

**PEOPLE 4 – MORE TOOLS TO IMPROVE YOUR RELATIONSHIPS
AND YOUR MOOD**

GOALS FOR LEADERS

- To explore obstacles to assertive communication, such as fear.
- To explore and identify interpersonal rules and assumptions about relationships that positively or negatively impact relationships and mood.
- To reinforce the idea that participants can choose to make changes in interpersonal relationships by: 1) balancing relationships; 2) employing more assertive communication styles, and 3) examining and altering interpersonal rules that guide relationships.

MATERIALS NEEDED FOR THIS SESSION

- 1) Pens
- 2) CES-D
- 3) Dry erase board, chalkboard or large sheets of paper to present material to group

SESSION OUTLINE

- I. Agenda and Announcements
- II. Review
- III. Personal Project Review
- IV. New Material: Overcoming Obstacles to Solving Relationship Problems and Relationship Rules
- V. Take Home Message
- VI. Feedback and Goodbye to Graduating Members
- VII. Personal Project
- VIII. Preview

COGNITIVE-BEHAVIORAL TREATMENT FOR DEPRESSION

Part I: Lecture Notes for Instructors: People 4

Version 2000: May, 2000

I. AGENDA AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Go over the agenda and ask participants whether they have any topics they would like to add to the agenda. Make any announcements.

Make sure to announce which group members are graduating.

II. REVIEW

Review the material covered in People 3. Use the review to check on how much participants remember from the last session, reinforce what they have learned, and educate group members who were absent last session.

[sample review statement]

Last week we talked about different communication styles, ways to make assertive requests, expressing feelings in a calm, respectful, direct way. We also began talking about things that sometimes get in the way of our being assertive.

What do you remember most from last week?

Review the difference between assertive, passive, and aggressive communication styles.

- Assertive communication is different from passive and aggressive communication styles.
- Assertiveness means expressing a feeling, thought or opinion in an honest, calm, respectful way. Usually assertiveness means using “I statements...”

III. PERSONAL PROJECT REVIEW

Review the personal project from the previous session. (Unless you do so, participants will not think it is important. They need to experience how it is helpful.)

WEEKLY PROJECT

1. Do the mood scale
2. Track the number of positive and negative contacts you have with others each day.

OPTIONAL PROJECT

- 1) Plan to get together with a supportive person this week.
- 2) Decide when and with whom you would like to be assertive this week and then try being assertive with them.

EXERCISE:

Either as a group or in pairs, encourage participants to talk about their use of assertiveness over the past week.

- Was there a time this past week when you were assertive?
- How did the listener respond when you were assertive?
- What may have happened if you had not been assertive?
- What were your thoughts and feelings about yourself or the situation after you were assertive?

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Quite often, in the review of personal projects, participants do not give examples of assertiveness but instead share an example with the group of how they normally respond to others, either passively or aggressively. In this case, the group leader may want to explore obstacles of being assertive which may include fears.

IV. NEW MATERIAL

BRIDGE: Introduce this week's material, linking it to material taught in previous sessions.

[sample bridge]

Last week we talked about different communication styles. Today we will be talking about things that get in the way of our communicating in open and assertive ways. We will also be talking about our relationship rules. We will be talking about where these rules come from, how they affect our current relationships, and whether we want to make small changes in those rules.

1. OBSTACLES TO USING ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION TO IMPROVE RELATIONSHIPS

Note: In order to save time, you may choose to focus only on those obstacles that are pertinent to group members.

[sample introduction]

Let's begin by talking about what may get in the way of our communicating in open and assertive ways. To begin with, who here admits that at times they don't say what they are feeling or thinking even though they may want to?

As group leaders, you should also raise your hands if this applies to you.

We all have times when we don't say what is on our minds. We often have a lot of excuses for not doing so. Sometimes the excuses are really good, and in some cases it might not be the right time to share our thoughts, feelings, or desires, but sometimes we fall into a non-speaking trap. Let's talk about some of the things that might prevent us from speaking our mind when it's a good idea for us to do so.

Brainstorm with the group some of the things that might keep them from being assertive and speaking their mind. Some of the common obstacles are listed below. After you have brainstormed with the group. Discuss each obstacle, clearly defining what thought or thoughts are linked to the obstacle, obtaining opinions from different group members, and talking about how to overcome the obstacle.

