

WEAVER

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WOMEN ENDING ABUSIVE / VIOLENT EPISODES Respectfully

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Michele Koonin, LCSW, MBA is the founder and director of Institute for Counseling (IFC). Michele has been active in the area of violence awareness and prevention for several years. IFC is one of the certified treatment programs for domestic violence perpetrators in San Diego, CA. After having facilitated several female groups, Michele became convinced of the need for a treatment program designed specifically for female perpetrators. Michele has also co-authored a treatment program for adolescents called SUCCESS. Michele Koonin can be reached at IFC at: (619) 688-1035

Araceli Cabarcas, MA, MFT is completing her doctorate in Clinical Psychology. Araceli has translated into Spanish a domestic violence workbook for men called *Un Metodo Psicoeducacional Para Terminar Abuso de Mujeres/Parejas*. Araceli has been the Program Director for two domestic violence treatment programs in San Diego that served over 250 clients each. She is currently in private practice. She developed the Female Aggression Wheel in response to women in the domestic violence groups having difficulty identifying with the male violence described in most handouts currently available. Araceli can be reached at the IFC at (619) 624-5915.

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WOMEN ENDING ABUSIVE/VIOLENT EPISODES RESPECTFULLY: WEAVER

INTRODUCTION

First and foremost, this curriculum has been written for the treatment of female perpetrators, and it is not advised that it be applied to men or women who have not used aggression. This program was developed as a result of the growing awareness that there are significant differences between male and female batterers and that successful treatment of female batterers needs to be different than the treatment of male batterers. In the recent past, we have seen a growing number of females being arrested for domestic abuse and being mandated into batterers' counseling programs. Much of the most current research shows that while men are more dangerous than women (they kill their partners twice as often as women do) and they are more likely than women to inflict serious damage, some women are also violent with their partners.

Two national surveys (Straus, Gelles, & Stenimetz, 1980; Straus & Gelles 1990) show that women are as frequently aggressive towards their partners as men are. Women's aggression toward men is often not reported for a number of reasons: the physical damage to the partner is minimal, the male partner is embarrassed to admit that he has been abused by his partner, and most of society feels that men are not supposed to be vulnerable to women (Finkelhor, Gelles, Hotaling, & Straus, 1983). The rate of severe male assaults on women decreased between the first National Family Violence Survey in 1975 and the updated report in 1985 (Straus & Gelles, 1988). However, the rate of severe female assaults on men stayed about the same during this same time period (Leo, 1996). There is considerable controversy concerning the meaning of these research studies, and there are limitations to the survey methodology. It is clear that many more men use power and control in relationships than do women. However, it is also clear that more women are being arrested for domestic violence, and that treatment programs are needed for these aggressive women.

A research study conducted by Moffitt (1998), a psychology professor at the University of Wisconsin, found data that supported a 1980 study showing that wives hit husbands at a higher rate than many people had believed. In addition, Moffitt discovered that women do not strike out *only* in response to men's violence, but that they sometimes initiate the violence that leads to their partner's injury (Moffitt, 1998). Unfortunately, we still do not have sufficient research to fully understand the dynamics of female violence in relationships, but more research is becoming available that is looking at violence in families, including female to male (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000).

There has been a strong bias against viewing females as perpetrators of abuse and violence. This may be because there have been far fewer female arrests, and because of the less damaging outcomes of their abusive actions. Unfortunately this leads to a minimization and even trivialization of seeing women as offenders. As a result, we have not spent much time addressing the differences and similarities between male and female batterers or developing programs to deal specifically with female offenders. If we don't begin to address the specific needs of female offenders, treatment may be ineffective.

There has been a lot of resistance towards seeing woman as aggressors. Many traditional explanations hold that violence and abuse stem from the patriarchal organization of our society. In looking at the differences between female and male batterers, we find that women more often attribute their behavior to self-protection than do men, while men are more likely to attribute their behavior to wanting to show who is in charge. Both sexes use reasons such as letting out violence, getting the attention of their partner, showing who is boss, teaching their partner a lesson, wanting to upset the other emotionally, being unaware of the impact of their behavior, and "just teasing" (Barnett, Lee, & Thelen, 1997).

Women often state that they are frustrated by their partner's inability or failure to discern their moods, they want more attention from their partners, or they feel abused verbally or emotionally. These may be triggers for their violent behaviors. In a study of physical hostility done by Archer (2000), a psychologist at the University of Central Lancashire in Britain, the following was found:

- ✓ Although women sustain more serious and visible injuries than men during domestic disputes, overall they are just as likely as men to resort to physical aggression during an argument with a sexual partner.
- ✓ Women who argue with their dates or mates are slightly more likely than men to use some form of physical violence ranging from slapping, kicking and biting, to choking or using a weapon. This pattern is particularly pronounced among younger women who were dating a partner rather than married to or living with a partner.
- ✓ Most instances of serious violence were caused by men, as were most injuries that required medical care.
- ✓ Women accounted for 65-70% of the injuries that required medical help as a result of violence between partners.

In a study done in 1994 by Hamberger and Petente the following characteristics were found to be prevalent among female perpetrators:

- ✓ Of the females he studied (54 in total), 84% were Caucasian and 14% were African-American.
- ✓ 37% were married and 27% had never married.
- ✓ 56% were employed outside of the home.
- ✓ 66% had finished high school.
- ✓ Ages ranged from 19-51 with an average age of 29.5.
- ✓ Half of these women reported emotional abuse, physical abuse or both within their families of origin.
- ✓ More than 1/3 of the women reported being victims of sexual abuse in their families of origin.
- ✓ 49% had been battered in a previous relationship.
- ✓ 54% had seen their father abuse their mother.
- ✓ Alcohol use was an issue for 32% of the participants.
- ✓ The reasons for using aggression were, in descending order of frequency: self-defense/protection; expressing feelings and tension; to stop their partner's nagging/get their partner to shut up; to retaliate for a previous assault; to get their partner to talk/listen/attend/or do something; to assert their authority; retaliate for emotional abuse; and "don't know why" (Hamberger & Petente, 1994).

There are some additional variables that seem significant in females who resort to physical abuse. These women usually feel unable to convey their needs to their partner, they often use black and white thinking, and they are overly dependent on the attention and close involvement of their partner. There is often a chronic fear of loss and abandonment as well as poor boundaries (Margolies & Leeder, 1995).

One of the main differences between male and female batterers is that many of the females have been victims of domestic abuse as well as perpetrators, if not in their present relationship, then in previous ones. This fact needs to be looked at and addressed in treatment in order to help women detect potential signs of abuse before they allow a relationship to develop.

Women must learn to recognize their own needs and any obstacles they have to getting those needs met. They need to learn what constitutes a good relationship, how to choose a partner wisely, how to maintain a good relationship, and when and how to leave a bad relationship. This kind of empowerment helps prevent violence and abuse before it occurs.

In addition, women must learn to understand why they may have stayed in an abusive relationship to the point that they became abusive. Women often stay in abusive relationships too long and then find themselves fighting back. In dealing with female aggressors, clinicians should be aware of some of these reasons for not leaving. Some common reasons are:

- Her beliefs about men and the power they have.
- Financial dependence.
- Fear of being alone.
- Not wanting to deprive her children of a father.
- Thinking it will get better.
- Fear of being alone, of being hunted down, of being unable to survive, or of her husband/lover losing his job.
- Not having anywhere to go.
- Lack of support systems.
- Feeling that the maintenance of the relationship is her responsibility.
- Hope.
- Not wanting others to know what is really going on in her life.

(Duluth Domestic Abuse Project, Duluth, MN)

Regardless of the reason, the longer a woman stays and endures abuse, the less she is able to see non-abusive options for dealing with problems. Treatment options are beginning to be investigated in order to look at options for females arrested for domestic violence (Dowd, 2001). It is important to deal with the women who are aggressive as both victims and perpetrators to meet their needs if they have such a history. It appears that women arrested for domestic violence fall into one of three types: Dominant aggressors similar to male perpetrators, women who have fought back in self-defense but have been primary victims of domestic violence for some time, or those who are in mutually aggressive relationships. It is not clear yet exactly what proportion of females arrested for domestic violence fall into each of these types. It is hoped that research being conducted around the United States will lead to a better understanding of the dynamics of the women are aggressive toward intimate partners.

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The following poem sums up some of these feelings quite poignantly:

PLEASE HEAR WHAT I'M NOT SAYING

Don't be fooled by me.
Don't be fooled by the face I wear.
For I wear a mask, a thousand masks,
Masks that I am afraid to take off,
And none of them are me.
Pretending is an art that is second nature to me,
But don't be fooled, for my sake, don't be fooled.
I give you the impression that I am secure,
That all is sunny and unruffled with me,
Within as well as without,
That confidence is my name and coolness is my game,
That the waters are calm, and I'm in command,
And that I need no one.
But don't believe me...please.
My surface may seem smooth but my surface is a mask,
My ever varying and ever concealing mask.
Beneath lies no smugness, no complacency.
Beneath dwells the real me, in confusion, in fear, and in aloneness.
But I hide this.
I don't want anyone to know this.
I panic at the thought of my weakness and fear being exposed.
That's why I frantically create a mask to hide behind,
A nonchalant, sophisticated facade to help me pretend,
To shield me from the glance that knows.
But such a glance is precisely my salvation. My only salvation.
And I know it.
That is if it is followed by acceptance, if it is followed by love.
It is the only thing that can liberate me...from myself.
From my own self - built barriers that I painstakingly erect.
It's the only thing that will assure me of what I can't assure myself, that I am really
worth something.
But I don't tell you this. I don't care. I'm afraid to care.
I'm afraid that your glance won't be followed by acceptance and love.
I'm afraid that you'll think less of me, that you'll laugh, and your laugh would kill me.
So I play my game, my desperate pretending game with a facade of assurance without,
and a trembling child within.
(AUTHOR UNKNOWN)

This curriculum was developed after several years of treating females arrested for domestic violence. Each session includes a *WEAVER Facilitator Guide*, which explains the goals of the session, and the handouts and exercises that can be used. The handouts and materials that can be used for each session are included in the *Client Handouts* section. This curriculum can be conducted in a fixed sequence or in an ongoing manner where the order is changed. We designed it in an order that we thought made the most sense clinically.

PART 1: FOUNDATIONS

SESSION 1

What Is Domestic Violence?

Using the Cottage of Abuse & Journaling

SESSION 1

Client Handouts

What Is Domestic Violence and Abuse? Using the Cottage of Abuse & Journaling

What is domestic violence and abuse? It is an array of acts that is used to control the behavior of another person in an intimate relationship. These behaviors can range from ignoring the individual, to denying sex or even to physical attacks. Domestic violence and abuse can also include damage to your partner's property or harassing phone calls to his place of employment. Some examples of psychological abuse can be as subtle as not giving him phone messages from a relative you don't like or denying him visitation with the children he has fathered.

As you begin to understand all the forms that domestic violence can take in an abusive relationship, you may begin to identify with some of the thoughts, feelings or actions that accompany or lead to abusive behaviors. Journaling is a very important part of learning to understand yourself. Take the time to write down what you have discovered through the exercises/group discussion, and share your insights with the group. At first, it may feel awkward to talk about abusive acts you have committed or have been victim to. However, becoming self-aware and being able to analyze your behaviors are the first steps to making changes.

Answer the Partner Abuse Checklist to assess if your relationship is abusive. Take a few moments to look over your responses. Did you realize that your partner also committed abusive acts against you? Were you and your partner using the same type of abusive behavior? Were there any patterns in your relationship? For example, did you tend to use verbal abuse rather than physical violence?

Remember, realizing that you have *acted* abusively does not necessarily make you an abusive person. However, you have the potential to continue using violence and/or abuse if you don't learn better and *safer* ways to deal with problems.

Journal Topic:

Now that you understand a little more about abusive behavior, write your thoughts on the following:

- How many times have you used aggression in other relationships?
- What other types of aggression have you used?
- Have you ever stalked your partner without realizing it?
- Have you been verbally abusive to your children? Siblings?

➤ Partner Abuse Checklist

Have any of the following ever occurred in your relationship?

- ◆ Does your partner display extreme forms of jealousy?
- ◆ Have you displayed extreme forms of jealousy?
- ◆ Are you afraid of disagreeing with your partner?
- ◆ Is your partner afraid of disagreeing with you?
- ◆ Do you take responsibility for all the problems in the relationship?
- ◆ Does your partner take responsibility for all the problems in the relationship?
- ◆ Does your partner *always* want to know where you are, what you are doing, who you are with?
- ◆ Do you *always* want to know where your partner is, what he is doing, who he is with?
- ◆ Has/does your partner call/called you hurtful names?
- ◆ Have/do you call/called your partner hurtful names?
- ◆ Does your partner use force on you to get what he wants?
- ◆ Have you used force on your partner to get what you want?
- ◆ Has your partner ever threatened to hurt you, your possessions, or someone you care about?
- ◆ Have you ever threatened to hurt your partner, his possessions, or someone he cares about?
- ◆ Has your partner been hurtful in other relationships?
- ◆ Have you been hurtful in other relationships?
- ◆ Are you afraid to say no to sex with your partner?
- ◆ Is your partner afraid to say no to sex with you?
- ◆ Does your partner embarrass you or hurt your feelings in front of others?
- ◆ Do you embarrass your partner or hurt your partner's feelings in front of others?
- ◆ Has your partner ever spied on you?
- ◆ Have you ever spied on your partner?
- ◆ Has your partner threatened to legally hurt you? (e.g. have you deported, get you arrested again)
- ◆ Have you threatened to legally hurt your partner? (e.g. deny visitations with children, get him arrested)

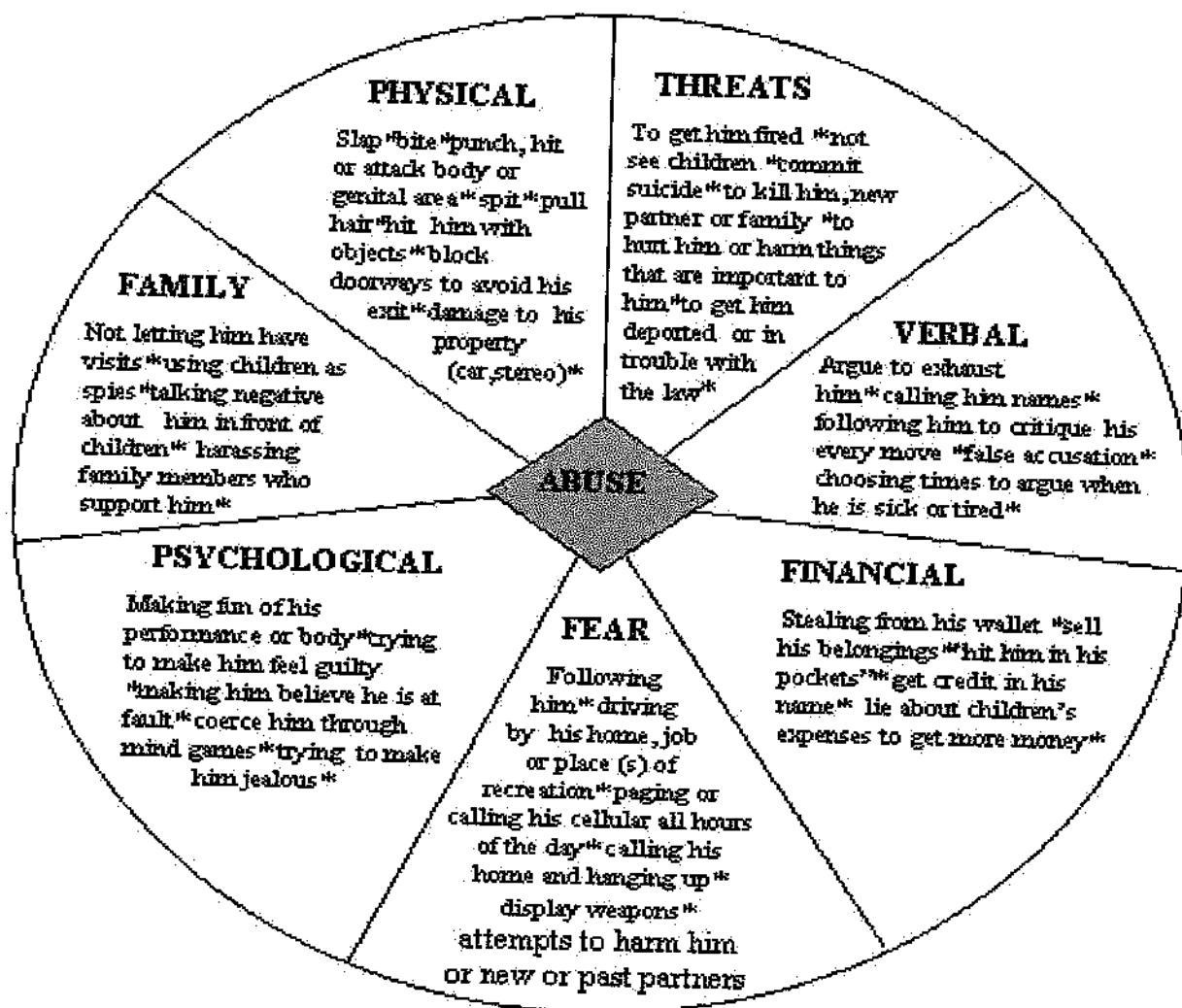
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- ◆ Has your partner threatened to hurt you financially? (e.g. take away child support or alimony)
- ◆ Have you threatened to hurt your partner financially? (e.g. increase child support or alimony)
- ◆ Has your partner ever: slapped, pushed, scratched, restrained, or pinched you?
- ◆ Have you ever done the following against your partner: slapped, pushed, scratched, restrained, or pinched your partner?

