
SESSION 8

Objectives:

- To identify benefits of thought-switching.
- To differentiate between needs and wants.
- To begin to identify emotional and intellectual traps and develop strategies for more positive patterns.
- To recognize and have some strategies for coping with depression.
- To recognize the possibility of making peace with the past and to develop some strategies for doing so.

Outline:

- Self-Esteem: How Our History Shapes our Self- Esteem
- Needs vs. Wants
- Identity Traps
- Feelings that Trap Us: Fear, Loss, Depression

Split Session Option

- Ambivalence: "Buts"
- Coulda, Woulda, Shoulda
- Letting Go of the Past

Materials:

- Paper
- GIVING IT UP BOX (Any size from shoebox up)

Updating

Who would like to share their experience of using thought-switching?

Did any of you feel any differently about yourselves or what was happening in your lives?

Did any of you find it easier to tell other people how you felt about something that was happening?

Today we're going to talk more about self-esteem, how we feel about ourselves, and the difference between what we need and what we want.

Needs vs. Wants

All people have some basic things that they need. What do you think those basic needs are?

What are some other needs you have, needs that help you feel good about yourself, your family, your life?

List physical needs (food, shelter clothing).

Flip chart 31**Basic psychological needs:**

- ✓ love
- ✓ security
- ✓ self-esteem
- ✓ recognition
- ✓ new experiences
- ✓ creative expression

We all need these things. Some of them we can provide for ourselves. Some our parents can provide, and some we need to look to other adults to help provide.

Let's make a list of some things you want.

Write down their ideas.

What is the difference between something you need and something you want?

An important part of becoming a responsible person is figuring out the difference between needs and wants.

We've talked about basic needs. If those basic needs go unmet, what happens?

Our survival and security are threatened.

Wants, on the other hand, are things that we would like to have but can survive without.

Knowing the difference between what we need and what we want is the first step in learning to be effective in really getting what you want out of life.

Can anyone tell me where you need to look to discover what you want or need?

Discuss.

In order to be clear about the difference between needs and wants, we have to understand how our feelings might interfere.

Identity Traps

Are you your feelings, or are your feelings a part of you?

Are you your thoughts, or are your thoughts just a part of you?

Remember all the feelings and thoughts we've been talking about?

Are any of these good or bad?

No, they are just the feelings and thoughts that all of us have from time to time. Some are more pleasant and feel better than others, but none of them are good or bad.

Believing that our feelings or thoughts are good or bad or that we are good or bad because we have them is a trap because it makes us afraid to be who we are.

Flip chart 32**Identity traps:**

What I feel = Who I am

What I do = Who I am

What I think = Who I am

IT IS NOT TRUE!!!!

Identity traps:

If I make a mistake, I am a mistake.

If I have bad thoughts, I am a bad person.

If I fail at something, I am a failure.

If I do something mean, I am a mean person.

IT IS NOT TRUE!!!

We've talked about ways to change what you say to yourself in order to avoid these traps.

(Thought-switching, positive self-talk, etc.)

What are some other thoughts you have that trap you and how could you answer yourself back so you won't be trapped?

For example: "I can't do anything right" versus "I made a mistake. Let me think about what I can learn from my mistake and I'll try again."

"I'm awful" versus "I have bad thoughts when I get angry or upset, but I don't act on those bad thoughts."

"I'm mean" versus "I did something mean and I need to apologize."

Fear

Fear is a natural feeling, but it can immobilize you.

It can keep you from taking risks. It can even keep you from leaving your house.

Fear can also be your friend, just as all your other feelings can be your friends when you understand them and learn to work with them instead of letting them control you.

Whenever you are feeling fear, you can ask yourself:

Flipchart 33

"What am I afraid of losing?"

- ✓ love, acceptance or approval;
 - ✓ power and control; and/or
 - ✓ looking good.
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The more accurately you can recognize the source of your fear, the more choices you have.

Give them an opportunity to share things they fear and explore which of the 3 losses the fears narrow down to.

