

AFRICAN-AMERICAN FEMALE IDENTITY

Review: 1. Therapeutic Exercises:

- i. Daily Mood Scale
- ii. Did you make room in your week for Moments of Spirituality/Meditation?

2. Purpose of this section:

Exploring issues related to our identity.

I. Internalized Racism

A. Due to racism, Black people, and Black women in particular, have very few positive images depicting Black beauty, Black intellect, and Black womanness.

B. The lack of affirming images of Black femaleness in art, magazines, movies, and television reflects not only the racist White world's way of seeing us, but the way we see ourselves.*


C. It is no mystery to most Black women that we have internalized racist/sexist notions of beauty that lead many of us to think we are unattractive.*

II. Reality Check

A. Do we have to/want to accept the stereotypes that others have used against us?

B. Sankofa: "WE MUST REMEMBER OUR PAST IN ORDER TO MOVE FORWARD IN THE FUTURE"

C. Let's remember our roots: History reminds us that we have been great Queens of Africa, ruling superior nations. We have been Harriet Tubman who freed over 100,000 slaves. We have been Sojourner Truth, a highly intelligent woman who spoke vehemently against slavery. And we have been Rosa Parks who was determined to be treated as a human being and sparked the Civil Rights Movement by refusing to give up her seat. There are hundreds/thousands of others who refuse to succumb to these circumstances.


D. Who is your hero and why? 

III. Self-healing

“Learning to love ourselves as Black Women goes beyond a simplistic insistence that ‘Black is Beautiful.’ It goes beyond and deeper than the surface appreciation of Black beauty, although that is certainly a good beginning... Clearly, if Black Women want to be about the business of collective self-healing, we have to be about the business of inventing all manner of images and representations that show us the way we want to be and are.” *

A. In order to affirm our identity as Black women we must practice self-healing.

B. First, we need to disown and discard the negative stereotypes that we have carried around with us collectively for hundreds of years and personally in our own lives.

What are some of the names (i.e., Aunt Jemima) and conditions (i.e., welfare mothers) that we have been led to believe and accept? 

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

C. What images of Black Women can we use to replace these stereotypes? Let's rediscover, reaffirm, and reclaim our true selves? Who are we? ✍

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

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

THERAPEUTIC EXERCISES:



1. Continue the Daily Mood Scale.
2. Keep track of the number of stereotypes both positive and negative that you find your self thinking and record the number of statements made on the daily mood scale.
3. Find an affirming image of Black Womanhood (a picture, a poem, an affirming statement, a song, etc.) and place it in an area where you will see it each day (on the fridge, on your bathroom mirror, by your bed, in your purse, etc.)

DAILY MOOD SCALE

Week Number _____

Name _____ Week Starting: _____

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

Number of
Stereotypes

Positive: _____

Negative: _____

RELEASE NEGATIVITY

“To be at peace, Black women, especially those among us who have been deeply wounded and hurt, must release the bitterness we hold within us. Bitterness is like a poison. When it’s inside us, it spreads even to the parts of the self that allows us to feel joy and a spirit of celebration.”

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

“Nothing can dim the light that shines from within.”

~Maya Angelou

13 5/6

HOW THOUGHTS AFFECT YOUR MOOD: A Review

- REVIEW: 1. Therapeutic Exercise - The Daily Mood Scale.
- a. What kinds of stereotypes did you notice last week?
2. What image(s) did you choose?
 3. The purpose of this section: A review of how thoughts affect your mood.

I. Tools to increase healthy thinking: Review

A. Increasing Thoughts That Make Us Feel Good

1. Increasing the number of good thoughts in your mind.
 - a. Make lists of good thoughts about yourself and about life.
2. Give yourself pats-on-the-back.

Most of the things we do are not noticed by others. Therefore, it is important for us to notice them and give ourselves credit for doing them.

 - a. For example, you could tell yourself, "I did not lash out at others even though I had to wait a long time for my appointment."
3. "Hold Everything!"

Give yourself a break by taking time out mentally.

 - a. Pause. Let your mind relax. Allow your body to feel at peace. This can give you energy.
 - b. Breathe. Take three deep breaths inhaling through your nose and exhaling through your mouth, making sure your stomach expands. This can center you.
4. Time Projection.

Imagine yourself taking the steps to move toward a time when things will be better.

B. Decreasing Thoughts That Make Us Feel Bad

1. Thought stopping.

When a thought is ruining your mood:

- a. Identify it.
- b. Tell yourself: "This thought is ruining my mood."
- c. Think of another thought. Use your card of positive thoughts to help you with this.

2. Worry time.

Schedule "worry time" each day so you can concentrate completely on necessary thinking and leave the rest of the day free of worry.

- a. Make your worrying practical. It doesn't help just to think that bad things might happen--make plans about what you can do if they do happen.

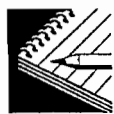
3. Balancing your thoughts:



"Yes, but..." statements:

You don't have to ignore or deny your problems to decrease negative thoughts--you can balance thoughts about negative situations by adding a more positive or hopeful statement to them.

4. Keeping a sense of humor: Keeping a good sense of humor about life can help you deal with stress.



Therapeutic Exercise:

1. Continue the Daily Mood Scale.

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 thoughts

Positive: _____

Handwritten notes:
 JJ
 2
 1/1/1/1
 1/1/1/1
 1/1/1/1

FUN AND PLAY

“It is an emergency for me to learn how to play. It is something I don’t know how to do. I’ve never just taken time off and played.”