Be respectful of cultural differences (e.g. age, gender, family positions, and structure) that may contribute to the inability to be assertive and/or to valuing other forms/styles of communication.

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Common Obstacles

- 1) Fear
- 2) Habit/routine – not used to doing it
- 3) Low energy – too tired to do it
- 4) Don't believe it would change things (why bother)

A. FEAR

Begin a discussion about specific thoughts people may have that prevent them from speaking their mind.

When you think of being assertive but then you don't do it, what do you suppose you are thinking? What do you think might happen if you do it? . . . what do you fear?

If necessary, share some examples.

“ I don't want to create a conflict.”

“I might be rejected if I told someone what I think.”

“People depend on me to solve all the problems.”

“If I say no, my family will not love me.”

Many people don't behave assertively because they fear that something bad will happen to them. Fear of rejection, fear of failure, fear of making a fool of oneself. If your fears are unrealistic or catastrophic, it is important to replace those fearful thoughts with more realistic ones.

EXERCISE:

Complete the exercise either as a group or in pairs.

Have participants identify a situation where assertiveness would normally be a problem. If possible, have them identify a specific situation, one that happened last week. Have participants turn to page 133 in their workbooks to complete the exercise if they are literate. Then get participants to discuss their responses in group or pair format.

The goal of this exercise is to have participants identify thoughts that keep them from being assertive. Evaluate how helpful (vs. harmful) those thoughts are. Examine whether they may be overlooking some possible benefits, and begin to think about how they might like to change.

- 1) Describe a situation where you have problems being assertive (sharing thoughts and feelings).
- 2) How do you normally act in that situation (passively or aggressively)?
- 3) What thought (fear) keeps you from being assertive (from sharing thoughts and feelings)?
 - What do you think would happen if you were assertive?
 - What is the worst thing that could happen?
- 4) What good things could happen if you are able to be assertive?
- 5) Ask another person how likely they think it is that what you fear will happen (check it out with a group member). What good do they think would come of being assertive? Then think about what might realistically happen if you are assertive (pluses and minuses)

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- 6) What do you think about making a change in order to improve your relationships and your mood?
- 7) What change would you like to make?
- 8) Practice your desired behavior with another group member.
Have participants engage in a role play exercise, either in the large group or with a partner. Make sure their partner gives them feedback.

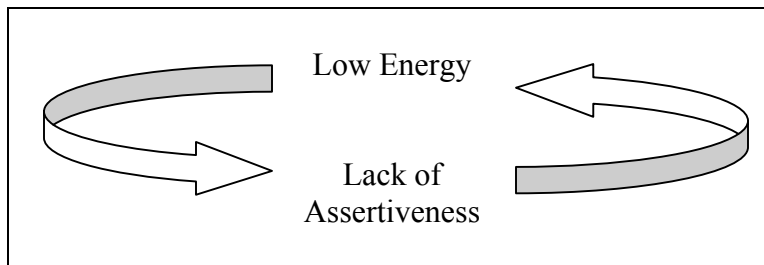
B. LOW ENERGY

Begin a discussion regarding this obstacle.

[sample introduction]

Sometimes we don't feel as though we have enough energy to try and change things. Let's see where this leaves us.

Draw the following diagram on the board. Highlight the reciprocal nature of the relationship between low energy and not being assertive.



Begin a discussion about what you can do to break the cycle.

C. DON'T BELIEVE IT WOULD CHANGE THINGS

Begin a discussion regarding this obstacle.

Review the notion of relationship rules. Are there some patterns that maybe we could change.

Is this an example of negative fortune telling? (see Thoughts module, sessions 2 and 3).

What is the antidote for negative fortune telling? [Ask yourself: Can I really predict the future?

What would it be like to find out how it really is rather than just imagine it? Things may have changed from how they used to be.]

D. HABIT – RELATIONSHIP RULES

While children have no choice about the traditional assumptions they were taught, adults have the option of choosing whether or not they are going to hold onto those beliefs that contribute to their depression and discourage assertive behavior (Davis, 1993).

[sample introduction]

Now let's talk about how we might not be assertive because that is just not the way we are used to being. We may have set up rules regarding how we behave in relationships. Sometimes being assertive is incompatible with the rules we have.

