



Feelings

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Representing:
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Thank you,



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Scope

This curriculum duration is 12 hours (3 hours sessions x 4 sessions). The curriculum plan followed the Kemp (1994) Curriculum planning model and Blooms Taxonomy. This workshop content was developed and will be implemented to fit the needs of those interested with a learner-centred approach.

Goal

On completion of this workshop, learners will be able to understand the value in identifying their feelings and have the tools necessary to work with their feelings.

Workshop Outline

<p>Session 1 What are Feelings?</p>	<p>Introduction What are feelings? Identifying Your feelings Emotional Recovery Choice Journal</p>
<p>Session 2 Who is in charge – You or your Feelings?</p>	<p>Review Thought Record Positive Self Talk/Affirmation 'I' statements Relaxation / meditations Releasing Emotions</p>
<p>Session 3 Anger</p>	<p>Review Video A How to Guide Controlling Anger</p>
<p>Session 4 Alternative ways of understanding and dealing with our Feelings</p>	<p>Review Drama Triangle Spirituality Sacral Chakra Releasing Unwanted Emotions Counselling</p>

Outcomes

These outcomes build upon the belief that each person has the potential to understand their feelings and take proactive measures to deal with their emotions in a healthy way. Upon completion of this workshop you will be able to:

- ✓ understand and identify the difference between your emotions and your behaviours (Knowledge & Skill)
- ✓ describe the underlying values in identifying feelings and the consequences of denying your feelings (Knowledge & Attitude)
- ✓ demonstrate a number of different tools used in managing your emotions (Knowledge & Skill)
- ✓ describe and identify personal pros and cons, and compare and contrast the different tools used in managing your emotions (Knowledge & Skills)
- ✓ critically evaluate the effectiveness of each tool in order to determine what is most appropriate for your own use (knowledge, Skill, Attitude & Evaluation)



Session One: What are Feelings?

Learning Outcomes

Completion of this Session will enable you to:

- ✓ begin to identify the difference between emotions and behaviours (Knowledge & Skill)
- ✓ discuss the value of identifying feelings and how that relates to your well-being (Knowledge & Attitude)
- ✓ discuss the consequences of denying feelings and how that relates to your well-being (Knowledge & Attitude)
- ✓ understand the role of choice in dealing with your emotions (Knowledge & Attitude)

Read the article on your own or out loud with the group.

Feelings, Nothing more than Feelings

By Pat Risser

Sometimes, feelings suck! For years following my childhood abuse, I had no feelings and that was fine. The feelings were very large and it genuinely seemed possible that I could be consumed by them.

I learned this trick when I was a kid. I could dissociate. I could make all feelings go away. I used to be able to proudly boast that you could take a hammer to my hand as it lay on a table and you could cause physical damage but you could NOT hurt me. I could turn off the pain and it was great. I could go absolutely numb and nothing could cause me pain. I could disappear into the nothingness and feel safe from any possible hurt.

Oh, once in a while, I dabbled with feelings. I got married and had kids and actually acted like I had some feelings about all of that but I didn't really. For a while, I got into some serious drinking. Then, I got scared and quit. I got scared that if I drank too much, I'd lose control and actually feel something. I would never lose control like most people do, but I was at risk of losing my ability to shut down my feelings; so I stopped drinking.

My shutting down of feelings was second nature. I'd been doing it for so long that I didn't even notice most of the time. But, eventually, I noticed that something was different. I noticed that most folks remembered stuff that they had done. Most folks remembered their high school graduation. Most folks remembered their wedding. Most folks remembered the birth of their kids. I didn't remember this stuff and more. I realized that at the same time I was shutting down the potential for anything that might hurt me, I also shut out the good stuff. The more emotionally laden something was, the less I could

recall it. That meant that I didn't recall the pain of the childhood abuse but it also meant that I couldn't recall some of the good and important things in my life.

Eventually, this stifling of emotions got to be too much. It was like it was all seething silently beneath my calm exterior. I started to react to smaller and smaller stressors. It was taking less and less to set me off, and I felt more and more out of control. I was spiralling into a depression that I couldn't stop. It's said that depression is anger turned inward and I think that's exactly what it was. I started having flashbacks to my childhood. I started to wake up at night screaming and filled with terror. All my best efforts to stuff the feelings were failing.

I sought help. I went to professionals in mental health. I got labelled and "treated" (actually mislabelled and mistreated). I was told that I was Borderline. I was also told that I had manic-depression and major depression and schizophrenia and schizoaffective disorder and schizotypal personality disorder and schizoid and all the rest. Of course, with each diagnosis, I also got a new drug. I also noticed that I got a new label with every new shrink or therapist. I think they all had their own "pet" label that they favoured. Of course, some of it was certainly driven by the insurance, which would only provide coverage for whatever was popular at the time.

I was raised to trust the doctors. If something is wrong, go to the doctor and they will "fix" it. I went. They didn't fix anything. I struggled with the feelings that were emerging. I was soooo little. I was tiny and scared and hurting just as if it was actually happening all over again. I used to take care of myself by forcing the feelings to subside. I'd cut myself or bang my head or other things to distract my feelings into hiding again. But, none of these things worked for long. Always the overwhelming feelings would again rise.

