



**Sample Pages from
The Virtual Support Group from Hell**

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THE VIRTUAL SUPPORT GROUP FROM HELL

A COMEDY BY
Jeffrey Harr



The Virtual Support Group from Hell
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Casting

5W+3M

DR. TAMMY	Counselor, kooky as it gets and absurdly enthusiastic, but utterly sincere
WENDY	Teen girl, new to the group and nervous about it
VLADIMIR	Teen boy, very well-dressed in clothes from another era, speaks with a thick Transylvanian accent
WOLFGANG	Teen boy with long hair and an absurdly crazy beard
HECUBA	Teen girl in all black, goth
LUCY	Teen girl, pale, in ripped jeans and T-shirt, spattered with blood
FRANK	Teen boy, in plain T-shirt and blazer, a few long scars on his face with stitches
JANET	Teen girl in completely normal clothes and a Batman mask

Production Note

To best make use of the background of each character's screens, consider virtual backgrounds, like a castle for Vladimir, a lab for Frank, that sort of thing; if not virtual, think about what, on screen, would best support the visual representation of the characters.

It is suggested that productions stream in gallery mode so all the screens are visible at the same time.

All characters on screen except for WENDY.

DR. TAMMY has a journal or paper and pen in hand, taking attendance.

WENDY enters the meeting.

WENDY: *(sheepishly waves, her mic is off)* Um... hi there.

DR. TAMMY: *(over-enthusiastic)* Hello, dear. Now, turn that mic on so we can all hear you.

WENDY: *(very uncomfortable, turns her mic on)* Oh. God. Sorry. I'm not so good at this, yet. I'm Wendy. I guess I'm in this... um... support group.

DR. TAMMY: You sure are, Wendy. *(looks at her list)* Got you right here. Wendy Wasserman. *(super excited)* Ooh! That just rolls off the tongue, doesn't it! Love it. Thanks for being here, Wendy. You are MOST welcome. Can everyone say hello to Wendy?

Suddenly, everyone (except LUCY, who only moans) chants in unison, with varying degrees of enthusiasm.

ALL: Hi Wendy.

WENDY, a bit overwhelmed, smiles weakly and waves ever-so-slightly.

DR. TAMMY: As you all know, I... am Dr. Tammy.

ALL: Hi, Dr. Tammy.

DR. TAMMY: Dr. Tammy. Your counselor. Your friend. Okay? Okay! Now, as I recall, our goal for this session was to bring in a key issue. Something we feel is holding us back. Something other than the fact that because of the global pandemic we're all stuck at home with our lousy families for hours on end with nothing but the dog and Netflix to keep us sane. *(laughs uncomfortably)* Am I right or am I right?

Everyone looks decidedly uncomfortable.

DR. TAMMY: Right. Now, who wants to start?

Everyone sort of shrugs and slinks down a bit. No one wants to go. LUCY moans.

DR. TAMMY: C'mon, now, people. No healing without dealing, right?

No one responds, but there's some eye-rolling; they've heard this before.

DR. TAMMY: C'mon, kids. Say it with me, no healing without dealing.

ALL: *(with next-to-no enthusiasm, LUCY sort of moaning along)* No healing without dealing.

DR. TAMMY: I'm sorry. I can't hear you!

ALL: *(louder)* No healing without dealing.

DR. TAMMY: Now, that's better, people. Geez. We are not making a good impression on Wendy, now are we? You see, Wendy, in this group, we believe that there is no HEAL-ing, without DEAL-ing. Know what I'm sayin'?

WENDY: *(like she's afraid to say anything other than yes)* Um... yes. Yes, I do. You have to... deal... to... heal.

DR. TAMMY: *(ecstatic)* Wendy, you have just made my day, girlfriend. Bless you. Now, who's ready to deal, people?

FRANK: All right, I'll go first.

DR. TAMMY: Thank you, Frank. Let... us... DEAL.

While the regular "group" already knows one another, they're not entirely shocked by what follows, but to WENDY, it's all pretty bizarre. As the others share, her face can betray all sorts of uneasiness with what's being said.

