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"Self-esteem enhancement: A personal approach" leader's guide

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"SELF-ESTEEM ENHANCEMENT: A PERSONAL APPROACH"

LEADER'S GUIDE

PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLAR SENIOR THESIS
SPRING 1990

JODI L. HAMMER
GOALS:

This workshop is designed to:

1. Provide participants with an increased understanding of what self-esteem is, its impact on life, and how it can be enhanced.

2. Assist participants in developing personal action steps to increasing their self-esteem based on a variety of enhancement techniques discussed.

WORKSHOP FORMAT:

This course will consist of four 90-minute sessions and will utilize a combination of role-plays, case studies, and group participation to enable students to achieve the desired result of increased self-esteem.

SESSION 1: "SELF AWARENESS: THE FIRST STEP"
Self-esteem will be introduced in terms of its components, characteristics, sources, and implication on well-being.

--Completing the Self-Esteem Index pre-test
--Identifying values, beliefs, and attitudes
--Perceiving the self: Real vs. ideal self

SESSION 2: "SELF-ACCEPTANCE: I'M OK, YOU'RE OK"

--Recognizing and accepting personal strengths and weaknesses
--Identifying personal skills for use in developing positive self statements
--Accepting compliments
--Responding to criticism and mistakes

SESSION 3: "BARRIERS TO SELF-ESTEEM ENHANCEMENT"

--Conquering self-defeating behaviors
--Recognizing and overcoming cognitive distortions
--Converting negative self-talk to positive self-talk: Cognitive restructuring

SESSION 4: "ON THE ROAD TO INCREASED SELF-ESTEEM: POSITIVE GOAL SETTING"

--Sabotaging the self
--Setting and achieving personal goals
--Using personal goals to increase self-esteem
--Completing Self-Esteem Index post-test
SELF ESTEEM ENHANCEMENT WORKSHOP
SESSION #1: SELF-AWARENESS: A BEGINNING STEP

I. INTRODUCTION (40 minutes)

A. Welcome/Opener activity:

Have participants introduce themselves to group and explain why they are here, what they hope to get out of this workshop.

-Discuss the realistic goals of this workshop.

Warning: Do not expect a suddenly high level of self-esteem upon completion of the program. Your self-esteem is formed over a long period of time and therefore cannot be changed overnight. This workshop will serve as an introduction to the topic of self-esteem as well as provide practical suggestions on how to begin enhancing your self-esteem.

B. Workshop format. (Hand out and review the "Self-Esteem Enhancement: A Personal Approach" overview (See Appendix A).

1. There will be 4 sessions, each addressing important issues related to self-esteem.

2. The workshop is intended to serve as an introduction to the topic of self-esteem as well as self-esteem enhancement techniques.
C. **Behavioral Objectives overhead** (See Appendix B)

D. **What is Self-Esteem?**

1. Ask participants how they would define self-esteem. (Write responses on flip chart and discuss.)

2. There's really no one standard definition of self-esteem. It is an evaluative term; it refers to how you feel about the person you perceive yourself to be. Self-esteem is the judgement you place upon yourself.
   
a. Distinction between self-concept and self-esteem:
   
   1) Self-concept = How you see yourself.
   
   2) Self-esteem = How you feel about how you see yourself.

b. Discuss related terms:
   
   Self-respect       Self-confidence
   Self-affirmation   Self-love
   Self-acceptance    Self-worth
   Self-satisfaction  Self-evaluation

3. Characteristics of high vs. low self-esteem individuals:

   a. Solicit responses to this question from participants--write on flip chart.
b. "Characteristics of People with High Self-Esteem" overhead.¹ (See Appendix C)

4. Self-esteem is a learned attitude. It is not a reflection of your true value, but of your judgement about your value. All persons start with the same level of self-esteem, but life experiences shape and change personal feelings of self-esteem. Therefore, the potential exists for everyone; self-esteem is something everyone can achieve if they work hard at it. You have the power to change your level of self-esteem.²

3. 2 components of self-esteem³:
   a. Feelings of personal efficacy/competency
   b. Feelings of personal worth

4. Sources of self-esteem⁴:
   a. Outer sources- self-esteem that is given to you by others--ex) social acceptance, love, respect, friendship.
   b. Inner sources- Self-esteem that is independent of what others think of you--ex) intelligence, strength, talents, living up to own standards.
c. Inner sources are more important for a stable self-esteem.\(^5\)
- No one else can provide you with a sense of true self-esteem. True self-esteem comes from within.\(^6\)

d. This workshop is designed to focus more on developing inner self-esteem, on helping you to develop a sense of personal worth and competence.

E. Barksdale Self-Esteem Evaluation Pre-test\(^7\) (See Appendix D)

1. This test should give you a general idea of your individual level of self-esteem.

2. Test Directions:
   For each of the statements, record your feelings as follows:
   "0" = if not true
   "1" = if somewhat true
   "2" = if largely true
   "3" = if true

3. Tabulating scores:
   Add your scores for all of the even numbered statements. From this total, subtract the sum of all the odd numbered statements. This will give you your self-esteem index score.
Scores can range from -75 to +75. Any score under 35 is thought to be a handicap.

4. Discuss scores. Do not be discouraged by your self-esteem index score. Regardless of how low your score is, you have the power to increase your level of self-esteem, with effort. Realizing your initial level of self-esteem is an important starting point to increasing your self-esteem.

5. Record your self-esteem index score, along with your student number on a piece of paper and turn this in. We will be referring to these scores in a later session.

II. SELF-AWARENESS: THE FIRST STEP TO ENHANCING SELF-ESTEEM

A. Identification icebreaker: (10 minutes)

1. Purpose:
   This icebreaker is designed to increase participants' awareness of themselves.

2. Directions:
   Draw something that is symbolic of you as a person. It could be an object, animal, or place. You will then have the opportunity to introduce yourself to the group and explain to them what you drew and how it is symbolic
of you (What common characteristics does it share with you?)

