

Stomp Out Stress

A grant awarded to the Harris County Community Supervision and Corrections Department to provide a Stress Education and Training Program for Community Supervision and Corrections Officers

Final Report

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Introduction

The incidence of stress in police officers has been clearly demonstrated in the literature. However, a fellow criminal justice professional, the community supervision, or probation, officer as a subject of investigation has been widely absent in stress literature. Few studies have been conducted on the stressful nature of the probation officer's job and even fewer appear in professional journals. Although both the police and probation officers' jobs entail a great deal of stress associated with safety issues, the job of the probation officer is unique as it requires greater long term contact with offenders creating a unique emotional stain.

The elements of the probation officer's job can vary to some degree. In some jurisdictions, the probation officer has the authority to carry a firearm and make arrests. According to the *Texas Code of Criminal Procedure*, community supervision is "...the placement of a defendant by a court under a continuum of programs and sanctions, with conditions imposed by the court for a specified period...". Those most directly responsible for the oversight of defendants placed on community supervision (hereafter referred to as probation) are the probation officers, such as those who are employed by the Harris County Community Supervision and Corrections Department (HCCSCD).

Statement of the Problem

Numerous factors overlap to produce potentially stressful situations for the probation officers at HCCSCD. The 353 officers in this department are charged with rehabilitating and protecting the public from approximately 44,000 probationers, making the ratio of officers to probationers 1 to124. These officers' responsibilities include enforcing the conditions of supervision as ordered by the courts, conducting investigations for treatment recommendations and/or punitive action for offender violations of conditions, assessing risk and need factors, and

ensuring regular contact with probationers under court supervision. However, it should be noted that the stress experienced by probation officers can vary greatly depending on their specific assignment in the organization. For example, officers assigned to field work as a regular part of their job have more opportunities to experience stressful situations resulting from working in unsafe communities. In some instances these officers' level of stress can be even higher when assigned special caseloads such as working with sex offenders.

The stressful nature of the probation officer's job in Harris County can be compounded by several external factors including public scrutiny, financial limitations, and departmental policies and procedures. Officers' actions are consistently performed under public and media scrutiny and even criticism. Further, the department's budget can be unstable resulting in personnel shortages and limited financial resources. Additionally, the department's policies and procedures are determined and influenced by various government bodies. The policies under which these officers operate create organizational disjointedness leading to role conflict. Like all county community corrections departments in Texas, the HCCSCD operates autonomously but is under the oversight of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice - Community Justice Assistance Division (CJAD). Although CJAD sets the basic guidelines for the department's operations, local, state and county judges interpret the guidelines and set policies for the department. These policies and procedures are further complicated by each judge exercising his or her own opinion of how probation officers should deal with offenders that appear in their court. Finally, the department formulates its own operational policies and procedures. The result of this "policy triad" can create frustration and role ambiguity, particularly for the line officers responsible for the daily implementation of the policies and procedures.

The systemic factors associated with the organization can provide significant stress for Harris County officers. Systemic stressors can be important factors in stress reduction as officers may not be able to mediate the effects since they often have little influence or control in identifying solutions to the challenges they often face. As a result, the officers may become more highly stressed as feelings of lack of control may escalate due to the realization that they have no mechanism to influence stressful situations associated with the organizational culture itself.

The endemic sources of stress delineated above may also result in physical and/or mental health problems for the probation officers in the department. As a result, it is possible that the officers may demonstrate one or more of the following negative outcomes of stress which consistently appear in the stress literature: increased levels of absenteeism, reduced attention to the details of the job, increased health problems, and emotional problems. Additionally, family members/significant others of officers at HCCSCD may be negatively impacted by the officer's inability to effectively deal with the stressors of the job. Officers stressed by the elements of the job may be less likely to effectively deal with family stressors and become less receptive to the positive benefits of familial social support.

Previous Attempts to Reduce Stress at HCCSCD

Historically, probation officers at HCCSCD have been able to utilize one of the following department sanctioned options for reducing stress: 1) use of vacation, sick and other forms of approved leave; 2) attendance in a voluntary stress management course offered through the department's Training Branch; and 3) utilization of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offered through Harris County, either through self or supervisor referral.

It is difficult to accurately estimate the use of these options. For instance, measuring the amount of sick leave used by officers as “mental health days” can be problematic. In order to estimate the impact of “mental health days,” the number of sick days taken by all staff at the probation department can be compared with those taken by all county employees. The average number of sick days per probation employee, including officers and staff, is eight. This figure is slightly higher than the six day average of sick days taken by the staff in other Harris County departments. There were no other identifiable estimations of probation officer attempts to reduce stress identified by the present authors.

Over the last several years, the HCCSCD Training Branch has provided training courses focusing on stress-related issues. In April 1998, a class developed by the Training Branch entitled *Don't Go Postal* identified life stressors and techniques for combating stressful situations. Since the inception of the class, a waiting list has been maintained for class enrollment. However, although HCCSCD officers clearly see a need for this type of training, funds are not currently available to expand the program.

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is another alternative for officers experiencing stressful situations, but it has an estimated average utilization rate of only 4.5% for all Harris County employees. Between January and March 1999, only 158 employees from all Harris County departments took advantage of the services offered through the EAP. There was no data available to estimate the utilization of EAP by HCCSD officers or staff.

The program described herein proposes to fill the gap between services currently available to HCCSD probation officers experiencing stress and those that should be provided to both the officers and their families. It is believed that unmediated stress is not only detrimental

to an officers' health and their home life, but also negatively impacts their effectiveness in serving the community.