FRANK: My key issue is with my dad. Now, I realize because he's a doctor and there's this pandemic and all, I wouldn't expect him to have all kinds of time for me, but he's home, all day and all night, down in our basement... *(uses his fingers to make air quotes)* "working." It's ridiculous. I mean, when I was born, we spent a lot of time together. Now that I'm a teenager, it just doesn't seem like he cares anymore.

DR. TAMMY: Is it possible he's doing virtual appointments with his patients?

FRANK: He can't be. We don't have WiFi. I have to use a hotspot on my phone to even be here today. Don't get me started. He considers himself a man of science but he shuns modern technology. He still has a flip phone for the love of god. The only reason he goes down there is to play with his toys.

HECUBA: His toys? Like what? What's he got down there?

FRANK: It's a lab. He's got a crap-ton of old switches and glass tubes and chemicals and beakers full of green liquid. Could be Mountain Dew, could be antifreeze.

WOLFGANG: Is there a difference?

FRANK: Good call, Wolfgang. But I wouldn't know anyway; I'm not even allowed down there. One time, I got really mad and took off. I was gone for, like, several days before he even came looking for me.

JANET: *(in a low, raspy voice reminiscent of Christian Bale's Batman voice)* You should have made a lair, a place you could hide when the sins of the city force you into the shadows.

FRANK: *(sarcastically)* That's great, Batman. Thanks for that. But I don't want a lair, I want my dad to care. I started out in the woods. Met a cute little kid by this old well. Then I hung out with this old dude in his cottage for a couple days. No biggie. I mean, it's not like dear old dad had to come get me from the polar ice caps or anything, but still.

Everyone groans a bit in sympathy.

VLADIMIR: *(pulls a cigarette out from behind his ear and a lighter from his coat pocket)* Nothing worse than an absentee parent, dude.

FRANK: *(sees the lighter, totally flips out, gets out of his chair and trashes some of what's around him)* FIRE BAD! FIRE BAD!

HECUBA: Vlad?! You KNOW he doesn't like fire!

VLADIMIR: What? We're not even in the same room. It might as well be virtual fire.

HECUBA: Put it away, Vlad! Now.

VLADIMIR: *(puts the lighter away)* Fine, fine. No smoking for Vlad. Happy now?

DR. TAMMY: It's okay, Frank. No fire. Vlad's sorry. C'mon back to the meeting, dear.

FRANK calms, sits back down.

FRANK: I'm good. Sorry, everyone. I'm working on the whole "fire thing."

VLADIMIR: No, no. My bad, Frank. I've been trying to quit for a thousand years but it's just not happenin'.

DR. TAMMY: Okay, now. Little bit of excitement there. Good for us. Now, Vladimir, since you brought it up, why don't you go next? Perhaps we could address your smoking?

VLADIMIR: No, Dr. Tammy. Compared to my drinking habit, the smoking's a joke.

DR. TAMMY: Drinking it is. How bad are we talking?

VLADIMIR: (*sarcastically*) Let's see. Is having to drink every day a problem?

WOLFGANG: Yeah, man. That's a problem. How long's it been?

VLADIMIR: Since I can remember. But the worst is the shame. It's like, something I have to do at night, y'know? In the dark. You find a dark alley by a bar any night of the week and you'll find me in it, drinking.

HECUBA: That's just sad, dude.

WENDY slowly raises her hand, hesitant to participate.

DR. TAMMY: Wendy! Yes! I'm so glad you feel comfortable enough to participate. It's cool that you raised your hand, but as you can see, we're all friends, here, and just jump right in there when we've got something to say. So, what's on your mind?

WENDY: I, um, just wanted to ask Vladimir if, um, he goes to the bars with his friends. Because, well, sometimes it's your friends that are part of the problem.

VLADIMIR: No, I never drink my friends, but I see your point.

WENDY seems confused for a second, but gets it together before responding.

WENDY: Oh. Well, drinking alone is a bad sign. I'm sorry.