3. **Group Feedback/Discussion of Activity:**
   Was it hard for you to identify with something else? What aspects of your selected object/animal/place were positive? Which aspects were negative? What did you learn from this activity?

**B. "Who am I?" Identity exercise:** (10 minutes)

1. **Introduction:**
   This exercise is designed to provide participants with further insight on their personal values and characteristics.

2. **Directions:**
   Write down at least 20 adjectives or values to describe yourself.
   Then, narrow the list down to those five characteristics or values that are essential to your being, that are most descriptive of you as an individual.

3. **Group Feedback/Discussion:**
   How do you feel about your essential five components? What did you learn about yourself from this activity? Was it difficult for you define the most important
five? The more difficult this was, probably
the lower your level of self-awareness is.

C. "Activity Inventory:" 8 (10 minutes)

1. **Purpose:**
   This activity is designed to help individuals
discover the different aspects of their
selves.

2. **Directions:**
   On a sheet of paper place numbers 1 through
20. List 20 things you like to do. When you
have finished this, take each item and write
one of the following codes next to each
activity.

   "N" = self-NURTURING activities.
   "A" = activities you enjoy doing ALONE
   "S" = SOCIAL activities
   "B" = primarily BODY/physical activities
   * = activities done on a regular basis

3. **Group Feedback/Discussion:**
   What type of patterns do you notice within
your activities? Which areas have you
neglected? What did you learn about yourself
from this activity?
D. **Real vs. Ideal self** (5 minutes)

1. Another important aspect of self-esteem involves an awareness of who you are (your real self) in comparison to whom you would like to be (your ideal self).

2. Self esteem = actual self-image 9 ideal self-image

3. The larger the discrepancy between your real and ideal self, the lower your level of self-esteem. The following exercise will help illustrate your real vs. ideal self.

4. **"The Roles I play" exercise** (10 minutes)

   a. **Purpose:**
   
   This activity is designed to assist students in becoming aware of their real and ideal selves.

   b. **Directions:**
   
   Each student is to draw two large circles on a piece of paper, labeling one "Real" and the other "Ideal." Think of the many different roles you play and the amount of time you spent on each role. In the "real" circle, graph out a piece of the pie for each role you play, making the piece representative in size to the percentage of time spent on that role. Next, think about how much time
you would like to devote to each role. Graph this out on the "ideal" circle.

c. **Group Discussion/feedback**

What discrepancies did you find between the two circles? What did you learn from this activity? Resolving the discrepancies through action plans we will discuss in future sessions will result in increased self-esteem.

III. **CONCLUSION** (5 minutes)

A. Summarize the importance of self-awareness as a beginning step to enhancing self-esteem.

B. Preview next week's session on accepting strengths and weaknesses.

**ENDNOTES**

1. Adapted from Diane Frey and Jesse C. Carlock, Enhancing Self Esteem, 2nd ed. (Muncie, IN: Accelerated Development Inc., 1989) 41.


5. Campbell, 37.


8. Adapted from Frey and Carlock, 48.

SELF-ESTEEM SESSION #2
"SELF ACCEPTANCE: I'M OK, YOU'RE OK"

I. INTRODUCTION TO THIS SESSION: (5 min.)

Last week, we talked about identifying who you are and your perception of your real self in relation to your ideal self. This session will center on exploring and accepting your personal strengths as well as your weaknesses and limitations. In order to achieve a solid sense of self-esteem, you must be aware of and accept yourself for who you are, for your strengths and weaknesses.

II. RECOGNIZING AND ACCEPTING STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

A. Strength and Weakness Inventory (10 min.)

1. Introduction:

This exercise is designed to assist students in gaining a better understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, as well as the ratio between them.

2. Directions:

On a piece of paper, make two columns, one for strengths and one for weaknesses. For 5 minutes, list every strength and weakness you can think of. Write down everything that comes to your mind.
3. **Group discussion:**

Which column is longer? What was the ratio between your strengths and weaknesses? How do you feel about your strengths and weaknesses? What generalizations can you make about yourselves based upon this activity?

B. **Societal Focus: Positive or Negative?** (10 min.)

1. Much of the explanation for the above discrepancies between your positive and negative self-statements can be attributed to your experiences in our society.

2. Society teaches us to focus on the negatives. We come to feel as if, by saying good things about ourselves, we are bragging or being self-centered. Looking down on oneself, belittling oneself is much more common but is very destructive to positive self-esteem.

3. In one study, college students, when asked to list their strengths and weaknesses, listed six weaknesses for every one strength.¹

4. A positive self-esteem is not possible when focusing so predominantly on weaknesses or shortcomings. Rather, a positive self-esteem requires that you focus more on your
positives, although acknowledging at the same time your weaknesses.

5. The following exercise will allow you to practice this strength-oriented focus.

C. Focusing on the Positives: "What I Like About Me" exercise.² (10 min.)

1. Purpose:

This exercise is designed to assist participants in recognizing their individual strengths and acknowledging them publicly.

2. Directions:

Have participants get into groups of 2. Explain how the activity works:
- Each student will play the role of complimenter or receiver for a period of 2 minutes.
- The designated receiver will begin by asking the partner, "Tell me, what do you like about yourself?"
- The complimenter will respond by saying one characteristic they like about themselves (Ex: "I like my sense of humor. I can always make people laugh.") Participants are to focus on internal characteristics.
- The receiver will respond by affirming that compliment by agreeing with it, and then
asking "What else do you like about yourself?"

-This process will continue for a period of two minutes.

-The CATCH: If the complimenter hesitates for longer than 5 seconds, s/he must jump up, throw his or her hands in the air, and yell loudly "I like EVERYTHING about myself!!" (The receiver must enforce this rule).