Loss

What does it mean to lose something? Not just to misplace something, but to feel loss?

Loss takes many forms, and is associated with change in our lives.

Can you think of times when you have had a feeling of loss?

Allow discussion.

For example, we can feel loss when our schedule changes, when a friend isn't around as often, when we have more or less money, when we move, when we feel someone doesn't like us as much as they did before.

Loss is often associated with something that doesn't make sense.

For example, if you lose something that you bought when you were with someone special, you might feel loss for the memories of the time you were with that special person.

Can we sometimes feel loss even about happy things?

For example, if you have a new brother or sister, you may be very happy that they are here, that you can

play with them, that you'll be growing up with another person in your family. At the same time, you may feel very sad, may feel loss that your parents don't have as much time for you now, that all the people in your family will be thinking and asking about your new brother or sister instead of just you.

Mixed feelings are part of life and are easier to understand if you acknowledge that they are there.

Who can think of a feeling of loss you have had with your family?

Divorce, move, death, separation.

How did it feel?

What did you do?

Did the feelings change over time? How did you handle the feelings?

Did anyone help you?

Did your parents act differently? Do you think they felt the loss too?

Have you ever had something happy cause feelings of loss for you?

New siblings, moving, good news for a friend that led to separation.

Did you communicate that or did you try to pretend you weren't having those feelings?

Did you feel badly about yourself for having those feelings?

Remember — you are not the same as your feelings.

Depression

Lets talk about one more difficult feeling. What does it mean to be depressed?

Depression is especially difficult because it affects everything you think and say.

It affects how you see and hear everything everyone else says to you. They may be trying to be helpful and depression can make you think and feel they are trying to hurt you.

This is an especially hard emotion or feeling to deal with because it usually isn't recognizable as depression.

It can feel like sadness or a bad mood, but it usually lasts much longer than most feelings.

Does anyone remember feeling depressed? What did it feel like?

- Feeling tired all the time and never having any energy;
- deep sadness that is with you all the time;
- guilt that never goes away or comes back very often;
- feeling incapable of making any decisions;
- not being able to think clearly and maybe not even caring that you can't decide or think;

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- feeling dull about everything;
 - not having a good time, even when you're doing something that should be fun;
 - feel like you don't love or care about people anymore and recognizing that feeling, you may feel even more sad;
 - irritable and jumpy and unable to stop feeling that way; and or
 - sometimes, depression even results in thinking about death a lot.

All of these things are very real in the mind of a depressed person. They make sense and are very powerful.

At the same time, the depressed person may realize that s/he didn't used to think and feel that way.

This is a really important time to ask for help.

Depression is self-sustaining and sometimes only someone from the outside of you can help you to regain your balance and get back to what is more normal for you.

Split Session Option

Go to Ambivalence if you are not splitting the session.

If the session will be conducted in two parts, introduce the worksheet on Preventing Depression and Selfwork Activity # 1 and 2.

Re-entry for Split Sessions

Does anyone have something to share since last time?

Did any of you notice that some of the things you used to think you need are really wants instead?

Did any of you notice that you were trapped in one of the traps we discussed last time?

Ambivalence: “Buts”

What if you're not sure how you feel about something?
What is it called when you have mixed feelings about something?

The word for mixed up feelings is ambivalence.
Everybody has ambivalent feelings, when you feel like you want two or more things at once.

One way to take care of mixed up feelings is to change the way you think and talk about them.

For example, "I want to go skating, but I'm scared of falling down and looking stupid."

The word "*but*" can keep people stuck .

By changing the word "*but*" to "*and*," you give yourself more choice and take more control of what you would like to do.

"I want to go skating *and* I'm afraid I'll fall down and look stupid." Now you can choose to go and take the chance of falling down or not go.

Have each child think of an ambivalent statement and write it down in their notebooks.

This week notice each time you use the word "*but*" and see what happens when you substitute "*and*" in its place.

Coulda, Shoulda, Woulda

Living in the past and staying upset or angry about something is another trap that takes your power away. This can be called "Coulda, Woulda, Shoulda."

