

Sample Dream Group Meeting

1 Lighting Candles, Welcome, & Inspirational Thought

We seek loving guidance and inspiration
so that our dream sharing today will bring
dream wisdom to inspire a life of love
a life of action, a life of sincere seeking
and a life of joy. May Our Dream Wisdom
Bear Much Good . . .



2 Initial Introductions: Tell us your name and background. What is your interest in dreams? How do you remember dreams? How do you record dreams?

3 Review the Ethics Statement of the "International Association for the Study of Dreams." Discuss confidentiality for group members.

Regular Check-in: Each person shares a dream title or image, how s/he is feeling today and a key, recent event. E.g. "I'm Sharon and a title for last night's dream is . . . Today I'm feeling confused about how to adjust to missing my daughter. A key event recently is my daughter's graduation."

Exploring An Individual Dream In-Depth

4 Choose A Dream for Dreamwork

Dreamers who wish to work on a dream in-depth, express their interest. One dream is then chosen—either because of the group's intuitive feelings, and/or because one Dreamer expresses a "burning" desire to focus on that particular dream at that time.

5 The Group Completes A Relaxation Exercise & the Dreamer Reads the Dream

Dreamworkers now close their eyes during a short relaxation exercise. Then, the Dreamer reads her/his dream aloud. Listeners may find they can focus more intensely on the dream when their eyes are closed—closing the eyes typically helps the listener hear subtle nuances in the Dreamer's voice, the changes in pacing, volume, emphasis, emotion, breathing, tone, etc.

6 A Dreamworker from the Group Reads the Dream Aloud

The dreamworker uses the Dreamer's pacing, volume, tone of voice, emphasis, emotion, etc. The Dreamer listens with her/his eyes closed . . .

7 The Dreamer & the Group Members Share How the Dream Affected Them

The Dreamer listens or takes notes while each person relates how the dream affected her/him: E.g., "I was overwhelmed by the colors in the dream. I felt excited, uplifted . . . The part about the flower opening made me feel like I want to do something to express my own creativity."

8 The Dreamworkers Ask the Dreamer A Series of Clarifying Questions

If the Dreamer wishes to share drawings of her dream, ask her clarifying questions about the drawings. Ask about shapes, contrasts, empty spaces, characters, what the elements in the drawing are, the colors s/he would choose, emotions, balance, sequences. Her overall feeling about the drawing . . .

If there is more than one dream scene, ask the Dreamer to sketch each scene in her dream and then ask clarifying questions. If the Dreamer spontaneously makes connections to her waking life, don't add your own interpretations—simply ask her additional, clarifying questions. If you are bursting with brilliant insights that you are afraid the Dreamer might overlook, then write them down and save them for the "**Shameless Projections**" Exercise that follows in Step 10.

Pause after each question. **Avoid rapid-fire questioning.** Let your intuition and feelings guide your exploring. Keep a sense of relaxed play during the exploration. *You* don't have to discover the meaning of the dream. Ask questions that help the **Dreamer** re-experience the dream as deeply as possible. (During the clarifying stage of dream exploration, the Dreamer may wish to take a five-minute writing break to make her/his own personal notes.)

At this stage, try to **avoid** various forms of interpretation. E.g., "What do you think that meant?" "I think it meant . . ." Instead, try to get **details** about the actual dream story—the settings, people, animals, feelings, actions, colors, etc. Ask clarifying questions such as the following:

Could you briefly summarize your dream?

Describe the opening and closing scenes of the dream and your feelings.

Which dream image was the most powerful or most vivid? The least? How so?

Which feelings were the most powerful?

Where were you standing in the living room?

What time was it? What season?

Describe the type of light in the dream.

Pretend I don't know what "X" is (Person, Place, Thing, etc.). Describe what it is like.

What three adjectives are most descriptive of this object? Person?

How is the "X" in your dream different from typical cats? Movie Stars? Cities?

Summarize your dream themes. E.g., Discovering new places; Growing geraniums.

Summarize your dream settings. Was there anything that surprised you?

Could you repeat the order that was given by the sergeant in your dream?

Would you show us how the child was crouching?

Was anything transformed in your dream?

How did you feel about each transformation?

Were there sudden transitions?

What was your role in the dream? How did you feel about this role?

What was the main conflict in the dream?

If there was a problem, how effective were you at solving it?

In hindsight, what would you have done differently?

When there is conflict in the mind, there is tension in the body.
When there is tension in the body-mind, there is conflict in the Dreaming
Consciousness.

Without resolution, deep rest and true peace eludes the dreamer.

9 Ask Questions to Help the Dreamer Link Her Dream to Waking Life

In general, use the *Dreamer's* words and expressions that s/he used in response to some of the questions above. To help the Dreamer **link** her dream to her waking life, ask her to . . . "Close your eyes and take seven deep breaths. Now, keep your eyes closed while I repeat your descriptions and feelings back to you." Then, use her words, **tone**, and pacing, as you restate the *Dreamer's* feelings and **key**, descriptive phrases.

