

Cultural Project: Life Skills Group

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Background

- ◆ My dissertation focused on the mental health of undocumented Latino/a college students, more specifically, how their undocumented status affects their mental health while in college.
- ◆ Themes that came up with students were
 - ◆ fear of deportation,
 - ◆ disempowerment regarding laws and policies,
 - ◆ lack of sense of belonging to the country,
 - ◆ not being able to see or plan for future, and
 - ◆ integration regarding who they are (intersecting identities culturally, professionally, developmental transition, etc.).

Background

- ◆ Congruently, some of the same themes were being reflected or shared in the incarcerated youth population.
- ◆ Although, the context in which I am seeing college students and incarcerated youth are different, college campus versus juvenile hall, they had many shared similar backgrounds; for example, they were of
 - ◆ lower-socio economical income or status,
 - ◆ people of color,
 - ◆ problems with law or police,
 - ◆ living dangerous neighborhoods, and
 - ◆ having the need to be seen and belong.

Topics

I am, Knowing

Illusion/Understanding

Lies/Truth

Shame/Power

Grief/Belonging

Guilt/Creation

Fear/Having



The Group

- ◆ The group met 7 times once a week for 1 hour.
- ◆ The group took place in the therapeutic detention unit of the juvenile hall at dinner time, which was the best available time.
- ◆ The group was originally planned for 6 youth who would be in the hall long enough to participate in all 7 modules. As a result, 9 youth participated in the group with no drop-outs.
- ◆ The group came up with and agreed to rules that incorporated respect, open mic or one mic, and confidentiality.

Interventions

Drawings

- Goal: to recognize when their actions/behaviors are based on certain beliefs
- Skill: visualize, self-examine, externalize the problem

Stories

- Goal: to recognize their own ability to re-create their personal story
- Skill: Mindfulness around decision-making

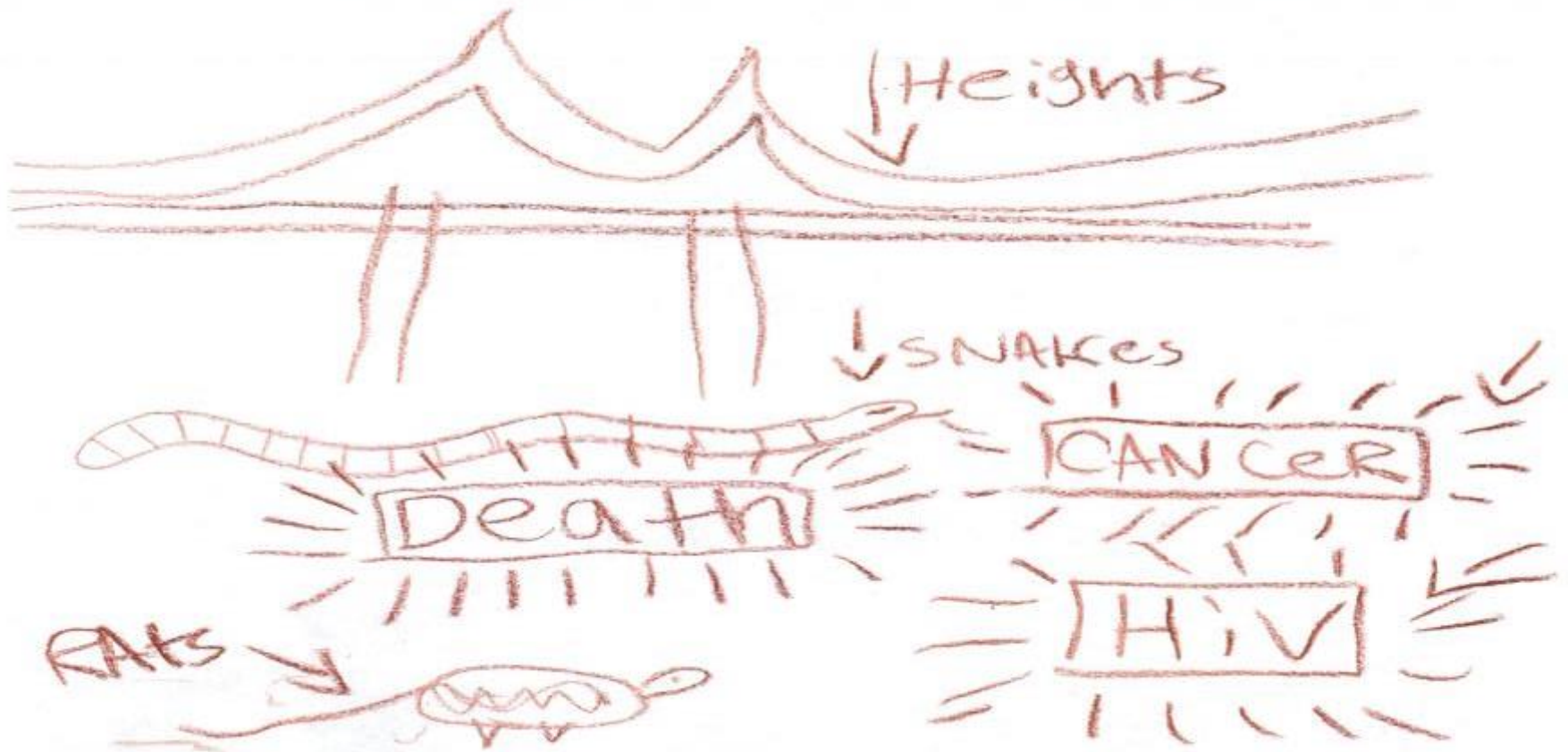
Open Group Discussions

- Goal: to think critically and problem solve based on peer interactions
- Skill: To entertain different perspectives and formulate opinions