Conclusion to Statement of the Problem

The stress experienced by a probation officer is not caused by a single factor, nor is its alleviation likely ensured by a single method of intervention. The current program utilized a multifaceted approach of direct intervention in an attempt to reduce stress and burnout as well as its effects on the officers and their significant others. The expected outcomes of the program included: 1) officers reporting lower levels of burnout; 2) an increase in the officer's knowledge of stress; and 3) a decrease in family/significant others' ratings of the officer's level of burnout and an increase in the significant other's knowledge of stress.

Literature Review

A wealth of research has been conducted on the constructs of stress and burnout especially in regard to its devastating effects. Further, research has led to a better understanding of the causes and treatment of stress and burnout. Within the body of the research literature, the most studied occupations are: teachers, nurses, and police officers. Law enforcement officers experience high levels of stress that may be different from most other occupations. However, a related group from the criminal justice system, probation officers, appears infrequently in stress research. Overall, there appears to be a paucity of research on the stress experienced by probation officers when compared to other occupations. However, most of the existing studies examine the work of these officers through a stress-related concept referred to as burnout.

The Relation of Stress and Burnout

Hans Selye (1956) provided what continues to be the foundation of what we understand about stress. Selye's theory, the General Adaptation Syndrome, defined stress as "a non-

specific, often global, emotional response by an organism to real or imagined demands” (Selye, 1976). For Selye, one of the central issues was the demand for modification or readjustment of behavior in response to the severity of the stress (Lazarus, 1993). According to Selye's triphasic theory, an individual's response to a stressor occurs in three stages: 1) an initial short-term stage of alarm, 2) a longer period of resistance or adaptation, and 3) a final stage of exhaustion. The pivotal period is in stage two. The individual's ability to resist the stressor or adapt behavior determines whether there is progression to stage three or return to a state of homeostasis (non-threat).

According to Selye, one cannot stay highly aroused for very long, thus the initial alarm stage usually leads to stage 2 - resistance or adaptation. Individuals in this stage may become irritable, impatient, and angry, and the energy wasted through these activities may lead to chronic fatigue as well as reduce their effectiveness on the job or diminish social relations. The ability to adapt or resist the stressful situation halts progression to Stage 3 (exhaustion). Stage 2 may persist for a few hours, several days, or even years, although eventually invulnerability to the stressor begins to decline (Selye, 1976).

The final stage is exhaustion. In this stage, stress robs psychological energy, and resistance is depleted. If the stress is not relieved, one can become too exhausted to adapt. At this point, the individual becomes extremely alarmed by their inability to resolve stress and finally gives up which leads to maladjustment or withdrawal (Selye, 1976). The effects of this stage are closely related to the construct of burnout as proposed by Maslach (1976, 1986).

Like the exhaustion stage in Selye's theory, burnout is most commonly characterized by physical fatigue, helplessness or hopelessness, emotional devitalization, and the development of negative self-concepts and attitudes towards work, life, and others (Maslach, 1993). As a result,

these characteristics lead to a sense of distress, discontent, and failure in the quest for the ideal. With continued exposure to stress, burnout ensues and the individual loses the ability to cope with and enjoy his or her environment (Pines, Aronson, & Kafry, 1980). The authors note, "Burnout is the painful realization that they no longer can help people in need, that they have nothing left to give" (p. 15).

Farber (1991) proposes the following definition of burnout:

Burnout is a work-related *syndrome* [italics added in original] that stems from an individual's perception of a significant discrepancy between effort (input) and reward (output), this perception being influenced by individual, organizational, and social factors. It occurs most often in those who work face to face with troubled or needy clients and is typically marked by withdrawal from and cynicism toward clients, emotional and physical exhaustion, and various psychological symptoms, such as irritability, anxiety, sadness, and lowered self-esteem. (p. 24)

An important aspect of this definition is that burnout is restricted to those in the helping professions (e.g., law enforcement, corrections, teaching and nursing) that often require a level of emotional commitment unusual in other professions. According to Farber (1991), burnout is not the result of stress per se, but exposure to stress in which the individual sees no way out, experiences no buffers from the stress, or is unable to identify a support system. In other words, the burned out individual feels isolated or alienated.

Maslach and Jackson (1981, 1984, 1986) proposed a multidimensional model of burnout that has been widely studied in the literature. According to the authors, there are three fundamental dimensions of burnout: 1) emotional exhaustion (associated with feelings of being worn out, used up, or drained), 2) depersonalization (associated with a feeling of callousness or

treating others as if they were impersonal objects), and 3) lack of personal accomplishment (associated with feelings of ineffectiveness and inadequacy). Maslach (1982) noted that the outcome of burnout created emotional exhaustion and worker detachment or alienation from their clients and personal relationships -- including their family. The work of Maslach and Jackson (1981, 1986) led to a widely used burnout instrument entitled the *Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)* which assesses burnout of the individual across the three aforementioned domains.

Individual and Organizational Factors Related to Stress and Burnout

There are two main categories for classifying factors that characterize or mediate stress and burnout -- individual and organizational. Individual factors include such things as: demographics (e.g., age, gender, race, education level, etc.), attitudes (e.g., commitment to the occupation or job satisfaction), personality traits, and life experiences/changes (e.g., employment history) (Farber, 1991). Organizational factors are elements that exist in the organization or even driven by a group associated with the individual and include such things as: features in the work environment (type of assignment), quality of supervision, lack of support (from peers, administrators, family, etc.), public criticism, low salaries, isolation from adults, and role ambiguity (Cherniss, 1980).

Burisch (1993) noted individuals experiencing high levels of burnout reported a sense of conflict between the need to help and the ability to meet the demand of the job highlighting the connection between burnout and role conflict. According to Farber (1991), "Role ambiguity is associated with lack of clarity regarding a worker's responsibilities, methods, goals, or status." He further describes role conflict as the inconsistency or incompatibility between job demands placed on the individual and their perceived role. Early research on burnout concluded that role

conflict and role ambiguity were important elements in predicting burnout (Schwab & Iwanicki, 1982).