~Bernice Johnson Reagon

“Right now, many of us don’t give enough time to play. Nevertheless, playing is a must for both our mental and physical health. So let’s make time for it!”

~Eric Copage, Black Pearls: Daily Meditations, Affirmations, and Inspirations for African-Americans.

14 5/13

WORKING WITH DAILY ACTIVITIES: A Review

REVIEW: 1. Therapeutic Exercise: The Daily Mood Scale.
2. The purpose of this section: A review of how activities affect your mood.

I. Depression and the Healthy Management of Reality

A. All of us live in two worlds:

1. **THE OBJECTIVE WORLD** (or the "Outside World").
This is all that we sense (see, feel, hear, smell, taste).
2. **THE SUBJECTIVE WORLD** (or the "Inside World").
What we think about what we sense.
3. Is the glass half full or half empty?

B. These two worlds are our REALITY.

The key to feeling healthy is to learn how to manage these two parts of our reality.

C. NO ONE controls either of these two worlds completely.

HOWEVER, WHEN WE ARE DEPRESSED,
WE FEEL WE HAVE NO CONTROL.

II. Ways to feel more control

A. Changing these two worlds

1. Objective world

- increasing pleasant activities
- increasing positive social contacts

2. Subjective world

- more healthy thinking
- less depressed thinking

B. Thinking about your time in healthy ways

1. Be careful about saying to yourself:

"I cannot enjoy life until _____." (this depression is over, my health improves, etc.)

You may not do the kinds of things that will help the depression end soon.

2. On the other hand, if you think about how you spend your time filling your OUTSIDE and INSIDE worlds with healthy, pleasant, meaningful things for yourself, the depression is more likely to end sooner.

III. Pleasant activities make your time more satisfying.

- A. As the way you spend your time becomes more satisfying, so will your life.
- B. Build your pleasant activities into your life plan.
- C. Pleasant activities help you feel less distressed and help you become emotionally healthier.
- D. The better you feel, the more you can do for yourself and others.

Therapeutic Exercise:



1. Continue Daily Mood Scale
2. Review the List of Activities

DAILY MOOD SCALE

Week Number _____

Name _____ Week Starting: _____

Day _____

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

Number of
Pleasant
Activities

CONNECTIONS

“It is important that Black people talk to one another, that we talk with friends and allies, for the telling of our stories enables us to name our pain, our suffering, and to seek healing.”

“Only by restoring the broken connections can we be healed.”

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

15 5/20

HOW CONTACTS WITH PEOPLE AFFECT MOOD: A Review

- Review:
1. Therapeutic Exercise - Number of Pleasant Activities.
 2. The purpose of this section: Review how contacts with people of people affect our mood.

I. People are important for your mood because:

- A. They can help you have rewarding experiences.
- B. They can support the values you want to live by.
- C. They can provide companionship and a sense of stability.
- D. They can reflect the image of yourself which you find most important.

II. It is NOT helpful to think that there is something wrong with yourself or others when relationships don't work well.

- A. It IS helpful to consider the following questions:
 1. Do you both want the same things from the relationship?
 2. Are your interests sufficiently similar?
 3. Can you tell each other what you think and feel clearly?

III. Relationships are like cars. They need maintenance or they begin to have troubles and break down.

- A. Relationships are never completely worked out.
 1. Just like life is never completely worked out.
 2. Nothing that is alive is fixed; it always changes.
- B. On the other hand, it is usually not worth the pain to struggle to establish a relationship when the only way the relationship is going to work is if one or both of the people involved has to make great changes.
- C. Once a relationship is established, it makes sense to try and make it into the best relationship that it can be.

IV. Relationships can help mold your life.

A. Your social environment can help you to be what you consider to be a good person.

B. People can foster your sense of self-worth, confidence and your self-image.

C. Pick relationships that will help you, not ones that hurt you.

V. Creating and maintaining social support.

A. Who are the people you feel that you can count on?

B. What are some ways you can maintain healthy relationships?

C. Are there things that you would like an honest opinion about that might be hard to ask others outside the group?

VI. Aspects of healthy relationships

A. ~~Practicing Truth-telling.~~

B. ~~Communication~~ openly and honestly.

C. ~~Harsh criticism~~ vs. healthy critical affirmation.

Communicating

VII. A tool to help make sure that you understand the other person is **Active Listening**:

A. Check out what someone said by asking them if you got it right.

1. The easiest way to do this is to repeat what they said in your OWN words.

2. You can ask them directly if that is what they meant.

B. Many people argue about things without finding out what the other person really meant to say.

Therapeutic Exercise:



1. Continue the Daily Mood Scale.

2. Notice how your contacts with people affect your mood.

DAILY MOOD SCALE

Week Number _____

Name _____ Week Starting: _____

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

Number of
People Contacts

Positive: _____

Negative: _____

“In spiritual solidarity, Black women have the potential to be a community of faith that acts collectively to transform our world. When we heal the woundedness inside us, when we attend to the inner love-seeking, love-starved child, we make ourselves ready to enter more fully into community. We can experience the totality of life because we have become fully life-affirming. Like our ancestors using our powers to the fullest, we share the secrets of healing and come to know sustained joy.”

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

16

5/27

GRADUATION



1. STATE ONE WAY IN WHICH YOUR MOOD HAS IMPROVED.

2. BRING SOMETHING TO SHARE WITH THE GROUP.