-NOTE: If and when the complimenter is forced to resort to the "Everything!" response, the receiver will respond with the usual "That's great, what else do you like about yourself?" and the complimenter must again respond with another positive attribute or resort to the "Everything" alternative again. The process will continue until time is called.

3. Discussion:

How difficult was this for you to do? How did you feel when complimenting yourself? What did you learn about yourself from this activity?
D. Accepting Compliments/Affirming Your Worth (15 min.)

1. Often times, just as difficult as it is to compliment yourself, it is even more difficult to receive compliments.

2. Ask "How do you feel when you receive compliments and why?" (Guilty? Suspicious? pleased?).

3. People with low self esteem have great difficulty in accepting compliments, even ones they would like to hear.

4. Low self-esteem individuals often feel anxious and guilty when receiving a compliment, wondering if they deserve it, or if the other individual has some ulterior motive.3

5. Therefore, they often reject/disown the compliment, devaluing it. (EX. After receiving a compliment about an outfit, response is "Oh, this old rag?!")

6. When receiving compliments, accept them, affirming them with at least "Thanks".

7. "Thanks, I Couldn't Agree More" exercise

   a. Purpose:

      This activity is designed to assist students in accepting compliments positively, affirming their own worth.
b. **Directions:**

Break into small groups (4-5 people). Think of one compliment each of you would like to hear. Practice receiving that compliment positively by having each of the other group members give it to you. Respond each time by affirming the compliment with some type of positive remark. Give all group members the opportunity to be the compliment receiver.

c. **Group discussion/feedback:**

How did you feel when receiving the compliment? What non-verbals did group members demonstrate when receiving the compliment? What did you learn about yourself from this activity?

E. **Accepting Criticism and Mistakes** (20 min.)

1. Although accepting compliments is often very hard, accepting criticism and mistakes can be even harder.

2. **Social attributions**—society tends to attribute compliments to your behavior, but criticism to your character or personality. (example: Compliment—"You did a nice job picking up your room." Criticism—"You are
so lazy; Why can't you do anything right?

These critical comments attack people's internal worth, giving them the idea that they are bad individuals.

3. Low self-esteem individuals have difficulty in resisting actual or implied criticism. Instead, they readily accept these negative comments and internalize them.

4. Many individuals feel as if their mistakes prove that they are incompetent, stupid, unworthy people.

5. When you receive criticism, do not let it affect your internal worth. You are still a good person. The criticism is not a reflection of your total worth as a person.

6. No one is perfect; everybody makes mistakes. Mistakes can be valuable learning tools. Rather than dwelling on past mistakes, accept them, forgive yourself, and learn from them.

7. Accepting your mistakes is an important part of increasing your self-esteem. The following exercise will help you to do this.

8. "Beg for Forgiveness" exercise.

   a. Purpose:

      This activity is designed to help participants forgive themselves for past
mistakes, to affirm their own worth in spite of their shortcomings.

b. Directions:
Break into groups of two. Each individual is to think of one past mistake they have made, something they still feel bad about. Take turns playing the beggar. The beggar must literally beg for forgiveness from his/her partner, on hands and knees, for one minute. The partner will sit quietly throughout the drama and respond with "It's ok. You are forgiven."

c. Group discussion:
How did this activity make you feel?
How do you feel about your mistake now?

F. "Dating Service" exercise (15 min.)

1. Purpose:
To assist students in developing a realistic concept of themselves and recognizing and accepting themselves for their strengths and weaknesses. This exercise should serve as a summary, pulling together what we've talked about today,
2. **Directions:**

Pretend you are completing the application for a dating service. One question asks you to write a realistic description of yourself, including your unique qualities and interests, strengths, and weaknesses. Take five minutes to write an honest description. Share these descriptions in groups of four.

3. **Discussion:**

How difficult was this for you to do? Was your description more positive or negative in nature? What did you learn from this activity?

**III. CONCLUSION** (5 min.)

A. Review today's discussion

B. Handout: "I am Me" by Virginia Satir.⁹ (See Appendix F)

B. Homework assignment:

Practice responding to compliments in a positive way. Be prepared to discuss your experiences next week.
ENDNOTES

1. Study by Herbert Otto, as cited in Elkin (1979), 191.

2. I learned this activity from Ellen Rosenberg, Keynote Speaker at the Lake Shore Wellness Conference, Storm Lake, IA. June 13, 1989.


7. Ibid.


SELF-ESTEEM ENHANCEMENT WORKSHOP
SESSION # 3: BARRIERS TO SELF-ESTEEM ENHANCEMENT

I. INTRODUCTION TO THIS SESSION:
This session will explore some of the barriers that can prevent one from achieving a sound self-esteem. The barriers discussed will include self-defeating behaviors as well as cognitive distortions. The process of cognitive restructuring will be discussed as the means to overcoming these barriers.

II. SELF-DEFEATING BEHAVIORS AS BARRIERS TO SELF-ESTEEM ENHANCEMENT
Persons with low self-esteem engage in a variety of self-defeating behaviors which add to their problems of low self-esteem.

A. Procrastination (5 min.)
A lack of self-esteem plays a central role in the self-defeating behavior of procrastination.1

1. Ask participants why they think procrastination would be a big problem for persons with lower self-esteem.

2. Because such individuals doubt their capability, they hesitate in starting projects. They procrastinate because they are afraid of failure.
3. Result of procrastination: Because they procrastinate, they complete things in a very rushed manner and, therefore, often do not feel as good about the end result.

4. This doubt that accompanies procrastination in turn prohibits them from obtaining the true feeling of success which are so essential to feelings of self-esteem.

B. Internalizing Failure/Externalizing Success

(5 min.)


2. Ask participants to think of something bad that has recently happened to you and why it happened (Whose responsibility was it?). Then, think of a recent good thing that has happened to you and why it happened (Whose responsibility was it?). Compare the answers with the group and make generalizations.