I found the resources to heal in the most unusual of places. I found solace in a church where I learned that I didn't have to forgive and that I could even be angry. I learned from a therapist that it's okay to feel anger and to vent the anger in ways that didn't harm me or anyone else. I learned to be normal from my fellow patients who treated me like a person as we sat and played cards and laughed and joked. I learned that feelings are merely feelings and that they don't have to have a matching action. That was a tough one to learn. I always figured that if I felt suicidal, I had to ACT suicidal and if I was happy, I had to ACT happy and if I was depressed, I had to ACT depressed. However, I learned that we can choose how to act. We may not be able to choose our feelings but we can choose our actions.

So, instead of acting on suicidal thoughts and feelings, I could choose to do something different. I did. I found other outlets for my emotions that didn't harm me or anyone else.

For awhile, I was almost consumed with anger. I would head out to the freeway on ramp and stick out my thumb to hitchhike back to the state where mom and dad lived so I could gain some vengeance. However, it was good that I was so far away because I never made it. I craved justice. I wanted only to get even with them. I started with small steps. I first had to prove that the things I remembered weren't just some figment of my imagination. I dug out court records and old hospital records. I called people who knew my mother and father when I was very small and talked with them. I learned that my memories were real. For a while, I was no longer suicidal because I had a purpose and that kept me going. Eventually, I got to where I no longer needed vengeance. I discovered that I didn't need these abusive people. I was vindicated enough by my search for truth and the fact that my memories really were based in reality.

The time I spent vindicating my mind, my memories, my reality and my sense of self was healing in itself. By the time I was done with my searches, I found that the wounds that had consumed me as a child and then later as an adult were no

longer quite so painful. My emotions were no longer suppressed nor were they out of control. I was feeling but tentatively in small bits. I liken this period of growth to that of a child developing a sense of colour. My early emotions were in just a few primary colours but as I grew, I was starting to see shades of colour that were new and different. I was maturing emotionally.

I have continued on this journey of healing for many years now. I still get struck with painful emotions at times. I still feel down and depressed. I still sometimes feel as if I'll be consumed, but it doesn't happen often. Sometimes, something will trigger me and then I'll feel very small but with very large emotions. However, I have learned that this passes and I survive. The good in all of this is that I no longer lose the good things that happen. I remember important events in my life and I appreciate those. I have grown into a more full person. I accept all aspects of myself, big and little, and I'm happy mostly. Even when I'm not happy, I know that there will be more happiness in my life because I've done what I can to be rid of abusing people and filled my life with good, kind, caring and loving people.

Yeah, emotions suck sometimes. It's a drag being depressed. I sometimes still feel suicidal and like it is going to last forever, but now I know better so I don't ACT foolishly or on impulse. Now, I just ride it out and then enjoy the good times that do come. I am still not finished. I'm an unfinished human being and I find that I have many lessons still to learn. I don't handle patience all that well yet and there are some other areas that are crying out for growth but I know it will be all right. Not only can I now see the light at the end of the tunnel but I also know for sure that it's not an oncoming train.

The Web: IceBreaker Exercise

1. Have a large ball of yarn or string.
2. Have the group stand in a circle.
3. The first person holding the yarn says his or her name, then throws or rolls the yarn to someone else in the circle.
4. That next person says their name then passes it on. Once the yarn has come to you for a second time, the person repeats their name and says something they like to do or something about themselves, then passes the yarn on again.
5. This continues until the yarn runs out. Make sure everyone gets a turn.
6. Then group then discusses the importance of the web – which is the idea that we are all interconnected, we all need others and that we can support one another.



Story of our Shadow Side

Book: Dark Side of the Light Chasers by Debbie Ford

You Were Born a Castle

Lets imagine for a moment that each of us was born a magnificent castle with long hallways and thousands of rooms. Every room in the house is perfect and possesses a special gift. Each room represents a different aspect of yourself and is an integral part of the entire perfect castle. As a child, you explored every inch of your castle without shame or judgement. Fearlessly you searched every room for its jewel and its mystery. Lovingly you embraced every room, whether it was a closet, a bedroom, or a cellar. Each and every room was unique. Your castle was full of light, love and wonder. Then one day, someone came to your castle and told you that one of your rooms was imperfect, that it could not belong in such a magnificent castle. They suggested that if you wanted to have a perfect castle, you should close and lock the door to this room. As time went by, more and more people came to your castle. They all gave you their opinions of the rooms, which ones they liked and which ones they didn't. And slowly you shut one door after another. Your marvellous rooms were being closed, taken out of the light and put into the dark. A cycle had begun.

From that time on, you closed more and more doors for all kinds of reasons. You closed doors because you were afraid, or you thought the rooms were too bold. You closed doors to rooms that were too conservative. You closed doors to rooms because other castles you saw did not have a room like yours. You closed doors because your religious leaders told you to stay away from certain rooms. You closed any door that did not fit into societies' standards or your own ideal.

The days were gone when your castle seemed endless and your future seemed exciting and bright. You no longer cared for every room with the same love and admiration. Rooms you were once proud of, you now willed to disappear. You tried to figure out ways to get rid of these rooms, but they were part of the structure of your castle. Now that you had shut the door to whatever room you did not like, time went by until one day you just forgot that room altogether. At first,

you didn't realize what you were doing. It just became a habit. With everyone giving you different messages about what a magnificent castle should look like, it became much easier to listen to them than to trust your inner voice: the one that loved your entire castle. Shutting off those rooms actually started to make you feel safe. Soon you found yourself living in just a few small rooms. You had learned to shut off life and became comfortable doing it. Many of us also locked away so many rooms that we have forgotten we ever were a castle. We began to believe we were just a small, two-bedroom house in need of repair.

