

Self-Esteem and Employment

A Workshop Delivered by
Employment Projects
for Women inc.

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PART 1: SELF-ESTEEM AND THE RULER OF PERFECTION

Purpose: To establish a safe learning environment

Length of Time: Fifteen minutes

Materials: Handout - Ground Rules

Instructor's Notes:



Please note that these series of workshops are intended to be delivered to groups of women who have decided to attend voluntarily.

- Welcome participants. Briefly introduce yourself and ensure that everybody is made aware of the location of the washroom, breaks and smoking locations.
- When starting a class working on self-esteem issues, it is very important to establish a safe and comfortable environment for the participants to allow them to talk freely without fear of their confidentiality being broken, i.e., what goes on in the class/course stays in the class/course. It is also important that people are not judged because of the comments that they make.
- It is important to emphasise that the group is closed, i.e., nobody new will be joining the group.
- The participants are probably a little apprehensive and nervous about such a course. Reiterate that being here says they recognize that they want to change by developing a greater awareness of self, that the issue of self-esteem is an issue they want to address in their lives and that this is the first step towards personal growth.
- Participants take part to the extent that they are comfortable, i.e., they are encouraged to share and participate on their terms.
- The tasks anchor the learning in the class. They are also reality based and intend to add meaning to the participants' lives. There are no right or wrong answers. The purpose of the exercises are to heighten awareness and to help participants make changes in their lives.

Method:

1. Review Ground Rules as provided.
2. Ensure that there is agreement amongst the participants.

GROUND RULES

People benefit most from the group experience when they bear in mind the following:

- ✎ Share what is comfortable and safe for you. You are entitled not to share. Use the word "pass" when choosing not to share.
- ✎ Maintain a non-judgmental perspective when listening to others and recognize that everyone is in a different place along her journey. Being respectful of differences of opinion encourages us to consider other possibilities.
- ✎ Maintain confidentiality and keep what is shared in the group within the bounds of the group.
- ✎ Be positive. Negativity is counterproductive to the group's goals.
- ✎ Respect yourself and others. Each person has a right to equal time.

Our priority is that you experience this environment as a comfortable place to share, to be yourself and to learn.



Purpose: To give the participants the time to get to know each other.

Length of time:

- ☛ Depends on the number of participants.
- ☛ Ask the participants to pair off and to interview each other (20-25 minutes).
- ☛ Each participant then introduces the person they interviewed to the larger group.
- ☛ Allow approximately 5-7 minutes per pair to deliver to the larger group.
- ☛ The facilitator then introduces herself to the group using the same guidelines.



Materials: See handout - Getting to Know You -

- OR Write on board/flipchart
- Name
- Tell me about yourself, e.g., family, life experiences etc.,
- This workshop will be successful for me if...
- I will not be able to complete the workshop if...

Also, sometimes it is a source of humour and helps to ease the tension in the room if, for example, people share their favourite colour, an unusual hobby etc.. Draw out from their own experiences as much as possible to enrich theirs and others lives.



GETTING TO KNOW YOU!

Name:

Tell me about yourself:



The workshop will be successful for me if ...

I will not be able to complete the workshop if ...

Purpose: To assist the participants to develop an understanding of high and low self-esteem because recognition is the first step toward change.

Length of time: Twenty minutes

Materials: Board/flipchart

Instructor's Notes:

High self-esteem is important not only for emotional well being but, also for the overall quality of life. How people feel about themselves also helps define the way people respond to each other. The inner confidence gained when people value themselves, will help them face any challenges they may be faced with in their lives.



Method:

1. Write the term SELF-ESTEEM in the middle of the board and simply have the participants call out what the term means to them. There are no right or wrong answers.
2. Write the term HIGH self-esteem on the board and ask the participants what does it LOOK like?

Similarly, write the term LOW self-esteem on the board and solicit from the participants what it looks like. Examples are given.

High Self-Esteem

- is expressed by a positive outlook of the future
- maintaining direct eye contact
- upright posture
- expressing opinions
- accepting criticism
- not being afraid to wear colourful clothing
- good, open listening
- willingness to take risks
- using assertive language - "I ..."
- being respectful
- displaying an optimistic outlook

Low Self-Esteem

- is expressed by negative talk about the future
- lack of eye contact
- slouching
- inability to speak up
- putting others down; undermining words
- wearing baggy, dark clothing. Tendency to hide their face, i.e., hair falling on face.
- nail biting
- inappropriate behaviour
- is passive in nature
- always apologizing
- assuming responsibility for everybody and everything
- pessimistic outlook
- tired looking

Purpose: To gain understanding of the impact of words on self-esteem.