3. Research shows that persons with low self-esteem attribute failure to internal factors such as lack of ability. They feel the reason for their problems is because of their own incompetence or inferiority.
4. Persons with low self-esteem often attribute success to external factors such as luck. They do not internalize the credit for their successes.³

5. This inner attribution of failure and external attribution of success promotes the persistence of negative attitudes about oneself and one's capabilities, thus promoting low self-esteem.

6. People must work to internalize their successes, taking credit for what they have accomplished in order to achieve a high self-esteem. We worked on this aspect to some extent last week in the strength identification exercises.

C. Comparing Oneself Negatively With Others (5 min.)

1. Show Charlie Brown Cartoon (See Appendix F)

2. Often people with low self-esteem compare themselves unfavorably with other people. By constantly finding someone who does something better than they, these individuals prevent themselves from ever feeling capable or successful. The thought pattern is "SOMEONE, SOMEWHERE can do this better than I, so therefore I'm not that good."
3. These individuals are expecting themselves to be "the best" in order to feel good about themselves. In this manner, they are prohibiting an inner, self-dependent sense of self-esteem from emerging.

4. We are trying to get you to focus on yourself, not how you measure up to others.

D. **Negative Self-Talk** (5 min.)

1. A very typical characteristic of low self-esteem individuals is the negative self-talk they engage in. These individuals constantly bombard themselves with negative messages, constantly "beating themselves" in a sense. They talk down to themselves, treating themselves like unworthy, awful people.

2. This negative "programming" is very common in today's society. Some suggest that up to 75% of our childhood programming was negative in nature.4

3. This self-defeating behavior is tied to the cognitive distortions barrier which will be discussed next. Positive suggestions as to how to overcome this destructive thought pattern will be given.
III. COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS

A. Definition:

Cognitive distortions are faulty, irrational thoughts which distort one's perception of reality, promoting the persistence of negative feelings about oneself. Cognitive distortions are very destructive barriers that must be overcome in order to achieve a sound self-esteem.

B. "Cognitive Distortions" overhead (See Appendix G)

(10 min.) The following distortions all contribute to feelings of low self-esteem: (ask for participants' help in defining each)

1. Polarized Thinking--(All-or-nothing Thinking)
   You see yourself as either perfect or as a complete failure. Everything is black and white; there is no middle ground.

2. Overgeneralizing--Seeing one negative event as a never-ending pattern of defeat. "Always" and "never" are key works of overgeneralization...Ex: "I always screw up."

3. Mental Filtering--Focusing on one negative detail so exclusively that all reality becomes darkened by it.

4. Disqualifying the Positive--Rejecting positive experiences by insisting they "don't count." (Only the negative things matter.)
This allows you to maintain faulty, negative beliefs about yourself.

5. Jumping to Conclusions--Automatically making negative interpretations even though there are not definite facts to support such conclusions.
   a. Mind reading--Projecting your negative self view onto others, assuming other people react negatively toward you.
   b. The Fortune Teller Error--(Self-fulfilling prophecy) Assuming that things will turn out badly beforehand. Convincing yourself of a negative outcome.

6. Magnification (Catastrophizing) or Minimization--Exaggerating the importance of negative things (such as personal failures or other people's achievements), and minimizing positive things (such as your positive qualities or others' imperfections).

7. Emotional Reasoning--Assuming that your negative feelings are automatically representative of reality. (Ex: "I feel I am unworthy, therefore I am unworthy.")

8. Should Statements--Maintaining a large range of shoulds, oughts, and musts. You expect yourself to live up to these arbitrary
standards at all times. (Ex. expecting yourself to be perfect on the job at all times). Have participants help create a "Should on you list," brainstorming by throwing out several of the shoulds they have ever heard or said to themselves through life. It's impossible to live up to all of these arbitrary standards all the time.

9. **Labeling and Mislabeling**--This is an extreme form of overgeneralization. When you make a mistake, you internalize it, and label yourself as a "complete loser," for example. You attribute the same type of labels to others when they error as well.

10. **Personalization**--Seeing yourself as the cause for external events over which you have no control. You internalize the blame for everything.

C. **Handout: "Cognitive Distortion Guide"** (See Appendix H)

D. **Cognitive Distortion Group Role Plays** (20 min.)

1. **Purpose:**
   
   This activity is designed to assist participants in recognizing and distinguishing between the various cognitive distortions.
2. **Directions:**

Have participants break into groups of three. The instructor will assign different cognitive distortions to each group. Using the Cognitive Distortion Guide, create a situation and dialogue that will demonstrate your assigned cognitive distortions. Using personal experiences and encounters with cognitive distortions will prove most effective. After 10 minutes, each group will role play their scene to the rest of the groups, having the others identify which cognitive distortions have been illustrated.

ex) Create a situation in which a student is preparing to give a speech. She is very nervous and is talking to a friend, saying, "I'm going to do terrible. I'll never remember what I'm supposed to say. My speech is stupid anyway. What a fool for even thinking I could do this!" Her friend responds by saying, "I'm sure you'll do fine. Remember last week when you addressed the rest of the student government? You did a great job then." The girl responds by saying, "Oh, that was
different. That wasn't important like this is."

--This dialogue represents many cognitive distortions including:
1. Jumping to conclusions (fortune telling error)
2. Disqualifying the positives
3. Labeling
4. Magnification/Minimizing

3. **Group feedback/discussion:**
Which cognitive distortions did you most identify with in these role plays? How difficult was it for you to recognize the various cognitive distortions? What did you learn from this activity?

Note: Overcoming these cognitive distortions is one of the major focuses of this workshop. The following technique will help to accomplish this goal.