Now imagine your castle is where you house all of who you are; the good and the bad. One of your rooms is love, one is courage, one is elegance and another grace. Creativity, femininity, honesty, integrity, health, assertiveness, sexiness, power, timidity, hatred, greed, frigidity, laziness, arrogance, sickness, and evil are rooms in your castle. Each room is an essential part of the structure and each room has an opposite somewhere in your castle.

Fortunately, we are never satisfied with being less than what we are capable of being. Our discontent with ourselves motivates us in our search for all the lost rooms of our castle. We can only find the key to our uniqueness by opening all the rooms in our castle.

Example of one person's story:

When I was 8 years old, I earned my first dollar by completing my newly assigned chores. I was so proud and very anxious to reward myself for my hard work by spending my dollar on candy. When in the mall with my mom, on the way to the candy store, we passed by a gentleman that was asking for donation for a local charity. My mother suggested I give my hard-earned dollar to the charity. At first I refused, explaining that I had worked hard for it and deserved to buy my candy. My mom explained to me that I needed to be thankful for all that I did have and it was selfish and greedy for me to keep the money when there were others in more need than me. I eventually gave up my dollar. I was confused, hurt and unsure what had just happened. My mom's intentions were good, she wanted me to learn to be thankful and that giving

was a good thing. But the real lesson I learned was that being selfish or rewarding myself was a greedy thing to do and looked upon as a negative attribute. With time, I unknowingly closed that door. I lost that room in my castle.

The realization of the impact this event (and many others like it) had on me was lost for many years. It was not until I start my journey of personal development that I began to explore all that I was. As a adult I had grown in to someone who was constantly allowing others to have their way, constantly giving and constantly feeling guilty any time I tried to be selfish or greedy with my own needs. And when my kids came I really start to run out of giving. I was giving, giving, giving, and the result was that by giving so much I was not able to refill and started to feel empty and burnt out. But any time I tried to say it was 'me time' I felt even more guilt. Or if I wanted to buy myself something nice, I often felt so guilty just at the thought, that I ended up buying for the kids or the house instead.

I now understand that I have to cherish my selfish and greedy rooms in my castle as much as I have to cherish my giving and generous rooms. If I do not take care of me and give to myself, I will be incapable of giving to others without running out and burning out. The more I get to know all the rooms in my castle, the good and the not so good, the more whole I feel.

Write down times were you remember having “doors” to yourself being closed, or feeling that you attempted to deny and why.

You may want to share with the group what you wrote.



How Does Your Body Tell You What You Are Feeling?

Given below are descriptions of feelings you may have experienced. Try to think of two different ways that you would express these feelings.

First, answer with something that you would **say** that would express your feelings.
Second, with something that you would **do** or **how you would express the feeling**.

1. When you feel bored with what is going on in a discussion, how do you usually express your feelings?

Using words:

Without using words:



2. When you feel very annoyed with another person with whom you want to build a better relationship, how do you usually express your feelings?

Using words:

Without using words:

3. When another person says or does something to you that hurts your feelings deeply, how do you usually express your feelings?

Using words:

Without using words:

- 4. An acquaintance asks you to do something that you are afraid you cannot do well. You also want to hide the fact that you feel inadequate. How do you express your feelings?

Using words:

Without using words:

- 5. You feel affection and fondness for someone else, but at the same time can not be sure the other person feels the same way about you. How do you express your feelings?

Using words:

Without using words:

6. Your close friend is leaving town for a long time, and you feel alone and lonely. How would you express your feeling?

Using words:

Without using words:



Guess the Feeling

For each of the following situations, identify two different feelings that you think the talker may be experiencing. You may choose to discuss possible answers with your group.

1. The female asks her partner, "Why can't you ever be any place on time?"

A.

B.

2. You notice that a person in the group, who usually talks a lot, has suddenly become silent.

A.

B.

3. Karen abruptly changed the subject after Tanya made a comment.

A.

B.

4. A male tells his partner, "You shouldn't have bought me such an expensive gift."

A.

B.

5. You hear a passenger say to the driver, "Do you have to drive that fast?"

A.

B.

6. Sam says to Jane, "You are really wonderful."

A.

B.



Emotional Recovery and Shame

Emotional Recovery – by Patricia Deegan

Emotional factors are what really hold people back from self-empowerment. Reclaiming your power can be achieved by focusing on three areas - **Hope, Courage and Complete Self-Appreciation.**

1. Hope

Hope needs to start with the disillusionment of our fantasies about a magic rescuer or magic pill. It also starts with the realization that it is a lie that one's condition is incurable - recovery is possible. One half to two thirds of those with a mental health issue can recover! Hope is the emotion that allows us to believe that something good can happen; that the future can be brighter and that things will all work out for the better.

Hope has been found to have a positive influence on health and general well being. The very idea that recovery is possible gives us renewed reason to hope.

Things to consider: What are some of the hopes that you have for your life?

We build hope in a number of different ways. We:

- build positive relationships
- actively seek small successes
- connect with successful role models
- increase spirituality
- use humour
- develop hope-filled rituals
- surround ourselves with symbols that represent hope
- talk to others who have hope or experienced hope in a way that started them on the road to recovery.