More specifically, empirical research on burnout has focused on job factors perhaps more than any other variable (Maslach, 1993). In general, the body of research in the area finds that job factors are more highly related to burnout than are demographic or personal factors (Maslach, 1993). Researchers have established a direct relation between burnout and many job factors, including: caseload (Jackson, Schwab, & Schuler, 1986; Maslach & Jackson, 1984), high levels of direct contact with clients (Lewiston, Conley, & Blessing-Moore, 1981), more difficult client problems (Meadow, 1981), greater role conflict (Birch, Marchant, & Smith, 1986; Jackson, Schwab, & Schuler, 1986; Schwab & Iwanicki, 1982), and low levels of peer support (Burke, Shearer, & Denszca, 1984).

Social Support, Stress, and Burnout

One of the most studied mediating factors in stress and burnout research is social support. It has been consistently noted in the literature that social support is a significant mediator of stress and burnout. Pines (1988) found that workers' scores on the *Maslach Burnout Inventory* correlated negatively with certain social support functions, including: listening, emotional support, and sharing of social reality. She concluded that individuals who have access to social support are less likely to experience burnout. In another study, Russell, Altmaier, and Van Velzen (1987) found that the lack of three social support factors were predictive of burnout: support from supervisors, reassurance of their worth, and what they termed "reliable alliance" (having someone to whom they could turn in a crisis situation). For example, many police officers have reported that they attempt to protect their families from the horrors of their job by not discussing the elements of the job. Such behaviors suggest that police officers may, in an

effort to shield their families from the stressful nature of the job, inadvertently create a situation that prevents them from receiving social support from the most effect source -- the family (Glazier, 1996). These and many other studies have shown the importance of the relation between social support and stress and burnout.

Burnout in Probation Officers

Whitehead (1981) published one of the largest studies of burnout in probation officers surveying 1000 officers. The study indicated that about 20% of the officers reported feeling burned out at least once a week. The author found that one of the implications of his study was that simple awareness of burnout would be an excellent first course of action. Further, the author suggests that individuals should attend workshops on how to combat burnout by developing positive coping strategies and peer relationships.

Other research by Whitehead and Lindquist (1985) found that probation officers were more highly stressed than police officers and institutional correctional officers. Although this study was based on stress and not burnout, one could deduce that this is finding would not be unlikely as there is no greater member of the criminal justice system that has more direct contact with offenders than the probation officer. Where police officers have numerous short contacts with citizens and offenders, probation officers in supervision have numerous contacts with offenders that can be of a longer duration. In addition, the probation officer is more connected to the emotional trials and tribulations of their offenders and attempt to assist them with solutions. The type of engagement between an offender and a probation officer can make the probation officer's job more stressful.

Summary of the Literature Review

The dual role of the probation officer as law enforcer and social worker means they must become completely immersed in the daily lives of the socially challenged. They are expected to assist offenders in overcoming drug problems, finding and maintaining steady employment, ensuring the conditions of the court are followed, and monitoring for continued criminal conduct. Through daily contact with offenders, probation officers often take on the problems of the offenders. As a part of the reporting process, officers counsel offenders on all aspects of their lives. As a result, officers may disengage emotionally or internalize the offender's failure. In either case, officer effectiveness is jeopardized and service to the offender is reduced.

The Present Study

To date, little research has been devoted to the treatment of stress and burnout in probation officers. Further, resources for combating this epidemic have been limited and under utilized (e.g., employee assistance programs and training). The main purpose of the present study was to provide a cost-effective intervention that did not require a significant commitment of time.

More specifically, the study utilized a multidimensional approach toward the design of a stress intervention program. The program was an education-based stress intervention for probation officers and a member of their family. The program was based on many of the principles of stress intervention that have been well established in the literature. The components of the intervention were a collection of factors that appear in the literature as mediating stress, including: general education on stress, individual responses to stress, organizational sources of stress, and communicating about stress. The study was a quasi-experimental design as the use of a control group and random selection techniques were

eliminated. The effectiveness of the study was expected to be demonstrated by a reduction in the level of burnout and an increased knowledge about stress by study participants.

Method

Participants

The subjects in the study were 31 probation officers. Initially, the program included 86 subjects. However, only 31 completed all four of the training courses and completed all three assessments. Included in the sample are three officers with personnel supervision duties. Although the original study proposed to include the participation of significant others of these officers, only two of the five significant other participants successfully completed the program. Due to the lack of response, no analyses could be applied to this group. The probation officers were recruited from the Harris County Community Corrections and Supervision Department based in Houston, Texas.

At the time of the study, the department was comprised of approximately 380 officers. The ethnic make-up in the department is less than 1 percent Asian, 40 percent Black, 24 percent Hispanic, and 35 percent White. Of the 380 officers, 85 percent were assigned to supervision duties and 12 percent were assigned to court services duties. The remaining officers were assigned to miscellaneous duties.

Of the 31 probation officers in the study, 35 percent were female and 65 percent were male. In this study, the ethnic make-up of the subjects was: 20 percent Black, 25 percent Hispanic, and 55 percent White. The years of experience of the officers was 3 percent with 1 to 5 years, 26 percent with 6 to 10 years, 39 percent with 11 to 15 years, 20 percent with 16 to 20 years, and 10 percent with 20 plus years experience.

Selection of subjects was through a convenience sample as the officers and spouses/significant others participated on a voluntary basis. Although 86 subjects started the program by completing a pretest assessment and the first of four training sessions, only 31 completed the remaining three classes and the post-test and follow-up. Subject attrition was the result of two factors, two subjects quit the department and 12 did not complete the series of four courses. In addition to these factors, Tropical Storm Alison resulted in the study area suffering from extreme flooding the first week of data collection. This event resulted in wide spread damage of homes and properties and a number of subjects missed one or more training sessions. Although make-up sessions were available to the participants, the pervasive damage did not allow many subjects to attend make-up sessions.