Female Aggression Wheel and Cottage of Abuse

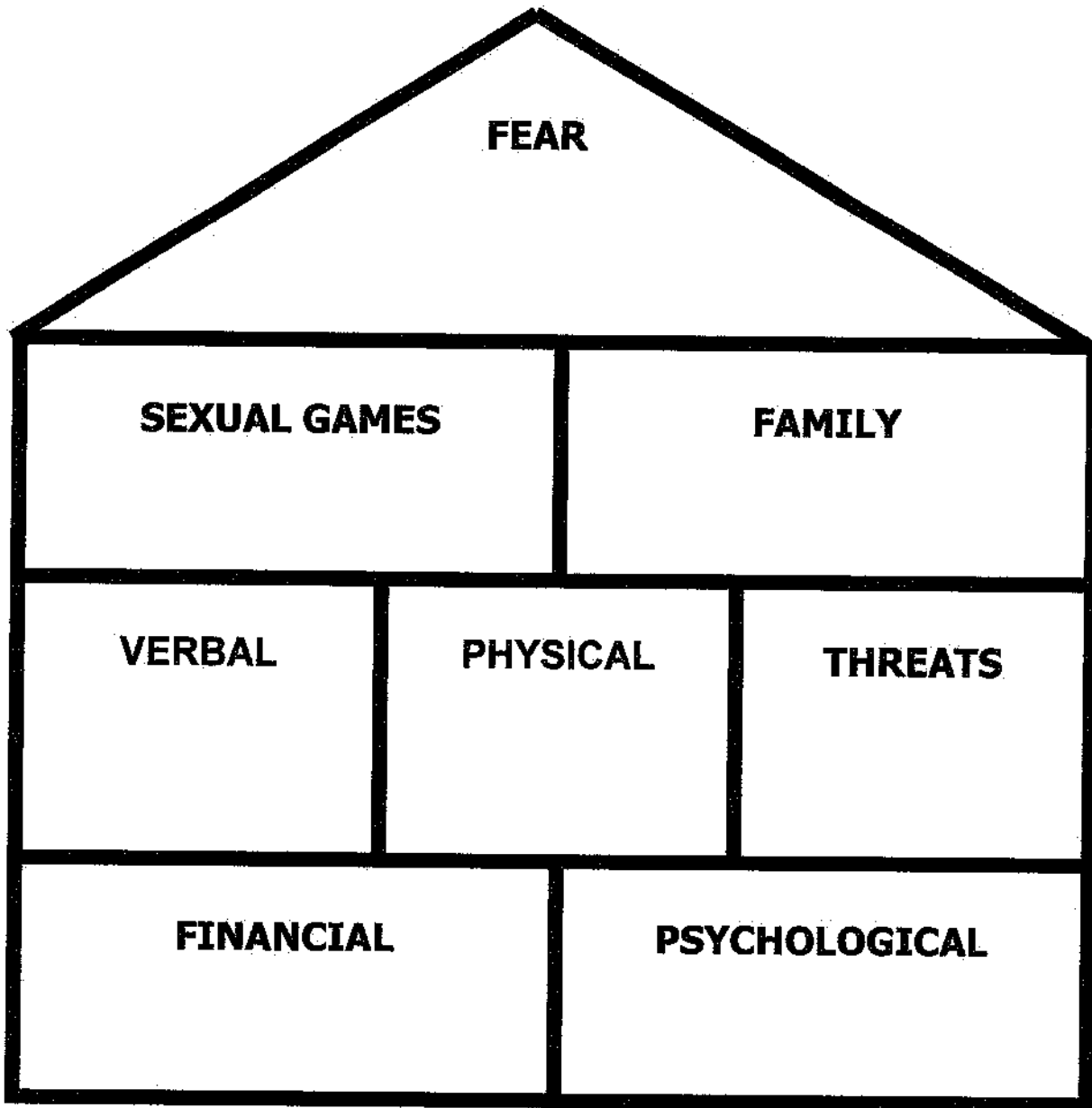
After looking at the Female Aggression Wheel on the next page, do you identify with any particular categories? Write down the ways in which you have been abusive to your partner. Then look over the Cottage of Abuse. Fill in each room of the Cottage of Abuse with descriptions of how you have been aggressive/abusive.

FEMALE AGGRESSION WHEEL



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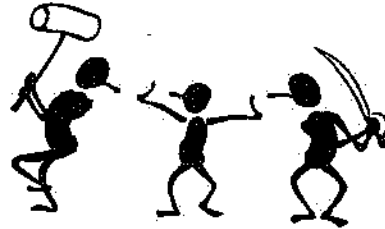
WOMEN'S COTTAGE OF ABUSE



CREATED FOR USE WITH THE FEMALE AGGRESSION WHEEL OF THE WEAVER CURRICULUM

Adapted from Michael McGrane, Wilder Foundation "House of Abuse" (1983)
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VIOLENCE BETWEEN THE SEXES



<i>"His Violence"</i>	<i>"Her Violence"</i>
He uses his physical power	She uses her verbal power
He hits	She slaps
He punches the walls	She throws things
He gets in her face	She nags
He shoves	She pushes
He grabs her to restrain her	She gets in front of the door
He pounds on the table	She refuses to talk or answer
He yells	She sulks
He raises his fist	She raises a knife
He keeps her from working	She takes money from his wallet
He controls her spending	She runs up the credit cards
He comes home late	She locks him out
He quizzes the kids about her	She denies visitation
He cheats sexually	She withholds sex
He talks down about family and friends	She won't let grandparents visit kids
He drinks not to argue	She drinks for the courage to argue
He criticizes her all the time	She insults him in public
He ignores her	She makes a scene

SESSION 2

Cultural Influences

SESSION 2

Client Handouts

Cultural Influences

We are all influenced by the culture we identify with and the societal values of the country in which we live. Aside from understanding yourself, it is important to understand where some of your values and beliefs came from. Although your family may have played a large role in shaping your value system, your family did not exist in a vacuum. Families are part of a broader culture that also has a set of values. It would be a disservice if we did not acknowledge that most of the societies in the world are founded upon patriarchal values. Therefore, this program will emphasize your individuality while also acknowledging that you may have been pressured to conform to the stereotypical norms of your culture.

What were some of the messages you heard about being a woman?

Have you ever been told "Good girls don't...":

Have you ever been told "Good girls should...":

Each culture shares certain values yet often differs in its expectations of women. For some, the wife is expected to be a silent, submissive homemaker/caretaker while the husband is the sole breadwinner. Society is influenced by the values of the people who are part of the culture. The patriarchal perspective in American culture can easily be traced to its founding fathers. Laws were originally enacted to reinforce the societal norms, but it was white men of power who developed the laws. In short, this is *male privilege*. One example of male privilege is seen when a woman marries. At the time of marriage, American culture largely expects the woman to let go of her maiden name. If she has attained any education, her diplomas are most likely in her maiden name. As a couple they may decide to have children, who will most likely also have their father's last name. In the unfortunate event of a divorce, the woman is faced with the decision to re-instate her maiden name, which would relinquish the name of her children. As if that were not complicated enough, what if she were to re-marry?

We continue to see the residue of this belief system today. Changes in what is considered to be "the norm" have been occurring slowly. Although women have gained the right to vote, the right to have an abortion, and the choice to pursue higher education, it hasn't evolved easily and there are still negative consequences to choosing a role that is contrary to societal stereotypes.

Journal Topic:

What are some examples of male privilege?

Who Has the Power in the World?

Circle all the groups listed that you belong to:

Powerful

Men
Whites
Wealthy
Adults
Christian
Educated
Able-Bodied
Heterosexuals
Bosses
Teachers
U.S. Born
English speakers

Less Powerful

Women
People of Color
Poor
Adolescents/Children
Other Religious Groups
Non-formally educated
People with disabilities
Lesbians, gay men, bisexuals
Workers
Students
Immigrants
Non-English Speakers

Power is often held by the groups of people listed on the left hand side of the page. Economic and political power is often used to control those on the right hand side of the page, but violence can also be used. The violence experienced can come in different forms, such as unequal pay, discrimination based on gender, religion or physical ability, harassment, hate crimes, rape, and physical violence. The less powerful group may also be blamed for "causing" the violence they experience. We each belong to several groups on the chart --- some on both sides of the power line. At times we may experience the anger of someone who is in a position of power over us. We may have also been in a position of power over another individual who we vented our anger and frustration upon.

Where are you on the power grid?

What groups have power over you?

What groups do you have power over?

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How does it feel to be in a less powerful group and vulnerable to violence and discrimination?

How does it feel to be in a group that has privilege and power?

What violence have you witnessed by remaining silent in a power group?

What is the most painful experience you have had by belonging to a less powerful group?

How has this affected others like you?

How has this affected your family?

How has this affected the way you view the group of power?

What questions, comments or last thoughts do you have about this grid?

Homework: Bring an article to share with the group in which male privilege is illustrated.

Who Am I? What Is My Heritage?

Describe your cultural and/or racial background. From where do your ancestors come?

What socio-economic class did you grow up in?

Who is one man who shares your cultural background and who you really admire? What makes you admire him?

Who is one woman who shares your cultural background and who you really admire? What makes you admire her?

What did you learn about men from your mother?

What did you learn about women from your mother?

What is one quality that you admire in your mother? Grandmother? Aunts?

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What is one quality that you hope you don't develop that your mother had?

What did you learn about men from your father?

What did you learn about women from your father?

What is one quality that you admire in your father? Grandfather? Uncles?

What is one quality that you hope you don't develop that your father had?

Growing up, what kinds of mannerisms, behaviors, attitudes, etc. did you learn to expect from women? Did you learn to think they were acceptable or unacceptable?

Growing up, what kinds of mannerisms, behaviors, attitudes, etc. did you learn to expect from men? Did you learn to think they were acceptable or unacceptable?

What kinds of limits were put on you because of your sex?

How do you react (be honest) when you see women/men step out of their "roles"? (for example, a woman being in a "man's" profession, an outspoken woman, a "house-husband", a man who cries)

SESSION 3

Differences Between Women and Men

SESSION 3

Client Handouts

Gender Differences

In simple terms, psychology is the study of how nature and nurture (i.e., nature is our skills and abilities we are born with, and nurture is how we are raised) interweave to make a person. As a society, we nurture girls to be more expressive verbally. If a girl falls and cries our response is usually: "What happened, honey? Talk to me". Compared to boys their age, young girls are more likely allowed to express pain, sadness and fear. If a boy falls, the response is usually: "Big boys don't cry, get up and be strong". The social stigma against men showing sad emotions such as tears is much stronger than it is for women. This influences how you feel comfortable sharing your feelings, your fears, and emotions of sadness.

As little girls, you probably were encouraged to "sit still and act like a lady" or to play quietly. Most girls play with dolls with their girlfriends, which lays the foundation for communication between women. They practice talking about their day, their feelings and their dreams. Boys on the other hand are often encouraged to "go outside and play and act like a man". It is no surprise that such different training can lead to communication problems between men and women.

How have you utilized your friendships during difficult times in your life?

Women who have been most supportive in your life are:

What actions did these women do that made you feel supported?

What qualities have you admired in other women?

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A strength(s) that I possess is (are):

When do you or your friends justify violence? (For example: when your partner is caught cheating, when a friend is intimate with your partner, when someone threatens your child)

Have you disclosed to your friends that you are in a domestic violence group/ have been aggressive to your partner?

What was their response? Supportive? Critical? Disbelief?

Have your friends encouraged your violence or helped you validate it?

There is a saying that states, "Birds of a feather, flock together". What words would you use to describe the friends you spend time with?

How do you think they would describe you?

Women tend to be very supportive of one another. Do you have friends that will honestly challenge you when you are "in the wrong" or "acting out of hand?"

Jealousy is one of those emotions that can tie our stomachs into knots, get our blood racing and our worst distortions activated. A little bit of jealousy is normal, but when it is motivated by a fear of losing someone or by feelings of inadequacy, it becomes a problem. We may spend too much time trying to control the other person or planning how to "catch him when

he's doing something wrong." We can harm a relationship when our jealousy becomes out of control and becomes controlling.

How do you and your friends handle jealousy between girlfriends, and with your partners in love relationships?

There may have been previous times when a partner was unfaithful, and these past experiences can shape how we perceive current situations. This limits our ability to truly see what is actually happening. Sometimes cognitive distortions influence how we interpret events or behaviors. A cognitive distortion is equivalent to looking through a pair of eyeglasses that aren't your prescription. They "distort" mentally how your mind comprehends life. We may use some of the following styles in how we approach communicating with others. These distortions keep the communications from being clearly understood and may interfere with the quality of the relationship.

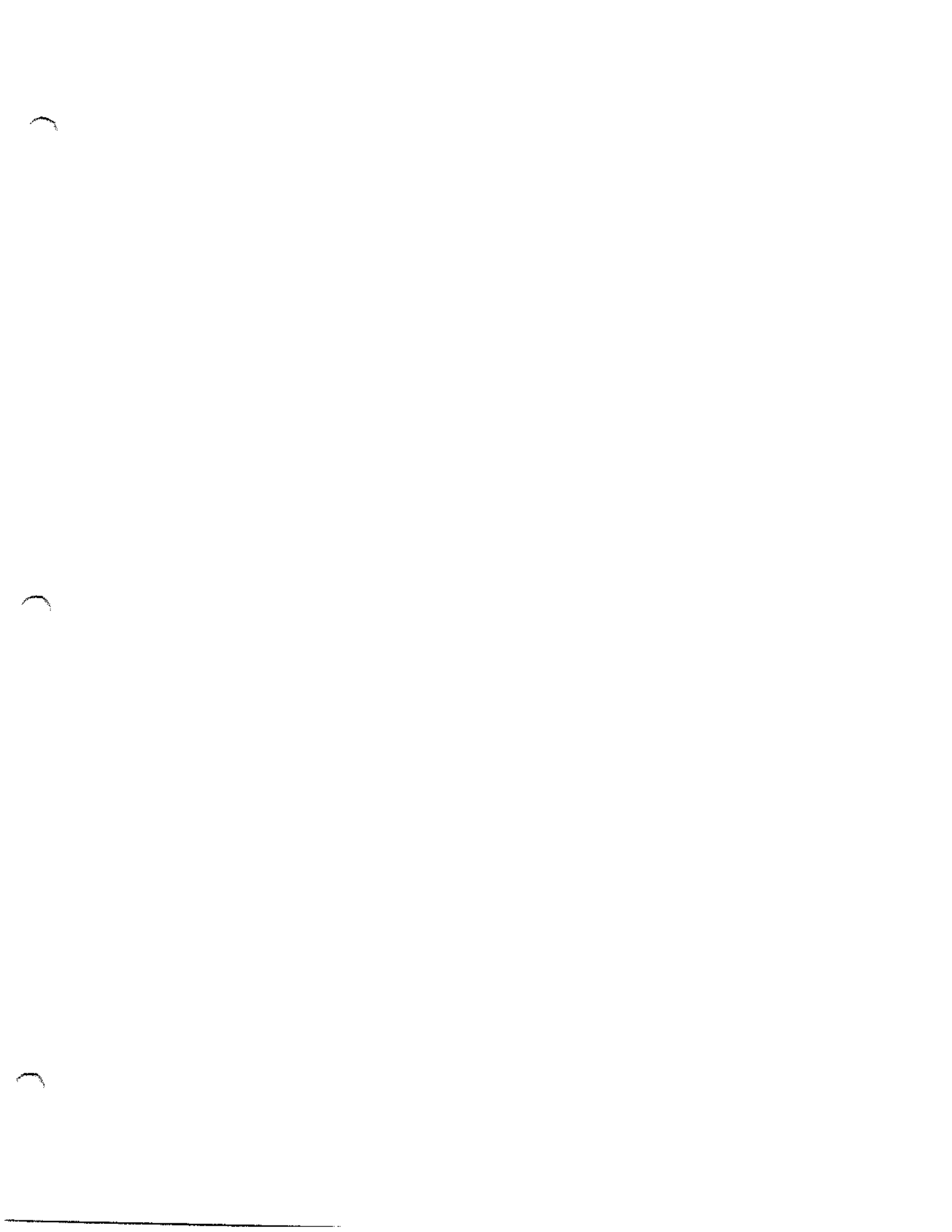
Read the following paragraph. Identify examples of distorted thinking from the next page and list them below.