Emotional Recovery (Continued)

2. Courage

“To dream anything that you want to dream. That is the beauty of the human mind, to do anything that you want to do. That is the strength of the human will. To trust yourself; to test your limits. That is the courage to succeed.” ~ Bernard Edmonds (Pathways) ~

Fear is the biggest roadblock to recovery. Fear is a tension held in the body, a memory of a past situations when we felt that our survival was in danger and we were not allowed to release the fear in the way that is natural to us.

Courage is the emotion that works with fear. To be afraid and to continue to do something is courage. You experience courage when you look fear in the face and continue walking forward.

How can we build courage? By talking to others who have shown courage. Also by setting small steps for us. What can you do today that is a small risk? What kind of support or assistance will you need? The emotion courage can really be a powerful tool in your road of recovery.



Emotional Recovery (Continued)

3. Complete Self-Acceptance

In reclaiming your power, complete self-acceptance is a very powerful emotion. Some examples of how to work with this emotion and to work towards self-acceptance are:

- 1) Take exquisite care of yourself
- 2) See yourself through eyes of compassion
- 3) Get the best information you can
- 4) Establish the best support for yourself that you can
- 5) Tell your story in detail
- 6) Find a safe person to talk to
- 7) Tell your story in detail
- 8) Reach for closeness with your counsellor
- 9) Focus on how safe you are now
- 10) Allow yourself to discharge the fear by laughing, trembling and sweating

Please discuss your thoughts on Hope, Courage and Complete Self-Appreciation with your group.

Further Readings:

Article: Breeding, John. 1998. Drug Withdrawal and Emotional Recovery: The Rights Tenet; published by NARPA (National Association for Rights Protection and Advocacy)

Book: Ridgway, P., McDiarmid, D., Davidson, L., Bayes, J. 2002.
Pathways To Recovery. A project of the University of Kansas School, School of Social Welfare, Office of Mental Health Research and training.

Emotional Balloon

You can practice this exercise with the group or do it on your own.

1. Take a balloon.
2. Think of your day. Name something stressful, then blow into the balloon.
3. Continue thinking of your day and for each stressful event, blow into the balloon more and more.
4. Allow the balloon to get as big as it needs without actually exploding.
5. Then think of something in your day that helped reduced some of the stress.
6. Do this for each thing you did to remove some of your days stress.
7. Now look at the balloon, is it back to the empty balloon that you started with?
If not then you need to continue to come up with other ways to release some of your stress.

Do this exercise everyday.

Make sure that the balloon is being emptied fully by the end of each day as the balloon represents the stress you are holding in your body.



Journalling

Journalling is a valuable tool in understanding one's self. It slows the brain down so that you are able to process the many thoughts that have been racing through your head. We have hundreds of thoughts a second, but are not capable of writing at that speed. Therefore, writing slows the brain down. It allows us to be in touch with our emotions that come with these many thoughts.

Journalling also provides us with a written account of our emotions. It provides for an opportunity to look back at what we felt in the past and provides us with a glimpse as to what we might feel in the future. We start to see patterns in our lives. These patterns allow us to better understand ourselves.

Discuss with the group ways in which they may have used journalling in their lives or how journalling can be used in the future.



Session Two

Who is in charge – You or Your Feelings?

Learning Outcomes

Completion of this Session will enable you to:

- ✓ understand the connection between your thoughts and your feelings (Knowledge)
- ✓ demonstrate an understanding of different tools used to shift your thought patterns from negative to positive and display an understanding of the benefits of this on your well being (Knowledge, Skill & Attitude)
- ✓ describe and identify your personal pros and cons, and compare and contrast the different tools used to shift your thought patterns (Knowledge & Skills)
- ✓ critically evaluate the effectiveness of each tool learned to date in order to determine what is most appropriate for your use (knowledge, Skill, Attitude & Evaluation)

Relationship Between our Thoughts and our Emotions

The original article can be found on the Internet at the sites listed after the title. You may choose to read the article online, or print off copies to share with your group.

Article: [How to Achieve Emotional Control](http://www.buildfreedom.com/tl/tl12.shtml), by Mark Lindsay (2003).
<http://www.buildfreedom.com/tl/tl12.shtml>

Article Highlights:

- Brain physiology – once you learn that emotions are largely an automatic function of the brain, it is much easier to learn how to begin to control them
- Personal growth and evolution are mostly a matter of exerting more control over our reflexes.
- Inappropriate diet and hormonal imbalances may affect your emotions adversely
- Automatic thoughts remain hidden from most people. Learning how to monitor your automatic thoughts is not difficult
- The basic idea behind cognitive therapy is that by changing the way you think, you can change the way you feel/act. It is simply a matter of turning your attention inward and tracing back the series of thoughts which ran through your head just prior to experiencing the emotion
- The secret to emotional control is to disengage yourself from them, pull back and cease to identify with your feelings or mood

Discuss your thoughts on this article with your group.

