

8/ 4/1

HOW CONTACTS WITH PEOPLE AFFECT MOOD

Session 2 of 2: Improving Contacts

- REVIEW:
1. Therapeutic Exercises: Mood, People Contacts
 2. The way you are thinking about things affects your mood.
 3. The things that you are doing affect your mood.
 4. Your mood affects what you think and what you do.
 5. You can change your thoughts and actions to help yourself overcome feelings of depression.

I. When you consider your contact with other people, again consider:

- A. Your thoughts about others.
- B. What you do around others.
- C. How you feel around others.

II. Your thoughts about others:

- A. Do you find that you can't trust others?
- B. Do you find that you don't feel tolerant of others?
- C. Do you find that you are frightened of others?
- D. Do you find that others expect too much from you?
- E. The most important thing is balance - learn how to cautiously test others and learn who you can and cannot trust.

III. Your behavior around others:

- A. Consider how you appear to others.
- B. How can you help others feel comfortable with you?
- C. Do you behave assertively? Assertiveness is being able to share positive or negative thoughts and feelings with others and to feel comfortable doing so.

IV. Your feelings around others:

- A. Before being with others
 1. Work on changing your feelings around others, decide ahead of time what kind of thoughts you would like to have when you are with them.

2. Similarly, if you want to change your behavior, decide ahead of time how you would like to behave around them.

B. After being with others

1. Learn from your experiences:
 - a. After you are with others, think about the feelings you had while with them.
 - i. What feelings are you aware of after you leave?
 - ii. Can you figure out what made you feel good or bad?

V. An important aspect of interacting with others is the building of trusting relationships.

A. Exercise: 

1. How are people feeling about trusting others in the group?
2. If you don't feel good about trusting someone, would you be able to tell them?
3. On index cards, write on one side the ingredients for healthy/trusting relationships. On the other side, write ingredients for unhealthy/non-trusting relationships.

THERAPEUTIC EXERCISES:



1. The Daily Mood Scale
2. The Weekly Contact Schedule

Note contacts with people.
Add a "+" if the contact was positive.
Add a "-" if the contact was negative.
3. Practice thinking and behaving differently with someone outside the group.
4. Write down problems with people/relationships for which you would like advice from the group.

DAILY MOOD SCALE

Week Number _____

Name _____ Week Starting: _____

Day		_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
D A I L Y M O O D S C O R E E	BEST	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
		8	8	8	8	8	8	8
		7	7	7	7	7	7	7
		6	6	6	6	6	6	6
	AVERAGE	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
		4	4	4	4	4	4	4
		3	3	3	3	3	3	3
		2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	WORST	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Number of
people contacts

Positive: _____

Negative: _____

WEEKLY ACTIVITY SCHEDULE

	M	T	W	Th	F	Sat	Sun
AM 8-9							
9-10							
10-11							
11-12	-						
PM 12-1							
1-2							
2-3							
3-4							
4-5							
5-6							
6-7							
7-8							
8-on							

Problems with people or relationships for which you would like advice from the group:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

RELATIONSHIPS

We have to consciously study how to be tender with each other until it becomes a habit because what was native has been stolen from us

... As we arm ourselves with ourselves and each other, we can stand toe to toe inside that rigorous loving and begin to speak the impossible - or what has always seemed like the impossible - to one another. The first step toward genuine change. Eventually, if we speak the truth to each other, it will become unavoidable to ourselves.

~Audre Lorde, "Eye to Eye" in Sister Outsider

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4/8

CREATING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

- Review:
1. Therapeutic Exercises:
 - i. Daily Mood Scale
 - ii. Number of Contacts with People
 - iii. Did you identify problems you would like to work on with the group's help?
 2. Purpose of this section:

Focus on creating healthy relationships.

- I. Truth Telling in relationships*
 - A. One area of difficulty in relationships is the inability to tell the truth to people in our lives.
 1. Historically, African-Americans needed to learn to "wear the mask" in order to survive oppression.
 2. Women have often learned to gain power in relationships by withholding truth. (e.g. keeping a bit of money stashed away somewhere that "he don't know about")
 3. Many times as children we were punished for telling the "truth."
 - B. Lack of truth telling has created an over-valuation of "appearance" in the African-American community.

"Lack of truth in our lives encourages us to deny what we genuinely feel and experience, we lose our capacity to know who we really are and what we need and desire."

- II. Communicating openly and honestly involves:
 - A. Feeling safe
 1. Finding a safe environment (therapy group, an important, trusted person).
 2. Realizing we can survive strong emotions.
 - B. Communicating effectively
 1. Finding an appropriate time (not when arguing).
 2. Discussing feelings, thoughts, experiences, with "I" statements (avoiding blame or judgements).