II. OVERCOMING COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS THROUGH COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING

A. **Definition of Cognitive Restructuring** (5 min.)

1. Cognitive restructuring is the process of changing faulty, illogical messages you receive from yourself and others (cognitive
distortions) into more objective, rational thoughts. 

2. In the process of cognitive restructuring, positive self-talk replaces the destructive negative self-talk we've discussed earlier. Changing this negative belief system to a more positive one is essential for increasing levels of self-esteem.

3. In cognitive restructuring, you admit your shortcomings in a positive way, focusing on your strengths and how they can help you achieve your goals and overcome your problems, rather than focusing on you as an awful person because of the problems you encounter. The following technique will illustrate a successful process of cognitive restructuring.

B. The Triple-Column Technique to Cognitive Restructuring (See Appendix I) (10 min.)

1. This is a very simple technique that assists in recognizing and restructuring cognitive distortion messages.

2. HANDOUT and explain "The Triple Column Technique" outline (See Appendix I)
3. Each time you catch yourself feeling down or upset, record the internal messages you are sending yourself in the "Self-statement" column.

4. Then, identify any cognitive distortions that are present in these messages in the "Distortion" column.

5. Finally, write rebuttals to your self-statements in the "rebuttal" column, attacking each of the distortions you have identified.

6. Discuss the example given on the handout.

7. Use this technique in your daily life, recording your thoughts whenever you feel down or find yourself conducting negative self-talk.

8. Although it is recommended to begin using the triple-column technique by writing down the messages and responses, eventually, with practice, you will be able to conduct this technique mentally.

9. By using this technique, you can record the battle that goes on between your negative and positive self-talk sides. The technique can help you focus on the positive side, helping it to win the never-ending battle within your mind.
C. "The Internal Battle" Exercise (20 min.)

1. Purpose:

This exercise is designed to assist participants in learning how to conduct cognitive restructuring, recognizing negative self-talk messages and converting them into positive ones.

2. Directions:

Break into groups of three. Designate one member of each group as the "Self-Critic" and another as the "Self-Defender." The remaining individual will play the "target" and will sit between the other two members. Each group represents one person's internal mind (the self-critic and self-defender are both parts of the target's mind.) When given a situation by the instructor, the critic will throw out negative, destructive messages directed at the target. The Self-Defender will then defend the target by rejecting those negative messages, by restructuring them into objective, realistic, and positive messages.

Groups will then exchange roles so that
all persons have the opportunity to practice all parts involved in cognitive restructuring. Select one group after each scenario to role play that situation to the rest of the participants. Allow a 5 minute planning time for each scenario.

a. Example:

1. Suppose the situation given by the instructor is that you did not do well on a test. The Self-Critic person could send negative messages such as, "You're so dumb. You can't do anything right." The Self-Defender person will reject these negative messages and convert them into positive messages by saying, for example, "No, you are not dumb. You may have done poorly on this test but that doesn't mean you are a failure. You have the capability to do better; you just need to study more next time."

b. Other situations to role play:

1. You were running for an officer position on student government and just lost the election.
2. You were politely turned down for a date because of previous plans.
3. You are preparing to give a presentation for a class and are very nervous.
4. You want to apply for a position but are hesitating because you are unsure of your qualifications.
5. You are running late for a meeting.

3. **Group feedback/discussion:**
   
   How did you feel while playing each role? How difficult was it for you to convert the negative messages into positive messages? What did you learn from this activity?

**IV. CONCLUSION**

A. Summarize today's session, particularly the process of cognitive restructuring.

B. Homework assignment:
   
   Keep track of when you find yourself or others involved in self-defeating behaviors. Practice implementing cognitive restructuring when proper situations arise, using the Triple-Column Technique discussed today.

C. Preview next week's session:
   
   In the fourth and final session, we will be pulling together what we have learned and
discussing positive goal setting and how it can help you increase your self-esteem.

D. For next week, think about two or three things that you would like to change about yourself or your behavior. We will use positive goal-setting techniques to help you make plans to change these things. We will discuss how goal-setting is related to feelings of increased self-esteem.

**ENDNOTES**


5. McKay and Fanning, 58.

6. Frey and Carlock, 145.


8. Burns, 60.

9. Adapted from McKay and Fanning, 65. See also Burns, 60.
SELF-ESTEEM ENHANCEMENT WORKSHOP
SESSION #4
"ON THE ROAD TO INCREASED SELF-ESTEEM:
POSITIVE GOAL-SETTING"

I. INTRODUCTION TO THIS SESSION

This session will begin with an exploration of the relationship between goal setting and self-esteem. The process of positive goal-setting as a means to increasing self-esteem will be reviewed and implemented. The session will conclude with a Self-Esteem Evaluation post-test and an evaluation of the training program itself.

II. GOAL SETTING AND SELF-ESTEEM

A. What's the connection? (10 min.)

1. Goals are very important contributors to feelings of self-esteem. Accomplishing goals provides a person with feelings of success and achievement, both of which are important to self-esteem. With each goal accomplishment, a person moves toward increased feelings of self-esteem.¹

2. Research shows that persons set goals in accordance to their level of self-esteem.²
   a. High self-esteem individuals set challenging yet realistic goals.
b. Low self-esteem individuals either set lower goals (because they have lower belief in their capability), or set unrealistically high goals that would be practically impossible to ever reach.

B. Self-sabotage: Preventing Goal Attainment (10 min.)

1. People often sabotage their own goals through a variety of self-defeating behaviors and cognitive distortions, some of which we discussed last week.

   a. Examples:

   1. Procrastination
   2. Self-fulfilling prophecy
   3. Negative self-talk
   4. Comparing oneself negatively to others in similar situations
   5. Setting unrealistic goals
   6. Setting goals that are not clearly definable or measurable
   7. Neglecting to break goals down into more achievable steps
   8. Neglecting to reward selves for accomplishing the smaller steps toward major goal.
2. **Self-Sabotage activity** (10 min.)
   
a. **Purpose:**
   This activity is designed to help participants identify their major problem areas with goal setting, and to help them identify possible solutions.
   
b. **Directions:**
   Write down the top three ways you sabotage your own goals. Discuss your responses in groups of 4. Offer suggestions for overcoming these problems. Regroup and share some of the responses and suggestions with other participants.
   
c. **Group feedback/discussion:**
   What were the most typical self-defeating behaviors you discussed? What types of suggestions did you come up with for overcoming these problems? What did you learn from this activity?