Thought Record

Being able to record your thoughts for specific situations can help you to reflect back on how you reacted initially to the situation, and how you could have reacted differently in a more positive way

1. Situation	2. Moods	3. Automatic Thoughts	4. Evidence to Support the Hot Thought	5. Evidence that Does Not Support the Hot Thought	6. Alternative /Balanced Thoughts	7. Rate Current Mood
Who? What? When? Where?	What did you feel? Rate each mood – (0-100%)	What was going through your mind just before you started to feel this way? Any other thoughts? Images? Circle the <u>Hot Thought</u> that most strongly relates to the emotions/moods			Write an Alternative or Balanced thought Rate how much you believe in each Alternative or Balanced Thought (0-100%)	Re-rate moods listed in column 2 as well as any new moods (0-100%)

Fill out your own Thought Record and discuss your results with the group.
You may want to have extra copies for different situations.

1. Situation	2. Moods	3. Automatic Thoughts	4. Evidence to Support the Hot Thought	5. Evidence that Does Not Support the Hot Thought	6. Alternative /Balanced Thoughts	7. Rate Current Mood

(Adapted From: Mind Over Mood, by Dennis Greenberger, PhD)

Negative and Positive Thoughts

The following is an example of how to turn your negative thoughts into positive affirmations. On your own, try to come up with your own positive thoughts to replace the negative ones. Feel free to share your responses with the group.

Negative Thoughts	Positive Thoughts
I am not worthy.	I am a valuable person.
I have never accomplished anything.	I have accomplished many things. - - -
I always make mistakes.	I do many things well. - - -
I am a jerk.	I am a great person.
I do not deserve a good life.	I deserve to be happy and healthy.
I am stupid.	I am smart.

Use this page to record your own negative thoughts about yourself, and turn those into positive thoughts. You may choose to share your responses with the group.

Negative thoughts	Positive Thoughts

Affirmations

With your group, brainstorming on affirmations: what are affirmations; give examples of affirmations (Example: I, and I alone, am responsible for my future and for my emotions. No one can make me feel anything unless I let them.)



Affirmations (Continued)

Mirror Exercise:

While looking in the mirror, repeat the following statements. Do this every morning and evening for 30 days straight:

------(your name) I love you.

------(your name) I love you.

------(your name) I love you.

You are guilt free.

And so it is.



Power thought Cards

Luis Hayes has cards created (http://www.aplacefortheheart.co.uk/frame.php?sp=/louise_hay/affirmation.htm)
 You can also create your own cards, or fill in the chart below and cut your cards out.

Make cards that are positive affirmations.

Close your eyes and pick one card. That is your affirmation for the day.

Pick one each day.



I accept where I am and smile.		



Compliments Record

Create a list of good things your friends have said about you. This list should be ongoing – add to it whenever someone gives you a compliment. Go back to this list when you are having difficulty thinking positively or are in a bad mood.















'I' Statements

The value behind using 'I' statements is that they help prevent the other person from becoming or feeling defensive, keeps the focus on your own feelings (no one else can tell you how you feel) etc.

'I' Statements Formula:

To use an 'I' Statement, just fill in the blanks in the formula below:

I feel _____

When you _____

because _____

What I want is _____



Practice using the 'I' Statement formula for the following examples:

Example 1: Your 12-year-old drops his books and coat at the front door:

I feel _____

When you _____

because _____

What I want is _____

Example 2: You made plans to go out with a friend who arrives an hour late. She didn't phone ahead so you could make alternate arrangements:

I feel _____

When you _____

because _____

What I want is _____

Example 3: You are leaving home for an early appointment. Your partner used the car last night and the tank is empty. Now you have to stop for gas, making you late.

I feel _____

When you _____

because _____

What I want is _____

Meditation

Benefits of Meditation

When we start practising meditation, we start feeling relaxed, peaceful and happy. This is a kind of inter-generative process. You meditate and you get the reward in forms of joy and happiness, which in turn motivates you to meditate more. In time, it becomes your automatic practice, a kind of 'sanskar'. You feel uneasy and think something is missing from your life if you do not meditate on any particular day. When you start your day with meditation, the peace and joy generated last with you the whole, day whatever the nature of your activities. It is like taking a healthy and nourishing diet before the start of a strenuous and stressful routine of the day.

Meditation enables you to become aware of your inner resources of joy and peace. You can tap into them whenever you feel stressed and worried. You acquire a habit of detached observation. So if something wrong and irritating happens in course of your day, you can view it as a detached observer. You learn to understand the monkey tricks of your mind. You thus get an inner poise that ultimately percolates into your daily life. The peace and joy that you acquire become infectious to those around you. In this way you try to make the whole environment happy and peaceful.

Although meditation is a great tool for relaxation and peace of mind, it can become a path for our spiritual quest of the ultimate spiritual goal of self-enlightenment and God realization or nirvana. Meditation may help us overcome our ego and body consciousness, which are the main causes of most of human suffering, tensions, conflicts at personal and larger levels. Meditation helps us understand that our real nature is an integral part of the divine or transcendental consciousness.

Scientific studies have conclusively proved the benefits of meditation for our mind and body. According to search results released by the University of Wisconsin-Madison, meditation has been shown to produce lasting beneficial changes in immune-system function as well as brain electrical activity. "Researchers found about 50 percent more electrical activity in the left frontal regions of the brains of the meditators. Other research has shows that part of the brain is associated with positive emotions and anxiety reduction."

(from <http://www.freemeditations.com/meditation-benefits.html>)

Meditation (Continued)

Borrow a meditation tape from the library, or have a group member slowly read the meditation below out loud. Sit or lie down in a comfortable position, in a space that has as few distractions as possible.