Spouses/Significant Others. A "significant other" was defined in the current study as a person who had lived with the officer for more than one year. The study started with 23 significant others expressing an interest to participate. Only five attended the first class and only two completed the study. It was unclear why recruitment of significant others was difficult. The training schedule included opportunities for the significant others to attend evening and weekend sessions

Materials

Maslach Burnout Inventory. Maslach and Jackson's (1986) *Maslach Burnout Inventory* (*MBI*) is a self-report measure containing three subscales: emotional exhaustion (9 items), depersonalization (5 items), and lack of personal accomplishment (8 items) (Appendix A). The 22 items that comprise the inventory are rated based on a 0-7 Guttman scale consisting of: never, a few times a year or less, once a month or less, a few times a month, once a week, a few times a week, or everyday - respectively. Each item on the *MBI* is a statement about the individual's

feelings or attitudes about their work. The emotional exhaustion subscale asks subjects to rate his/her level of agreement with statements such as, "I feel 'used up' at the end of the workday." Statements on the depersonalization subscale include, "I have become more callous toward people since I took this job." The third subscale, lack of personal accomplishment, includes statements like, "I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job."

The *MBI* has been used extensively in stress and burnout research. The reliability of the *MBI* has been adequately demonstrated (Green & Walkey, 1988; Schaufeli, Enzmann, & Girault, 1993). There is no composite score for the *MBI*. Scores on the three subscales are reported separately. Internal consistency has been estimated using Cronbach's alpha ($n = 1,316$) with reliability coefficients and standard error of measurement (reported in parentheses) as .90 (3.80) for emotional exhaustion, .79 (3.16) for depersonalization, and .71 (3.73) for personal accomplishment (Koeske & Koeske, 1989).

Significant Other Rating Scale. The Significant Other Burnout Inventory (Glazier, 1996) was designed for the assessment of burnout by significant others in a subject's life using a behavioral rating scale. The inventory was constructed by transforming the *Maslach Burnout Inventory* items into behaviorally observable items (Appendix B). The behavioral rating scale was matched on the number of items on each subscale of the *MBI*. The rating scale of the *MBI* was maintained for the behavioral rating scale.

Content validity of the Significant Other Burnout Inventory was established by having ten expert raters with doctoral degrees in psychology assess the congruence of the items on the *MBI* and the significant other inventory. The experts' responses were scored as right or wrong based on the intended match between the *MBI* and the behavioral items written for the peer rating on the significant other inventory. A Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 was used to calculate

the consistency of item matching by the experts between the inventory and the *MBI* prior to administration. The resulting reliability coefficient was .92 demonstrating consistency between the two measures. Further, validity of the inventory was established through a confirmatory factor analysis that was then compared to the factor structure of the *MBI*.

Knowledge of Stress Survey. The Knowledge of Stress Survey was a 25 item multiple-choice survey intended to assess the participants' knowledge of stress (Appendix C). The questions on the survey were derived from the curriculum for the present study and assessed all content areas of the curriculum.

Procedure

The program consisted of three assessments, including: a pretest, a posttest (administered one month after intervention), and a six-month follow-up. At the beginning of the first module, each probation officer and significant other was given an envelope containing pretest assessments including a burnout inventory and knowledge of stress inventory. It is noted that the burnout inventory the significant others completed was for them to assess the officer's level of burnout, rather than their own. Additionally, participants completed an informed consent document outlining their rights as a research subject (Appendix D). The participants were informed about the study verbally by the principal investigator and were directed to read the informed consent that was also in the envelope. The informed consent notified the subjects that participation was voluntary, participation could be withdrawn at any time, and non-participation in the study would have no impact on their standing in the department. During pretest assessment, the participants were asked to refrain from discussing the content of the envelope until the material had been completed and returned to the principal investigator. Participants were informed that only group data would be reported and possibly used for publication

purposes. The participants were also informed that they had the opportunity to obtain a copy of the results upon the study's completion by contacting the principal investigator. Finally, the subjects were notified that a debriefing procedure was available upon the request of the participants. Due to the follow-up nature of the design, subject identification was made on the assessment instruments. The participants were informed that no one at Harris County would have access to raw data.

Both the posttest and follow-up assessments were sent to the officers through internal department mail and United States mail for the significant others. All participants returned the completed assessments to the principal investigator via the United States Postal Service. The proposal of this study intended a five-month follow-up. However, the fifth month fell during the Christmas holidays and the follow-up assessment was extended by one month in order to increase the response rate.

Numerous efforts were made to ensure subject response rates on the assessments. All assessments were distributed with a cover letter outlining the procedure for completing and returning the surveys (Appendix E). After two weeks, the principal investigator made phone calls reminding participants to complete and return the surveys. Further, the program manager emailed reminders to the participants and contacted participant's managers to have them verify that the officers had returned the surveys. These efforts resulted in a 36 percent response rate.

In order to maintain data confidentiality as well as create a secure environment in which to participate, the principal investigator collected and managed all data and data analyses efforts. All data was stored in a locked filing cabinet in the principal investigator's office at the University of Houston – Downtown. This office remained locked in his absence creating a double-lock data security protocol.

Program Design

Officers, and in some instances a member of their family, were exposed to a series of interventions related to various aspects of stress, including: stress education, organizational sources of stress, individual response to stress, and finally, a session on how to communicate about stress in the home. The model of the intervention program can be found in Appendix F. The intervention sessions for the education, organizational, and individual components were separated for officers and their significant others as they received somewhat different training on the same topic. The final joint session allowed not only for synthesis of the previous sessions, but also for the officers and significant others to apply the techniques they had learned in the program.