Monica had been cheated on in the past. She knew that men couldn't be trusted. All her friends had had the same experience. She knew, a "good man is hard to find" and she hadn't found anyone like that. It was just a matter of time when her children's father, Enrique, would do it again. She knew that she needed to stay on her toes with him. When she did his laundry, she'd check his pockets for phone numbers. When she drove his car, she'd check his mileage, and she would watch the clock when he took longer than what *she* thought it should to go to the supermarket. If he got dressed up nice and put on cologne, she would ask him a hundred questions, because if he wasn't going out with her, he was surely going out to meet someone else. Eventually, Enrique got tired of Monica's insecurities and began seeing someone else. Unfortunately for Monica, it "proved" to her that "all men are dogs" and that she was right about him. She began following him so she could see what his new partner looked like and whether or not she was prettier than Monica. Monica didn't tell anyone that he was being unfaithful. She took him back and reminds him daily of his "offense."

Distorted Thinking Styles from Above Story:

15 Styles of Distorted Thinking

- **Filtering** You take the negative details and magnify them while filtering out and not seeing the positive aspects of a situation.
- **Polarized Thinking** Seeing things as black or white, good or bad. You feel you have to be perfect or you're a failure. There is no middle ground.
- **Overgeneralization** You come to a general conclusion based on a single incident or piece of evidence. If something bad happens once you expect it to happen over and over again.
- **Mind Reading** Without their saying so, you know what people are feeling and why they act the way they do. In particular, you are able to define how people are feeling toward you.
- **Catastrophizing** You expect disaster. You notice or hear about a problem and start "what if's": What if a tragedy happens? What if it doesn't turn out all right?
- **Personalization** You think that everything people do or say is some kind of reaction to you. You also compare yourself to others, trying to determine who's smarter, better looking, slimmer, etc.
- **Control Fallacies** If you feel externally controlled, you see yourself as helpless or as a victim of fate. If you feel internally controlled, you feel responsible for the pain and happiness of everyone around you.
- **Fallacy of Fairness** You feel resentful because you think you know what's fair but that other people won't agree with you.
- **Blaming** You hold others responsible for your pain, or place the blame on yourself regardless of who's responsible.
- **Shoulds** You have a list of "shoulds", or iron clad rules about how you and others should act. Other people who break the rules anger you and you feel guilty if you break your own rules.
- **Emotional Reading** You believe that how you *feel* must be what is reality. If you *feel* stupid, then you *must be* stupid.
- **Fallacy of Change** You expect that other people will change to suit you if you just pressure them enough.
- **Global Labeling** You generalize a good or bad quality of a person, place or thing and apply it to all person, places, or things like them -- for example, "all yellow dogs bite", because you got bit by a yellow dog.
- **Being Right** You are continually on trial to prove to yourself and others that you are always right. Being wrong is unthinkable and you will go to any length to hide that you are wrong (adapted from Ellis & MacLauren, 1998).



SESSIONS 4 & 5

Anger and Depression

SESSIONS 4-5

Client Handouts

Anger and Depression

Anger and depression are often confused with one another -- especially in women. For many women, anger is not an acceptable emotion, and angry women are often known as "bitchy". Depression is often used as a cover for anger, a substitute for anger, or an escape from anger. Very often, depression is a way of covering up uncomfortable or unacceptable feelings.

Anger and depression are strong emotions, and both require a lot of energy. They both can be overwhelming and can lead to behaviors that might not otherwise happen. Depression may lead us to feel alone, helpless, and without power. It usually leads to feelings of lowered self-esteem, incompetence, and being "stuck". Depression may also include feelings of grief about something that is happening in our life, a loss of something important to us, or a feeling of failure somewhere in our lives. Depression has been called "anger turned inwards" and may actually be anger that we are directing against ourselves instead of what we are really angry at.

Physical signs of anger and depression can be restlessness, agitation, loss/increase of appetite, fatigue, "daring behaviors", isolation, tension, and the inability to connect with others on many levels. As women, we may be more prone to depression than to anger. Depression can come from monthly menstrual cycles, from learning to be depressed instead of being angry, from repressing anger, and from feeling like we have failed in doing our jobs. It is not uncommon for women to become depressed more often than they become angry.

Many women use anger as a reason or excuse for expressing feelings, for letting others know about problems, or for looking for change. On the opposite side, many women use depression as a reason for not letting others know what is going on with them, for checking out of relationships, and for not being emotionally or physically available to the people in their lives.

Please answer the following questions about anger:

Do you feel that women and men deal with anger differently? If yes, how?

What is the relationship for you between anger and self-esteem?

What might keep you or other women from expressing anger, especially towards men?

What are the risks for women when they display anger?

How does society treat angry women?

How can you become more effective in how you express anger differently?

How do you express anger in a "healthy" manner?

HOW ANGER CAN BE "ADDICTIVE"

1. Anger keeps you from dealing with the source of fear.
2. Anger keeps you from dealing with your inner "critic".
3. Anger keeps you from facing losses.
4. Anger keeps you from saying what hurts, or it helps you say what hurts but in an angry manner.
5. Anger keeps you in the same old situations.
6. Anger keeps you empty.
7. Anger keeps you from looking at how you are not living what you believe (Ellis & MacLauren, 1998).

WEAVER

In addition to the above, anger provides defenses against many uncomfortable feelings. Anger defends against:

- ⇒ Guilt
- ⇒ Hurt
- ⇒ Loss
- ⇒ Feelings of helplessness or being trapped
- ⇒ Anxiety and fear
- ⇒ The feeling of being bad, wrong, or unworthy
- ⇒ Emptiness
- ⇒ Frustrated wishes
- ⇒ Being aware of another person's needs in a situation.

The "addiction" part comes when anger gets used over and over for the above reasons. It soon becomes difficult to look at what we have been avoiding, and we learn to keep on avoiding it by staying angry. This is often where depression comes in. Depression is often called "anger turned inside". In other words, we're not able to express the anger we feel at the real things we feel it about, and we wind up turning it against ourselves.

It is important to realize and understand that we don't have to become angry/depressed in order to "GET SOMETHING OUT". The point is to learn to appropriately express feelings before they get to the depression/anger point. This can be difficult and scary.

Answer the following questions to help you start learning about your own anger and depression and what functions these emotions may serve.

I get angry about/when:

I get depressed about/when:

I express my anger by:

I express my depression by:

Anger gets me:

Depression gets me:

My anger triggers are:

My depression triggers are:

Anger shows in my body and my behaviors in the following ways:

Depression shows in my body and my behaviors in the following ways:

Things that I am most likely to be angry at are:

Things that I am most likely to be depressed about are:

I get the following feedback/attention when I am angry:

I get the following feedback/attention when I am depressed:

WEAVER

Depression/anger (choose one) is more comfortable because:

My anger can be connected to the following times:

My depression can be connected to the following times:

The feelings that anger allows me to ignore are:

The feelings that depression allows me to ignore are:

I use depression/anger instead of anger/depression because:

Anger has four levels. They are:

- ◆ Defensiveness
- ◆ Aggression
- ◆ Anxiety
- ◆ Dangerousness

Please list your body's reactions and behaviors to each of these levels. Focus on your thoughts, your behaviors, and your physical reactions. Which level is the most common for you to experience? Also list what you feel you need from others when you are experiencing these feelings.

Anxious

Defensive

Aggressive

Dangerous

ANGER AWARENESS CHART

Below are some common causes/triggers of anger. Please check the ones that apply to you. Add any that might not be listed.

Traffic jams	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inconsiderate people	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arrogance	<input type="checkbox"/>	Injustice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rude people	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taxes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prejudice	<input type="checkbox"/>	People who cheat me	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tailgaters	<input type="checkbox"/>	People who cut in line	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yelling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disbelief of what I say	<input type="checkbox"/>
Manipulation of my time	<input type="checkbox"/>	Workers who won't do their jobs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tardiness	<input type="checkbox"/>	My paycheck	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	Criticism	<input type="checkbox"/>
Waiting	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of appreciation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lies	<input type="checkbox"/>	People who won't listen	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being dismissed	<input type="checkbox"/>	False accusations	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

WEAVER

Answer the following questions:

How is my anger affecting me physically?

How is my anger affecting me emotionally?

How is my anger affecting me socially?

How is my anger affecting me mentally?

How is my anger affecting me spiritually?

What are the costs of my anger to the relationships in my life?

MY CHANGE PLAN

Now that you have become aware of some of your destructive emotional patterns, you are ready to make a plan to change them. This is very important because it will become your map and guide. It will be a way to assess the changes you are making, and it will let you know if you need to alter the plan.

Behaviors I want to change:

Triggers I want to change:

Positive behaviors I can use when I feel anger coming on:

Things I can do for myself when I feel depressed:

Sources of support I can use to make these changes permanent:

SESSION 6

Alcohol and Drugs: Its Impact on Us

SESSION 6

Client Handouts

“But I really didn’t mean to do it... I was drunk”

This session is about taking responsibility for all of your decisions and actions, including using substances. Your recovery and choice to establish healthier relationships requires you to evaluate your use and/ or abuse, how it impacts those around you and how it impacts your life. In many cultures, alcohol is an accepted indulgence at meals, parties, wakes, and weddings. Most people have alcohol in their homes and can admit to occasionally having “one too many” drinks at some point in their lives. However, not all of those who drink commit abusive acts. You may have been forced to attend AA or NA meetings, or have chosen the road to abstinence voluntarily. By the end of this process, you may decide to change your lifestyle, friends, the places you frequent, and even your partner if they no longer coincide with your new desire to be responsible.

Have you ever done something while under the influence that you regretted afterward? (Explain)

Have you had a memory lapse or a black out, or time when you cannot recall what happened due to being under the influence? (Explain)

Is anyone in your family an alcoholic or drug abuser?

Have you missed work/school due to your use?

Have you made most of your ‘bad’ choices while under the influence?

As you begin to look honestly at the choices you've made, do you have any regrets? People who have difficulty coping with situations sometimes turn to alcohol or drugs to numb the pain. The truth is, you can only numb it for so long before it too becomes part of the problem. The guilt and shame associated with drug or alcohol use affects your self-esteem. It becomes a cycle in which after each episode or binge, you may feel more pity and hopelessness at your increasing dependence on substances. Rather than seeking support from those around you, you wind up seeking comfort in alcohol and/or drugs. The consequences of these actions can begin to hurt and/or permanently damage your relationships. The people you most value may begin to distance themselves from you.

The people who are affected by your use/abuse vary depending on your lifestyle. Your actions can hurt your children, partner, friends, co-workers, church members, neighbors, or extended relatives. Part of acknowledging that your use of alcohol and/or drugs hurts those around you is accepting the consequences of your behavior.

Who have you hurt while under the influence?

What influence do your actions have on those who care about you?

What hurt feeling or old issue is numbed by your use?

ROLES IN A FAMILY

In a family, a parent who drinks or uses drugs creates an environment that the other members are stuck in. The children may be forced to take on different roles, such as "mommy's little helper" or "dad's confidant". Sometimes children get blamed for the problems in the home, becoming the "bad one" or the "scapegoat". They may grow up being constantly aware of what other people feel rather than having the ability to express their own feelings. Part of surviving in a home where there is alcohol or drug use is being acutely aware of what everyone else's body language says. The children in this type of home may become over-sensitive or may simply burn out and begin to rebel. Look at the Labels of Children and answer the following.

What labels were you given as a child?

What label(s) have been used in your life? (Include names of labels from the list below given to you or your siblings as well as to your own children by you.)

Name of Child

Label(s)

POSSIBLE LABELS OF CHILDREN

HERO
 DAD'S BUDDY
 PARENT'S PARENT
 FAMILY COUNSELOR
 UNDERACHEIVER
 CARETAKER
 DAD'S STAR
 PERFECT ONE
 SAINT
 RELIGIOUS ONE
 SUNSHINE
 DADS SCAPEGOAT
 FAMILY REFEREE
 CONFIDANT
 PEACEMAKER
 THE PROBLEM
 REBEL
 DEFENDER OF WEAK

LITTLE PARENT
 VICTIM (PHYSICAL)
 WINNER
 MOM'S SCAPEGOAT
 DESIGNATED PATIENT
 GENIUS
 LOST CHILD
 LITTLE PRINCESS
 MOM'S HEROINE
 CUTE ONE
 ATHLETE
 BLACK SHEEP
 MASCOT
 OVERACHEIVER
 LOSER
 OFFENDER
 PERSECUTOR
 SHY ONE

A partner dealing with your out of control binges may suffer in the same way as children. Your partner may be blamed for "causing" you to drink. In reality, even if your partner hurts you, **it is your decision** on how to react.

For example, if you know that your partner has been unfaithful and you have chosen not to confront him on it: **you have taken action**. You have chosen not to discuss it. If it bothers you but you decided to have a few drinks with your friends rather than talk to him: **you have taken action**. You have decided to ignore a large obstacle in your relationship, decided to seek comfort in alcohol, and decided to place yourself in a high-risk situation if you drink excessively. Although you may be too intoxicated to remember coming home, yelling at him, throwing his clothes out, breaking objects and threatening to kill him, **you have taken action**. Just as we do not excuse drunk drivers, we do not excuse aggression under the influence.

How has your alcohol or drug use affected your relationship with your partner?

How has your partner's alcohol or drug use affected your relationship?

There are many programs that will help you on your journey to sobriety and abstinence. Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous are useful recovery tools. You may decide to encourage your family to talk about how your actions have impacted them and to find support groups for themselves as well.

Part of the change will be shifting your way of thinking. Rather than seeking something to numb yourself, you must use courage to confront issues and allow yourself to fully experience difficult events.

PART 2: SELF-MANAGEMENT

SESSION 7

Responsibility: Acceptance of Our Own Actions

SESSION 7

Client Handouts

THE PRINCIPLE OF SELF-RESPONSIBILITY

We are all 100% responsible for all of the actions in our lives.

This 100% responsibility rule means that we must learn to take responsibility for what happens in our lives. We are the **OWNERS** of our lives. Taking responsibility means that we can no longer blame anyone else for what is going on in our life, for anything that we have been doing, feeling, or for any situations that we are in.

This is perhaps one of the most difficult and important things that will come out of this program. Learning to take responsibility for our lives is both demanding and freeing. When we let others “make” us do something, we give them a tremendous amount of power and control in our life. They decide what we feel, who we are, and what we want in our life. Is that how you want to live?

You create what goes on in your head and in your life. You are responsible for the outcome of all interactions. If you don't like what is going on in your life, how people are treating you, or where you are financially, physically, or emotionally, you are the only one who can make the necessary changes. Don't wait until someone else “gets it”, or “understands” or “feels better”. Those things have absolutely nothing to do with you!!

IF YOU ARE DISSATISFIED WITH HOW PEOPLE ARE TREATING YOU, ONLY YOU CAN MAKE THE NECESSARY MODIFICATIONS IN YOUR BEHAVIOR FOR THE OUTCOME TO CHANGE. YOU ARE THE ONE WHO KNOWS WHAT YOU WANT. IF THINGS ARE NOT GOING WELL FOR YOU IN ANY RELATIONSHIP, IT IS IN YOUR INTEREST, NOT THE OTHER PERSON'S, THAT THINGS CHANGE, AND IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE THAT CHANGE.

Let's say you make the decision to take charge, you make changes, and then nothing happens. What do you do next? Do something different!! Remember: **IF ONE STRATEGY DOESN'T WORK TO MEET YOUR NEEDS OR SOLVE A PROBLEM, THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO POINT IN PLACING BLAME ON OTHERS.** It's your responsibility to keep using new strategies for change until something finally works. Don't give up – it may take

some time to make changes, and it may be frustrating. That's OK. Remember, it took a long time to get you where you are now, and it will take some time to fully learn the skill of 100% self-responsibility.

The question to ask is not, "Who can I blame for how I feel and where I am in my life?" but rather, "What can I do to make the changes necessary to make my life better?"

You have to learn that you can't expect others to change or to be different. The only time others will be different is when *you* are different and they have to respond to you in a different way if they want to stay in your life. It all comes from you. Remember: Others are doing the best they can, even if it doesn't work for you. Concentrate on yourself and not on others.

THE OTHER PERSON WILL ONLY CHANGE WITH THE PERCEPTION THAT NEW BEHAVIOR IS IN HIS/HER BEST INTEREST.