Meditation to Relax

As we begin to relax the mind
 Try to visualize
 That you are sitting on the banks of a stream
 And You are a peaceful observer
 And the stream is flowing with the thoughts in your mind
 Some positive some negative
 Some necessary some unnecessary
 But you relax
 And just watch the thoughts flow by
 Like a stream
 You watch these thoughts
 And realize that you are separate from them
 And you are relaxed knowing that
 You just let them flow by
 And do not get attached to the thoughts
 Sitting on the bank of the river
 Like an observer

(from <http://www.freemeditations.com/meditation-to-relax.html>)

You can experience a deep relaxation
 For you do not need to worry
 About each and every thought in your mind
 You let the negative thoughts pass
 And enjoy the positive ones
 And you are the observer of your mind
 And as you are the observer
 You choose to relax with positive feelings
 And the more these relaxed feelings in your heart
 You notice the gradual change of thoughts
 The change from the polluted negative stream
 To a clear flowing stream of positive thoughts
 Thoughts such as that you are relaxed and peaceful
 No matter what thoughts are in your mind
 Or in the mind of the others
 For you are a relaxed peaceful observer
 Calm concentrated detached



Releasing Emotions

Emotions control your thinking, behaviour and actions. Negative emotions affect your physical bodies as much as your body affects your feelings and thinking. People, who ignore, dismiss, repress, or just ventilate their emotions are setting themselves up for physical illness. Emotions that are not felt and released, but buried within the body can, cause serious illness, including cancer, arthritis, and many types of chronic illnesses.

With the group, brainstorm on healthy ways to release emotions:

Example: Deep breathing

Emotions Freeze-Frame

This technique uses the power of the heart, brain, and nervous system to consciously choose our emotions. Freeze-Frame only takes a few minutes and can be done anytime, any place.

The five-step process of Freeze-Frame:

1. Recognize a stressful feeling and take time out.
2. Shift your focus of thinking away from the disturbed emotion and into the heart area.
3. Think about a fun time or positive experience you have had for at least 10 seconds.
4. Ask your heart what would be a more efficient response to the stressful situation you have experienced.
5. Let your heart give you the answer and follow what it says.



(Adapted from: <http://www.biztimes.com/news/2005/4/15/turn-on-your-heart-light>)



Session Three Anger

Learning Outcomes

Completion of this Session will enable you to:

- ✓ understand the valuable role the emotion anger plays in our lives (Knowledge & Attitude)
- ✓ demonstrate an understanding of different tools used to deal with and manage anger (Knowledge & Skill)
- ✓ describe and identify your personal pros and cons, and compare and contrast the different tools used to deal with anger (Knowledge & Skills)
- ✓ critically evaluate the effectiveness of each tool learned to date, in order to determine what is most appropriate for your own use (knowledge, Skill, Attitude & Evaluation)

Video

At this point, you may want to watch a video to help introduce anger and ways of dealing with anger.

Some video suggestions include:



Anger Management, starring Adam Sandler.



Anger: The Misunderstood Emotion – can be borrowed from Wellington-Dufferin Self Help, Orangeville



Swallowing Anger; Recipe for Depression – can be borrowed from Mood Disorders Association of the Waterloo Region

Discuss with your group the definition of anger and how you see anger expressed in your own life.

Anger Management

Article: Anger Management: A How to Guide, (<http://www.state.sc.us/dmh/bryan/webanger.htm>)

"The mind is its own place, and in itself can make
a heaven of hell,
a hell of heaven."
--John Milton

What causes anger?

Anger is a natural response that all people have. It is caused by two basic things:

- (1) Frustration: Not getting what we want, especially if we were expecting to get it;
- (2) Feeling that others do not respect us or care how we feel.

There are many specific things that may cause anger, but they all come down to these two basic principles.

How is anger related to depression?

Often anger becomes depression. When a person gives up fighting a problem and loses the energy of anger, he becomes depressed. Many depressions, therefore, has the same basic causes as anger --frustration and/or a feeling that others do not respect you or care about you.

Our thoughts cause our anger.

If you are mad at someone, it is usually because you think that he meant to be disrespectful or uncaring. Since we can never be sure what another person meant, we may be wrong about his motive. Most arguments start from such misunderstandings. Remember: it is **we** who make ourselves mad!

Expectation determines frustration.

An entertainer may be angry or depressed because he did not win an Oscar, even though he still has wealth and fame. A poor man, however, may be happy because he found a \$5 bill when he was broke. Our moods are relative to what we want and expect, not to what we actually get!

Self-concept affects anger and depression.

We all have areas in which we are sensitive based always on past experiences. These sensitive areas cause us to react more strongly, as well as to jump to negative conclusions more readily at times when our "buttons" are pushed. Thus, "know thyself" is a key to managing anger.

Several things affect the threshold of anger.

- Physical fatigue
- Pain
- Alcohol, drugs
- Other recent irritations or stresses.

These make us more irritable or susceptible to depression. Be aware of the thresholds of anger of both persons anytime there is a disagreement!

Managing anger is often managing communication.

For two people to communicate clearly, there needs to be a talker and a listener. However, in an argument there are two talkers and no listeners! Thus, to resolve an argument, one must remember several techniques of good communication:

Use active listening: Making eye contact and saying, "I understand what you're saying," or "I understand that you feel such-and-such," helps calm the other person down and helps clarify misunderstandings, often laying the groundwork for him to listen to you after he has calmed down.