The first component of the intervention was an eight-hour course associated with educating the participants on stress. This module not only provided education on stress and burnout as constructs, but also about how to identify resources for dealing with stress. The focus of this session was on the various ways stress and burnout impact the individual as well as the maladaptive ways individuals reduce stressful situations.

The second component was a four-hour session associated with understanding how organizational factors impact the individual's level of stress. During this session, officers learned how to identify aspects of the job that could cause significant amounts of stress. Specifically, they learned how to identify sources of role conflict and ambiguity and healthy ways of dealing with these discoveries. In an effort to provide alternative methods of approaching problems on the job, low stressed or burned out peers were identified to share how they functioned within the organization while managing their stress without sacrificing efficiency. Conversely, the significant others participating in the program learned not only these

issues, but were also exposed to the elements of the job which can provide stress to the officer. A large portion of this session for the significant others was devoted to role-playing and scenarios designed to help them understand the stress of the job (e.g., the safety issues associated with home visits).

The third component was a four-hour session associated with the individual factors that may contribute to high levels of stress. The principle element of this session was learning about coping mechanisms. Through self-exploration, the officers and significant others were able to evaluate their own coping styles and, perhaps more importantly, to understand the mechanisms that lead to maladaptive ways of dealing with stress. Unique to the significant other's session was the exploration of supportive behavior they may use to assist the officer at times of significant stress.

The fourth and final component of the intervention was a four-hour session that served to solidify the entire program. The participants not only reviewed the elements of the three previous sessions, but also discussed good and healthy ways of communicating in the home about stress and burnout. Role playing exercises were utilized for the practice of communication skills.

Curriculum Development

Upon award of the grant, the program manager and principal investigator developed a training curriculum (Appendix G) based on the model outlined above. Although the basic structure of the model was maintained, some of the time allocations of the components were changed from the original proposal to accommodate the elements of the curriculum.

The purpose of this grant was to provide the officers and significant others with a multifaceted understanding of stress that would not likely be uncovered in a short-term EAP referral

or a traditional training course on stress – both of which are usually the only resources available to the officer. Due to the number of participants, complexity of the program’s design, and varying officer schedules, multiple class sessions were offered over a one-month period.

Program Evaluation

In order to evaluate the program, two sources of data were collected. First, the officers’ level of burnout was assessed using the *Maslach Burnout Inventory* (1976, 1978). In addition, the officers’ significant other completed a behavior rating scale of burnout based on the work of Maslach (1976) and constructed and validated by Glazier (1996). Second, both the officer and their significant other completed a knowledge of stress survey.

In order to demonstrate the effectiveness of the program, the researchers applied a pretest –posttest design measuring the aforementioned constructs prior to and after the intervention. In order to establish the durability of the program, a second posttest measure was administered approximately six months from the termination of the program.

As the study was a sponsored investigation by the National Institute of Justice, a summary of the actions taken by the grantees to administer the program can be found in Appendix H entitled Accountability Data.

Results

The main purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of a training-based stress intervention program. Two variables were utilized to assess post treatment effects – burnout and knowledge of stress. The results of the intervention were assessed using a pretest-posttest methodology considering both the burnout and knowledge of stress variables. The results of the study will first report the level of burnout experienced by probation officers. Then the results of

the evaluation of the intervention will be presented based on the 31 officers that successfully completed all four components of the study.

Incidence of Burnout

Documenting the level of burnout in probation officers is important as no studies appear in the literature that describe the probation officer's burnout profile. In this regard, the results of the study will first present the level of burnout experienced by the 85 probation officers starting the study followed by the 31 officers completing the study.

As noted previously, the MBI is a multidimensional construct and does not contain a composite score of burnout. The three subscales of the MBI are: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. Table 1 outlines the MBI subscales and the scores associated with classification into low, moderate, and high levels of burnout.

Table 2 presents a summary of the number of probation officers responding to each of these subscales within the context of the three levels of burnout (low, moderate, and high). Further, the percentages of officers classified within these categories are reported. Overall, the majority of officers in the study appear to be highly burned out. Sixty-one percent of the officers were high in emotional exhaustion while 64 percent of officers were high in depersonalization. The personal accomplishment subscale is interpreted in reverse. Approximately half (46%) of the officers in the study felt they lacked a feeling of personal accomplishment.

Table 3 contains descriptive statistics of the 85 officers' initial assessment prior to intervention. When the officers' mean values on each subscale of the MBI were compared to the level of burnout chart in the manual, the officers demonstrated burnout across all subscales.

Table 4 presents the incidence of burnout for the 31 officers completing the program. The table not only presents the three subscales of the MBI across the levels of

low, moderate, and high, but also within the context of the three assessments associated with the present study. The pretest of the officers completing the program suggests the majority of officers were burned out across the three subscales of the MBI. In comparing the pretest, posttest, and follow-up assessments, there was a reduction of burnout as represented by the emotional exhaustion and depersonalization subscales. However, in comparing the assessments within the personal accomplishment subscale, there was an increase in the officers' feelings of a lack of personal accomplishment from the pretest to the posttest. This effect reversed to the original level of the pretest assessment at the time of the follow-up assessment. It is also generally noted that changes in the percentage of officers classified as high in the three burnout subscales across the assessments shows a reduction of burnout between the pretest and posttest. However, the reduction is not maintained from the posttest to follow-up assessments.

Table 5 reports the descriptive statistics of the officers completing the program across the three assessments. The mean values of the officers' reported burnout suggested that the officers were highly burned out across all three subscales on the pretest. After intervention, the mean values on the emotional exhaustion subscale reduced to the moderate level for both the posttest and follow-up. These reductions were not evident on the depersonalization and lack of personal accomplishment subscales.