Time: Thirty minutes (fifteen minutes per activity)

Materials Required: Board/flipchart
Handout - Comparing High and Low Self-Esteem

Instructor's Notes:

The levels of self-esteem experienced by people fluctuate on a daily basis. Sometimes people feel really great about themselves and the next day they may feel completely the opposite way. These fluctuations are also experienced on a daily basis.

Life IS a mixture of high and low self-esteem moments and is very much dependent on what is happening on a daily basis. The words that people use are critical when considering the impact on self-esteem and greatly influence how they feel about themselves. Words reflect behaviour and the individual's view of the world.

Method:

1. Draw a large table on the board/flipchart with two columns on it. Write High Self Esteem on one column and Low Self-Esteem on the other.
2. Solicit from the group words/phrases that evoke negative self-esteem. Prompting may be necessary. Refer back to the previous discussion where the participants may think about people who have low self-esteem and the language that they use to describe their behaviour.

Examples are:

- I feel guilty that I didn't go.
 - I should have gone immediately.
 - I am always late.
 - I could have been more organized and gone there earlier.
 - Boy, am I ever stupid.
 - I must go to my mother's now.
 - I can't stop it.
 - I'm never there.
 - I don't know anything.
3. Solicit from the group how they feel about these terms. The tendency will be for negative reactions. However, channel the discussion in a way that while participants examine their reactions, they are also able to derive awareness and gain understanding of the need to use language that is validating and supportive.

4. Repeat the second step but this time work on terms associated with positive self-esteem.

Examples are:

- I want to go to my mother's now.
- I am usually on time etc.,

5. Solicit from the group how they feel about these terms. The reaction may have changed to one of optimism coupled with a sense of having control over the situation.

6. Have the participants complete the following exercise sheet. The purpose is to allow the participants to gain a greater awareness of who they are and how they react in situations where they feel really good or bad about themselves. By increasing the awareness within participants of how they react under specific situations, it allows them to facilitate change in their thoughts and actions. Steps, no matter how small are significant milestones on the road to change.



HOW DO I REACT IN DIFFERENT SITUATIONS?



If I had	High self-esteem	Low self-esteem
How would I carry myself ?		
How would I dress ?		
How would I talk ?		
With whom would I spend time ?		
Whom would I avoid ?		

Purpose: To discover the power of the internal "chatterbox"

Time: Forty-five minutes

Materials: See Handout - Challenging Our Mistaken Certainties
- I Have Control ...

Scissors

Instructor's Notes:

The latest scientific research suggests that happy thoughts produce chemicals that actually strengthen the body and negative thoughts produce other chemicals that weaken the body. It is important that people are aware of words that are limiting them and their ideas, e.g., "I can't" or "I never." Even the words of obligation such as "I should" or "I must" weaken people because they have a sense of guilt, inadequacy or obligation associated with them.

The problem with negative thinking is that it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Negative motivation - people telling themselves how bad they are so that they will start to be good rarely works. Instead of saying, "I failed," and rendering themselves a failure, people can say instead, "I made a mistake. I am only human and mistakes can be corrected or learned from."

It is important that people start to restructure self-defeating thoughts. Instead of saying, "I can never succeed at anything," say "I am confident that I can make the best of whatever happens." Exaggerated or meaningless claims are not being made, e.g., "I will never succeed at anything." Research shows that symptoms of depression improve in people who learn to transform their most negative thoughts into positive statements.

A key to greater self-confidence is to be self-directed. Encourage participants to take their eyes off others and what they expect of them and look deep inside themselves. It is important to become a self-directed person rather than one whose life is controlled by the opinions of others.

Method:

1. To show the effect of the words on people, the following demonstration is performed. Ask for a volunteer from the class. Tell the person to face the group, extend their arm and make a fist. Instruct them to resist as the instructor tries to push their arm down. (If the volunteer is unable to resist the pushing another person is required). Then instruct the volunteer as follows:
 - "Close your eyes and repeat ten times I am a weak and unworthy person. This statement is not to be believed, simply said. I'll stop you when you've said it ten times".
 - The volunteer stops when instructed. They are then asked to raise their arm, make a fist and resist as the instructor tries to push their arm down. Their arm will drop.