Choose non-attacking words and use a polite tone: We can always express our views in a variety of ways, so the choice of words is important. Our tone of voice and our body language convey as much information as our words!

Do not let the argument expand! In many arguments (especially marital ones) one person brings up old issues from previous disputes. That expands the argument and creates too many issues to resolve at one time. If the other person tries to bring up other issues, use the "broken record technique"; repeatedly, politely insist that you will stick to the first issue, and will deal with the others only after the main issue has been resolved. Likewise, if the other person attacks you personally, you must resist the temptation to stop and defend yourself until the main point has been worked out. Once you let yourself get drawn into an enlarged discussion or put on the defensive, you have lost the ability to manage and resolve the argument.

"There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so." --William Shakespeare

10 Steps to dealing with Healthy Anger

1. Feeling angry is good. Anger tells us something is wrong. Violence or abusive language is never an acceptable way to cope with anger.
2. Instead of giving time outs, take one yourself.
3. Use this time to talk yourself down from hostile thoughts, feelings and urges.
4. Don't blame others for the fact that you are feeling angry. Take 100% responsibility for your own thoughts, feelings and urges.
5. Play detective with yourself. Hurts, fears and vulnerability often hide beneath anger.
6. Consider the consequences to you and others of your choice of words and actions. Consequences come now or they come later, but they always show up!
7. Be specific and talk about the "real" problem.
8. Avoid the tug of war - your way - their way. Instead, use everyone's creativity to find a solution that will work.
9. Maintain your dignity: help others keep theirs.
10. Be fair. Be generous.

(from YWCA of Canada, Week Without Violence, 2001 campaign materials)

Practice

On your own or with your group, list different situations that you have dealt with anger:

List ways you could have better dealt with the different anger situations:

If you choose, break into pairs or small groups and choose an anger situation to go over. With your group, act out the anger situation, and give each person the opportunity to practice dealing with anger.



Session 4: Alternative Ways of Understanding and Dealing with our Feelings

Learning Outcomes

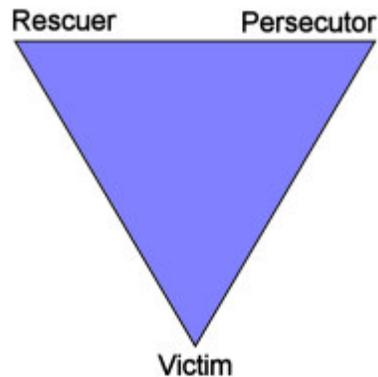
Completion of this Session will enable you to:

- ✓ demonstrate an understanding of alternative tools used by some to deal with their emotions (Knowledge & Attitude)
- ✓ evaluate the value these alternative tools have in dealing with your own emotional well being (Evaluation)
- ✓ critically evaluate the effectiveness of each tool learned to date in order to determine what is most appropriate for your own use (knowledge, Skill, Attitude & Evaluation)

Breaking The Drama Triangle

The drama triangle is a model of dysfunctional social interaction... Each point on the triangle represents a common and ineffective response to conflict, one more likely to prolong disharmony than to end it. Participants in a drama triangle create misery for themselves and others. By applying the physical principles of martial arts to the psychological realm, you can transform this lose-lose situation and create a more positive outcome for everyone.

Each player in this particular mind game begins by assuming one of three archetypal roles: Victim, Rescuer, or Persecutor.



- **Victims** are helpless and hopeless. They deny responsibility for their negative circumstances, and deny possession of the power to change them.
- **Rescuers** are constantly applying short-term repairs to a Victim's problems, while neglecting their own needs.
- **Persecutors** blame the Victims and criticize the enabling behaviour of Rescuers, without providing guidance, assistance or a solution to the underlying problem.

Players sometimes alternate roles during the course of a game. For example, a Rescuer pushed too far by a Persecutor will switch to the role of Victim or counter-Persecutor.

While a healthy person will perform in each of these roles occasionally, pathological role-players actively avoid leaving the familiar and comfortable environment of the game. Thus, if no recent misfortune has befallen them or their loved ones, they will often create one. Victims suffer a series of “accidents” and Rescuers engage in noble self-sacrifice, while Persecutors are just “keeping it real”.

In each case, the drama triangle is an instrument of destruction.

Avoid the Corners

In order to break the Drama Triangle pattern, there are a few things you can do:

1. **Move into the centre.** Resist the temptation to play an exaggerated and complementary role to a Victim, Rescuer or Persecutor. You do not want to stabilize an unpleasant situation. Instead, find and hold the centre position, thereby marginalizing your adversary and eliminating their power base.
The centre of the drama triangle contains elements of each corner. It is a combination of sensitivity, compassion, and responsibility.
2. **Refuse to accept your opponent’s force.** Do not struggle with them, or yield to them; instead, allow your opponent to move into an indefensible position.
If you have successfully taken the centre, your adversary will halt their attack, rather than risk unmasking themselves and exposing the game.

Although the drama triangle is a form of passive aggression, you may nevertheless object to casting a loved one as your opponent. Instead, take their bad habits and unskilful means as your enemy, and destroy them with awareness and enlightened action.

Spirituality

With your group, discuss the following questions:

What roles does spirituality play in your life?