Program Effectiveness

This section reports the results of the statistics used to assess program effectiveness. In an effort to demonstrate changes in the subjects from one assessment to another, t-tests were utilized between each of the three assessments across the three subscales of the MBI and a composite variable of burnout and knowledge of stress. The descriptive statistics of level of burnout experienced by the 31 officers completing the program was previously reported in Table

5. Table 6 reports the descriptive statistics of the 31 officers on the variable of knowledge of stress. The means for the pretest, posttest, and follow-up were 14.16, 16.45, and 15.65, respectively.

In order to establish the impact the program had on reducing burnout and increasing knowledge of stress, numerous t-tests were performed. First, the results of the study were subjected to a pretest-posttest comparison. Second, the results were subjected to two methods of analysis in order to estimate the long-term effects of the program. The two methods of demonstrating the long-term effects of the program included comparisons of the officers' pretest and follow-up scores as well as their posttest and follow-up scores across the burnout subscales.

Table 7 reports the comparisons of the officers' burnout scores across the three assessments (pretest, posttest, and follow-up) and the associated t-test results. All three of the pretest-posttest tests for a reduction in the three dimensions of burnout demonstrated lower levels of burnout post intervention, including: emotional exhaustion at $t(30) = 4.41, p < .001$, depersonalization at $t(30) = 2.54, p < .008$, and personal accomplishment at $t(30) = 1.69, p < .05$. In order to assess the long-term effects of the program, t-tests were performed on the posttest and the six-month follow-up. The results of the posttest-follow-up comparisons, include: $t(30) = -2.01, p < .02$ for emotional exhaustion, $t(30) = -1.20, p > .05$ for depersonalization, and $t(30) = -.41, p > .05$ for personal accomplishment. It is noted that the only significant test was on the posttest-follow-up comparison on the emotional exhaustion subscale. To further clarify the long-term impact of the program, data was subjected to a comparison between the pretest and follow-up assessments across the three burnout subscales. These comparisons resulted in the following statistics: $t(30) = 2.87, p < .003$ for emotional exhaustion, $t(30) = 1.47, p > .05$ for depersonalization, and $t(30) = 1.01, p > .05$ for personal accomplishment. It is noted that the

pretest-follow-up tests for depersonalization and personal accomplishment did not produce statistically significant results.

In addition to assessing changes in the officers' reported level of burnout as a result of the intervention, the present study also considered whether knowledge of stress would increase as a result of the program. Table 8 summarizes the results of the comparisons of the officers' scores on knowledge of stress across the three assessments. It is noted that the statistical values of the comparisons should result in negative values as the study expected an increase in the officers' knowledge of stress. The pretest-posttest analysis for the officers' knowledge of stress produced a $t(30) = -4.13, p > .00013$ suggesting that there was a statistically significant change. The pretest-follow-up analysis produced a $t(30) = -2.61, p > .0069$ also suggesting a statistically significant difference. The posttest-follow-up analysis resulted in a $t(30) = 1.74, p < .04$ suggesting there was no statistically significant difference between the assessments.

Discussion

The central element of this study was to mediate the stress and burnout experienced by probation officers through a training program on stress. In addition, the study attempted to document the level of burnout experienced by probation officers as no studies currently appear in the literature.

Incidence of Burnout

As a group, the results of the probation officers' responses on the MBI appear to match the profile indicative of burned out individuals. As Maslach and Jackson (1986) report in the *MBI Manual*, those individuals which show high levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and low levels of personal accomplishment are likely experiencing burnout. Basically, the results appear to suggest that over 50 percent of probation officers in the study are

burned out. One interesting finding was that the officers reported higher levels of depersonalization than emotional exhaustion. This pattern is an uncommon observation in the literature. Glazier (1996) found the same pattern in police officers. These results may suggest that criminal justice professionals who work directly with offenders may attempt to alleviate burnout by depersonalizing the individuals they serve. Future stress or burnout interventions may wish to address this unique observation in criminal justice professionals.

Program Effectiveness

The central question of this study was whether an intervention based on training programs would reduce the amount of stress and burnout in probation officers. This study utilized two dependant measures to demonstrate program effectiveness – burnout and knowledge of stress. The basic intention was that probation officers would report a reduced level of burnout and an increased knowledge of stress as a result of the program.

Reduction in Burnout. The results support the main purpose of this research to reduce experienced burnout through a stress training program. The probation officers' level of burnout across the three subscales of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment were all reduced post intervention. The methodology also attempted to assess the durability of the intervention by conducting a follow-up assessment. The analysis of the durability of program's effectiveness produced slightly conflicting results. The analysis of the officers' feelings of emotional exhaustion, the central feature of burnout, produced significant differences across all three assessments. Conversely, the analysis of durability across depersonalization and personal accomplishment did not produce significant differences at the follow-up assessment. It is noted that the officers' average scores were lower at posttest and follow-up. However, the scores did not produce statistically significant differences from the

pretest. Although there were not completely statistically different results across the assessments, the pattern of the officers' responses appear to be indicative of effect decay. Therefore, it appears that the effect of the intervention deteriorates to some degree over time. It is also noted that none of the officers' scores returned to the baseline established at the pretest assessment.

Increased Knowledge about Stress. The analysis of the officers' knowledge about stress demonstrated statistically significant differences across the three assessment periods suggesting the officers had increased their knowledge about stress as a result of the program. However, it is noted that the posttest-follow-up analysis, although significant, showed a slight reduction in knowledge about stress at follow-up. As with the level of burnout, the officers' knowledge of stress had not returned to baseline after six months.