- Then instruct the volunteer as follows: "Close your eyes and repeat ten times I am a strong and worthy person. I'll stop you when you've said it ten times".



- The volunteer stops when instructed. The person is then asked to raise their arm, make a fist and resist as the instructor tries to push their arm down. This time their arm will be able to resist the force.

2. The words that people use have positive and negative effects on how they feel about themselves. Words like **SHOULD**, **COULD**, **CAN'T**, **OUGHT TO**, **HAVE TO** debilitate the internal power within people and negatively impact their self-esteem. To increase awareness of this effect, have the participants complete the following handout (15 minutes) and allow fifteen minutes for class discussion and debriefing.

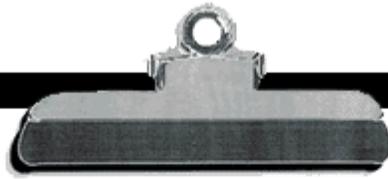
3. Photocopy the sheet (I have control etc.), discuss it and encourage participants to hang it in their home or conversely keep the reduced form in their wallet, for example. They can refer to it in a time of need or as a constant reminder of their worthiness as individuals who have control over what they say, do and think and how they react to each specific situation.



CHALLENGING OUR "MISTAKEN CERTAINTIES"
(Things our chatterbox often tells us)



Negative thoughts	What can we say instead
I must be perfect	
I need the approval of everyone	
The world should be different than it is	
<i>over generalisation:</i> I'm always late I'll never win I can't do it	
If something bad can possibly happen, it will.	
Other people make me: Sad, mad, happy, etc.	
I am helpless - at the mercy of forces beyond my control	



I have control over...

**what I say,
what I think and
what I do and**

THAT'S ALL!

I have control over...

**what I say,
what I think and
what I do and**

THAT'S ALL!

I have control over...

**what I say,
what I think and
what I do and**

THAT'S ALL!

I have control over...

**what I say,
what I think and
what I do and**

THAT'S ALL!

Purpose: The Importance of Self-Care

Time: Forty-five minutes

Materials: See Handout - Uniqueness
- My Declaration of Self-Esteem
Scissors



Instructor's Notes:

In most societies and cultures, women are the primary care providers and nurturing in nature. This critical role that women fulfil in society is not recognized for being important and is not rewarded from a monetary or legislative perspective. The care of self is frequently left out. However, when the caregiver practices self care, e.g., walking, hot baths, reading for twenty minutes, it is frequently viewed or perceived as self-centred and selfish. Since women are at the hub of so many activities, i.e., family, work, volunteer, partner, by taking care of the "hub" everyone flourishes. **Women can only truly appreciate others when they appreciate themselves.** When women begin to recognize their own uniqueness and contributions, they can begin to appreciate and value themselves and the work they do.

It is important to listen to the Inner Voice and to reflect on an issue that is occupying the mind, e.g., "What can I do about my job?" or "how can I improve my relationship with my partner?" Sit for five minutes with a blank sheet of paper and just jot down whatever comes to mind. It is amazing how many solutions are already there if the time is taken to simply ask.

Methods:

1. To encourage participants to see their uniqueness and contributions; allow fifteen minutes to complete the sheet. If participants are comfortable in sharing allow the class to discuss their findings (15 minutes).
2. The poem "My Declaration of Self-Esteem" is reviewed in class. Participants are encouraged to review this on a daily basis (15 minutes) for the purpose of honing who they are and valuing their contributions.

Other Suggestions:

1. It is only natural that when people are not feeling so good about themselves they tend to focus only on their difficulties and failures - what they don't have. At the end of the day, encourage participants to reflect and think of perhaps, five things for which they are grateful, e.g., I am grateful for the good weather, I am grateful for the hug from my son etc. For somebody who is really not feeling good about themselves this may be as simple as "I am grateful I was able to get out of bed this morning." Participants may want to write their reflections in addition to just thinking about their day.

2. If possible, take the time to volunteer. Studies have shown that the feedback people get when they do something good for others energizes them and helps improve their moods. Helping others always leads to greater self-confidence, because by reaching out a difference can be made in another person's life.

3. People find it hard to feel good about themselves if they're tired and cranky. There is a link between physical and mental health. By improving their physical well being, self-esteem will also improve. Lack of sleep is a source of many problems. Cutting down on sleep may seem like a great way to get more done but it actually undermines all that people do. Women who sleep too little experience more tension and anxiety and are less able to cope with challenges than women who get enough sleep. Sometimes, at the end of the day, it may be necessary to put things into perspective and really ask if it will make a difference in twenty years time if I don't finish the report tonight etc.

