

We trust that you will support this endeavor. To that end, we ask that you complete the attached learning behaviors pre-assessment and return to Carol Freeman as soon as possible.

Your feedback will assist in our monitoring student progress throughout this intervention.

Please let us know if you are willing to allow your child to participate in this program.

Sincerely,

School Counselors

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**Please sign and return to the school counseling office**

\_\_\_\_\_ I DO give my child permission to participate in the MP3 Program.

\_\_\_\_\_ I do NOT give my child permission to participate in the MP3 Program.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

### MP3 Screening Questions

**Student Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Grade** \_\_\_\_\_

Your parents, teachers, counselor, principal, or coach recommended you to participate in a small group experience that will use discussions as a way of exploring how to realize your academic and career potential. Please respond to the questions below so that we can decide together whether or not this experience would be a good fit for you.

1. What one word best describes you?

2. Who are you without the ball (i.e., outside of your sport)?

3. How prepared do you believe you are for life after high school?

4. What one word best describes you? \_\_\_\_\_

#### 5. Group Norms and Responsibilities

- Confidentiality is stressed
- Must be willing to take risks

#### 6. Next Steps

- We will contact your parents
- Contact your teachers

7. Are you interested?

**Letter to Teachers (Pre)**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

You are receiving this letter because one of your students, \_\_\_\_\_, will be participating in an experience entitled “Men Passionately Pursuing Purpose (MP3).”

The mission of MP3 is to promote the identity development of high school Black male student-athletes through group counseling. Intended outcomes include: increased positive identity, academic self-efficacy, and learning behaviors.

Attached is a schedule of group meetings. While the students will miss some instructional time to participate in the group, we believe the time will be well spent and will lead to gains both in and out of the classroom. To that end, students will be responsible for any material that they miss.

We trust that you will support this endeavor. To that end, we ask that you complete the attached learning behaviors pre-assessment and return to the school counseling office as soon as possible.

Your feedback will assist in our monitoring student progress throughout this intervention.

Sincerely,

School Counselors

**Letter to Teachers (Post)**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

You are receiving this letter because one of your students, \_\_\_\_\_, participated in an experience entitled “Men Passionately Pursuing Purpose (MP3).”

The mission of MP3 is to promote the identity development of high school Black male student-athletes through group counseling. Intended outcomes include: increased positive identity, academic self-efficacy, and learning behaviors.

Attached are the dates/times that we met throughout the experience. While the students missed some instructional time to participate in the group, we believe the time was well spent and has already led to gains both in and out of the classroom.

We thank you for your support of this endeavor.

Your feedback will assist in our evaluating student progress throughout this intervention.

Sincerely,

School Counselors