When you follow this principle be prepared to lose some people in your life. There may be people in your life that don't want you to change and who will leave when you make changes. This may be difficult and painful to deal with, but remember, sometimes we have to clean out our lives in order to make room for new and healthier relationships and experiences.

All people in relationships inevitably come to two basic choices – they either adapt or let go. If your needs in any relationship don't get met or recognized or if the relationship is far more painful than it is satisfying, then you may need to look at why you are staying in the relationship. Decide on how long you are going to wait for changes to happen. If they don't happen in that time framework, then you need to look at making other choices. The alternative to this is to suffer chronic anger and/or depression, and you know where those emotions get you.

**HELPFUL SELF-TALK TO MAINTAIN
SELF-RESPONSIBILITY**

The following statements may be helpful to you as you work on mastering self-responsibility.

1. I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT HAPPENS BETWEEN US.
2. NO POINT IN BLAMING, USE A NEW STRATEGY.
3. WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT THIS?
4. THE AMOUNT OF HELP, SUPPORT, AND NOURISHMENT I AM NOW GETTING IS ALL I CAN GET, GIVEN THE STRATEGIES I AM USING.
5. PEOPLE WON'T CHANGE UNLESS I MAKE IT IN THEIR INTEREST.
6. HOW CAN I REINFORCE HIM OR HER TO CHANGE IN THIS SITUATION?
7. I MAY NOT LIKE IT, BUT HE OR SHE IS USING THE BEST PROBLEM SOLVING STRATEGY AVAILABLE RIGHT NOW.
8. EVERYONE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR TAKING CARE OF HIS OR HER OWN NEEDS.
9. WHAT ARE MY EXPECTATIONS IN THIS PARTICULAR RELATIONSHIP?
10. MY CHOICE IS TO ADAPT OR LET GO.
11. ONLY CHILDREN ARE VICTIMS, I ALWAYS HAVE A CHOICE.

(adapted from McKay, 1993)

SIGNS OF DISSATISFACTION IN A RELATIONSHIP

Use the following list as ways of assessing the relationships in your life.

- ⇒ Lack of communication about the expectations of the relationship.
- ⇒ Feelings of drifting apart; having no shared goals or common shared interests.
- ⇒ Long periods of sadness.
- ⇒ Lack of attention to the "little things".
- ⇒ Decisions made by one person with no input from the other.
- ⇒ Feelings of being less important than the other.
- ⇒ Feelings of resentment, either spoken or unspoken.
- ⇒ Unexpected explosions.
- ⇒ Escaping – through liquor, TV, telephone, work, etc.
- ⇒ Criticizing in public.
- ⇒ Lack of interest in each other.
- ⇒ Decreased signs of caring.
- ⇒ Going to others for needs or attention instead of to each other.
- ⇒ Nagging.
- ⇒ Focusing on the negative instead of on the positive.
- ⇒ Making jokes at the expense of the other.
- ⇒ Losing or showing lack of respect for one another in some areas.
- ⇒ Feelings of loneliness.
- ⇒ Feeling "stuck".
- ⇒ Dissatisfaction with sexual relationship.

HOMEWORK

This week, monitor your self-responsibility. How often do you say, "you made me..." or "such and such made me..." How often do you take full responsibility for what you do and say? List two situations where this happened.

Write down the benefits and the drawbacks of being 100% self-responsible.

Watch others around you and observe how often they are 100% self-responsible. How does it feel to be around people who are/are not 100% self-responsible? Write your thoughts below.

Write a short explanation of what being self-responsible means in your life.

The Five Guarantees

- 1. You cannot control what other people choose to think.*
- 2. You cannot control what other people choose to feel.*
- 3. You cannot control what other people choose to do.*
- 4. If you attempt to do any of the first three, or any combination of the first three, you will feel inadequate, frustrated, angry, and depressed.*

5. You DO have control over:

What you think

What you feel

What you do,

And how you choose to respond to what others directly express and do. (Satir & Baldwin, 1983 #12)

SESSION 8

Time-Outs: Behavior Management

SESSION 8

Client Handouts

Time-Outs

Learning to take time-outs is an important lesson of this program. It is a skill that should be used and respected by both members of a relationship in order for it to work best. However, one person can still use them effectively even if the partner does not follow along. Time-outs provide time to calm down, to focus on what one wants from the situation at hand, and to decide how to best and most effectively make that happen.

Time-outs are difficult to do. Why? Because most of us want to resolve an issue when it arises. Many of us (especially men) were taught to believe that only a coward/weaking backs down from a confrontation. In conflicts, our first impulse is often to get things resolved as soon as possible.

The problem with this method is that the temptation to "win" the argument often overrides the threat of harming the relationship. The original problem is often left unresolved while each person may be left with hurt feelings. The other danger (which may be the reason you are here in this program) is that angry words often lead to violent actions (*see Cabarcas Destiny Model*) when you are unwilling to control your words, feelings, and body. The problem that was so important at the beginning of the argument probably seems miniscule after being arrested or having your partner walk out on you for verbally abusing him. If you truly value your relationship, you must act accordingly. By taking the time to collect yourself and your thoughts, you are in essence, demonstrating your respect for your partner, your relationship, and yourself. If your fear is that your partner will not be there when you get back, then the trust level of your relationship should be addressed at an appropriate time. When trust is low, it is difficult to believe that your partner will stick it through to get issues resolved. However, lashing out in anger is not a way to build this trust.

As time-outs are practiced and each partner puts his/her share of effort into working through issues, trust levels will build naturally and both members of the relationship will feel safer and more secure. However, it is important to remember that even if one partner does not follow through, time-outs can still be beneficial because the acting partner is learning self-control while also getting information about the relationship that will help determine if it is worth staying in.

One frequent problem with taking time-outs is the tendency to use alcohol/drugs during the time-out as a way of dealing with the pain and loneliness, and to numb the uncomfortable feelings. Remember, taking time-outs may be difficult at the beginning, but it gets easier with time and works better and more effectively the more often it is used.

It is suggested that you practice time-outs before you use them in earnest. Think about what you will do and where you will go when you take one. Learn to monitor yourself so that you will be aware of when you need to take one. This self-practice gives you confidence in implementing them effectively. Even if you can't practice with a partner, practice by yourself so you will know what you need to do.

Make sure that you don't use time-outs as a way of putting off or avoiding dealing with uncomfortable situations in your relationship. Unresolved problems don't go away -- they simply simmer and get bigger if they are not dealt with.

Taking a Time-Out

Step 1.

Whenever you feel your anger or your partner's anger rising uncontrollably, you feel your body getting tense, or when you feel frustrated/out of control, say out loud to yourself and to your partner:

"I'm beginning to feel angry/uncomfortable. I need to take a time-out."

"I truly value what you have to say, however I need some time to collect myself so that I can give you my full attention, which is what you deserve."

"Because I value our relationship and don't want to hurt the trust we have gained, I'd like to ask you to give me some time to digest what we've said and pick up the conversation later _____ (fill in when)"

"We have been working really hard on our communication and I really want to understand you, but right now I'm feeling overwhelmed and need _____ (fill in amount of time needed) to think over what we've said to one another."

"I'm starting to feel upset, which makes it hard for me to listen effectively. I need _____ (fill in amount of time needed) to refocus myself and listen attentively to you."

It is very important to focus on your feelings and not on your observations of your partner's feelings. This puts you in charge of yourself and gives you a sense of being able to work on a resolution to the situation. You are communicating how you feel clearly and directly. You are taking responsibility for your emotions and not making them the responsibility of your partner. Acknowledging an uncomfortable feeling may help you begin to develop control over it.

Step 2.

Leave the premises. If you have discussed this with your partner previously, you will have set a time length to allow yourself to calm down. Remember: It is imperative that you use this time to do something that will get rid of the tension in your body. Exercise can be very beneficial. Do not use this time as an opportunity to become angrier, to think about the bad things your partner has done to you, or how you can get even. You want to calm down, not agitate yourself more during this time.

Step 3:

If you have made a commitment to come back at an agreed upon time, do it. This shows caring for the well-being of your relationship and helps develop trust. In the event that you are still angry and do not trust yourself if you come back, contact your partner and explain this, giving another time when you will most likely be back. This behavior shows both you and your partner that you are not avoiding the issue and want to resolve the problem. When you return to the situation, check in with your partner. Find out if he is ready to discuss the problem. If not, don't push it, but ask him to let you know when he is ready. If your angry feelings start to rise again, start over with another time-out.

Step 4:

This is when you and your partner address the issue. Talking about what your anger is about helps develop skills in discussing difficult situations.

Couples may find that some topics are too emotionally charged to discuss. If that happens, consider getting professional help to resolve the situation in a mutually acceptable way.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

How have time-outs worked in your relationship?

What changes do you need to make in how you take time-outs?

How can you help your partner be more effective in taking time-outs?

What is the most difficult thing for you about time-outs?

Time-Out Contract

When I realize that my anger is rising, or if I feel that my partner's anger is rising to an uncomfortable level, I will give an agreed upon signal for a time out. In taking the time out, I will not get in a "last shot" or do any provoking behavior.

I will return or contact my partner at the agreed upon time.

I will use the time away to calm myself down and think of possible resolutions to the problem. I will not drink or use drugs while away.

When I return, I will check with my partner to see if he wants to discuss the problem. If not, I will not pursue the issue, but will ask him to tell me in a reasonable time when he will be ready and willing to discuss it.

I will acknowledge my share of responsibility for the problem and state my commitment to finding a mutually acceptable resolution.

If my partner gives a time-out signal and leaves, I will respect that and let my partner go without further argument. I will not drink or use drugs while my partner is away. When my partner returns, I will let him/her know if I am ready to discuss the problem and work towards a resolution.

Date _____ Signature _____

Date _____ Signature _____

Stress Management

SESSION 9 Client Handouts

Stress Management

Stress exists on many levels and can be considered, in moderation, a necessary part of life. Stress, whether mild, intense, good or bad, is a part of everyone's life. It can cause one to lose sleep, develop ulcers, lose hair, have heart attacks, gain/lose weight, and even death. Learning to manage the stress in your life is vital to your physical health and your mental well-being.

To me stress is.... (Give examples from your life.)

My biggest stressors in life right now are:

Where is my stress coming from? Myself? My job? My children? My family?

Things that I do when I feel under a lot of pressure and stress that are NOT helpful to my situation (for example, drink too much):

Who have I taken my stress out on in the past? (for example, my children, myself, my partner?)

Things that I do when I feel under a lot of pressure and stress that ARE MOST HELPFUL to my situation:

Part of learning to deal with stress is having the ability to identify which things are within your control and which things are not. Situations that you have control over, for example where you work and whom you spend your leisure time with, can be adjusted if they are causing you to feel stress. Situations that you cannot control, such as your partner's drinking or the friends that your teenager spends time with at school, are best dealt with by using one of the stress reduction techniques.

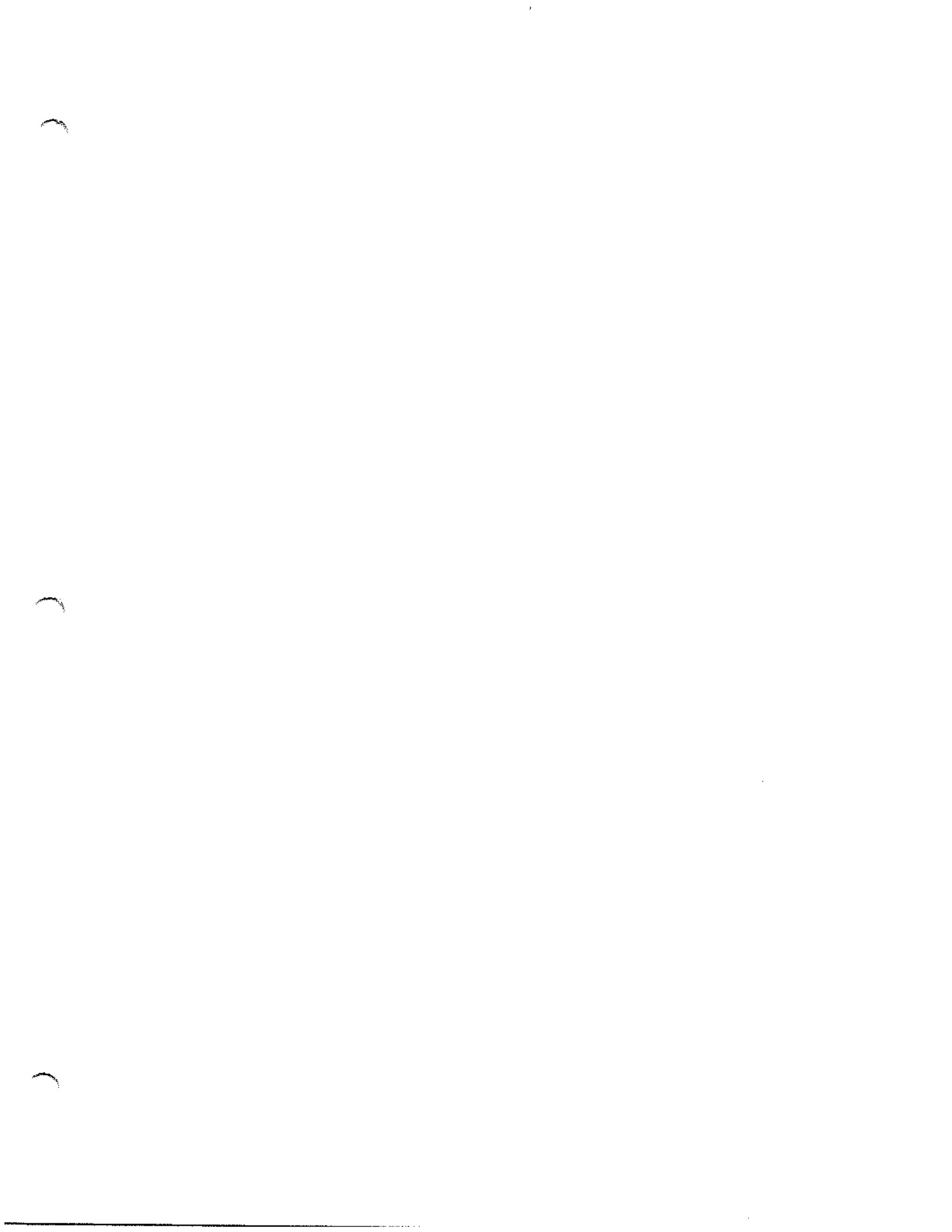
Stress Reduction Techniques

1. **Deep Breathing.** Take a deep breath and then let it out very slowly. Try to take twice as long to exhale as to inhale. Breathe deep down into your abdomen (not just your chest), and then exhale very slowly. Do this for a few minutes several times a day.
2. **Enjoy.** Activities that you find pleasure in, enjoy more.
3. **Exercise.** Get physical exercise in your schedule regularly.
4. **Mental Imagery.** Think of a very peaceful, soothing, and relaxing scene. You could picture a peaceful blue sky, a lovely green meadow, and so forth. While focusing on this image, imagine what it feels like. Is there wind or is the heat of the sun on your face? Also focus on the sounds of your image. Is there peaceful silence or the trickle of stream water? After developing your mental image, breathe slowly and naturally while focusing on it.
5. **Reward.** When you effectively handle a stressful situation without aggression, reward yourself with a bath, an ice cream, a movie, etc.
6. **Healthy Diet.** Many people suffer from mood swings due to excess sugar or caffeine in their diets. Begin to look at your diet and develop healthier habits. There are many books to help you develop a well-balanced diet.
7. **Delegate.** If possible, find someone who can complete a task for you.
8. **Retreat.** Set aside 15-30 minutes a day where you can relax and be alone. For example, take a 10-minute work break to go outside and breathe fresh air.
9. **Autogenic Exercise.** While in a relaxed and comfortable position, slowly say to yourself "warm and heavy". Repeat this to yourself several times.
10. **Acceptance.** Accept things and situations that cannot be changed. Accept that no one, including yourself is perfect.

For the next week, write down the situations/people that create stress in your life. Identify if you have control over those situations.

Day:	Day:	Day:
Situation:	Situation:	Situation:
What was stressful about it?	What was stressful about it?	What was stressful about it?
On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being least stressful) rate your day:	On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being least stressful) rate your day:	On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being least stressful) rate your day:
What coping skills did you use?	What coping skills did you use?	What coping skills did you use?

Day:	Day:	Day:
Situation:	Situation:	Situation:
What was stressful about it?	What was stressful about it?	What was stressful about it?
On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being least stressful) rate your day:	On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being least stressful) rate your day:	On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being least stressful) rate your day:
What coping skills did you use?	What coping skills did you use?	What coping skills did you use?



SESSION 10

Bottom Lines and Boundaries

SESSION 10

Client Handouts

What is a Bottom Line?