4. Women by their nature don't expect perfection of other people but expect perfection of themselves. This high standard isn't possible and women feel bad about themselves. There is the cascading negative effect on self-esteem. Women also have a tendency to reflect on past situations and blame themselves when things do not work out as anticipated. Encourage the participants to reflect on the following poster (I'm doing the best ...) and again put reminder notes in their wallet. The term PERFECTION can be written on a sheet by participants and cut up as a visual demonstration of breaking the rule of perfection.

5. People are familiar with the physical benefits of exercise; it can also help boost people's moods, increase brain power, decrease the urge to smoke or snack and diminish feelings of anger, anxiety and depression. Encourage people to consider a form of exercise that works for them and fits into their schedules. Also, too much pop and caffeine-based beverages are not beneficial for people. Encourage people to drink more water. Eight glasses per day are recommended. However, it is important to be patient. Change comes slowly and not overnight.

Sources of Information:

- Harrison, P. (1996). Dream a little dream of you - directed daydreaming boosts confidence, creates calm. In *Chatelaine Magazine*, May 1996, page 174.
- Hunt, M. (1995). The secret of Self-Feeling better about Life is a lot easier than you think in *Woman's Day Magazine*, July 18, 1995, pages 70-72.
- Jeffers, S, PhD. (1987). *Feel the Fear and do it anyway*. Ballantine Publishers.
- Jungkind, E (1994). Contagious bad moods - how to boost your resistance. In *Chatelaine Magazine*, September 1994, page 30.
- Shimoff, M. and Read-Hawthorne, J. (1998). Four weeks to better Self-Esteem. In *Ladies Home Journal*, June 1998, pages 56-60.
- Verry, Beth, Employment Counsellor, Women's Employment Counselling Service, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Twelve hour workshop on Self-Esteem and Self-Confidence, 1998.



UNIQUENESS

Using only "I" statements, finish each of the following with your own personal positive response.

I am.....

I like.....

I want.....

I will be.....

I know.....

I can.....

I will.....

I have.....

I frequently.....

I rarely.....

Take your three favourite statements, write one in each box and put them into places where you know you will see them frequently, e.g., a wallet, bathroom mirror or a daily journal.

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Another idea ... every morning while brushing your teeth think about three things from this list that YOU really appreciate about yourself, e.g., "I have a good sense of humour" or "I like who I am' or I am trustworthy." This will serve as a psychological caffeine boost at the beginning of the day! Plan on having a 'good hair' day! Be the Queen for 15 minutes! Feel great about you!



**I'm doing the best
I can
with
what I have
and
what I know - RIGHT NOW!**

<p>I'm doing the best I can with what I have and what I Know - RIGHT NOW</p>	<p>I'm doing the best I can with what I have and what I Know - RIGHT NOW</p>	<p>I'm doing the best I can with what I have and what I Know - RIGHT NOW</p>
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My Declaration of Self-Esteem - Virginia Satir

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, 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 are 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 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 any given moment in time is me. This is authentic and represents where I am at that moment in time.

When I reviewed 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.

PART 2: ASSERTIVENESS: FINDING MY OWN VOICE

Purpose: To differentiate between aggressive, assertive and passive behaviour

Time: Fifteen minutes

Materials: Board/flipchart

Instructor's Notes:

Assertive behaviour is a relatively new concept in the area of psychology. It means communicating in a direct and clear manner that is respectful of self and others. Being assertive is sometimes misinterpreted as 'getting your own way'; it simply means finding your own voice and being respectful of everybody including yourself.

Being aggressive isn't "bad," neither is being passive. The boundary of being passive, aggressive or assertive differs for each person. Each person has different ways of seeing the same situation, i.e., what one person will define as assertive behaviour will be defined as passive by another. Every person is entitled to their opinion. Everybody, depending on the situation chooses to be assertive, aggressive or passive.

Method

1. Write the terms PASSIVE, ASSERTIVE, AGGRESSIVE (in this order) on the board and ask the participants what each of these individual terms look like. Note their comments on the board. Follow the pattern of asking what does Passive look like, Aggressive etc., and then Assertive. Some of the responses might be:

PASSIVE

mEEK
weak
detached
silent
not caring
fearful
indifferent
quiet

ASSERTIVE

firm
self assured
confident
considerate
courageous
respect for self and others
flexible

AGGRESSIVE

pushy
opinionated
loud
obnoxious
nasty
rigid
controlling
domineering

Purpose: To help participants see aggressive, assertive and passive behaviour within themselves.