C. **Overcoming These Problems: Positive Goal-Setting for Increased Self-Esteem.** (10 min.)

1. **Guidelines for Goal-Setting.**
   
   --Make sure goals are:
   
   a. Desirable/Useful
   b. Specific
c. Measurable

d. Realistic yet challenging

e. Reasonable in time span

f. Associated with some type of reward system.

2. Give good and bad examples of each of the criteria.

D. Positive Goal-setting worksheet. (See Appendix J)

(10 min.)

1. Take participants through the worksheet using a sample goal to illustrate the various steps.

E. "Ready, Set, Goal" Exercise (15 min.)

1. **Purpose:**

   This activity is designed to assist participants in practicing positive goal-setting, using the goal-setting worksheet guide.

2. **Directions:**

   Participants are to identify three things they would like to change or achieve, and convert one or two of these into a positive goal action plan, using the goal-setting worksheet. After 10 minutes, participants will share their action plans with the group.
Group members will then give constructive feedback on the goals, offering suggestions when appropriate.

3. **Group feedback/discussion:**
What parts of the worksheet were the most difficult for you to complete? How did the worksheet help or impede your goal-setting process? How do you feel about this goal now that you've established an action plan? What did you learn from this activity?

**F. Summary of Goal-Setting** (5 min.)

1. Goal-setting can be a very powerful tool for increasing your self-esteem.

2. By following the guidelines we've discussed you can achieve the goals you establish for yourself, and in turn, experience the feelings of success and accomplishment which are so vital to feelings of self-esteem.

**II. WRAPPING UP: WHERE WE'VE BEEN, WHERE WE'VE COME**

A. **Review of the 4 sessions and topics covered**
(10 min.)

1. **First session:**
   a. Introduction to the topic of self-esteem and its importance for emotional well-being
b. Self-awareness as the foundation for self-esteem. Real vs. ideal self

2. **Second session:**
   a. Self-acceptance
   b. Recognizing and appreciating strengths and weaknesses
   c. Accepting mistakes as learning tools.

3. **Third session:**
   a. Barriers to self-esteem enhancement
   b. Self-defeating behaviors
   c. Cognitive distortions
   d. Cognitive restructuring through positive self-talk

4. **Fourth session:**
   a. Positive goal setting as a way to increase self-esteem
   b. Overcoming self-sabotage problems

B. **Self-Esteem Index post-test.** (See Appendix D) (10 min.)

1. Administer the post-test and discuss results.
2. Remind participants to answer questions as honestly as possible to achieve an accurate reflection of their self-esteem.
3. Discuss the differences between pre-test and post-test scores. Gather participants' reactions to their changes in scores.
4. **Reminder:** Self-esteem scores most probably will not be suddenly spectacular upon completion of this four-week workshop. Self-esteem is formed over a long period of time and, although this workshop has introduced the topic of self-esteem and has provided some suggestions for improving self-esteem, the journey is by no means complete. Therefore, although self-esteem index scores should have improved to some degree, it is most probably not a spectacular difference as of yet.

5. The biggest difference is yet to come, as you continue working toward incorporating the suggestions we have discussed into your life. Remember, self-esteem is a life-long process, and one that you alone have the power to control. Loving yourself is a choice that you alone can make.

6. Good luck to all of you in your self-esteem journey. I hope that you will continue to work at being good to yourselves, allowing yourselves to acquire the feelings of self-esteem you so deserve.
C. Self-Referral Guide (5 min.)

1. This referral system is tied to the competencies and behaviors we have worked on during this workshop.

2. Are you still having difficulty in any of the following areas?:
   a. Accepting your own strengths and weaknesses without guilt
   b. Resisting the cognitive distortions
   c. Restructuring your thoughts into positive, affirmative messages
   d. Saying 2 positives for every negative
   e. Accepting compliments and criticism
   f. Setting positive, achievable goals

3. If any of the above areas are still areas of great difficulty for you, please feel free to contact the UNI counseling staff. The professional staff here is always available for individual consultation and assistance. They can help you to continue working on increasing your self-esteem.

D. Program Evaluation (10 min.)

1. Distribute the Program Evaluation handout (See Appendix K)

2. Have participants complete the forms and drop them off on the desk before leaving.
3. Responses are anonymous so please be honest. Any suggestions for improvement will be greatly appreciated.

ENDNOTES

1. Frey and Carlock, 95.


5. Dauw, 6.
SELF-ESTEEM ENHANCEMENT: A PERSONAL APPROACH

GOALS:

This workshop is designed to:

1. Provide participants with an increased understanding of what self-esteem is, its impact on life, and how it can be enhanced.

2. Assist participants in developing personal action steps to increasing their self-esteem based on a variety of enhancement techniques discussed.

WORKSHOP FORMAT:

This course will consist of four 90-minute sessions and will utilize a combination of role-plays, case studies, and group participation to enable students to achieve the desired result of increased self-esteem.

SESSION 1: "SELF AWARENESS: THE FIRST STEP"

Self-esteem will be introduced in terms of its components, characteristics, sources, and implication on well-being.