Have participants turn to page 135 in their books.

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People often have rules about relationships that guide the way that they interact with others. Some rules are helpful, some rules are rigid and harmful. Let's go through some examples of relationship rules.

Go over the examples on page 135 with the participants.

Examples of Relationship Rules:

- “You can't trust anyone.”
- “People will always disappoint you.”
- “My feelings come last.”
- “If you make a mistake, then you are bad.”
- “I have to be responsible for everything.”

Then ask participants to try and identify their relationship rules. As you have been getting to know the group member during the course of the group and have been developing a case formulation, you may have an idea about their relationship rule. You might suggest examples of relationship rules that might be especially pertinent for group members.

Write down some of the participants' relationship rules on the board. Begin a group discussion regarding how having these rules might affect:

- Whether you are able to express thoughts and feelings openly to others.
- The way that you behave with others.

When we look at our relationship rules and how they affect us, we might think things like “that may not be a good rule to have. Why am I using it?” or “I must be stupid to have such a rule.” It's important to acknowledge that the rules probably made a lot of sense at one point in our lives and probably helped us to be safe and to survive. We developed relationship rules when we were very young. We did not have control over our situation. Now the situation has changed, but we often continue to use the same rules.

Begin a group discussion regarding:

- where participants believe their rules came from
 - how the rules have helped them
 - how the rules have not helped them
 - how their lives have changed since when they first learned the rule.
 - how do they think they might want to change their rules.
- Let participants know that you will be talking about ways to make changes in relationship rules.

Participants can complete the worksheet on page 136 in their books.

Then ask participants to turn to page 137 in their books. Go over the cartoon there and discuss the dance metaphor. Ask participants how they might like to change the dance that they do with other people to improve their relationships and their mood.

2. MORE RELATIONSHIP TOOLS

A. BALANCING YOUR NEEDS WITH THE NEEDS OF OTHERS

When participants describe dichotomous rules of relating to others such as, never trusting others, always doing for others and never saying no, it is important for the group leader to label these Relationship Rules and suggest that they may affect behavior in a way that may be harmful, damaging to establishing good relationships and damaging to maintaining a healthy mood.

[sample introduction]

We just talked about our relationship rules. Now we're going to begin seeing how we might make changes in our rules to make them more balanced and flexible.

Ask group members to turn to page 138 in their books to go over the exercise found on that page.

The goal is to help participants begin to think in a more flexible way about their relationship rules. The notion of balance introduces the notion of choice and alternatives in different situations with friends and families. It does not mean that you have to change completely, just that it might be helpful to become more balanced in your current position. You may also choose to give examples that are more pertinent to participants.

When a participant insists on retaining a belief held since childhood, and it appears that belief contributes to the participant's depression, the group leader can gently dispute the belief with the following questions:

- While this rule was true for you as a child, do these conditions continue to exist for you as an adult?
- How does this assumption interfere with improving your mood?
- If this relationship rule is 'true,' then how will you continue to feel?

Help participants examine the costs and benefits of examining relationship rules and considering more flexible rules.

It might be helpful to brainstorm as a group the costs and benefits of examining relationship rules. Write group answers on the board to make them clear to everyone. Make sure you bring up costs if group members do not.

Costs of changing relationship rules	Benefits of changing relationship rules
1. Change can be hard	1. Things might get better.
2. Others may not be used to it at first.	2. My relationships might improve.
3. It might feel weird.	3. My mood may improve.

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If participants are beginning to talk about making changes in their rules, ask them what it might be like to share their new rules with the important people in their lives. Begin a group discussion about this. Points to include:

- By telling other people you will be making a commitment to change.
- Other people will be able to support and help you.

B. SETTING LIMITS

[sample introduction]

We have been talking about making changes in our relationship rules, but sometimes we also need to make changes in our relationships. Changing relationships is often difficult, but it is important. One way to change relationships is by setting limits.

When is it important to set limits with others and say no?

Begin a group discussion around this question. You may choose to highlight that in previous sessions we have talked about how negative contacts with others can impact mood. There may be times when we need to set limits in order to reduce the amount of negative contact that we have with others.

There are many different ways to set limits with others. Let's come up with some of them.