Your "bottom line" is a point that, for you, is unacceptable to be exceeded. It is a limit after which you will not allow any more of whatever is happening to occur. For example, a bottom line that is often found in relationships concerns being faithful. Most of us want the person we are involved with to be sexually faithful to us. Many of us say that if our partner is not faithful, we will leave the relationship. The true test of that bottom line is whether or not we leave the relationship once we discover infidelity.

We all have bottom lines in our lives whether we think about them or not. We live in a society where we have to conform to "bottom lines" all the time. When we are driving in a car and come to a red light, we usually stop. Why? Because we know what can happen if we don't. If we break the rules of society, we have to pay the consequences. **That's a bottom line: Break the rules, pay the price.**

Sometimes we use bottom lines unfairly. We have them, but we don't tell our partners or friends what they are until they break them. Then we punish them for having broken them. This kind of bottom line can cause a lot of problems in a relationship. It can even destroy a relationship. **So, how do you use "bottom lines"?**

Step 1.

First, you have to decide what is acceptable to you in your life and what is unacceptable. Remember that this is your life and your bottom line. Don't choose a bottom line because everyone else has it, or because you might be embarrassed if others found out what your real bottom line was. Remember, you will have a lot of bottom lines in your life and they sometimes change as circumstances in your life change.

There are two parts to a bottom line. The first part is simply establishing what it is, and the second part is determining what the consequences will be if it is crossed. Remember, there are all kinds of possible consequences, and they don't necessarily have to be drastic. Naturally, the more important the situation, the more severe the consequences will be. Very often, we don't figure out both parts of a bottom line and then when it is broken, we are not sure of what the consequences need to be. (And when that is the case, we usually go for drastic consequences instead of milder ones).

Step 2.

The next step is letting the other people in your life know what your bottom lines are. This can be tricky. It is very important to be very specific and very clear in stating what you want. For example, you might tell your partner that you have a bottom line that you want your relationship to be loving. The problem that can occur is when you and your partner have different ideas of what a

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"loving" relationship is. He/she may be doing everything that they think/feel shows a loving relationship and you may want something entirely different.

Another benefit of stating your bottom lines concisely is that your partner will be able to tell you if he/she is able to give you what you want, and sometimes you will both end up compromising. Also, don't forget to convey to your partner what the consequences are if your bottom line is crossed. This way, they know what to expect if they decide to break or cross your bottom line.

Step 3.

This is the step that hopefully you won't have to use much. This is where the bottom line has been broken and the consequences must be imposed. This is also the step that most of us have the most problems with. We tend to find excuses/reasons for why the other person broke our bottom line, and then we don't end up imposing the consequences. We might say, "Well, he/she was drunk and didn't know what he/she was doing", or "It only happened one time, and I know it won't ever happen again". What this means is that we don't really have a bottom line and that there is no reason for anyone in our life to act as if we do.

Often times we don't follow through with the consequences because we have made them really extreme. Either we can't impose them or we are afraid to. This is why it is very important to think our bottom lines through very carefully.

When we set bottom lines we show respect for ourselves and for others. We are also telling others that we demand respect from them. Every time we allow our bottom lines to be broken without consequences, we create a new and lesser bottom line, we lose self-respect, and we lower our self-esteem. We also allow anger to build up within ourselves.

Sadly, what often happens is that a person's bottom line gets broken over and over again until it can't possibly be pushed any further. The result of this is that the person who has allowed their bottom line to be broken becomes enraged and very often violent. This can be avoided if we are clear on what our bottom lines are and committed to sticking to them.

It is very important to remember that a **bottom line is not an ultimatum**. A bottom line is something you decide on for yourself. The people in your life have a *choice* if they want to accept it or not.

Bottom Line Exercise

Please give an example of three important bottom lines in your life. Be very clear, brief, and complete. Include the behaviors that you expect/want and the consequences if those bottom lines are broken.

1. Bottom line

Consequence

2. Bottom line

Consequence

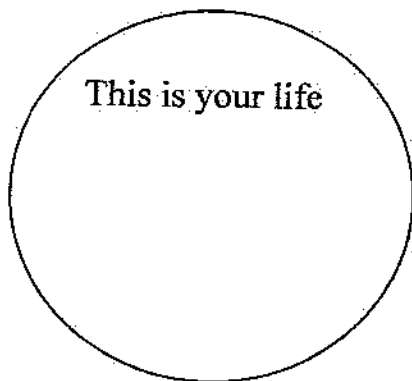
3. Bottom line

Consequence

LEARNING, SETTING, AND ENFORCING BOUNDARIES

Boundaries are the limits or rules we set to provide safety for ourselves and to let others know what they can and can't do to or with us. In many abusive relationships, one or both partners may have limited abilities to set or maintain good boundaries. One or both partners may not know how to deal with uncomfortable issues that arise, and anger and abusive behavior may be the outcome.

One of the best ways to learn to set boundaries is to look at your life as if it were a pie chart and then look at the demands on your energy as if they were pieces out of the pie. Take some time to do the exercise below.



- How much of your time, energy, etc. goes into work? _____ %
- How much goes into sleeping? _____ %
- How much goes into your primary relationship? _____ %
- How much goes into family? _____ %
- How much goes into others? _____ %
- How much goes into just you? _____ %
- What other categories are there for you? _____ %

Total = 100%

Portion the circle according to the various demands there are on you.

In looking at the circle:

Do you like the way things are parceled out? Is there good balance in your life? Is your life under control or out of control?

Would you like to change anything? If so, what?

Would you like to add or delete anything? If so, what?

What discoveries have you made about you and your time?

Can you see some reasons why you are not able to do some of the things you may want to do?
What are they?

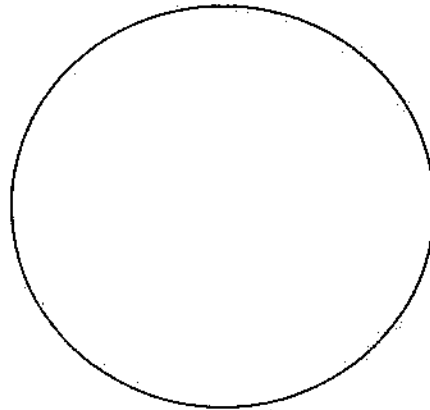
Why might you not have the energy available to do what you need to do for yourself?

Who determines the categories in your life, you or someone else?

How would your ideal circle of life look? Portion the categories the way you would like them to be in the circle below.

- How much of your time, energy, etc. goes into work? _____ %
- How much goes into sleeping? _____ %
- How much goes into a primary relationship? _____ %
- How much goes into family? _____ %
- How much goes into others? _____ %
- How much goes into just you? _____ %
- What other categories are there for you? _____ %

Total = 100%



In order to get to your ideal circle, you have to take control of your life. You have to decide how your energy will be allocated, where to draw the lines, and how to replenish yourself when you are tired. This gives you internal control over your life, instead of having your life controlled by external events. This is having healthy boundaries.

SESSIONS 11-12

Self-Esteem and Self-Care

SESSIONS 11-12

Client Handouts

What Is Self-Esteem and Why Is It Important in Relationships?

Self-esteem is the value we choose to place on ourselves.

- For healthy people, self-esteem is how we view ourselves, not how others view or value us.
- The more we allow our self-esteem to be based on what others think or feel about us, the easier it is to have our self-esteem attacked and lessened.
- Our self-esteem determines how we perceive, judge, and act.
- Our self-esteem has a major role in determining who we choose as partners, what kind of treatment we will tolerate from others, and how we expect others to treat us.
- It determines how we let others treat us.
- It affects the decisions and choices we make, such as the spouse we choose, friends we choose, employment etc.
- It affects academic and career achievement.
- It affects how motivated we are or how hard we try.

A person who has low self-esteem will:

1. Blame others for problems -- "you made me do it."
2. Not believe what people say; be suspicious.
3. Be unable to accept criticism, thinking it is a judgment call; get angry and defensive.
4. View compliments as threats.
5. Not have good physical care.
6. Base decisions on external input.
7. Stick with the sure and safe -- no risk taking.
8. Be amused by what makes others appear to look foolish.
9. Expect or demand perfection in others; take mistakes as failures.
10. Argue, preach, and nag.
11. Never let go of guilt from the past.

A person who has high self-esteem will:

1. Take responsibility for their feelings and actions.
2. Take compliments graciously (just say thank you).
3. Listen to criticism without anger (they don't have to agree).
4. Give praise and compliments frequently.
5. Take good care of themselves.
6. Make decisions from their internal values (even if it goes against the viewpoints of others).
7. Take risks and challenge themselves.

8. Have a sense of humor that doesn't hurt others; not put others down to make themselves look good; be able to laugh at themselves.
9. Accept mistakes as a part of living; be open to feedback.
10. Listen openly to the thoughts of others.
11. Focus on the here and now and what can be changed in the future; learn from the past.

SELF-ESTEEM: WHICH ONE ARE YOU?

Self-esteem can be positive or negative. Look at these descriptions and see which one fits you.

1. **Positive and strong self-esteem:** This is viewing yourself as worthwhile and as a person who has worth simply because you are alive.
2. **Negative and weak self-esteem:** This is viewing yourself as worthless or only able to be worthwhile if you accomplish what you think you should. Sometimes people with negative or low self-esteem have an inferiority complex. They may have strong and persistent doubts about themselves in comparison to others.

When someone has an inferiority complex as a result of negative self esteem, it is often manifested by the following behaviors:

- * Sensitivity to criticism
- * Inappropriate response to flattery
- * Tendency towards blaming
- * Hypercritical attitude
- * Feelings of persecution
- * Negative feelings about competition
- * Tendency toward exclusiveness, shyness, and timidity

Self-esteem directly relates to our concept of how we see ourselves. Our self-concept involves many different aspects of us as a person.

Different Areas of Self-Concept:

1. **Identity:** Your identity involves having direction for your life and how you see your place in the world. It involves answering such questions as "Who am I?" and "What's my purpose in life?"
2. **Self-acceptance:** Self-acceptance involves knowing and accepting your strengths and weaknesses; having an inside feeling that you are OK.

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3. **Self-satisfaction:** Self-satisfaction involves being satisfied with who you are and where you are on the road of life. It is OK to have *some* areas of dissatisfaction, because this unease motivates people to strengthen their weaknesses or change their situations.
4. **Behavior:** Behavior involves feeling okay about yourself in terms of how you act in situations. Do you feel that you act according to your beliefs or do you act how you think others want you to act? This could involve how you behave toward your children, spouse or friends.
5. **Moral, ethical self:** Moral, ethical self relates to how you feel about yourself in relation to being ethical in dealing with others and in doing what you feel is right or wrong. Some individuals are motivated by their spiritual values that encourage honoring and respecting others as well as being fair. Who taught you what was right from wrong? Who taught you about ethical or moral behavior?"
6. **Physical self:** Physical self involves how you feel about your physical appearance, your body, and your health. Do you like and accept your body, or are you constantly finding fault with something about it? Do you take care of your health and hygiene? Your physical appearance is how you represent yourself to the rest of the world. How you treat your body is often a good clue as to how you will treat others.
7. **Personal self:** Personal self relates to how you feel you present yourself to others. This might involve the use of gestures, facial expressions, and nonverbal expressions.
8. **Family self:** Family self relates to how you feel about yourself in relation to your family, spouse, children, or parents. It could involve whether or not there are problems in the relationship, or whether you feel your "family" likes you or thinks you are okay.
9. **Peer self:** Peer self relates to how you feel about yourself in relation to those outside your family. This could include friends, co-workers, or employers. Do you feel generally liked or disliked by others?

Fill in the following boxes as a way to look at your self-concept and some areas where you can build your self-esteem:

What I do well:	What I believe in:	What I like to do:
3 Words I like to use to describe me:	What is important to me:	Something I've mastered with great effort:
A tragedy in my life and what I learned from it:	What I gave up at a great price:	My own personal symbol:

Anytime you compare yourself with others or allow others to determine how "good" you are, you may come out feeling inferior. There are always going to be those who are better looking, have more money, have a higher IQ, etc. You must learn to get your self-esteem from personal qualities and attributes that you feel positive about, and not from what others tell you is important.

Your self-esteem depends to a large degree on YOU. Take care of it and build it, and your self-esteem will protect you in times of challenge. It is important to work on your self-esteem each and every day. The stronger it is, the more resilient you'll be to stress, difficulties, and challenges.

Do something positive for yourself every day, and make sure to give yourself credit for all of your daily accomplishments.

Use the space below to list things you can do on a daily basis to feed and strengthen your self-esteem.

1. _____

4. _____

2. _____

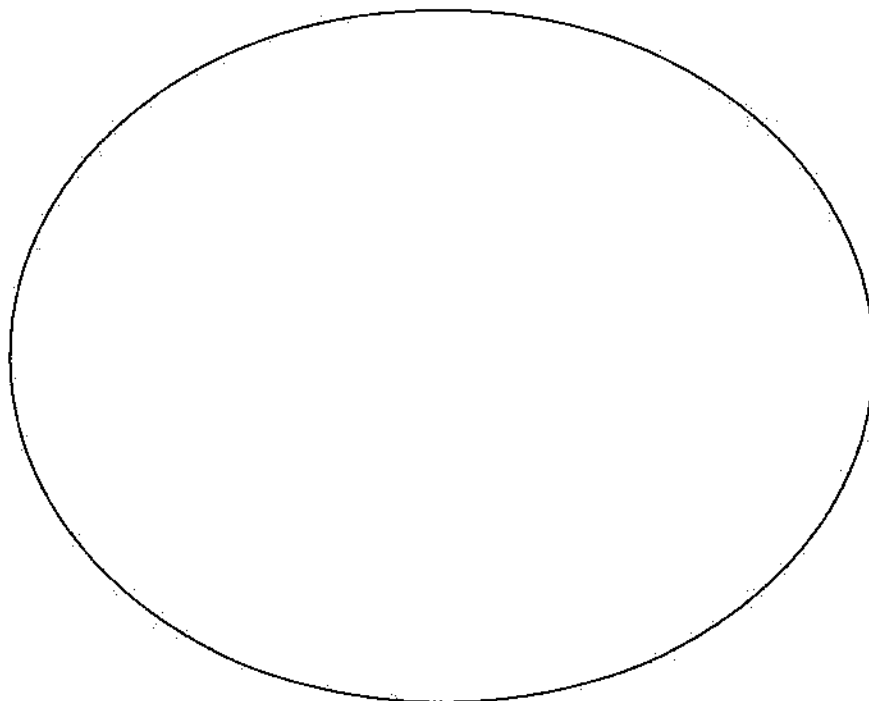
5. _____

3. _____

6. _____

Take the circle below and divide it into sections that represent the sources of where you get your self-esteem. Make the size of the sections represent how much of your self-esteem comes from each source. For example, if you get a lot of self-esteem from your job, make that section larger than some of the others.

Self-esteem circle



Now, look at your self-esteem.

Do you have a lot of places to get your self-esteem from, or are you dependent on a few areas?

Do you like the way you are parceled out?

Would you like to change anything? If so, what?

Would you like to add or delete anything? If so, what?

Please answer the following questions.

How well balanced is my self-esteem wheel? What do I need to do to make it more balanced?

How much of my self-esteem comes from inside of myself, and how much comes from outside?

What do I need to do to make it stronger?

Where in my life is my self-esteem enhanced and increased? Where is it attacked and lessened?

How does my significant relationship help/hurt my self-esteem?

What do I do on a regular basis to build and nurture my partner's self-esteem? What does my partner do for me to build and nurture my self-esteem on a regular basis?

What can I do to change/help this?

Remember!!! It is good to have several sources of self-esteem. A larger number of sources gives us a buffer when one area is having trouble. For example, suppose a person had a large amount of self-esteem coming from work and small amounts coming from other areas such as friends, family, and accomplishments. What is going to happen to that person if the job is lost, or if it changes in a negative way? Most likely they will have a difficult time with their self-esteem because they don't have enough buffers to fall back on.

Many women have a limited number of self-esteem sources. Historically, women have often gotten a great deal of their self-esteem from personal relationships, particularly their primary relationship. When there are problems in this relationship, their self-esteem often suffers. It is important for us to have alternative self-esteem sources in case our relationship does not provide what we need. In addition, when we have other areas of our life providing self-esteem, we put less pressure on our primary relationships.

We will all have attacks on our self-esteem throughout our lives. It is important for us to know how to re-build our self-esteem and how to handle blows when they happen. Being able to take care of needs like this helps to prevent self-esteem loss. Another prevention method is to build up our *inner* self-esteem.