“Oftentimes, Black folks find it easier to “tell it like it is” when we are angry, pissed, and desire to use “the truth” as a weapon to wound others.”*

Healthy truth telling in relationships does NOT involve harsh criticism, teasing, “reading,” or calling people out.

III. Healthy vs. Harsh*

“Harsh criticism is often a major characteristic of Black mother-daughter relationships. We may imagine that hurting criticism takes place for our own good. This is not the kind of honesty that is healing. And it is vitally important for Black female well-being that we can distinguish it from a commitment to truth telling.”

- A. Can you identify the difference between harsh criticism and healthy truth telling?
- B. What are some examples?

IV. Practicing critical affirmation

A. With others:

1. Takes more time and greater concentration.
2. Uses caring tones.
3. Recognizes that constructive critical affirmation is the best strategy for building character.
3. Response may not be as quick but has a better, healthier effect.

B. With ourselves:

1. Identify the harsh, critical voice within ourselves.
2. Replace the harsh voice with a gentle, compassionate, caring voice.
3. Notice the effect of changing our voices within and extend the positivity to other relationships in our lives.

V. Exercise:

A. Turn to the person sitting next to you:

1. Practice critical affirmation with others:

2. Practice critical affirmation with yourself:

“... It is important for Black women to practice speaking in a loving and caring manner about what we appreciate about one another. For such an action makes it evident to all observers of our social reality that Black women deserve care, respect, and ongoing affirmation.”*

*from bell hooks (1993), Sister of the Yam: Black Women and Self Recovery.

THERAPEUTIC EXERCISES:



1. The Daily Mood Scale
2. The Weekly Contact Schedule
Note contacts with people.
Add a “+” if the contact was positive.
Add a “-” if the contact was negative.
3. Practice open and honest communication in relationships.
4. Replace harsh criticism with critical affirmation at least once this week and tell the group about it.

DAILY MOOD SCALE

Week Number _____

Name _____ Week Starting: _____

Day		_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
D A I L Y M O O D S C O R E	BEST	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
		8	8	8	8	8	8	8
		7	7	7	7	7	7	7
		6	6	6	6	6	6	6
	AVERAGE	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
		4	4	4	4	4	4	4
		3	3	3	3	3	3	3
		2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	WORST	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Number of
people contacts

Positive: _____ | _____

Negative: _____ | _____

WEEKLY ACTIVITY SCHEDULE

	M	T	W	Th	F	Sat	Sun
AM 8-9							
9-10							
10-11							
11-12							
PM 12-1							
1-2			+				
2-3							
3-4							
4-5							
5-6							
6-7			-				
7-8							
8-on							

1
2

Practice with replacing harsh criticism with critical affirmation:

Who:

When:

How:

> Announce > Meditations >

mod scale / hw

(Joyce)

go over critical affirmations

75

FAMILY

Some people are your relatives but others are your ancestors, and you choose the ones you want to have as ancestors. You create yourself out of those values.

~Ralph Ellison

The fruit must have a stem before it grows.

~Jabo proverb, Liberia

OUR FAMILIES

- Review:
1. Therapeutic Exercises:
 - i. Daily Mood Scale
 - ii. Number of Contacts with People
 - iii. Did you practice critical affirmation?
 2. Purpose of this section:
Understanding our family relationships.

- I. Understanding our family dynamics helps us to understand how our relationships and contacts with people affect our mood.
 - A. If we want to understand ourselves as individuals, it makes sense to focus on our inner self as we have; our thoughts, our feelings, and how those things affect our mood.
 - B. But, if we want to understand the part of our lives that involve relationships with spouses or partners, children, friends, etc., it is important to understand the families we were born into as well as the generations before us.

II. Our Families Historically:

- A. Civilization began in Africa.
- B. As African-American women we have a long history of generations of women before us who have survived difficulties and dangers.
- C. We are a product of these women and the way we have developed as people, whether we think of it as positive or negative, has been influenced by earlier generations.
- D. What are some of the ways we as African-American women have been influenced by our history?

III. Our Families Personally:

- A. Throughout the centuries it has been known that what happens in a family in any one generation, can echo through the generations to follow.
- B. Often our behavior patterns have been influenced by what our parents experienced growing up in our grandparent's household.
- C. What are some of the ways we have been personally influenced by our family history?

IV. Exercise: Creating a Genogram*

A. What is a Genogram?

A Genogram is a picture representation of three (or more) generations of the family you were born into, and it is used as a guide for understanding your own family and some of the roots of your patterns of behavior. It is like a "family tree" except that it is presented in a different format and it can have more personal details.

B. Why make a Genogram?

Examining your Genogram and sharing it with others may help you discover which patterns of behavior happening in your family right now are repeats from previous generations. In the process of doing this project you may be able to identify present issues and family strengths, as well as potential difficulties. This project is not meant to fault or blame previous generations for present problems. We know that just as each generation of descended Africans have done the best job possible given the resources available to them, families also do the best they can given their circumstances. Genograms may give you a sense of valuable traditions and characteristics passed on through families and may stimulate a sense of respect and appreciation for those who have come before you.