Ask participants to turn to page 140 in their books and brainstorm as a group ways that people might set limits with others. Possible ways are listed below:

1. Use assertive communication to let the other person know your limits and let them know when they have crossed the line.
2. Structure your contact with others. For example, choose a setting that helps you impose a limit. For example, if you don't want to drink, choose to not meet old friends in bars.
3. Limit or stop contact with people who are harmful to you and your mood. Sometimes it is time to give up certain relationships.

C. PLANNING HOW YOU WANT TO BE WITH OTHERS

[sample introduction]

Another way to make changes in our relationships and our relationship rules is to make a conscious choice about how we would like to be with others. This means thinking about the kinds of thoughts you would like to have with others and the way you would like to act with others before you are in a social situation.

For example, if I decide that I would like to change my rule from "my feelings come last" to "my feelings are important as anyone else's," how might I begin making a conscious choice to change this rule.

Ask group members to turn to page 141 in their books and go through the exercise there using the example given above or another example.

Given the new relationship rule, have group members identify:

- 1) The kinds of thoughts they would like to have
- 2) The way they would like to act
- 3) Any way they could set up the situation to help them better adapt to the new rule.

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In addition, discuss with group members the importance of processing how making a conscious change felt after they do it.

After being with others they might:

- a. Think about the feelings they had when they were with people.
- b. Identify what happened that made them feel good and what happened that made them feel bad.
- c. Try to learn from the experience and use what they have learned in the future.

V. TAKE HOME MESSAGE

You have choices about how you behave with others.

You can change how you behave with others.

VI. FEEDBACK

As this is the last session of the module, spend time reviewing material from the past 4 sessions. Use the feedback time to review key concepts, determine what messages group members have learned from the module, and highlight that it is possible to make positive changes in your life.

Possible questions to stimulate discussion include:

1. How have you made changes in what you do since beginning the group?
2. What did you learn about relationships that was most helpful, in terms of improving your mood?
3. What did you find least helpful?
4. What message will you take from this module?

It will also be important to discuss with group members who are leaving the group, how their reactions to leaving and what they have learned from the group. Possible questions to ask group members who are leaving include:

1. What did you learn from the group?
2. What are your goals and plans after you leave the group?
3. How will you continue to get support?
4. What do you need to continue your progress in managing your mood?
5. What will happen the next time you feel that you are becoming depressed?

Allow time so that other group members can also provide feedback to those who are leaving regarding how they feel about their leaving and specific things they have learned from them. Make sure you have prepared something specific to say to each participant who is leaving about their unique contribution to the group and the changes you have seen them make.

VII. PERSONAL PROJECT ASSIGNMENT

1. Daily Mood Scale
2. Plan a positive contact with a supportive person this week.

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3. When and with whom would you like to be assertive this week?

VIII. PREVIEW

Let the group members know that next week you will begin talking about the connection between health and mood, and we will have new group members joining the group.

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GROUP LEADER SELF EVALUATION FORM: PEOPLE 4

INSTRUCTIONS

Content Covered: Rate the degree to which you feel this material was covered (0=not at all, 10=fully covered) If not done this session but done later, when it is done write in the date and rate how well you feel you covered it.

Satisfaction with Teaching: Rate the degree to which you are satisfied with the way you and your co-leader taught the material (0=not at all satisfied, 10=extremely satisfied).

Participant Process: Rate on average the degree to which participants seemed to participate, understand and complete the exercise (0=on average very poor no one understood or no one was able to complete exercise; 10=everyone seemed to understand keypoints and complete the exercise).

	Taught/ Done? (0-10)	Satisfaction with Teaching (0-10)	Participant Process (0-10)
Agenda and Announcements	_____	_____	_____
Review	_____	_____	_____
Personal Project Review	_____	_____	_____
1. Obstacles to using assertive communication to improve relationships	_____	_____	_____
a. fear	_____	_____	_____
b. low energy	_____	_____	_____
c. don't believe it would change things	_____	_____	_____
d. habit relationship rules	_____	_____	_____
2. More relationship tools	_____	_____	_____
a. balancing your needs with the needs of others	_____	_____	_____
b. setting limits	_____	_____	_____
c. planning how you want to be with others	_____	_____	_____
Take Home Message	_____	_____	_____
Feedback	_____	_____	_____
Personal Project Assigned	_____	_____	_____
Preview	_____	_____	_____