Limitations of the Study

Perhaps the most significant limitation of the study was subject recruitment and attrition. The administration of the program was significantly impacted by Tropical Storm Alison which struck Houston the first week of training. The long-term effects of Alison on this project are immeasurable. The storm closed roads and interrupted power across the entire area for many days. Subjects in the study were informed about the importance of commitment to the program through perfect attendance at the training sessions. This information was stressed to all subjects during recruitment. Due to the storm, a number of subjects missed the first week of training. In an effort to reduce subject attrition, the investigators attempted to schedule make-up classes, but these efforts did not positively impact subject retention. Unfortunately, subjects who missed one or more classes were removed from the final analysis as they had missed a portion of the intervention violating the research methodology. Further, the pervasive and long-lasting

aftermath of Alison affected a large portion of the area. In addition, the storm may have falsely inflated the level of burnout in the subjects.

Although the original intent of the study was to include probation officers and their significant others, the present study was unable to recruit a significant number of significant others for participation. An effort was made to schedule their sessions at various times of the day and on weekends to make attendance in the program more feasible. However, these efforts did not result in substantial significant other recruitment. It is unclear as to the impact that Tropical Storm Alison had on attendance in the program by the significant others. By the end of the study, only two significant others had completed all training sessions and returned all three assessments preventing the investigators from conducting an analysis that would be reliable and valid.

During the process of curriculum design and program formulation, feedback from a focus group suggested a greater emphasis should be placed on the organizational sources of stress in the curriculum. These suggestions were taken into account in curriculum development. However, if the program was administered in the future, it is suggested that much more time be devoted to organizational stressors. Maslach & Leiter (1997) have suggested that organizational sources of stress are the chief causes of stress and burnout in the workplace. These factors include: work overload, lack of control over one's work, lack of reward, and lack of fairness. These features were all elements of discussion during both the focus groups and training. Future interventions based on this program could be strengthened not only through an increase in presentation time, but also through curricular enhancement in these areas.

Future Directions for Research

Future investigations into the incidence of burnout in probation officers may want to explore the high level of depersonalization as it appears this trend might be unique to criminal justice professionals. Such research endeavors may wish to consider measuring the burnout of probation officers against other occupations. These differences may be associated with the unique type of individuals (offenders) that probation officers serve.

Based on feedback from participants in the study both through focus groups and in end of class evaluations, more emphasis should have been placed on the sources of stress related to the organization. Future studies should provide a greater focus on the impact of organizational sources of stress. In addition, future interventions should address the need to bridge any possible gaps in communication between the line personnel and upper management in order to facilitate dialogue within the organization.

Finally, future applications of the program should consider administration across all classifications of personnel. Such a broad application of the program would require some modification of the current program, for example, adding sections to the organization module to tailor the curriculum to support staff and corrections officer staff as well as upper and mid-management personnel. Further, the communication module might be strengthened by adding a section encouraging dialogue between line officers and department management. Such a modification to the communication module may result in increased organizational communication as it appears to be a central source of stress in the department.

Conclusion

The present study intended to reduce burnout and increase knowledge about stress in probation officers. The program basically achieved this goal. Since this study was the first of its

kind, the program largely served as a pilot study. As such, it appears the program holds promise in reducing the stress and burnout experienced by probation officers and, perhaps, those employed in other capacities within probation departments. Through continued modification, the impact of the program may be greater in future administrations.

Clearly, the most disappointing aspect of the current study was the lack of significant other participation. The reason for the difficulty in recruiting significant others is unclear, but devising creative and unique ways of addressing this issue within the context of organizational resources and culture may result in greater significant other participation and thus increase the effects of the program for the probation officers.

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Appendix

Accountability Data

As the study was a sponsored investigation by the National Institute of Justice, this appendix summarizes and documents the actions taken by the grantees to administer the program.

Summary of Program Activities

This section chronologically outlines activities undertaken in the administration of the program. Once the principal investigator and program manager had completed the project design, a meeting was held with the community supervision department's director and human resources director. The intent of the meeting was to, first, obtain approval of the program format and, second, to solicit administrative support for the project since it would require substantial staff time to complete. The following is a timeline of other related activities:

In May 2000, planning began for the development of a focus group to allow for officer input into the program. To recruit focus group members, an email was sent to department managers soliciting names of staff they would recommend to serve on the focus group. In June 2000, the principal investigator and program manager met with 31 officers and managers to identify obstacles to program success. The group identified and discussed the following issues: motivation for officer participation, obstacles to participation, motivation of family members to participate, and logistical concerns (Appendix I). In December 2000, the focus group members were updated on the progress of the curriculum development. In March 2001, members of the focus group were asked to serve as peer trainers to assist in the delivery of the organization module.

In March 2001, a number of efforts were made to publicize and raise interest in the program. First, a variety of signs promoting the program were placed in all regional offices (Appendix J). These signs introduced the title of the program, S.O.S. (“Stomp Out Stress”). In addition, focus group members were asked to “talk up” the program in their respective regions and during their programs.

In April 2001, the training calendar for June 2001 was distributed via email with the program dates and times. To further market the program, the following items were attached: first, a mini stress assessment that the officers could take in an effort to have them self-evaluate how the program might benefit them (Appendix K); and second, a registration form that provided the officer with an opportunity to designate if they had a significant other who would be interested in participating in the program (Appendix L). The registration form listed all class dates and times. The officers were able to designate the dates and times they wanted to attend each of the four sections of the program. The officers were also able to indicate the times that their significant other would likely want to attend. Invitations to participate were subsequently mailed to the significant others at the addresses provided by the officers on their registration form.

In April 2001, the previously identified peer trainers were invited to a meeting to discuss the elements of the program as well as their function in delivering the organization module. The peer trainers were recruited through recommendations from department supervisors who based their recommendation on the officer’s positive work ethic as well as their ability to handle stressful situations.