C. How to make a Genogram?

Look at the first example (Figure 1). This is an example of a Genogram. Jack and Freda had 6 children, one of whom died. Also, Freda's mother Mary had a stillborn child before Freda was born.

You may start your Genogram with your grandparent's generation and go forward, or you may start with your own generation and work backwards to your grandparent's generation.

You should include everyone born into a family or formally or informally adopted. Within the African-American community we may have unofficial relatives like "play" uncles, aunts, or cousins, and you may include these people if you want. Include anyone living and anyone now dead is indicated with an "X" mark.

See the following page for the Basic Information and how it is represented.

See figure 2 for an example of a more complex Genogram.

*adapted from Sheldon Starr, Ph.D., 1988.

THERAPEUTIC EXERCISES:



1. The Daily Mood Scale
2. The Weekly Contact Schedule: Note contacts with **family**.
Add a "+" if the contact was positive.
Add a "-" if the contact was negative.
3. Continue working on Genogram.

GENOGRAM BASIC INFORMATION

Basic Information:

Symbol Used:





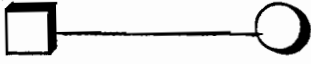
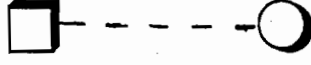
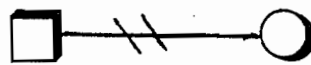
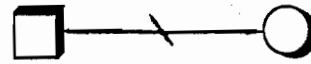

- | | | |
|----|--|---|
| 1. | Gender | male  female  |
| 2. | Date of birth | 
b. 1943 |
| 3. | Death, date, and cause | 
d. 1987
cancer |
| 4. | Marriage and year | 
m. 1970 |
| 5. | Living together and year | 
l.t. 1972 |
| 6. | Divorce and year | 
div. 1965 |
| 7. | Separation and year | 
sep. 1951 |
| 8. | Children: in birth order,
oldest on left with year born |  |

Figure 2

GENOGRAM

Dhio: First generation USA

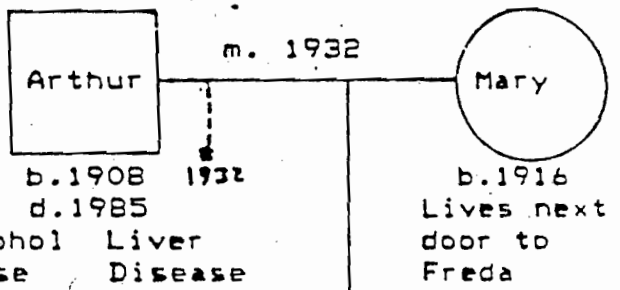
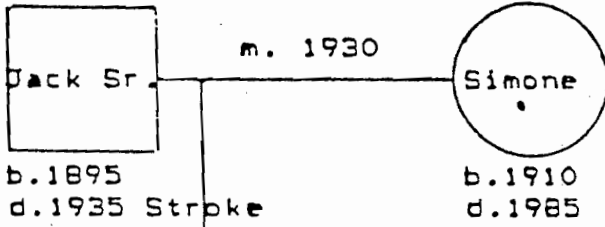
Indiana: First generation USA

Welder

Teacher

Brick Layer

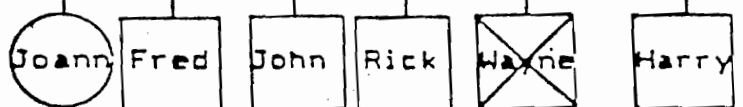
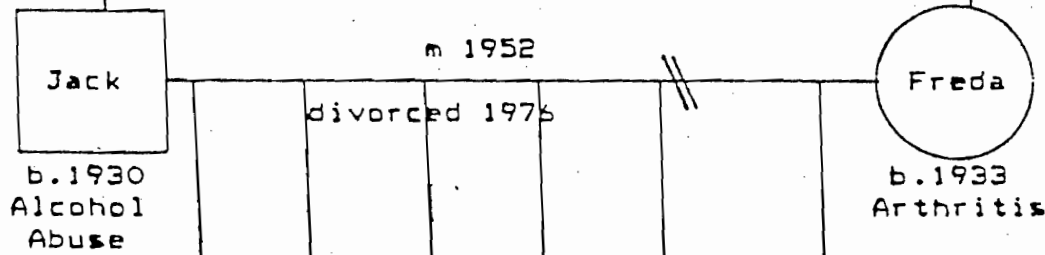
Nurse



California 1953

Salesman

Social Worker



b. 53 Drugs
 b. 54 Alcohol
 b. 56
 b. 66
 b. 68 d. 69 Birth Defect
 b. 71 A+ Student