Time: 45 minutes

Materials: See attached - Assertive, Passive and Aggressive Behaviour
- Worksheets to look at patterns of behaviour

Method:

1. The sheets are reviewed in class. Allow 20 minutes for participants to complete the sheets in a quiet environment. By recognizing patterns, the participants will be helped to gain a greater understanding of their behaviour and that it is possible to change. Allow twenty minutes for class discussion to share findings.
2. Encourage the participants to PLAN for success, e.g., plan for a good hair day as people are able to control their thoughts POSITIVELY. It is also important to point out that being down is an inherent part of the life cycle. It is impossible to maintain a "high" level all of the time. Encourage participants to recognize when they are down and to try and determine why they are feeling down.



Describe three different situations in which you have been/have used the three types of behaviours.

AGGRESSIVE	ASSERTIVE	PASSIVE
Expresses own feelings, needs, beliefs, opinions, preferences in direct and forceful manner	Expresses own feelings, needs, beliefs, opinions, preferences in direct and clear manner	Expresses own feelings, needs, beliefs, opinions, preferences in indirect and/or an unclear manner, if at all
Holds 'other' responsible for thoughts, words and actions	Takes responsibility for own thoughts, words and actions and allows others to do the same.	Takes silent responsibility for own and others' thoughts, words and actions.
Invites/allows one-sided communication on own terms	Invites/allows two-sided communication	Invites/allows one-sided communication on others' terms
Respectful of self	Respectful of self and others	Respectful of others
Self is more important than other	Both self and other are equally important	Other is more important than self

Describe three different situations in which you have been/ have use the three types of behaviours.

	AGGRESSIVE	ASSERTIVE	PASSIVE
Who are you with?			
What are the circumstances?			
Do you recognize any patterns in the people?			
Do you recognize any patterns in the situation?			

Purpose: To help participants take the steps to assertiveness
Time Forty-five minutes
Materials: See attached - Steps to Assertiveness
-Listening



Method:

1. Review the sheet "Steps to Assertiveness."
2. Allow the participants to complete the exercise. Allow 25 minutes for this activity.
3. Encourage participants to share their experiences, review the responses, i.e., give the group the opportunity to draw out from their own experiences what assertive behaviour is.

Characteristics of Assertive behaviour include:

- "I" statements only
- Be honest, open and direct
- Avoid excuses and apologies
- Respect of self and others

Allow 15 minutes for this activity.

4. The poems "Listening" and "Autobiography in Five Short Chapters" support the concept of assertiveness. Briefly review and encourage the participants to review the poems on a regular basis before the next session.

Source of Information:

- Beth Verry, Employment Counsellor, Women's Employment Counselling Services, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Twelve hour workshop on Self-Esteem and Self-Confidence, 1998.

STEPS TO ASSERTIVENESS

- Think about your own behaviour. Are you being assertive? Are you pleased with the degree of assertiveness you display?
- Think about the last week. Write down situations where you were assertive.
- Examine a specific situation. After writing, visualize one situation where you were assertive include all details and feelings before and after the situation: review your responses (Eye contact? Body language? Tone of voice?)
- Consider alternate responses. What is another way the situation could have been handled assertively?
- Practice being assertive. Think about a different scenario where, in the future, you would like to be assertive. Practice with a friend.



Just a reminder ...

Characteristics of Assertive Behaviour include:

"I" statements only
Be honest, open and direct
Avoid excuses and apologies
Respect of self and others

Listening (Anon.)

***When I ask you to listen to me
and you give me advice ...
You are not listening
When I ask you to listen to me
and you tell me why I should not feel this way ...
You are negating my feelings
When I ask you to listen to me
and you tell me how I should solve my problems,
as strange as it may seem ... you fail me
Listen ... all I'm asking is that you listen.
Not justify my feelings for me
Not solve my problems for me
For I am not helpless; I can do for myself
I may be sad, discouraged, and faltering,
but I am not helpless!***

***When something is done for me that I can
and need to do for myself
it contributes to my fears and my weaknesses
However, when the fact that I do feel what I feel
is accepted as such - even if it's irrational -
I can then quit trying to convince you that my feelings are real
and get down to the business of understanding what's behind
them***