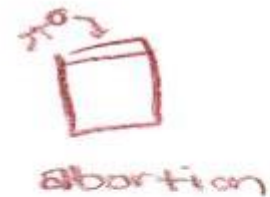
Examples (fear)



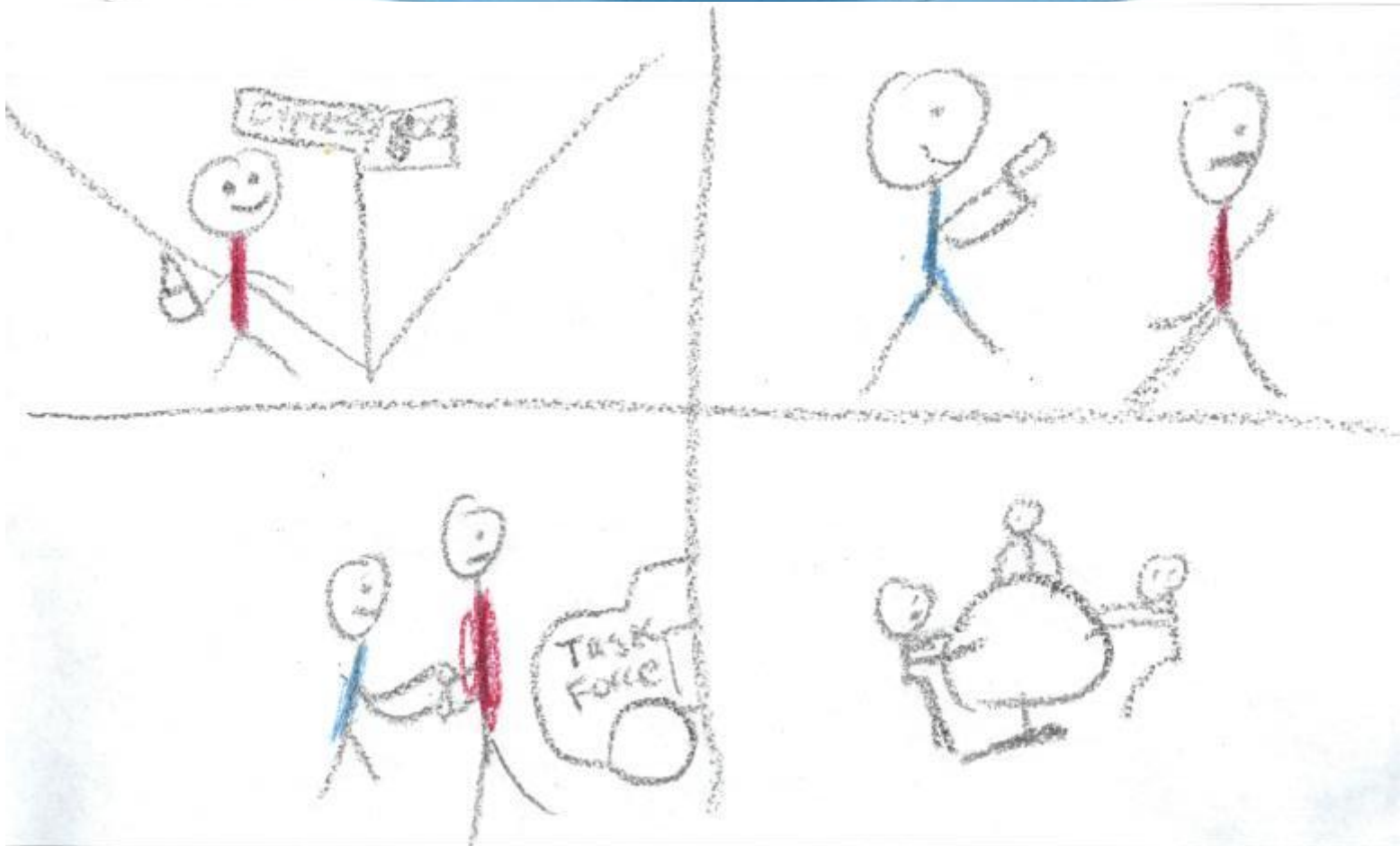
Examples (fear)



Example (guilt)



Example (guilt)



Results

- ◆ Feedback surveys were given for the participants to fill out on the last group meeting
- ◆ The overall sense of the group was that the group was, “related to life,” and wanted “longer and more sessions.”
- ◆ For improvement they wished the content were more interesting, and improvement around the structure of the talk.
- ◆ Certificates of completion were given to all the participants