--Completing the Self-Esteem Index pre-test
--Identifying values, beliefs, and attitudes
--Perceiving the self: Real vs. ideal self

SESSION 2: "SELF-ACCEPTANCE: I'M OK, YOU'RE OK"

--Recognizing and accepting personal strengths and weaknesses
--Identifying personal skills for use in developing positive self statements
--Accepting compliments
--Responding to criticism and mistakes

SESSION 3: "BARRIERS TO SELF-ESTEEM ENHANCEMENT"

--Conquering self-defeating behaviors
--Recognizing and overcoming cognitive distortions
--Converting negative self-talk to positive self-talk: Cognitive restructuring

SESSION 4: "ON THE ROAD TO INCREASED SELF-ESTEEM: POSITIVE GOAL SETTING"

--Sabotaging the self
--Setting and achieving personal goals
--Using personal goals to increase self-esteem
--Completing Self-Esteem Index post-test
Upon completion of the self-esteem enhancement workshop, participants should be able to:

1. Define the concept of self-esteem in terms of its components and sources.

2. Identify characteristics of high self-esteem individuals vs. low self-esteem individuals.

3. Diagnose their level of self-esteem using the Barksdale Self-Esteem Inventory.

4. Accurately define themselves in terms of their individual values, beliefs and attitudes.

5. Recognize and appreciate their individual strengths and weaknesses.

6. Identify and convert cognitive distortions into more positive self-statements through the process of cognitive restructuring.

7. Perform positive goal setting as a means of enhancing self-esteem.
CHARACTERISTICS OF PEOPLE WITH HIGH SELF-ESTEEM

1. ACCEPT SELF AND OTHERS

2. RECOGNIZE OWN SPECIFIC STRENGTHS AND SKILLS AS WELL AS LIMITS

3. SECURE IN SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT

4. SENSE OF BELONGING OR BONDING WITH OTHERS

5. PRIDE IN THEMSELVES AND SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR ACTIONS

6. NOT OVERLY INFLUENCED BY ENVIRONMENT

7. LOTS OF SPONTANEITY

8. "FRESH" APPRECIATION OF OTHER PEOPLE

9. PHILOSOPHICAL SENSE OF HUMOR--NOT HOSTILE

10. MOTIVATED BY DREAMS OF WHAT THEY WANT TO ACCOMPLISH
**Self-Esteem Evaluation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Statement of Present Condition or Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I usually feel inferior to others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I normally feel warm and happy toward myself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I often feel inadequate to handle new situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I usually feel warm and friendly toward all I contact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I habitually condemn myself for my mistakes and shortcomings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I am free of shame, blame, guilt and remorse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I have a driving need to prove my worth and excellence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I have great enjoyment and zest for living.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I am much concerned about what others think and say of me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I can let others be &quot;wrong&quot; without attempting to correct them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I have an intense need for recognition and approval.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I am usually free of emotional turmoil, conflict and frustration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Losing normally causes me to feel resentful and &quot;less than.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I usually anticipate new endeavors with quiet confidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I am prone to condemn others and often wish them punished.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>I normally do my own thinking and make my own decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I often defer to others on account of their ability, wealth or prestige.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>I willingly take responsibility for the consequences of my actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I am inclined to exaggerate and lie to maintain a desired image.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>I am free to give precedence to my own needs and desires.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>I tend to belittle my own talents, possessions and achievements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>I normally speak up for my own opinions and convictions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>I habitually deny, alibi, justify or rationalize my mistakes and defeats.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>I am usually poised and comfortable among strangers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>I am very often critical and belittling of others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>I am free to express love, anger, hostility, resentment, joy, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>I feel very vulnerable to others' opinions, comments and attitudes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>I rarely experience jealousy, envy or suspicion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>I am a &quot;professional people pleaser.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>I am not prejudiced toward racial, ethnic or religious groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>I am fearful of exposing my &quot;real self.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>I am normally friendly, considerate and generous with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>I often blame others for my handicaps, problems and mistakes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>I rarely feel uncomfortable, lonely, and isolated when alone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>I am a compulsive &quot;perfectionist.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>I accept compliments and gifts without embarrassment or obligation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>I am often compulsive about eating, smoking, talking or drinking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>I am appreciative of others' achievements and ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>I often shun new endeavors because of fear of mistakes or failure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>I make and keep friends without exerting myself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>I am often embarrassed by the actions of my family or friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>I readily admit my mistakes, shortcomings and defeats.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>I experience a strong need to defend my acts, opinions and beliefs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>I take disagreement and refusal without feeling &quot;put down,&quot; or rejected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>I have an intense need for confirmation and agreement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>I am eagerly open to new ideas and proposals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>I customarily judge my self-worth by personal comparison with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>I am free to think any thoughts that come into my mind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>I frequently boast about myself, my possessions and achievements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>I accept my own authority and do as I, myself, see fit.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Score as follows:**

- "0" if not true
- "1" if somewhat true
- "2" if largely true
- "3" if true

---

Self-Esteem Index = sum "SFI" 

Date
I Am Me

In all the world, there is no one else exactly like me. There are persons who have some parts like me, but no one adds up exactly like me. Therefore, everything that comes out of me is authentically mine because I alone chose it. I own everything about me—my body, including everything it does; my mind, including all its thoughts and ideas; my eyes, including the images of all they behold; my feelings, whatever they may be—anger, joy, frustration, love, disappointment, excitement; my mouth, and all the words that come out of it, polite, sweet or rough, correct or incorrect; my voice, loud or soft; and all my actions, whether they be to others or to myself.

I own my fantasies, my dreams, my hopes, my fears. I own all my triumphs and successes, all my failures and mistakes. Because I own all of me, I can become intimately acquainted with me. By so doing I can love me and be friendly with me in all my parts. I can then make it possible for all of me to work in my best interests.

I know there are aspects about myself that puzzle me, and other aspects that I do not know. But as long as I am friendly and loving to myself, I can courageously and hopefully look for the solutions to the puzzles and for ways to find out more about me. However I look and sound, whatever I say and do, and whatever I think and feel at a given moment in time is me. This is authentic and represents where I am at that moment in time. When I review later how I looked and sounded, what I said and did, and how I thought and felt, some parts may turn out to be unfitting.