***And when that is clear, answers are obvious
and I can make sense of them and work through them
Irrational feelings are only irrational until
there is understanding about what is behind them
Perhaps that is why prayer works,
sometimes ... for some people ...
Because God is mute and does, not give advice
nor try to fix things ... just listens
and lets you work it out for yourself
So ... please, listen and just hear me
And if you want to talk,
wait a minute for your turn
and I will listen to you.***

Autobiography in Five Short Chapters

By Portia Nelson

***I walk down the street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk
I fall in.***

***I am lost ... I am helpless
It isn't my fault.
It takes forever to find a way out.***

***I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I pretend I don't see it.
I fall in again.
I can't believe I am in the same place.
But, it isn't my fault.
It still takes a long time to get out.***

***I walk down the same street
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk,
I see it is there.
I still fall in ... it's a habit.
My eyes are open.
I know where I am.
It is my fault.
I get out immediately.***

***I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk
I walk around it.***

I walk down another street.

PART 3: TAKING RESPONSIBILITY: RECOGNIZING MY PERSONAL FREEDOM

Purpose: To reiterate with participants that they are the only person who has control over their lives.

Time: Sixty minutes

Materials: See attached - Taking Responsibility
-Rights of All Persons

Instructor's Notes:

Every person has rights, but having rights also means that there are responsibilities that have to be accepted. Through growth and change, people determine their roles in life, but also realize that the only person who can them is themselves.

Method:

1. Write the terms RIGHTS and RESPONSIBILITIES on the board and ask the participants what each of these means to them, i.e., what are your rights? What are your responsibilities?

Rights	Responsibilities
to disagree to be treated with respect to my feelings to my thoughts to accept myself to choose my response to be happy to question to learn, to dream	respect others look after my health

2. Review the handout 'Taking Responsibility' and discuss thoroughly (20 minutes).
3. Review the handout 'The Rights of Persons' and discuss thoroughly (20 minutes).



TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

Source: **Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway (Susan Jeffers, PhD), 1987,**

- **Taking responsibility means never blaming anyone else for anything you are being, doing, having, feeling.**
- **Taking responsibility means not blaming yourself Anything that takes away your power or pleasure makes you a victim.**
- **Taking responsibility means being aware of where and when you are NOT taking responsibility so that you CAN change, i.e., what am I not doing in my life that I could be doing that I'm blaming others for not doing?**
- **Taking responsibility means handling the chatterbox. It's the voice of negativity.**
- **Taking responsibility means being aware of payoffs that keep you stuck.**
- **Taking responsibility means figuring out what you want in life and acting on it.**
- **Taking responsibility means being aware of the multitude of choices there are in any given situation. Every moment of the day you are choosing how your feel, i.e., are you happy or sad?**

RIGHTS OF ALL PERSONS

I have the right:

- To alone time - to spend some time on my own, to be by myself even when I feel pressured to do something with others.
- To be independent - to maintain my own individuality in life.
- To say no without feeling guilty or self-centered - even when others say or think it is wrong or selfish.
- To ask for what I want - and to respect the answer
- To make mistakes and be responsible for the outcomes; the right to be less than perfect.
- To be listened to and heard - not necessarily be agreed with, but to have a particular point of view.
- To choose how I behave passive, assertive or aggressive.
- To the ownership of my own feelings - regardless of how appropriate or "correct" others judge them.
- To be successful - to measure this by my own standards, even when others may not do as well or when others do better.



PART 4: AFFIRMATION OF PERSONAL GROWTH AND FUTURE ATTITUDE

Purpose: To encourage participants to see the benefits of affirmations, i.e., notes or sayings of encouragement as they bring change into their lives.

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: See attached - A More Confident You
- Affirmation - I Don't Need ...

Instructor's Notes:

Affirmations are notes or sayings of encouragement. They are positive in nature, in the present tense and frequently starts with "I am."

Method:

1. Explain to participants what an affirmation is (see Instructor's Notes).
2. Encourage the participants to think about one thing that they would like to change in their lives, e.g., I want to say "no" more or I want to eliminate "should" from my vocabulary etc.
3. Ask them to write their affirmations on the sheets provided and post them wherever they will see them on a regular basis, e.g., fridges, wallets etc., (15 minutes)
4. Review the handout - A More Confident You and discuss in class. (15 minutes)
5. Copies of the affirmation can be distributed to the participants and/or posted in the classroom.