VLADIMIR: It's not your fault. It's mine. My... curse.

DR. TAMMY: Vladimir, can I just say that I'm proud of you? As Dr. Phil would say—

Everyone but WENDY (and LUCY, who simply moans) chants in unison; they've done this before.

ALL: Dr. Phil be praised.

DR. TAMMY: —you can't change what you don't acknowledge. Now, we know that drinking problems can be genetic. Any serious drinkers in the family?

VLADIMIR: Are you kidding? My dad drinks like a college freshman at a kegger. About ten pints a night.

Everyone recoils, aware that that's a lot.

WENDY: I'm sorry... pints?

DR. TAMMY: Oh, of course, Wendy. Vlad's dad lived in the UK. Right, Vlad?

VLADIMIR: Yes, he did. Lifetimes ago. A bloody nightmare, I'm afraid. He drank so much there that they ran him out of the country.

HECUBA: He was kicked out of the country for drinking? Now that's a drinking problem!

VLADIMIR: I know, right?

DR. TAMMY: Aw, you kids. I miss bein' close enough to hug ya'll. Mama bear misses gettin' her big, bad claws on ya.

VLADIMIR: Try drinking someone from six feet away. It's put a real kink in my style.

WENDY: (*absolutely disturbed*) I'm sorry—did you just say drinking someone from—

DR. TAMMY: Okay, then. Who's next?

WOLFGANG: Okay, I'll go. Now, where do I start? First of all, this hair. What's up with that? I'm not out of high school and I have a beard full enough to fit a family of five. And in case you're wondering: yes, I shave every day. (*refers to his beard*) This just... grows back. It's ridiculous. But that's not what's really bothering me. See, I can kinda relate to Vlad. I'm a bit of a night owl, too, especially on nights when there's a full moon. Problem is, I'll go to bed and when I wake up, it'll be, like, a couple days later.

Everyone oohs.

WOLFGANG: And I'll be, like, in the woods.

Everyone ahs.

WOLFGANG: And, I'll be, like, naked.

Everyone oohs.

WOLFGANG: And bloody.

Everyone ews.

WOLFGANG: It's pretty messed up. And you wanna know the REALLY bizarre part of it? When I wake up, I can't remember a thing that happened.

VLADIMIR: Sounds like you're partying pretty hard.

HECUBA: Sounds like narcolepsy. Well, um, except for the blood. I don't think that's normal.

DR. TAMMY: She's right, Wolfgang. As Dr. Phil likes to say—

ALL: Dr. Phil be praised—

DR. TAMMY: If what is happening isn't normal, admit it.

JANET: *(in the Batman voice)* I, too, am out quite a bit at night. I'll keep an eye out for you, Wolfgang. But know this: As the Dark Knight, if this substance you're covered in is, indeed, blood, you may not want to see me. *(steps up on her chair, hunkers down)* From my perch above this city, I see all. And I will do my duty. I will dispense justice. I am the Batman.

WOLFGANG: *(a little weirded out)* Um, thanks, Batman.

JANET: And, of course, the fact that you're naked. There's that, too. Public indecency. The people of Gotham are good people. Decent people. They don't need to be seeing that.

JANET sits back down.

HECUBA: True dat.

Suddenly, LUCY moans.

DR. TAMMY: Yes, Lucy? Go right ahead.

LUCY: *(since "brains" is the only word she uses, she should inflect it in different ways to indicate a change in meaning)* Brains. Braaaaaaiiiiiins. Brains.

DR. TAMMY: Ah, yes, Lucy. Good point. We should remember not to discriminate against those who are covered in blood. Thanks for reminding us.

Everyone but WENDY, who has no idea what is happening, apologizes to LUCY.

LUCY: Braaaaaaiiins.

DR. TAMMY: Oh, you're welcome, dear. Now, let's see. Who else? Hecuba? What have you got for us tonight?

HECUBA: Well, it's my mom. It's stupid, really. Not a big thing, but still.

DR. TAMMY: Go ahead, dear. No issue is too small to share.