I can discard that which is unfitting, and keep that which proved fitting, and invent something new for that which I discarded. I can see, hear, feel, think, say, and do. I have the tools to survive, to be close to others, to be productive, and to make sense and order out of the world of people and things outside of me. I own me, and therefore I can engineer me. I am me and I am okay.
I have a suggestion for you, Charlie Brown.

Have you ever tried whistling?

Yours is a problem of self-esteem... you need to feel good about yourself.

The next time you walk down the street, try whistling... it'll help you feel good about yourself, and about everybody around you...

I think maybe I need another suggestion...

The doctor is in.
COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS

1. POLARIZED THINKING (ALL-OR-NOTHING THINKING)

2. OVERGENERALIZATION

3. MENTAL FILTERING

4. DISQUALIFYING THE POSITIVE

5. JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS
   A. MIND-READING
   B. THE FORTUNE TELLER ERROR (SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY)

6. MAGNIFICATION (CATASTROPHIZING) OR MINIMIZATION

7. EMOTIONAL REASONING

8. SHOULD STATEMENTS

9. LABELING AND MISLABELING

10. PERSONALIZATION
COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS GUIDE

1. **Polarized Thinking (All-or-Nothing Thinking)** -- Everything is black and white; there is no middle ground. (Ex: You see yourself as either perfect or as a complete failure.)

2. **Overgeneralizing** -- Seeing one negative event as a never-ending pattern of defeat. (Ex: "I always screw up.")

3. **Mental Filtering** -- Focusing on negative events so exclusively that all reality becomes darkened by it.

4. **Disqualifying the Positive** -- Rejecting positive experiences by insisting they "don't count." Only the negative things matter. This allows you to maintain faulty, negative beliefs about yourself.

5. **Jumping to Conclusions** -- Automatically making negative interpretations even though there are not definite facts to support such conclusions.
   a. **Mind-reading** -- Projecting your negative self view onto others, assuming other people react negatively toward you.
   b. **The Fortune Teller Error (Self-fulfilling prophecy)** -- Assuming that things will turn out badly beforehand. Convincing yourself of a negative outcome.

6. **Magnification (Catastrophizing) or Minimization** -- Exaggerating the importance of negative things (such as failures or other people's achievements), and minimizing positive things (such as personal qualities or others' imperfections).

7. **Emotional Reasoning** -- Assuming that your negative feelings are automatically representative of reality. (Ex: "I feel I am unworthy, therefore I am unworthy.")

8. **Should Statements** -- Maintaining a large range of shoulds, oughts, and musts. You expect yourself to live up to these arbitrary standards at all times. (Ex: Expecting yourself to never make a mistake on the job).

9. **Labeling and Mislabeling** -- (An extreme form of overgeneralization). When you make a mistake, you internalize it, and label yourself as a complete loser, for example. You attribute the same type of labels to others when they error as well.

10. **Personalization** -- Seeing yourself as the cause of external events over which you have no control. You internalize the blame for everything.
# Appendix I

## THE TRIPLE COLUMN TECHNIQUE TO COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SELF-STATEMENT (SELF CRITICISM)</th>
<th>DISTORTION</th>
<th>RATIONAL RESPONSE (SELF-DEFENSE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What a dummy I am.</td>
<td>1. Labeling/ mislabeling</td>
<td>1. Come on now, I’m not a dummy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I can’t do anything right.</td>
<td>2. Overgeneralization</td>
<td>2. I do so do things right. This is the first time in my two-year term as president of this organization that I have ever forgotten to reserve a table.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Everyone will be mad at me.</td>
<td>3. Mind reading Overgeneralization All-or-nothing thinking</td>
<td>3. Now some people may be a little disappointed but it’s they aren’t going to be mad at me. Everyone makes mistakes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GOAL-SETTING WORK SHEET

One of my goals is: ____________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

Date this goal was established: __________________________________

How is this goal important to me? ________________________________
________________________________________________________________

Is this goal:
  Achievable? ______
  Measurable? ______
  Specific? ______
  Of value to me? ____

What steps do I need to take to reach this goal? (How can I break this goal down into achievable steps?)
1. ____________________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________________________
4. ____________________________________________________________
5. ____________________________________________________________

How will I know when I reach this goal? _________________________
________________________________________________________________

How have I committed myself to this goal?
  By telling friends/family ______
  Setting up a reward system ______
  Creating reminder technique ______
  Committing time ______
  Committing money ______
  Other (list) ______________________

What barriers could arise that could prevent me from reaching my goal?
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

How will I deal with/overcome these obstacles as they arise?
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

When should I reach this goal? _________________________________
SELF-ESTEEM ENHANCEMENT WORKSHOP
PROGRAM EVALUATION

In order for us to make this program meet the needs of participants, we ask you to help us in this effort by honestly and openly responding to the questions below. You do not need to sign your name. Thank you for your cooperation and input.

1. To what extent did the program provide a basic understanding of the concept of self-esteem?

   1  2  3  4  5  6
   Not at all  Very Much

2. To what extent did the program provide useful techniques for self-esteem enhancement?

   1  2  3  4  5  6
   Not at all  Very much

3. To what extent did the instructor provide information and suggestions that will be helpful as you work to obtain increased levels of self-esteem?

   1  2  3  4  5  6
   Not at all  Very much

5. The most beneficial segment(s) of the program (and why?):

   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________

6. The least beneficial segment(s) of the program (and why?):

   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________

7. Favorite activity--why?:

   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________

8. Least favorite activity--why?:

   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________

9. What suggestions could you make to improve this workshop?

   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________

10. Overall opinion of the program:
    Poor  Average  Above average  Excellent