Source of Information:

Beth Verry, Employment Counsellor, Women's Employment Counselling Services, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Twelve hour workshop on Self-Esteem and Self-Confidence, 1998.

I am

I am

I am

A More Confident You

- ☞ **Recognize your strengths**
- ☞ **Acknowledge your areas for development**
- ☞ **Forgive yourself for past errors and omissions; permanently bury all negative tapes. The past continues to live in your memory only with your permission.**
- ☞ **Guilt and shame are destructive to your health and well being - don't indulge!**
- ☞ **Eliminate self-abusive words from you vocabulary - "should," "can't have to" and replace with "want," "will" and "need."**
- ☞ **Don't accept others' criticism of you as a person; only your behaviours are up for evaluation.**
- ☞ **Don't tolerate situations that make you feel inadequate - if you cannot change them, change your reactions to them - if that doesn't work, remove yourself. Life is too short to waste on negatives.**
- ☞ **Keep in touch with yourself. Take the time to relax, to meditate, to listen to yourself, to enjoy activities you are able to do on your own.**
- ☞ **You are not an object to which bad things happen. You are the culmination of millions of years of evolution of our species. You're a person who is able to make things happen. You are able to change the direction of your entire life anytime you decide to do so. With confidence in yourself, obstacles turn into challenges and challenges into accomplishments.**



**I DON'T NEED
TO BE
PERFECT
TO BE
GREAT!**

- Aneita Kogan

*Note: The following excerpt is taken from 01991, AST Works, Inc. 0 Indianapolis, Indiana

LIVE LIFE OR BE RUN BY IT?

Challenge. Can you imagine a horse walking down the street, pushing a cart in front of it? Can you also picture your life being controlled by everyone or everything around you? This is as ridiculous as a cart-drawn horse.

 List three areas where you have only a little voice in decision-making (if at all).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

 Decide which two of these areas most concerns you. Suggest some ways you would like to take more responsibility in these areas and how you would change it.

Area 1

Area 2

Putting It Together. How does it feel when I gain control of my own life? When does it happen? How? Why? How often? How can I do it more? Should I? Can I do it with love? Diplomatically? Planned, not reactive

Spin Off. Share one or two areas of decision-making over which you feel you have little control, and what you plan to do about it. Can you do it gently but firmly? Is confrontation "bad"?

*Note: The following excerpt is taken from C.1991, AST Works, Inc. Indianapolis, Indiana

YOU DECIDE

Challenge. You are suddenly given the ability to make people's lives turn out as you wish.

- ▶ Ellen has lived at home for 18 years and is just finishing high school. She has gotten along well with her parents, but she is beginning to feel an urge to go out on her own. She cannot pinpoint her anxiety, but she senses the urge to be independent. Finally, one day she approaches her parents and says:

- ▶ Jim decided he needed to be making money by the time he was 18. His family had financial pressures that could only be relieved by Jim's helping out. He decided to look at all the options available to him at local schools. He had to have marketable skills by 18, or he would have to work at common labor jobs for less money. He decided to (you finish the story):

➤ Alice has wanted to work with blind children. She has felt this desire since she was 13 years old. She is now finishing high school and must decide on future training. Alice feels she cannot wait until she completes college to start working, but she knows a good education will open more doors for her. After much thinking and talking with advisors she decides to (you tell what to do):

➤ Dave is very intelligent, and he loves math and working with numbers. He is also very good with his hands - especially repairing machines. He cannot afford college and doesn't like sitting in a classroom for four hours or more. After much thought and talking with others, he chooses to (you tell what he does):

Putting It Together How did I like the power to give people's lives the ending I wanted?

Spin Off. Discuss with your small group your story endings and whether you felt a sense of power as you made decisions about someone else's life. Share selected stories with the total group.

DAILY AFFIRMATIONS

I am responsible for my level of self-esteem; only I am able to change my life and make things happen for myself.

I am becoming a positive thinker; this includes making friends with other positive thinkers.

I am learning how to recognize roadblocks to my moving forward and am determined to find another option.

I am eliminating the words 'can't', 'have to', 'should' and 'mistake' from my vocabulary and using more correct words such as, 'unable to', 'want to', 'will' and 'learning experience'.

I am committed to my own continuous growth, and realize this is a life long process that is worth every effort I make toward this goal.

I am me! I am unique! I am a contributing and productive individual, worthy of respect from all.