HECUBA: So, I keep my broom in the hall closet, right? You know, so it's right there when I need it. The other day, I go in there to grab my coat, and I can't find my broom. I start panicking, y'know, 'cause I love that broom. It's old, I know, but it's worn in, right? Besides, it's my first freaking broom! I look around in there and what do I see in the corner of the closet? A Swiffer! My MOTHER replaced my FAVORITE BROOM with a FREAKING SWIFFER! Now, what am I supposed to do with a freaking Swiffer?

WOLFGANG: Well, that depends. Is it one of the dry ones, that's just a duster, or is it one of those wet ones you can use on tile and wood floors and stuff?

HECUBA: (*stares at him with a death glare*) You're hysterical, Wolfgang. It's the kind that with a wave of my hand I could shove right up your—

DR. TAMMY: Whoa, there. Wolfgang's sorry, aren't you, Wolfgang? We all know how much you love your broom.

WOLFGANG: Sorry, Hecuba. I was just messing with you.

WENDY: My mom does that too.

Everyone stops for a second, surprised WENDY is speaking up.

WENDY: You know... makes me clean.

Everyone's still frozen.

WENDY: With... a Swiffer.

WENDY's starting to get more uncomfortable as she notices they're all a bit dumbfounded.

WENDY: When... I... um... don't want to.

Still, stillness.

FRANK: Awk-ward.

DR. TAMMY: (*right on the heels of FRANK's line*) So, Wendy. About that. Is that something you'd like to talk about? Your mom?

WENDY: Um... sure. Actually, she's the reason I'm in this group. She made me sign up. Well, that's not exactly why. I'm here because...
(*pauses*) there's this boy.

Everyone ews.

WENDY: My boyfriend. Well, I was dating him for a really long time, y'know, about a month, and then, one day, out of the blue, he breaks up with me.

Everyone ohs.

JANET: (*as straight as can be*) My girlfriend fell in love with the district attorney who later became Two-Face after the Joker blew her to smithereens.

Everyone stops.

VLADIMIR: Now, THAT sucks.

DR. TAMMY: Thank you, Batman. I'm sure that makes Wendy feel a little better, by comparison. Wendy? You were saying?

WENDY: It's not so much that he broke up with me; it's the way he did it. By text.

Everyone oohs.

WENDY: (*gets a bit more agitated as she goes, more upset*) Yeah. He said that it was fun and all, y'know, but that he's gotta be free. That I was just... tying him down.

Everyone ews.

WENDY: But me? I say... I say... THAT HE'S A JERK!

LUCY raises her fist in the air and moans, approvingly.

FRANK: You go, girl.

WENDY: I hate him. He's dead to me.

VLADIMIR: Do you want him to be dead? 'Cause I could make that happen.

DR. TAMMY: Vladimir... thank you, but no.

VLADIMIR: Just trying to help.

WENDY: Dead? No. Dead's too good for him. I want him... to suffer.

HECUBA: Ooh, now you're talking. If you've got a hair sample and the eye of a newt, we'll get that done.

DR. TAMMY: Hecuba, please. A little TOO supportive.

HECUBA shrugs.

So, Wendy. Clearly, you've been hurt by this boy. And that's terrible. But you're here. Talking about it. Deeeaaaling with it. And that is something to be very, very proud of.

WENDY: Doesn't feel like it.

DR. TAMMY: I know, dear. Break-ups are never easy. Why, when I was your age, there was a boy. A man-child. And we were in love. (*increasingly melodramatic*) His name: Fernando. His game: breaking... my... heart. Oh, sure, there was the passion. The... endless nights of...

FRANK: (*emphatically*) We get the picture, Dr. Tammy. Thanks so much.

DR. TAMMY: (*comes back to reality*) Oh, I'm sorry, kids. Just got a little too much in my head, there, for a second.

VLADIMIR: Sorry, Wendy. Dr. Tammy does this every once and awhile. We try to let her go, but sometimes, she goes a smidge too far.

DR. TAMMY: Anyway, Wendy. The point is, we've all been there. And we've all survived it. And I have a feeling that you will too. Right, group?