INNER VERSUS OUTER SELF-ESTEEM

It is important to assess how much of our self-esteem comes from inside of ourselves and how much comes from outside ourselves. Inner self-esteem is how we feel about who we are, what we do, how we treat ourselves, and others. This is the self-esteem of values and experiences. It is more lasting and permanent than outside self-esteem. **Inner self-esteem belongs to us and is dependent on us.**

Outside self-esteem comes from what we have, such as money, friends, and status. This is the self-esteem of possessions. **Outside self-esteem is dependent on others and can be taken away at any time.**

One way to help develop your self-esteem is to have an idea of who you want to be and how you want others to view you. How do you want the people in your life and the people you interact with to remember you? One way of setting up this goal in your life is to write your eulogy and to use it as a benchmark to live up to.

Things to think about as you build your self-esteem:

- We must feel love inside ourselves before we can give it to others.
- Our reward in life depends on the quality and amount of the contributions we make.
- A touch is worth a thousand words.
- Life is a self-fulfilling prophecy. You won't necessarily get everything you want in life, but in the long run you will usually get what you expect.
- The reason so many individuals fail to achieve their goals in life is that they never really set them in the first place.
- The good old days are here and now.
- Winners work at doing things that the majority of the population is not willing to do.
- How we see life (our perspective), makes all the difference.
- Look for the positives -- wisdom, purpose, and faith -- and have the courage to adapt to change and persevere when the odds seem overwhelming (Waitley, 1984).

Give Yourself the Winner's Edge

Anyone can learn to be more self-confident. The process of building self-esteem is a game of skills which can be learned and polished with practice. Take these practical 10 steps to self-assurance and become a doer, not a doubter.

1. **Shoot down "self-killer" phrases:** Insecure people riddle their speech with lines that raise doubts about their competence. For instance, by saying "I know this relationship could be better" or "I know we are making a mistake here", you are turning a gun on yourself. You may be fishing for compliments or validation, or fending off criticism, but you're also creating a mindset. You may be asked to defend your approach or position. Avoid subtle and wishy-washy phrases like "I guess", "maybe", "I don't know" and replace them with phrases like "I'm sure", and "It seems to me".
2. **Don't be a downer:** many people have a litany of put downs which they constantly chant to themselves: "I'm fat, silly, stupid, clumsy, a failure...." When you're preoccupied with self-criticism, you risk communicating your negative self-image to others through self-demeaning remarks or demeanor. If we tell people we are inadequate, they may believe us, which could negatively influence our interactions with them. Self-depreciation, even in jest, may spotlight your shortcomings or persuade others of something untrue before they have a chance to form an independent impression. Don't advertise your inadequacies; it's just not good press (Butler, 1992).
3. **The "con" in confidence:** if you label yourself, you limit what you will attempt. For instance, if you're "unathletic" you may never take up skiing. Your self-evaluation (or labels from parents, peers, etc.) has influenced your behavior and stunted your growth. The solution: put on some counterfeit confidence. Pretend you can do it, relax and give it your

all. If you do okay, you'll get positive reinforcement and begin believing in your ability. Also try looking the part.

Observe the way self-assured people stand, speak, dress and behave. Then dress, stand, speak and behave like them. Even if you're quaking inside, you will seem confident if you act assured. Look people in the eye, smile frequently, shake hands firmly, stand tall, speak clearly, wear flattering clothes. Not only will you feel better, but, others will see you in a favorable light. Your self-esteem will soar as you respond to their encouraging reactions/perceptions.

4. **Work on your weaknesses:** Assess your weak spots honestly. The point is to recognize, not exaggerate short-comings and then apply a little elbow grease. Take a lesson or attend a self-improvement seminar to help you overcome an inadequacy. Don't let a poor self-concept predict how you will perform. **Remember, only practice makes perfect.**
5. **Try, try again:** Only by overcoming difficulties can you become a winner. Keep in mind three trite truisms: a) winning takes effort, or "no pain no gain", b) you can't win at every game, and c) the road to success is paved with failures. Expect stalls, learn from setbacks, and don't consider yourself a failure at something. As the song says, "Just pick yourself up, dust yourself off and start all over again." **Tip:** If you make your goals reasonable and manageable, you're more likely to reach them. Try doing things in small steps rather than leaps. Success isn't how far you've gotten; it's the distance you've traveled from where you started.
6. **Be your own cheerleader:** To improve your self-image, start saying good things about yourself. Rehearse your good points. Make a list of positive things about yourself (appearance, intelligence, interests, achievements, etc.). Repeat these statements (I have pretty eyes, I'm a good tennis player, I write well, etc.). Every day when you're brushing your teeth, or doing something ordinary, take a break, compliment yourself and convince yourself of how good you really are.
7. **Rewrite your script:** Try some personal propaganda by reversing the negative, self-defeating statements you make about yourself. Repetition of a message drives it home unconsciously so that it becomes a subjective truth of your belief system. Instead of saying, "I am easily discouraged" think, "I will be persistent." Change "I can't" to "I can."
8. **Bounce ups for put-downs:** You don't have to put on the gloves when someone tries to take you down a notch. Try deflecting a dig with a quip or changing the subject. Brush off an off-the-wall remark; if there's some truth in the criticism, agree to the truthful part. Put a put-downer on the spot and ask, "Why did you say that about me?"
9. **Paint a pretty picture:** Fantasizing is a creative, constructive way to boost your confidence and chances for success. Visualization techniques can polish skills. Experiments with golfers indicated that visualizing a perfect swing improved their physical technique. When you envision doing something, you're really practicing. The body responds -- the nervous system reacts and the blood starts pumping. If you consistently visualize peak performances, whether skiing or giving a speech, then you're going to perform. To become a daydream believer, think of your mind as a computer with a TV screen. You can use your visual imagination to

project pictures of the way you want yourself and your life to be. Then, program in positive information and thoughts, which will be played back to you. **Positive in, positive out.**

10. **Take a bow:** Confident people take credit when they've done a good job. Don't brush off compliments by saying, "it was nothing." People might believe you! Tell your boss, "I gave it my all". When you've completed a tough assignment, remember, if you hide your light under a bushel basket, the only thing the rest of the world is going to see is a dim bulb.

Happy Homework

Read these statements every day, until they become part of your thinking. Do not memorize them. Really hear the words as you say them out loud. You will find that you will feel great! They will really help you build your self-esteem.

1. I am a unique and precious human being, always doing the best I can, always growing in wisdom and in love.
2. I am in charge of my own life.
3. I take responsibility for my own growth and well being. The better I am to me, the better I will be to others.
4. I refuse to be put down by the attitudes or opinions of others.
5. I make my own decisions and assume the responsibility for any mistakes. However, I refuse to feel shame or guilt because of them.
6. I am not my actions. I am the actor. My actions may be good or bad.
7. I cannot control all of the things that will happen to me. But I have 100% freedom over the attitude I have towards those things. My personal well-being or my suffering depends upon my attitude.
8. I do not have to prove myself to anyone. I need only to express myself as honestly and effectively as I am capable.
9. I am free of animosity or resentment.
10. My emotional well-being is dependent primarily on how I love myself.
11. I am kind and gentle towards myself.
12. I live a day at a time, doing first things first.
13. I am patient and serene for I have the rest of my life in which to grow.
14. Every experience I have in life (even the unpleasant ones) contributes to my learning and growth.
15. No one in the world is more important than I as a person.
16. My mistakes and non-successes do not make me a louse, a crumb, or whatever. They only prove that I am imperfect, that is, "human". And there's nothing wrong with being human.
17. Every experience I have, either good or bad, provides me with an opportunity to grow and to know myself better.
18. Once I have reconciled with god and my neighbor, I am totally free of guilty feelings or remorse.
19. I choose to give love and good will to all those who are around me. They can choose to accept it or not.

TECHNIQUES FOR CHANGING SELF-ESTEEM

I. **Make small, positive goals for the future.**

Example: If you want to lose weight, make a goal to lose a pound a week. Continue to try to do this every week until you reach your desired weight. This is much more realistic than a goal to lose 25 pounds in one month. With small realistic goals you will be successful and motivated to reach your end goal.

II. **Modify unrealistic standards:**

A. Rational thinking. You are influenced by your view and perception of the world. This often takes precedence over reality. How you see things is often more important than what really happened. Your beliefs about yourself influence how you feel and what you do.

Example: Your boss tells you that you made a mistake in your last project (**event**). You tell yourself, "I am worthless" (**belief**). You then become depressed and feel horrible about yourself (**emotion**).

The point is that bad things happen. Acknowledge that this is a fact of life. Do not give yourself additional blows by a belief system that hurts you. Adopt a healthy belief system, and you will be happier and more successful.

B. What you expect of yourself. Remember to be realistic and to allow yourself to live with "wants" not "musts." Enjoy what you have and do not evaluate yourself.

C. Are your expectations reasonable and obtainable? Again set your expectations and goals so that they are obtainable. Do not place obstacles in your way by making goals that demand perfection or that are impossible to reach. Make small goals along the way to your end goal. Reward yourself when you reach each goal.

D. Admit when you are expecting too much. Don't expect perfection in yourself or others. This sets you up for failure. Enjoy your uniqueness and that of others. Learn to appreciate yourself and others. Again, stop rating yourself or others. Give yourself freedom to make mistakes and still like who you are. Extend this freedom to others also.

III. **Develop positive fantasies**

A. List positive attributes and characteristics.

B. List positive things or events. Treat yourself to some of these.

C. Lie down, relax, think about occasions in the past when you felt very good.

D. Mentally project yourself into the future. Picture yourself enjoying pleasant events.

E. Work at always staying relaxed.

IV Develop positive scanning skills.

A. Have a positive approach to life.

B. Do not insist on perfection.

C. Think about positive and humorous events.

D. Do not let others get you down with negative conversations and negative remarks.

V. Create better social support reinforcement.

A. Seek people who give you positive reinforcement

B. Be pleasant to others. Talk and act in a positive manner.

C. Be nice, even when you do not feel like it.

D. Do not expect everyone to like you.

E. Do not expect everyone to be perfect.

F. Do not talk about your problems all the time. Others do not like to hear negative things constantly.

G. Be assertive, not aggressive. Let people know what you want and need in an appropriate way. Do not expect them to know what you need.

VI. Learn to meet your own needs (concentrate on the following needs):

A. To love and to be loved. Giving up unrealistic demands on yourself and others allows you to love and be loved more generously. Having a loving relationship with at least one other person may be crucial to your well-being.

B. To feel worthwhile. Doing something that feels useful and worthwhile is important for everyone. Give yourself credit for anything you are doing which makes you feel worthwhile.

C. To have fun. Allow yourself to have fun. Do something which you find enjoyable every day. If there is something that is particularly fun to you which you have not done for some time, make it a point to indulge in this activity very soon.

(Example: have your hair done, have a manicure, go roller-skating, go to a ball game, go bowling, play tennis, or call your best friend from high school.)

- D. To be free.** Keep in mind at all times that you are free to make choices. Forget the past and live in the present. Accept responsibility for making meaningful choices in your life. You are free to choose how to live your life.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT:

Thirty Day Self-Esteem Builder

I Make a written list of the following about yourself:

- A. 10 Character assets

- B. 10 Physical assets

- C. 10 People who love you

- D. 10 Things you are grateful for

II. Think about and write on paper:

- A. What kind of higher power you have, if this is important to you

- B. What your higher power wants for you

- C. What is your higher power willing to do for you?

**Remember! Work on positive thoughts only! Progress, not perfection.
You are somebody unique!**

SESSION 13

Self-Talk, Beliefs, and Our Identity

SESSION 13

Client Handouts

What Can You Change About Yourself?

At first glance, this may seem impossible to do, but in fact, it is possible. The following will assist you in the process of evaluating what you can change about yourself and what is NOT changeable. There are several areas in your life that influence the way in which you view yourself. Some of these are as follows:

1. Parents, family
2. Social class, money
3. Intellectual ability
4. Physical appearance, facial features, body build
5. Job, role
6. Education
7. Physical strength, stamina
8. Sexual prowess

Some of these are areas that are either very difficult to change or simply unchangeable at this time, so you must accept them. Remember, your self-esteem should never become dependent on any one of these areas. Anytime we put ourselves in a situation to compare ourselves with others we may come out feeling inferior. There are always going to be others who are better looking, have more money, have a higher I.Q., or some other trait. It is important to remember the difference between self-esteem that comes from within and the self-esteem that comes from without. Some traits we can change, others we cannot and we are not "less worthwhile" because we don't surpass another's accomplishment. Change what you can, accept what you can't.

To better understand this development of your "destiny," we can look at the *Cabarcas Destiny Model* on the next page. For each event in your life, you choose a response based on past experiences, old hurts and/or feelings, unresolved issues, self-talk (which can be negative or positive), and self-esteem (which can be high or low).

Cabarcas Destiny Model

The power of how you interpret events profoundly influences your destiny in life. The six components to your destiny are:

1. A **Thought** about an event you experience
2. A **Feeling** about the thought you had. The feeling sometimes reinforces your thought.
3. Your **Words** in conversation are largely based on the previous two components: your thoughts and feelings.
4. Your **Actions** reinforce the words, statements, promises, etc.
5. **Habits** are developed by use/reuse of actions that either gave you the result you wanted or made you feel good. You may make some previous statements part of your philosophy about life.
6. Your **Destiny** is formulated by continuing your habits.

Event	1- Thought	2- Feeling	3- Words	4- Actions	5- Habits	6- Destiny
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Part of the challenge will be changing how you interpret events. For example: If you lost your job today (**event**), would you be worried or excited? If you thought, "How am I going to pay my bills?" (**thought**), your feeling would probably be depressed or anxious (**feelings**). You may call your friends and tell them you're worried and sad (**words**). Your actions would probably include crying and maybe even misuse of alcohol (**action**). You might feel better by crying and having a drink, so you develop the habit that: "When life gets tough, have a good cry with some girlfriends over some wine" (**habit becomes destiny**). You have now developed a negative destiny for yourself: strong emotions + alcohol = eventual problems.

Changing your thoughts, or *self-talk*, will begin to change the rest of the chain. Let's suppose that the same scenario occurs (**event**), but instead you think that this is an opportunity for you to grow and get a better job (**thought**). You will probably feel excited and optimistic (**feeling**). You will probably call your friends and share with them your enthusiasm for this opportunity (**words**). Your actions will be to look for employment with such a positive energy that you get a job quickly (**action**). You have now developed the habit of looking at every difficult event as an opportunity for growth. Your more positive destiny: tough scenarios + positive attitude = less stress.

Evaluating Your Destiny

Think of three of the most difficult situations you have dealt with (you may want to include the incident(s) that brought you to counseling). On the following pages, evaluate how your thoughts influenced the rest of the chain. Look at the feelings you associate with each thought. How do you communicate what you are thinking and feeling? What are the actions that you demonstrate to "back up" your words? Have the thoughts and feelings become habit(s) anytime you experience a similar event? At the end, ask yourself if you want this to be your destiny. If not, YOU are now responsible for developing and/or learning new ways to look at events in your life.

Event #1:

Thought(s):

Feeling(s):

Words:

Action(s):

Habit: Yes No Maybe

Event #2:

Thought(s):

Feeling(s):

Words:

Action(s):

Habit: Yes No Maybe

Event #3:

Thought(s):

Feeling(s):

Words:

Action(s):

Habit: Yes No Maybe

SESSION 14

Changing Self-Talk and Beliefs

SESSION 14

Client Handouts

Making Changes

Changing is one of the most difficult things to do in life. We all have many things we want to change in ourselves, and we all have many obstacles to making these changes. The ability to make and sustain changes in our lives has a great deal to do with our level of self-esteem. The stronger and more intact our self-esteem is, the easier it is to recognize and make needed changes.

Making changes depends on how well we understand our priorities in life. The easiest changes to make are the changes that fit with our life priorities. What are your priorities in life? Use the following list as a guide to describing your priorities. Add ones that may be important to you.

Health	Romance	Power/Recognition
Sex	Work	Roots and Tradition
Money	Religion	Physical Activity
Security	Relaxation	Ownership of things
Feeling good	Appearance	Solitude
Education	Pleasure	Freedom from stress
Stimulation	Sociability	
Family	Integrity	

Remember! Making changes can be difficult for others in your life. When we make changes, others often have to make changes too in order to maintain the relationship. You may find that as you make new and healthy changes, others in your life will continue to treat you as they did before and may even exaggerate their old behavior in an attempt to get you to return to the old behaviors.

New changes take approximately six weeks to become new habits. They must be practiced on an on-going basis. You will find that it will be very easy to slip back into your old patterns during the early stages of making the changes, especially during times of stress.

What I want to do:

GOAL	TIMELINE	OBSTACLES	RESOURCES NEEDED
Finish school			
Do work as...			
Be established or recognized as...			
Live with...			
Be in a stable relationship			
Have children			
People I want to know...			
Places I want to see...			
Skills I want to learn...			
Lose ___ pounds			

Now that you have the list, what strengths can you draw from in order to make them happen? What weaknesses do you have to address in yourself? What are the opportunities that are open to you to help make them happen? What are the obstacles to making them happen?