How do you think spirituality and/or prayer can influence how you deal with your feelings?

Sacral Chakra

Chakras are centres of energy, located on the midline of the body. There are seven of them, and they govern our psychological properties. The chakras can have various levels of activity. When they're "open," they're considered operative in a normal fashion.

There exist lots of techniques to balance the chakras. Mostly techniques to open chakras are used.

Of the seven chakras, we are going to focus on **The Sacral Chakra**. This chakra is about feeling and sexuality. When it is open, your feelings flow freely, and are expressed without you being over-emotional. You are open to intimacy and you can be passionate and lively. You have no problems dealing with your sexuality.

If you tend to be stiff and unemotional or have a "poker face," the Sacral chakra is under-active. You're not very open to people.

If this chakra is over-active, you tend to be emotional all the time. You'll feel emotionally attached to people and you can be very sexual.

To Open the Sacral Chakra:

Put your hands in your lap, palms up, on top of each other. Left hand underneath, its palm touching the back of the fingers of the right hand. The tips of the thumbs touch gently.

Concentrate on the Sacral chakra at the sacral bone (on the lower back).

Chant the sound VAM.



• Sacral Chakra



(adapted from <http://www.eclecticenergies.com/chakras/introduction.php>)

Releasing Unwanted Emotions

Unwanted emotions are any emotions that are affecting your life in a negative way. Even emotions often viewed as positive, such as lovestruck, can be harmful if the other person does not love you back or is an abuser.

What are some ways we can release unwanted feelings?

Letter Burning Ceremony

On a piece of paper or in the space below, write a letter to someone you are angry with, someone who has hurt you or you have hurt. You may also choose to write a list of emotions you want to release, and the causes of those emotions.

Once you have finished, go outside with your group and, in a metal bowl or fire pit, burn the letter/list you have written. While watching the items burn, think about what you have written and imagine those items floating away with the smoke and ashes.

(Safety Note: Please only do this exercise if you have a safe place to burn the letters, away from any other flammable materials. Also, be sure to have a fire extinguisher within reach.)

If burning your letter/list is not an option, rip it up into small pieces and sprinkle them into a bowl. While you are watching the pieces of paper flutter down, think about what you have written and imagine those items fluttering away with the bits of paper.



Counselling

Sometimes when we have tried a variety of methods to control and release our feelings, we may still have difficulties dealing with very strong emotions. If this happens, it may be a good idea to seek support from a counsellor, social worker, etc.

So how does one go about choosing a counsellor?

The answer to this question is going to depend on what is important to you, which is why I don't believe in a cookie-cutter formula. Following is a list of things to consider when choosing a counsellor, but at the end of the day, you will decide which of them hold the highest priority.

- 1) **Therapist Credentials / Degrees:** How long has the counsellor been working? What are their credentials? Some people put a lot of weight on credentials – Ph.D., LMFT, Psy.D., LCSW.... Are you more comfortable working with someone who has a higher level of education or is this not as important as what the person brings into the therapy room in relationship skills and style? Are you open to working with an intern under the supervision of a licensed professional?
- 2) **Fees:** Speaking of fees, what can you afford for counselling? Do you have the option of going through your insurance? When you do the math to try to figure out what you can afford, make sure you allow for a minimum of six sessions in your plan. If there are financial limitations, be sure to tell let the potential counsellor so they can refer you out to a lower cost option if needed.
- 3) **Location:** These days, convenience is king. A lot of people who contact me for therapy have said they were in my neighbourhood and that my location was a “plus” to them. When you do a search on a therapist directory, plug in your zip/postal code, if that's an option, to start with the closest people to you.
- 4) **Referrals:** Getting a therapist referral from a trusted source can be very comforting for some people. A least you know that this person has been helpful to someone you know. However, keep in mind that just because one counsellor was helpful to your friend doesn't mean that it will translate to your situation.

- 5) **Spiritual / Religious Concerns:** For those with particular spiritual or religious beliefs, it's usually important to find a counsellor who works from that platform. The ideas about marriage, meaning, roles, rules, etc. will differ vastly between, for example, a Catholic therapist and a therapist without religion as a focus.
- 6) **Therapist Modality:** There are different theoretical orientations therapists operate from in how they conceptualize people and healthy relationships. Don't be afraid to ask, "What's your orientation?" if this is important to you.
- 7) **Comfort Level:** Are you more comfortable with a male or female counsellor? What types of personalities do you resonate with? Is this someone you would feel safe opening your heart and vulnerabilities to?
- 8) **Trust Your Instincts:** I often encourage my own clients to pay closer attention to their instincts. This applies to choosing a marriage counsellor. After spending some time looking at a therapist's website and speaking to them on the phone, let your intuition guide you to decide whether this is a good fit for you. When you meet the person, continue to do an internal check. If it doesn't feel right – try somebody else!

Good luck in your search and be sure to shop around. These days there are numerous therapist directories and personal therapist websites that can be found all over the Internet. This visibility has allowed counsellors to share what they want to about themselves, their practices and ways of working with people which I believe has led to a demystification of the whole process – and more easily available information for the consumer.

(Adapted from <http://family-marriage-counseling.com/mentalhealth/choosing-a-marriage-counselor.htm>. By: Lisa Kift, MFT)

Appendices

A. How to Achieve Emotional Control

Page Number