Everyone gives some form of support, like, "Oh, sure," or "Totally," except for LUCY, who moans.

WENDY: (*genuinely touched*) Wow. Um... thanks, guys. I really appreciate the support. Y'know, I gotta say, I was very nervous about this meeting, but... I dunno... you all have been so nice and, I just—

DR. TAMMY: (*ecstatic*) You have made my day, Wendy! Oh, it's just the best thing in the world when we help someone, isn't it? Just the best. Now, since we're running out of time, I think it only proper to ask you, now that you've accepted us and it looks like you will be a more permanent member of our group, what sort of monster you are.

WENDY: (*genuinely confused*) Mon... ster?

DR. TAMMY: Oh, I'm sorry. Some find the term monster pejorative. Um... let's see... creature, entity, paranormal figure?

WENDY: I... I still have no idea what you're talking about.

DR. TAMMY: Are you a demon, or some sort of wraith, ooh, or maybe a reincarnated spirit seeking vengeance from the wrongs done to her in a previous life?

WENDY: Is this part of the therapy? 'Cause I am totally lost here.

VLADIMIR: Of course not. We are all here because we're... special. I, myself, for example, am a child of the night.

WENDY: A child of the night? Like, you're homeless or something?

VLADIMIR: No, no. Nothing like that. I'm Nosferatu.

WENDY: Nosferatu? So, you're like, German? Doesn't make you special.

VLADIMIR: (*dramatically, as much like Dracula as possible*) I... am a vampire.

WENDY: No way!

VLADIMIR: (*back in his regular kid voice*) It's true. Got turned around the turn of the century. Totally not my fault. Hard to believe, I know, but Wolfgang is a werewolf.

WOLFGANG: Yup. Howl at the moon and everything.

WENDY: Certainly explains the facial hair.

VLADIMIR: Frank is a reanimated being composed entirely of human parts from donors.

WENDY: Right, right. Frankenstein, I get it.

FRANK: Actually, no. But I get that a lot. We're not related to the Frankensteins. I know of them, of course, but my last name's Smith.

WENDY: Sorry. Guess I shouldn't stereotype like that.

FRANK: It's cool.

VLADIMIR: Hecuba's a real witch—

HECUBA: Um, I prefer the term enchantress. Makes people less likely to think I'm a mean girl. I can make your hair fall out, but I won't make your friends disappear, if you know what I'm sayin'.

VLADIMIR: Sorry, Hecuba. My bad. And, of course, (*gestures to JANET*) there's... Batman.

WENDY: Batman?

JANET: I am the Batman.

WENDY: No offense, um... Batman... but how do you fit in this... group?

JANET: Like the rest, I am the outcast. Consigned to the shadows. Misunderstood by society.

VLADIMIR: Batman! Behind you! Someone's committing a crime!

JANET: (*suddenly hyperaware, stands, moves off-camera*) Not in my city!

VLADIMIR: Her name's Janet, but she thinks she's the Dark Knight. She's a wackadoodle, but very nice.

WENDY: Huh. Fair enough.

JANET: (*returns to her seat*) Thanks for the tip, Vlad. Caught Catwoman, red-handed, trying to scratch up the sofa.

VLADIMIR: Always glad to help, Batman. And last but not least, good ol' Lucy, one of the undead.

WENDY: The walking dead?

At this, LUCY flips out, gets super close to the camera like she's comin' for WENDY.

DR. TAMMY: Whoa, now, Lucy! Calm it down. Step away from the camera.

LUCY calms and sits back down.

That's it. Thank you, dear. Not your fault, Wendy, but we don't use that term here. As I'm sure you know, that show is merely propaganda for the living to persecute and oppress those who are life-challenged. Right, Wendy?

WENDY: Oh. Of course. Yes. Never watch it. Yuck. Hate that... propagandist... crap. I'm very sorry, Lucy.

LUCY smiles and gives WENDY the thumbs up.

VLADIMIR: So, you didn't notice we were... um... special? You know, once you saw us?



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