DAILY MOOD SCALE

Week Number _____

Name _____ Week Starting: _____

Day		_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
D A I L Y M O O D S C O R E E	BEST	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
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Number of **family** contacts

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WEEKLY ACTIVITY SCHEDULE

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PM 12-1							
1-2							
2-3							
3-4							
4-5							
5-6							
6-7	..						
7-8							
8-on							

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4/22

SPIRITUALITY

- REVIEW:
1. Therapeutic Exercises:
 - i. Daily Mood Scale
 - ii. Number of contacts with family
 - iii. Did you do your Genogram?
 2. Purpose of this section:

Understanding our Spirituality

Please note that we are aware that there are many names for the act of worship and for the higher power to which the worship is being made. For this discussion, we use GOD to identify the higher power and we recognize Spirituality as the central principal of worship. We also understand that not everyone may consider themselves religious or spiritual; hopefully you still feel comfortable enough to participate in the discussion because your experience is valuable.

I. Understanding how we may or may not be spiritual helps us to understand how we ultimately view ourselves, and therefore, gives us a clearer understanding of how these views affect our mood.

A. For most of us, being spiritual is an inner experience. However, this inner experience is really a representation of how we think of ourselves. If this representation is of affirming qualities, then most of the time our self views will have a positive effect on our mood. But if our representations are of self-doubt, self-hate, etc., then our self views will mostly have a negative affect on our mood.

B. So, if we want to understand how spirituality impacts our lives, then it is important to understand how it has affected us historically and on a personal level.

II. The Historical Role of Spirituality

A. Spirituality has many meanings for us as African Americans.

B. Spirituality has been a source of comfort and security for us as we have endured great atrocities such as slavery.

C. We were not allowed to practice the religion that we brought over from Africa. Some of our ancestors hid in the woods or fields and held secret meetings to practice their religion. Most of our ancestors were forced to convert to Christianity as the Europeans practiced. In some instances there was an integration of both.

D. How was religion or spirituality talked about in your family?

E. What is your understanding of the historical role that Spirituality has had in our community?

III. The Role of Spirituality in Our Community

A. It is also important to acknowledge that sometimes our relationship with Spirituality has been conflictual.

B. As a community, when we have searched for the meaning of life, sometimes we get angry with GOD for letting the things that happen to us occur. Things such as inner city violence, drugs, joblessness, illness, are just a few of the experiences that we share as African Americans - and these things are hard to understand - IT JUST DOES NOT MAKE ANY SENSE!

C. What is your understanding of the role that Spirituality/Religion has in our community. Does it have a role?

IV. The Personal Role of Spirituality

A. As we search for answers to the questions of the situations that do not make sense, sometimes our spirituality leads us inward.

B. There, we may find that the power to change comes from within us.

- C. What does it mean to go inward?
- D. How do we go inward?
- E. When you go inward do you have a sense of powerfulness or weakness?
- F. Where did this sense of powerfulness or weakness come from?

V. Exercise: Going inward - a meditation

Close your eyes and breath deeply through your nose and out through your mouth. Let the thoughts wander in and out- do not try to manipulate your thoughts, just let them flow. Now, focus more on your breath. Count your breaths. Now, picture giving yourself perfect LOVE. What does it feel like and what does it look like? What is the meaning of perfect self-love?

THERAPEUTIC EXERCISES:



1. Continue the Daily Mood Scale
2. Monitor the moments of spirituality throughout your week and record at the bottom of the Mood Scale.
3. Do a meditation once this week and write down your thoughts and feelings after you have completed the meditation.

DAILY MOOD SCALE

Week Number _____

Name _____ Week Starting: _____

Day		_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
D A I L Y M O O D S C O R E	BEST	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
		8	8	8	8	8	8	8
		7	7	7	7	7	7	7
		6	6	6	6	6	6	6
	AVERAGE	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
		4	4	4	4	4	4	4
	WORST	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Number of moments of spirituality:

Spirituality: _____

MEDITATION WORKSHEET

Mood before Meditation:

Thoughts before Meditation:

Meditation Practiced:

(i.e. deep breathing,
visualization,
relaxation, etc.)

Where:

When:

Thoughts after Meditation:

Mood after Meditation:

SELF-LOVE

“If internalized racism enters the souls of Black folks through years of socialization then we are not going to be rid of it by simply giving shallow expressions to the notion that Black is beautiful. We must live in our bodies in such a way that we daily indicate that Black is beautiful. We must talk about Blackness differently. And we cannot do any of this constructive action without first loving Blackness.

The art and practice of loving begins with our capacity to recognize and affirm ourselves.

Affirming ourselves is the first step in the direction of cultivating the practice of being inwardly loving.”

~bell hooks Sisters Of The Yam: Black Women and Self-Recovery