

How to do Phase Five B

Phase Five B is a celebration! In this phase the participants are asked to look at who they are as persons, who God created them to be, and who they *are now* as compared to what they *had to do* in order to survive. The trauma came into their lives, and they got off of the path God had laid out for them. Now they are back on the right track, or, if they have more traumas to resolve, closer to the right track. Each person in the group prepares something for the individual which represents how he or she views them. The individual also prepares something that represents how he or she views himself or herself now as compared to before he or she resolved the trauma. Many of the group members may have been together since the beginning of their trauma work, so they have probably come to know each other quite well. The changes they have seen can be reflected in their presentations. People are encouraged to be creative in this phase. Group members can write a letter, a poem, a song, sing a song, play a tape, buy a gift, paint, draw, perform a skit, make a video tape, do a demonstration, involve the whole group, or bring in whatever creative article they wish, to convey their view of the individual or themselves. The group members come prepared to send whatever they have constructed home with the graduate.

In the past one group member demonstrated how to make recycled paper, and then put a piece of it in a picture with a poem to represent the changes in herself. One group member made a video of herself performing a dance. Others have performed skits, played songs, written letters, sang, or purchased small gifts that are representative of their feelings and beliefs.

I encourage members to think and pray about what they are going to do before completing their project. Inevitably, there are one or two themes which pervade the entire Phase Five B experience, even though the group members do not get together and discuss what they will do beforehand. This phase involves a lot of *happy* tears, hugs and congratulations.

Phase Five B is scheduled two to three weeks in advance in order to give everyone plenty of time to prepare. Also, the therapist must select a day in which everyone will be present. If someone becomes ill, the 5B is postponed unless it is absolutely impossible to postpone. On the night of the 5B, no other trauma work is done in that group. All of the focus remains on the graduate. The group process is also rearranged. The group begins as usual with check-in, then processing the previous week's group. Then you move directly into the celebration. After giving instructions, the facilitator moves a chair into the center of the circle and the "graduate" is seated in the chair. Each group member then volunteers when he or she is ready to present his or her gift. The graduate moves his or her chair to sit directly facing the individual making the presentation. After the presentation, the two may shake hands, or hug or the graduate may just say, "Thank you." This process is relatively unstructured. After all group members have made their presentations, the graduate returns to his or her seat and makes his or her presentation. Usually the group leader does not prepare anything but does say a few words on behalf of the graduate's progress in group. The group is then ended with a group hug, as usual.

One word summarizes the TRT process—structure. Without the structure, it is not TRT. If someone is using a different structure, i.e., adding another phase, writing the five most difficult incidents of trauma in Phase One rather than all of them, using confrontation in the group process, etc., then it is not TRT. A trained TRT counselor learns the structure, trusts the structure, and follows it to the letter so that a TRT participant can learn the structure, trust the structure and follow it to the letter. When there are no outside interferences, the structure works.