"Coulda, Woulda, Shoulda" are negative and destructive thought patterns. Whenever things don't go the way you wanted them to, you start to say things like this.

Flip Chart 34**Coulda, Woulda, Should . . .**

- ✓ Stop.
- ✓ Remind yourself that what you did in the past is a way to learn for the future.
- ✓ Look at what you need to do next and then do it.
- ✓ Forgive yourself for whatever you didn't do to your satisfaction.
- ✓ Acknowledge yourself for moving on and then move on.

Who can think of some examples of "Coulda, Woulda, Shoulda" statements you make in your own lives?

How do you feel when you're doing "Coulda, Woulda, Shoulda?"

Isn't it just another form of negative self-talk?

Do you think statements like that affect your ability to act in the future? Why?

This is very important. Whenever you hear yourself or someone else speaking to you using "Coulda, Shoulda, Woulda," you should:

Letting Go Of The Past

One of the things that often affects our thoughts is things that have happened to us in the past.

We make decisions about our lives based on the past and often dwell on them thinking the same thoughts over and over. These can be thought of as tapes, or worry tapes.

In order to keep growing and learning new things, in order to get more of what you want in your life, you need to not get trapped in the past.

Negative feelings about something in your past make it hard for you to concentrate on new things, new experiences.

The time you spend letting memories keep you feeling one way or the other is time that you're not free to be who you want to be today!

Things happen in life that you can't change.

For example, you might not live with one or both of your parents. Some people have physical differences like muscle problems so they can't walk, or diet problems so they can't eat certain foods.

The way you can have some real control is by working with your self, by deciding how *you* feel about what has happened in your life.

Exercise: Giving It Up

I'd like each of you to think about one (or more) things in your life that has made you unhappy, that you've been carrying around for a long time, that you've been thinking about and would like to let go of.

Write it (them) down. (For younger children, the group leader can write them down one child at a time privately or allow the children to draw a picture).

Now look at what you have written and ask yourself, "Am I willing to let go of this now?"

If the answer is no, hold onto that part of the paper.

If the answer is yes, get ready to put the paper in our GIVING IT UP BOX. You may tear it up, crumple it, let it float in, anything you want to do to let go of it.

Remember this doesn't mean it didn't happen or that it didn't make you sad or that you won't think of it again. You're just choosing to let go of some of the power it has over you.

When the group is ready, each can dispose of his/her paper in whatever way they have chosen. Acknowledge the group and be sure they acknowledge themselves with clapping and smiles and "Thank you's" to themselves.

For the next session I'd like each of you to select another negative self-talk statement and write a positive override.

Those who wish to keep or slightly change the previous one may do so.

Write them down, take them home and keep them where they will be a visible reminder during the week.

You might also want to really start thinking about what you want in your life, write your thoughts down into a few simple statements, keep them with you, look at how you diminish your ability to have those things, be nice to yourself when you aren't perfect. This isn't simple or easy, but you absolutely can do it if you choose to.

Relaxation (optional)

Walking and Centering

Most of us pay no attention when we are walking. We look just enough not to bump into things most of the time. But walking can be exhilarating and remind you of how special it is to be alive and how special each of us is.

Everyone stand up and let's clear a bit of space so we all have room to walk around.

Before we begin, take a couple of deep breaths.

Now let's begin walking slowly.

Be aware of everything and everyone in the room without looking at anyone or anything in particular.

Say to yourself, "I see and hear and feel everything."

Be aware of the temperature of the air in the room, the light, any smells, other people, the furniture.

Feel the air move against your skin as you walk.

If your mind thinks of other things like what you'll do after class today, set that thought aside and come back to saying to yourself, "I see and hear and feel everything."

Allow your walking to be smooth, centered, in control, so you don't have to make sudden movements to avoid other people or furniture, so you flow through the room.

Feel how centered and relaxed you feel.

Notice your breathing.

If you feel amused or want to smile, do so.