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	OBSTACLES

Hints for Making Changes Happen

- Plan the wanted change.
- Visualize yourself with the change already in place; always keep this vision in your mind.
- Be a risk-taker. Start with small risks that help or enhance the wanted change. Remember, small risk-taking leads to larger risk-taking.
- **PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE.**
- Learn your needs and practice stating them to others.
- Beware of your “shoulds” and “musts”. These are the traps against making the wanted changes. Your “shoulds” and “musts” need to be challenged all of the time.
- Congratulate yourself on the advances that you make.
- Figure out the support you need and ask for it.
- Figure out your support system and use it to help you make the changes happen.
- Be aware of those who will try to sabotage your change and protect yourself from the sabotage.

Changing Self-Talk and Beliefs

One of the key components to changing your attitude is changing your thoughts. If the saying is: “you are what you eat”, then a parallel statement could be: “you act in conjunction with your thoughts”. There is no such thing as “It just happened”. For each action you make, there has been a thought that preceded that action. Whether you choose to drink alcohol or choose to ignore your feelings, these are all choices that you make daily. The way in which you decide to react to a situation is based on your self-talk. The following self-talk statements are stress responses and ways to *reframe* them more positively. Add other stress responses you have said to yourself in similar emotional states. Begin to develop your own reframe statements as well.

Category: *Fear and Anxiety*

Stress Response: I’m afraid I will always be alone; I won’t do a good job.

My Stress Response: _____

Reframe: I don’t have to be alone. I can have a close relationship. I can do my best, which is a good job.

My New Thought:

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Category: *Impending Doom*

Stress Response: I'm afraid of losing my mind; Men are just going to take advantage of me.

My Stress Response: _____

Reframe: I won't go crazy. I can control my emotional responses and get help if I need some support coping with this. I have had some disappointing relationships. I can be cautious before I involve myself but isolating won't help me.

My New Thought:

Category: *Anger and Frustration*

Stress Response: I hate myself for letting this happen. I hate my partner. He/she did this to me on purpose.

My Stress Response: _____

Reframe: I may have made a mistake, but I'm not a bad person. I can take responsibility for my actions but I don't control everything around me. My partner is responsible for his/her behavior, and I choose how I respond.

My New Thought:

Category: *Guilt and Remorse*

Stress Response: I shouldn't feel so angry and hateful. I can't believe I said that to her -- I feel so horrible about it.

My Stress Response: _____

Reframe: I have a right to my feelings -- ALL of them. If I think I have hurt her feelings, I can acknowledge it and make my best effort to avoid repeating it.

My New Thought:

Category: *Shame and Self-disgust*

Stress Response: I will always be helpless and cannot control my life. I am fat and ugly. Who would want to be with me? I can never tell anyone I was molested. They'll think I caused it, and it's so embarrassing to say that it happened.

My Stress Response: _____

Reframe: I have control over many areas of my life. I am a beautiful person inside and out, and I can work on either the inside part or the outside part if I choose. I don't have to be a victim for the rest of my life. I can be a confident, strong woman because I trust in myself.

My New Thought:

Category: *Sadness*

Stress Response: I lost my relationship. I feel empty and numb. I now have a criminal record and I feel like a failure.

My Stress Response: _____

Reframe: My relationship is over, but my life is not. I am coping. My actions have cost a lot, but not everything. I will survive this experience and learn from it.

My New Thought:

(Koonin, 1992)

- If you have any other "categories" or stress-response statements, include them in your journal.
- Each time you tell yourself something positive, put it on paper.
- During days when you find it challenging to "pick yourself up," read your written self-talk and you will feel like your own best friend.

Techniques for Changing Self-Talk

I Rewrite your internal monologue

- A. Accept the past: you cannot change it. What you can do is work with the present situation.
- B. Quit putting yourself down. The purpose of life is to find enjoyment and meaning, not to evaluate yourself. Give up "shoulds", "oughts" and "musts" and replace them with "wants" and "would likes".

Example: Say to yourself, "I want to do my best at my job". Do not say, "I must be the best person at my job".

- C. Think about good experiences in the past. Be proud of your achievements. Dwell on your successes, not your failures. Use the techniques that helped you in the past to be successful.

Example: If you did well in athletics, then get active in some type of sport again.

D. Use the following techniques for thought change

- * Write down negative thoughts in detail. This will help you be more aware of them. Also, it will help you discover their patterns and what triggers them. Awareness helps you change and control negative thoughts.
- * Block negative thoughts by **thought stopping**. When you have a negative thought, tell yourself silently or out loud **STOP!** Refuse to allow yourself to think negatively.
- * Replace negative thoughts with positive thoughts. After saying **STOP!** to the negative thought, think of a positive thought immediately. Remember to draw from your successes.

II. Recognize lowered self-esteem cues

- A. Figure out which situations bring down your self-esteem. Is it when you feel someone is not interested in what you say? (Rejection) Are you comparing yourself to others physically, intellectually, or financially? Is it specific circumstances, settings, events, holidays, or interpersonal interactions? Is after you drink or use drugs?
- B. Use your knowledge of what cues lowered self-esteem to help you to overcome it. It may be necessary to avoid certain things or situations that make you feel this way. You may also choose to work on improving in a certain area.
For example: If lowered self-esteem is a result of non-assertiveness, then take training classes to improve this skill.

III. Learn to relax

- A. **Relaxation.** Lie or sit in a comfortable position. Close your eyes. Breathe deeply, tensing and relaxing each muscle group. Begin with your feet and lower legs, move up to your abdomen, arms and shoulders. Finish the exercise with your neck and face muscles. Concentrate on feelings of warmth and relaxation. Practice doing this at least once a day.
- B. **Exercise.** Choose something you enjoy and will continue. Join an aerobics class, ride your bike, or walk at the park with your children. Pick a time of day that is convenient and exercise at least 2-3 times a week.

IV. Change your unrealistic expectations

- A. **Irrational Thinking.** Your view and perception of the world influence you. Often this takes precedence over actual reality. How you see things is often more important than what really happened. Your beliefs about yourself influence how you feel and what you do.

Example: Your partner tells you that he is going to hang out with his buddies (event); you tell yourself, "He doesn't love me because I'm overweight" (belief). You become depressed and feel horrible about yourself (emotion).

(Geffner & Mantooth, 2000, adapted from Ellis & Harper, 1975)

MORNING EXERCISE:

- A. Before getting dressed, stand naked in front of the mirror and affirm character assets. Say "I love you" five times to your image.
- B. While dressing, think about people who love you and positive changes that are to come.

EVENING EXERCISE:

- A. Write down all the positive things you did today and the good feelings you had (only the positive and the good)
- B. Write down your most outstanding character assets of the day and why they were outstanding.
- C. Call or spend time with a sponsor or friend, and share your day with them.

Do this every day for 30 days. Write without thinking about the exercises; writing has a powerful effect. See how the affirmations become easier each day. See how differently you feel about yourself as the exercise progresses.

(Geffner & Mantooth, 2000)

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Thinking about the topics and exercises for the past few weeks, what might be something that you would like to change in behaviors, beliefs, or in how you accept the attitudes of others without challenge? Now, develop your own personal change plan:

What is the change I think I need to make?

What makes this change necessary?

How will this change make my life better?

What do I have to give up to make this change?

What are the steps I need to do in order to make this change?

What will be the possible roadblocks to making this change?

What help do I need to make this change?

How will I reward myself for the progress I make?

PART 3: FAMILY OF ORIGIN

SESSION 15

Family of Origin: How We Learned Our Behaviors and Beliefs

SESSION 15

Client Handouts

Looking at Where We Came From

The family we grew up in has a strong effect on who we are and what we believe --- about ourselves, about how we should be treated by others, about how we should treat others, and about the way relationships are "supposed" to be. Our families of origin teach us ways to give and receive love, how to take care of ourselves and of others, and what love means. We bring these lessons into our relationships, and whether we want to or not, we often repeat patterns learned in our childhood in our adult lives.

In this section, we are going to explore your family, the relationship "rules" you learned, the ways that love was expressed, and what it meant to be a "girl". In addition, we will look at the kinds of violence and abuse you may have been exposed to and the kinds of intimate relationships that you grew up around. The purpose of this section is to help you recognize what you have learned to expect from a relationship, and how those expectations may be helping or harming you. You will also be able to identify the changes you want to work on in your beliefs about relationships.

What was it like growing up in your family? Where were you in terms of siblings? How many boys, how many girls? Who were you closest to or least close to? What was the composition of your family? Who was the "head" of the family? How close were your siblings in ages? Who was the "favorite" in the family? What was your role?

What was/is your relationship like with other family members? Who are you most like? Most unlike? What made/makes you different from the others in the family?

What is your best/worst memory from your childhood?

Was there a father in your family? If so, describe your relationship with him. Was it loving? Was it distant?

Was there a mother in your family? If so, describe your relationship with her. Was it loving? Was it distant?

Do you remember any physical or emotional abuse when you were growing up? If so, who did the abusing? Who was abused? How was it handled in your family? What was your reaction to the abuse?

What form of discipline was used in your family? Who did the disciplining? What kinds of things did you get disciplined for?

Did anyone in your family suffer from psychological problems, chemical abuse, problems with the law, major medical problems, suicides, or deaths? How did the family deal with these?

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What were the "rules" in your family of origin for being a "good":

mom/dad:

daughter/son:

husband/wife:

woman/man:

Did any of these roles conflict? For example, if to be a good wife, a woman had to always put her husband first, how did that conflict with her being a good mother?

What were the consequences of breaking those rules? What are the rules for the above now that you are an adult? What have you changed, deleted, added, or modified? What are the consequences for breaking the rules now? Do any of them conflict with one another? For example, in order to live up to the rules of being a "good" mom, does a woman have to violate some of the rules for being a "good" wife?

Many women will have to challenge the "good girl" rules that they have been taught to live by as they grew up and into their adult lives. What are some of the "good girl" rules that you will have to confront?

"A good girl is..."

Polite
Nurturing
Emotional
Submissive
Dependent
not too smart
Pretty
Strong
responsible for those around her

"A good girl should..."

Be sexy, but not too sexy
take care of the house
take care of the kids
Be a superwoman
put her needs aside
Be clean
Be ready for sex at any time
Be available to men
dress right

(From Myhand & Kivel, 1998)

List any others you can think of here:

What impact has your family of origin had on your relationships, both positive and negative?

What have you learned about yourself and your relationships from doing this exercise?

SESSION 16

Who I Am/Who I Want to Be

SESSION 16

Client Handouts

Who I Am/Who I Want to Be

In this session, we are going to take the things you learned in the previous session and develop two “puzzles”. One will show how you are now and the second will show how you would like to be. It may be that these puzzles will be similar or even identical. It may be that the two puzzles will be entirely different. The purpose is to give you an idea of where you are, how well you like where you are, and what you might like to change about yourself.

Me Now

My boundaries:

My fears:

My supports:

My regrets:

My "Wish I would haves"

**Things I want to change/
things I think I can't change:**

My hopes and dreams:

My goals:

My beliefs:

**Things I need to do and
learn:**

My accomplishments:

My strengths:

My weaknesses:

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Fill in the puzzle pieces with information about you. The first puzzle shows the real you, based on what you learned in your family of origin and your life experiences up until now.

The Me I Want to Be

My boundaries:

My fears:

My supports:

My regrets:

My "Wish I would haves"

**Things I want to change/
things I think I can't change**

My hopes and dreams:

My goals:

My beliefs:

**Things I need to do and
learn:**

My accomplishments:

My strengths:

My weaknesses:

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Fill in this puzzle with the "you" that you would like to be. After both puzzles are filled in, ask yourself the following questions:

1. How close are the two "Me's"?
2. What are the biggest areas of difference?
3. What do I want to let go of? Where did I learn these things? How can I let go of them?
4. What is it that I want to change about myself the most? What are the obstacles to doing that?
5. What do I still do in spite of knowing that it is wrong for me? What makes me continue doing it?
6. How do I help myself become who I want to be?
7. How do I keep myself from becoming who I want to be?

HOMEWORK FOR THE NEXT SEVEN DAYS:

Keep a notebook with paper for each day. On each sheet, mark down all the things you do during the day. At the end of the day take some time and look at the list. Put a blue mark by the things that gave you pleasure, that you enjoyed, and that enhanced your life. Put a red mark by the things that were not fun, and did not add to your life.

Remember, sometimes it takes time to learn to enjoy something. Exercise is a good example. It is often very difficult at first and even painful. However, as time goes by and we see results, we find we like it more and more, and sometimes our bodies get so used to being active that we crave exercise when we don't get it. Look at your lists in this way.

Some of the things may not be immediately pleasurable, but may have the potential for improving your life and getting you where you want to go. If you spend your time doing things that don't move you toward your goals, you will never get to the goals.

SESSION 17

VICTIMIZATION



SESSION 17

Client Handout

Victimization

As part of the healing process, it is important that you understand where your anger comes from. Anger is often a secondary emotion, which means it masks the true emotion you are feeling. For example, if someone feels embarrassed they may respond by verbally attacking the other individual.

In the above example, anger is not necessarily the true emotion experienced. Perhaps the true emotions were embarrassment, hurt or shame but the individual chose to respond in anger. A woman who was sexually victimized as a child may carry anger toward the original perpetrator but her anger is released on men with whom she has relationships as an adult.

This portion of the program may be difficult and stir up old emotions that you have worked hard at hiding behind your anger. Controlling the amount of anger you release will require you to express new emotions that may be uncomfortable for you.

This session acknowledges that most of you have been victimized in your past. Statistics show that one in seven females will/has experience(d) abuse. In one form or another, by the time a woman finishes college she may have been victimized sexually, physically or emotionally. The trauma influences your identity and how you view the world. However, being victimized **does not** give you permission to victimize others.

There are many forms in which women can be victimized. Some may come in non-aggressive forms, such as denial of a promotion, being fired from a job after maternity leave, or hearing sexist jokes. Other types of victimization may come in aggressive, even life-threatening, forms, such as incest, rape, and domestic violence. As part of this exercise, begin to develop a list of your traumatic experiences on the next page (you may decide to develop a more complete list at a later point).

0-5 Years: _____

6-10 Years: _____

11-14 Years: _____

15-18 Years: _____

19-24 Years: _____

25-30 Years: _____

31-40 Years: _____

over 40 Years: _____

If thinking about some of these events brings up anger, take care of yourself by putting those feelings on paper. Take some time to journal the feelings you felt in addition to, in place of, or aside from anger at having experienced these events in your life.

The most troubling effect of being victimized as a child is that you may be more vulnerable to being victimized as an adult. A study of adult women found that low self-esteem and even the inability to find/keep employment were possibly linked with experiencing victimization as a child. As a child struggles to survive a traumatic event, the child develops coping skills. The problem is that unless the adult has dealt with the trauma, most continue to use the same coping skills they developed as children. This results in limiting themselves on how to handle stress-created situations (Gwinn & Köfler, 2001).

As you answer the following questions, think of coping skills you used to handle the event. Note whether you are still using them today.

A Personal Experience of Victimization

Have you ever been sexually harassed at work or been witness to someone else being harassed?

Coping Skill:

Have you ever been disciplined at work for excessive absences due to caring for your children?
(Include if you were afraid to call in sick)

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Coping Skill:

(If you had male siblings) As a child, were you treated differently than your brothers?

Coping Skill:

As a child, did anyone ever scare you with words, gestures, or physical force?

Coping Skill:

Did you ever experience inappropriate touching as a child?

Coping Skill:

As a young girl, what statements did you hear that made you feel inferior? Where did those statements come from?

Coping Skill:

As a woman, have you ever been pressured/forced to have sex?

Coping Skill:

Victims of Domestic Violence

Beauty and the Beast Syndrome (Shorthand, 1998) is a simplified explanation for why women may stay in abusive relationships. The story of *Beauty and the Beast* tells a tale of a woman believing that if she loves the abusive Beast long enough, he will turn into a prince. Beauty has lost her father and is raised by a single mother.

In essence she is being told about womanhood through society and her father's understanding of womanhood. The story of *Beauty and the Beast* starts with Beauty looking for her father. This may be symbolic of the societal belief that one searches for a mate that reminds them of their opposite sex parent. For a woman, it would suggest that you search for a man who reminds you of qualities your father had or of the father figure you didn't have as a child.