E.g., "Does the way the little girl was crouching in the dream, whom you described as 'ready to spring on someone' remind you of a situation in your life, of anyone in your life, or of some part of yourself . . . perhaps an attitude or a feeling? If so, what?" After the Dreamer responds, ask, "How is it similar?"

10 "Shameless" Projections

Projecting one's own feelings and responses onto another person's dream is partly based on the dreamwork methods described by Montague Ullman and Nan Zimmerman in their book *Working With Dreams*.

During the "shameless" projections, dream group members imagine what the dream would be saying to them **if they had actually had the dream**. They share what the dream would be telling them about their own personal life situation and personality. They describe the feelings that were evoked by the Dreamer's imagery, symbols, and dream story. They might begin with the words "If this were my dream . . ."

While group members are sharing how the dream imagery, symbols, and story, could be a metaphor for some parts of **their own lives**, the Dreamer may wish to take notes in case some of the feelings and insights have parallels to what s/he is experiencing.

Dream group members might also record insights and feelings and give these to the Dreamer when the shared dreaming ends. **BUT!** Only the Dreamer can decide what is similar to her feelings, associations, and insights. Only the Dreamer knows the meaning of her dream—the dream that s/he created for her journey to wholeness.

Examples of Shameless Projections

When I "walk" in your dream, I am reminded of situation X in my life and I feel . . .

I am reminded of . . . feeling X, experience X, person X, losing my favorite childhood toy, etc.

In my dream of your dream, I feel ecstatic when I realize that I am free of the boat. It reminds me of the fall of 1995, when I left my mother's care and everything behind me. I set out for university and chose to study engineering.

11 The Dreamer Shares Her/His Insights & Responses

After most of the dream has been explored, within the constraints of the group's time, the Dreamer may then choose to share her insights and her response to the dreamwork with the group, or, she may prefer to reflect privately when she is alone.

12 Schedule the Next Meeting & Select the Key Focus

The time, date, and host for the next meeting are determined. Someone may indicate an interest in sharing or creating a **dream technique** for the group exercise portion of the next meeting. Or, perhaps, someone will share a summary of a book and one or two techniques that seemed interesting.

If the group is working on dream incubation themes, that week's incubation question may be chosen. Before sleep, each dream group member may repeat the same question. For example:

"What is the most important step I can take to achieve goal X?"

"What is the next step on my journey to health, happiness, and wholeness?"

Or, if the group decides to make a lucky Dreamer the focus of a dream incubation night, the question might be, "**How can Anne best achieve goal X?**"

13 The Circle of Light Ritual

Dream group members stand in a circle and hold hands—the left hand faces up and the right hand faces down. Then, each person imagines that during each inhalation, beautiful light is received through the left hand. During the exhalation, the healing light flows in to the person on the right. After a minute or so of relaxed breathing, some in the circle may give voice to inspiring images, thanks for gifts received, and this closing wish . . .

May Our Dream Wisdom Bear Much Good . . .

IASD Dreamwork Ethics Statement

IASD celebrates the many benefits of dreamwork, yet recognizes that there are potential risks. IASD supports an approach to dreamwork and dream sharing that respects the dreamer's dignity and integrity, and which recognizes the dreamer as the decision-maker regarding the significance of the dream. Systems of dreamwork that assign authority or knowledge of the dream's meaning to someone other than the dreamer can be misleading, incorrect, and harmful. Ethical dreamwork helps the dreamer work with his/her own dream images, feelings, and associations, and guides the dreamer to more fully experience, appreciate, and understand the dream. Every dream may have multiple meanings, and different techniques may be reasonably employed to touch these multiple layers of significance.

A dreamer's decision to share or discontinue sharing a dream should always be respected and honored. The dreamer should be forewarned that unexpected issues or emotions may arise in the course of the dreamwork. Information and mutual agreement about the degree of privacy and confidentiality are essential ingredients in creating a safe atmosphere for dream sharing.

Dreamwork outside a clinical setting is not a substitute for psychotherapy, or other professional treatment, and should not be used as such.

IASD recognizes and respects that there are many valid and time-honored dreamwork traditions. We invite and welcome the participation of dreamers from all cultures. There are social, cultural, and transpersonal aspects to dream experience. In this statement we do not mean to imply that the only valid approach to dreamwork focuses on the dreamer's personal life. Our purpose is to honor and respect the person of the dreamer as well as the dream itself, regardless of how the relationship between the two may be understood.

Prepared by the IASD Ethics Committee
Carol Warner, Chair
International Association for the Study of Dreams
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Dreamwork

- [Top Ten Dreamwork Techniques](#) — "Your Guide to Happiness, Wisdom, and Purpose"
- [What Did You Dream Last Night?](#) — "Ask A Puzzling Question Tonight . . . Discover Your Dreaming Mind's Answers Tomorrow"
- [Artists Dreaming Joy](#) — A workbook that helps artists express a multitude of joys