Feeling good naturally brings smiles and laughter and is part of what you normally feel.

Just continue walking and being aware of the room.

Do this for 3 -5 minutes.

Now slow down, be aware of how relaxed you feel and stop. Return to your seats.

Session 8 — Self-Work Activities

1. Wishing is a real part of life. Write down for yourself three things that you wish for. Look at whether they are things that you really want. Ask yourself if there is anything you could do to move toward getting your wishes. Use your goal setting list to set steps to move toward those goals.

Look at the other types of things you wish for, like wishing you were someone else, wishing you could relive something that happened. Look at how many of your wishes make your life better and how many seem to diminish the quality of your life or just plain make you miserable.

2. Practice preventing low days or getting depressed. Be active — for yourself. Read and put into practice some of the things on the “Preventing Depression” handout.
3. Begin a thought reflection diary in your notebook.

Reflection Diary

Upsetting Situation

Example:
My mother screamed at me for not making the bed again.

Negative thought

I hate my mother
I'm never making my bed for her.

Thought-switch

Making my bed is my responsibility.
I'm going to do it before she asks.

PREVENTING DEPRESSION

Begin to notice the feelings that you have at the very beginning of feeling bad or depressed. Look at how you feel and what you do. Begin to try things that will shake you feeling low and get your day or your life going again. Keep track of what works for you. Some suggestions might be:

1. Do something nice for yourself.
2. Get with a friend or family member who makes you feel good, who makes you laugh.
3. Take a few minutes to acknowledge to yourself how bad you really feel, cry if you want to, feel as bad as you feel and then do something else.
4. Tell yourself, "I feel depressed and I'm going to do something for myself." Then do something for yourself. That something may be directly related to your feeling bad or not.
5. Keep moving. Chunk down. Make yourself be engaged in something for ten minutes. Often that is enough to break the cycle and get you going again.
6. Exercise.
7. Do a relaxation exercise and then do something active.
8. Communicate what you need to communicate to complete an upset and then move on. (Sometimes you don't need to communicate to anyone but yourself.)
9. Stop telling yourself you're awful for feeling the way you do. The truth is you feel the way you do, so feel that way and do something else.
10. Keep a journal. Write down all of your thoughts or feelings as quickly as they come into your head. Write them anyway you want to — no one is going to grade you. Keep writing until you don't have anything more to say. Then go on to something more enjoyable. Later you can reread what you've written or just throw the thoughts away in the same way you let go of your depressed feelings.

FINALLY, have fun, do something silly, force yourself if you have to in order to get into it.

Dear Parents,

We've been discussing the difference between "needs" and "wants." An important part of becoming a responsible person is figuring out the difference between needs and wants. Wants are things we would like to have, but we could survive without. (That doesn't mean they are unimportant.) At the same time, we sometimes forget to work toward the things we really need in life because they can be more subtle and hard to identify.

Living in the past or constantly second-guessing our lives is another way to get stuck in life. Too many people fall into patterns of thinking, "I coulda, shoulda, woulda . . ." Whenever you hear your children or yourselves speaking this way, remember that the past is the learning ground for the future.

Being aware of feelings and how they affect self-esteem helps children to communicate more effectively and responsibly with themselves and with others. This takes practice and is a life long endeavor, but learning to have your feelings and thoughts and still move forward in life is at the heart of this program. It is something we learn to do for ourselves even as we work with our children to help them learn how to exercise greater control to get what they want from their own lives. Enjoy it!

Sincerely,

Basic psychological needs:

- ✓ love
- ✓ security
- ✓ self-esteem
- ✓ recognition
- ✓ new experiences
- ✓ creative expression

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What I do = Who I am

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person.

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“What am I afraid of loosing?”

- ✓ love, acceptance or approval;
- ✓ power and control; and/or
- ✓ looking good.

Coulda, Woulda, Shoulda . . .

- ✓ Stop.
- ✓ Remind yourself that what you did in the past is a way to learn for the future.
- ✓ Look at what you need to do next and then do it.
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