Beauty then spends most of the story trying to please the Beast. Perhaps it is her societal training to be submissive to her partner therefore in spite of his violence, she stays. Beauty may also believe that if she loves him, he will change. This may be because of how she has been taught to be in relationships or what she believes the role of a woman to be in a relationship. However, in spite of her attempts, he yells at her, berates her, questions her, breaks objects in her presence, demands her to join him in activities he chooses and eventually makes her cry. **This is domestic violence.** She feels confused, frustrated and alone. **She is a victim of domestic violence.**

Human nature allows us to deal with overwhelming information in many ways. Some of these ways are healthy and some are not. Beauty utilizes unhealthy ones, such as denial, justification, blaming herself and rationalization. She **rationalizes** his anger since he is upset about being a beast and believes he needs to be shown how to love. She is in **denial** at the dangerousness of her situation (she is living with a powerful Beast who is double her size and has triple her strength). She has essentially become **desensitized** to her abuser.

The beast is completely oblivious to her attempts. He is angry at his predicament, angry at his situation and at times is remorseful for his intimidating behavior. However, the remorse does not change his behavior and he continues to keep her his prisoner. He continues to be displeased with Beauty for not loving him, but never acknowledges that it is his behavior that is stopping the development of a good relationship. At one point Beauty has the opportunity to flee, but feels sorry for the Beast being left alone and **RETURNS!** **The hardest part of leaving an abusive relationship are the feelings that you carry inside of you and the negative "tapes" stored in your memory.**

Beauty is a battered woman; she is hesitant, afraid and unsure of whether or not she wants to leave. She is no longer aware of the fear this relationship causes. The emotional wounds, the cruel words and mind-games will continue to affect Beauty even after she has left him.

Some batterers continue to batter their partner in other ways (i.e., court, visitation) or replace them with other victims. New relationships don't always mean the abuser is healthier and capable of treating someone else better (even though many women believe that he is now having the best relationship possible and giving the new woman everything that he did not give to her). Some batterers continue to terrorize their victims through stalking-type behaviors -- calling at all hours, arriving at her job or residence uninvited, or using the children as spies.

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Some batterers may change with an acceptance of spirituality, which aids in the realization that we are defective human beings and need help to change. However, others may use this as a tool to convince the victim they will not batter again. Others find counseling helpful, but counseling requires an open mind and a willingness to work hard if it is to be of any use. Again, some batterers use this as a way to engage their partner into believing he has changed when he has not.

Some women return to an abusive relationship disoriented about love and their own wants and desires. Some women, however, leave and once again become the beautiful, intelligent women they once were.

Have you been in an abusive intimate relationship? If so, please describe it.

What was the most painful insult you were told in an intimate relationship?

What was the most humiliating experience you have had at the hands of your partner?

How have these events affected your self-esteem?

How have these events affected your belief that you can be assertive?

How have these events affected your value as an employee, mother, wife, or human?

Has it made you protective of yourself?

Do you find yourself thinking that you can't trust men, adults, or people?

Name two ways in which victimization has affected you.

HOMEWORK

Look at another story/fable. Analyze the hidden messages about relationships and the role of women by using the following questions to evaluate the intent of story.

- How are women viewed?
- What adjectives are used to describe girls/women?
- What activities are the girls/women doing in the story (cleaning, washing, fighting wars)?
- What is the "moral" of the story?

Story/Fable:

Message to girls about womanhood:

PART 4: COMMUNICATION

SESSION 18 FEELINGS

Session 18 Client Handouts

Feelings

What are feelings? Feelings are the energies that move us in response to our thoughts and experiences. All feelings are neutral. We attach meanings to them based on our experiences, beliefs, and value systems. Our feelings about any event tell us about the *value* of that experience to us.

Many of the feelings that we have today are expressions that we learned early in life. We learned to attach meanings of happy, sad, safe, angry, and so on by the experiences we had as children. Events, places, and things that we react to with anger, happiness, fear, shame, etc. are usually associated with experiences we have had in our early formative years. Something that one person may react to with feelings of excitement and joy may be something that another person will react to with fear and dread.

Feelings are expressions of what we perceive is going on in our world. We choose our feelings based on our prior experiences. Many of us have to unlearn some of our early associations when we become adults because those associations are unhealthy or unsafe.

Sometimes we get stuck in a feeling. This "stuckness" tends to be with the more unpleasant emotions, like anger and depression. When one is "stuck" in anger or depression, their whole experience of the world is seen through that emotion. If the feeling is depression, the world may be seen as uninviting, not fun, and not friendly. If the feeling is anger, the world may be seen as unsafe, threatening, and hostile.

In addition, our feelings are tied to our value systems. When individuals in relationships have different value systems, they often have different and even conflicting emotions about the same experiences.

There are many words that are used to describe feelings: elated, sad, frustrated, frightened, angry, happy, depressed --- all of these describe inner emotional responses. Some words describe degrees of feelings: for example "irritated" may mean just a little angry and "outraged" may mean a lot angry. Often, words combine different feelings: for example, "upset" may mean angry and hurt. There may be times when we have a mixture of feelings and we may not know how to sort them out.

When we have an emotional response to something, we are evaluating its meaning to us. Some of us are trained from an early age to make these evaluations by using only rational means

(i.e., thinking). Something happens and the pluses and minuses of that something are added up. Then a judgment is made of what that "something" means.

When this is happening, feelings are confused with thinking or observation. Feelings are an expression of what is going on inside of you. Thinking and observing are expressions of how you think things fit together. Feelings are not always rational and do not always follow the expected. Many of our current feelings come from past experiences, are a result of good and bad times, and sometimes don't have anything to do with what is going on in the present.

An example of an "I feel-thinking" response would be:

"I feel it was unfair"

To change this to an "I feel-emotion" response:

"I feel hurt that you spent all of the money that way."

Remember, the purpose of expressing feelings is to communicate to ourselves and to others how we experience and are affected by the events in our lives.

There are four basic feelings: Sadness, happiness, fear, and anger. Each of these feelings has a wide array of expressions, from the least to the most profound. List under each feeling some words that are used to describe that feeling.

Sad	Happy	Fearful	Anger

Now look at the list and see how many of the descriptions can fit more than one category. See how confusing it can be to figure out what emotion you are really feeling?

As women, we often use feelings to manipulate others. Most women have been taught more about expressing emotions than men, and most of us are better than most men at "using" emotions to get what we want from others. We use the emotions of fear, guilt, sadness, or of "making someone else happy" as ways of getting what we want.

What are some of the ways that you have manipulated others?

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Some of us are uncomfortable with emotions. We have the mistaken belief that if we don't feel, we won't hurt. Fear and sadness can be difficult to experience for some. Most of us don't want to feel "bad". So we avoid those "bad" feelings. What we tend to forget, or perhaps don't even know, is that feelings that we don't acknowledge don't go away -- they just lie dormant (like being asleep) and wait until there is a weak moment so they can reappear. In addition, these unaddressed feelings collect "interest" like money in a bank and become bigger than they were when they first appeared. So when they come back up again, they are often large and may even feel "uncontrollable".

Also, please remember: You may experience the same level of joy and happiness that you allow yourself to experience sadness. When you cut yourself off from one emotion, you also cut yourself off from the other emotions.

Do you experience a full range of emotions or do you cut yourself off? The decision is up to you.

What does your emotional range look like?

What does your partner's emotional range look like? Are there clashes between you and your partner with the way you experience emotions?

Another thing that happens with these uncomfortable emotions is that we are spending a lot of time in keeping them "down" or controlled. To do this, we often have to be very aware of our surroundings and of everything that is going on all the time. We may start to "arrange" things to make sure that life goes on in a certain manner so that uncomfortable things don't happen. This usually results in our being called "controlling" or a "control freak." Sound familiar?

People who are controlling are usually those people who feel very unsafe. They often feel that their feelings are not valid and that their lives revolve around a person/persons/situation(s) that are out of control. They are often blamed for all that goes wrong and so they learn to "fix" this by arranging and managing what is happening around them. They are often afraid to even look at their own feelings and so they deny their feelings, and pay more attention to the feelings of others.

This makes it difficult, if not impossible to be spontaneous with anything. It makes closeness with others unlikely to happen, and it is emotionally exhausting. This controlling behavior blocks feeling, blocks facing reality, causes tenseness in relationships, and keeps the individual from freely giving and receiving love. Controlling is a sign of distress -- that things are not okay in our life, and that the real feelings are not being addressed.

What are the most uncomfortable emotions for you to feel? What do you do with them? How do you avoid them?

What emotions were allowed to be expressed in your family of origin? How were they expressed? How does that differ from how your partner learned to express emotions?

When individuals in a relationship come from backgrounds where they learned very different things about emotions, how to express them, what was okay and not okay to express, the relationship can develop problems. Partner A may feel that Partner B is “unfeeling” while Partner B may feel that Partner A is “out of control”.

In your relationship, who is the most comfortable one in expressing emotions? Do you know why?

Take some time and fill out the following log as honestly as possible:

Emotion	I do the following when I feel this way:	My body feels like:	Situations that lead to this emotion	What I would really like to do/feel:
Hurt				
Love				
Sadness				
Fear				
Rejection				
Joy				
Anger				
Loneliness				

In healthy relationships, there is a positive exchange of emotions of all kinds. All members of the relationships feel safe and secure in expressing what they are feeling when they are feeling it. Others may not always agree with what a person is feeling. However, in healthy relationships, all feelings are respected and not made fun of or used against the other.

It is important to assess how safe one's relationship is, and to decide to stay or go based on how safe it is to express a wide variety of emotions. If a person stays in relationships where their emotions are ignored or ridiculed, there is a high likelihood of anger building up and spilling over into the relationship. This is when abuse and violence are more likely to happen.

Look at the chart on the following page and use it to assess your own relationship. What patterns do you see? What changes do you need to make in your life? How do you plan on making those changes?

Emotion	Who was involved	Describe situation	Describe outcome
Annoyed			
Bored			
Warm and cared for			
Guilty			
Sad			
Hesitant/fearful			
Happy/joyful			
Excited/anticipating			
Energetic/ambitious			
Powerful			
Misunderstood/rejected			
Embarrassed/shamed			
Lonely/isolated			

SESSIONS 19-20

Communication: "I" Messages

SESSIONS 19-20

Client Handouts

Communication

Communication is the link between parts of a relationship -- one of the "glues" that holds a relationship together. When the parts of the relationship are "communicating" they are creating a "community". Communication can do great damage or great enhancement to a relationship.

Good communication does not just happen, but is a skill that needs to be learned and practiced. With strong, effective communication skills, relationships of all kinds improve, conflicts can be resolved, and the members of the relationship may feel closer and more bonded.

Messages come to us in many forms. We are constantly bombarded by information and communication coming to us from many sources (Jones & Shechter, 1992); most of our communication is non-verbal. It is important to understand which methods we use to communicate most often to others, and which we focus on when others try to communicate with us.

WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

- 1. Perception***
- 2. Expectation***
- 3. Involvement***

Perception

Even though communication requires a sender and a receiver, it is the recipient (the person who gets/is given the message) who perceives what is being communicated. All meanings of any communication are determined by the person who receives the message, not by the person who sends the message. The receiver decides what the giver of the communication means, wants or has.

The person who sends the message may have an intended message, but unless the receiver has a set of "shared definitions" with the sender, the message received may not be the same as the message sent. Since the receiver of the message is the one who acts on the message, they are also the ones who give/place the meaning to the message. This is a very important component to learn.

Relationships get into a lot of trouble because of the difference between people regarding "meanings." The receiver *assumes* that they know what the sender "means" and does not check it out. If the assumption is wrong, there could be a problem between the sender and the receiver.

This can be especially true when the communication is about something important, difficult, or touchy. The sender may "beat around the bush" and the receiver may not check things out enough. As a result, the true meaning of the sent communication is not received and problems can result.

The phrase "I love you" is a good example. This phrase can mean very different things to each member communicating it. Unless they agree on which meaning is being used, they will both assume that their definition is the agreed one and they will both react from their definition. If these definitions or "meanings" are very different, a big problem could result.

Perception then, is not logic; it is an experience and is only a part of the whole picture. For a communication to be understood, the communication must be sent in the recipient's language, and he/she must have some understanding of what is being "said".

Whenever anything is "communicated" to us, we see/pay attention to only the part of what is being communicated that matters to us. As an example, think about a child wanting something from a parent. The child asks and asks and when the parent says, "yes" with conditions attached, the child only hears the "yes". We are all like that. We hear the "I love you" and not the, "but..." And what we end up getting hurt by is the part that we didn't/couldn't/didn't want to hear.

Expectation

Expectation is the sense that something is going to happen. Very often, we have something in mind for what we think or want to happen. We tend to see or perceive what we expect to see or perceive and to filter out the unexpected or unwanted. We all get used to certain patterns in our lives. Then we "tune out" because we know those patterns and we can fill in the spaces when we hear the beginning of the pattern.

This is all well and good as long as the pattern holds. Where we get into trouble is when the pattern changes and we are on autopilot and not paying attention to the changes.

Involvement

Involvement is having or making demands on the receiver of the communication. Communication always makes demands. It demands that the recipient of the communication become somebody, do something, or believe something.

The closer the relationship, the more involvement there is. When people are closely involved, they start to feel demands simply from a sigh, or a tone of voice.

The problem occurs when the demand that is heard is not the demand that is being sent. We react to what we "**hear**" instead of what is being "**sent**". Most of us who have been in committed relationships can come up with one or two tales of being involved in this kind of

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situation. For example, many of us "know" from a certain sigh, word, or movement from our partner that they want to have sex with us. This is great if we also want to have sex. However, if we aren't in the mood, we may already be reacting to/avoiding what we "know" they want before they have even brought it up. And boy does this create a problem when they really didn't want sex, but something else.

Big disagreements can happen when one partner misunderstands what the other wanted before even being asked!!!

There are three basic premises of human communications.

1. **It is impossible to not communicate.** Communication is going on all of the time, with or without words.
2. **Human communication is a multi-level phenomenon.** There are two parts to human communication:
 - a. Content - informational value.
 - b. Feeling - what the information is about. This has to do with the relationship between the sender and the receiver. It is very different when your partner tells you "I love you" and your mother tells you "I love you".
3. **The message sent is not necessarily the message received.**

When we look at the communication in any relationship, that communication is easier to understand if we know something about that relationship. We all communicate differently in the many relationships we have. We speak in different ways, in different words, and we have varying expectations in different relationships.

These expectations are the "rules" of the various relationships in our lives. Different relationships have different rules. Many times, the people in the relationship are not aware of the "rules". Spouses may communicate differently than do boss and subordinate or parent and child. The kind of relationship that exists has a strong impact on the communication patterns.

Feedback

Communication goes two ways -- from us and to us. The communication that comes to us helps us learn about ourselves and how we are seen in the relationship we have with whoever is communicating with us. This is called feedback, and it comes in many forms. Sometimes others tell us how we affect them, and sometimes they avoid or seek us out more. This is also feedback but in a different form. The more trust and comfort we have in the relationship, the more we will believe the feedback.

Feedback is a way of helping another person to consider changing his/her behavior. It is communication to a person (or group) that gives that person information about how he or she affects others.

Feedback helps an individual keep his behavior "on target" and to thus better achieve his or her goals. When you give feedback, use the following guidelines in order to ensure that the feedback gives the best benefit.

If you want good communication in your relationships, you need to become a good communicator. The only person you will ever be able to improve in your lifetime is **YOU**. However, when we make changes in ourselves, those changes tend to impact and create the way for changes to happen in others.

One way of starting good communication is to begin to use "I" messages. "I" messages are statements that let others know how you feel. You are taking responsibility for your feelings. You do not attack the receiver, but you give information about the behaviors that need attention, and you give information about what specific changes you would like to have happen.

"I" messages are your emotional truths and expressions of your feelings. They allow others to respond from their emotional truths and feelings. **"I" messages are always right because they are about you and not about others.**

"You" messages, on the other hand, tend to be controlling, aggressive, and judging of the recipient of the message. "You" messages tend to mean that there must be a winner and a loser in the communication.

"I" messages are especially helpful in giving feedback to another person. The following is a good guideline for giving feedback.

Giving feedback

Think about the amount of information that the person you want to give feedback to can use, rather than the amount that you may have, or feel that you have to give.

Following are the steps of an "I" message.

1. **Describe the situation.** Be specific and objective. Make behavioral observations, not inferences. Deal with the present, not the past behavior. Stay away from words like "always" and "never"
 - When _____ (describe the situation)
(When you come home four hours late without having called)
2. **Express your own feelings, and take responsibility for them.** Focus on sharing this to assist the recipient, rather than as a "release" for you. Describe the consequences to you as a result of the other person's behavior.
 - I feel _____ because _____
(I am frightened because I am afraid you have been hurt)
3. **Specify the changes you want.** Express what you want but be realistic. Ask, don't demand. Make sure you express the changes in behaviors you would like to see.
 - I would like/appreciate _____
(I would like you to call me if you are going to be late)
4. **Share your perceptions of the possible outcomes of the changes.**
 - This will result in _____
(This will help me feel more comfortable and not angry when you do come home)