In order to encourage officer participation as well as seek management buy-in to the program, the program was presented at a manager’s meeting in April 2001. The managers were

encouraged to support their officers' attendance at the program. Further, the managers were specifically asked to assist officers in covering their caseloads while they were attending all four sessions throughout the month of June. Also in April 2001, trainers from the Training Branch personally visited each region to promote and recruit participants.

In May 2001, three instructors were recruited that had no association with the department. The instructors all had doctorates in psychology and university teaching experience. The instructors conducted all aspects of the training except for the organization modules that were facilitated by department peer trainers.

Actual Courses Offered and Attendance by Officers and Significant Others

The following table summarizes officer attendance by module, date, time, and number of attendees.

Actual Class Schedule Reporting Date, Time, and Number of Officers in Attendance

| Module | Date | Time | Number Attendees |
|----------------|-----------|--------------|------------------|
| Education | 6/6/01 | 8:00 – 5:00 | 32 |
| | 6/8/01 | 8:00 – 5:00 | 35 |
| | 6/11/01 | 8:00 – 5:00 | 19 |
| Individual | 6/13/01 | 1:00 – 5:00 | 29 |
| | 6/14/01 | 8:00 – 12:00 | 36 |
| | 6/19/01 | 1:00 – 5:00 | 23 |
| Organizational | 6/20/01 | 1:00 – 5:00 | 21 |
| | 6/21/01 | 8:00 – 12:00 | 35 |
| | 6/21/01** | 1:00 – 5:00 | 2 |
| | 6/25/01 | 1:00 – 5:00 | 23 |
| Communication | 6/25/01* | 8:00 – 12:00 | 6 |
| | 6/26/01 | 8:00 – 12:00 | 24 |
| | 6/27/01 | 8:00 – 12:00 | 38 |
| | 6/27/01 | 1:00 – 5:00 | 21 |

* for those with management duties; ** for significant others

Table 1

Level of Burnout Based on MBI Score

| Burnout Subscale | Low | Moderate | High |
|-------------------------|--------------|----------|--------|
| | Score Ranges | | |
| Emotional Exhaustion | 0 - 16 | 17 - 26 | 27 + |
| Depersonalization | 0 - 6 | 7 - 12 | 13 + |
| Personal Accomplishment | 39 + | 32 - 38 | 0 - 31 |

Table 2

Subject's Level of Burnout on Maslach Burnout Inventory on Pretest

| Burnout Subscale | Low | | Moderate | | High | | Total # |
|-------------------------|-----|------|----------|------|------|------|---------|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | |
| Emotional Exhaustion | 8 | 9 % | 25 | 29 % | 52 | 61 % | 85 |
| Depersonalization | 4 | 5 % | 27 | 33 % | 54 | 64 % | 85 |
| Personal Accomplishment | 39 | 46 % | 24 | 28 % | 22 | 26 % | 85 |

Table 3

Mean and Standard Deviation of the Subscales on the Maslach Burnout Inventory for the Pretest Assessment

| Burnout Subscale | Pretest | |
|---------------------------------|----------|-----------|
| | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
| Emotional Exhaustion | 33.00 | 13.00 |
| Depersonalization | 14.00 | 7.00 |
| Lack of Personal Accomplishment | 37.00 | 8.00 |

Table 4

Incidence of Burnout of Subjects Completing Program

| Burnout Subscale/Assessment | Low | | Moderate | | High | | Total # |
|-----------------------------|-----|-----|----------|-----|------|-----|---------|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | |
| Emotional Exhaustion | | | | | | | |
| Pretest | 3 | 10% | 12 | 39% | 16 | 51% | 31 |
| Posttest | 4 | 13% | 18 | 58% | 9 | 29% | 31 |
| Follow-up | 6 | 19% | 11 | 36% | 14 | 45% | 31 |
| Depersonalization | | | | | | | |
| Pretest | 0 | 0% | 10 | 32% | 21 | 68% | 31 |
| Posttest | 0 | 0% | 13 | 42% | 18 | 58% | 31 |
| Follow-up | 1 | 3% | 11 | 36% | 19 | 61% | 31 |
| Personal Accomplishment | | | | | | | |
| Pretest | 14 | 45% | 11 | 36% | 6 | 19% | 31 |
| Posttest | 17 | 55% | 3 | 10% | 11 | 35% | 31 |
| Follow-up | 14 | 45% | 6 | 19% | 11 | 36% | 31 |

Table 5

Mean and Standard Deviation of the Subscales on the Maslach Burnout Inventory for the Subjects Completing Program

| Burnout Subscale | Pretest | | Follow-up 1 | | Follow-up 2 | |
|---------------------------------|----------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
| Emotional Exhaustion | 31.00 | 13.00 | 24.90 | 9.92 | 26.97 | 12.29 |
| Depersonalization | 14.00 | 5.70 | 12.23 | 4.75 | 13.61 | 6.46 |
| Lack of Personal Accomplishment | 39.00 | 6.80 | 37.00 | 10.03 | 37.55 | 9.40 |

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics of Knowledge of Stress across the Three Assessments in the Program

| | Pretest | | Posttest | | Follow-up | |
|---------------------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
| Knowledge of Stress | 14.16 | 3.16 | 16.45 | 2.77 | 15.65 | 2.67 |

Table 7

t-test Comparisons Between Assessments Across Maslach Burnout Inventory Subscales

| Burnout Subscale/Assessment Comparison | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> |
|--|----------|----------|
| Emotional Exhaustion | | |
| Pretest – Posttest | 4.41 | < .001 |
| Posttest – Follow-up | - 2.01 | < .02 |
| Pretest – Follow-up | 2.87 | < .003 |
| Depersonalization | | |
| Pretest – Posttest | 2.54 | < .008 |
| Posttest – Follow-up | - 1.20 | > .05 |
| Pretest – Follow-up | 1.47 | > .05 |
| Personal Accomplishment | | |
| Pretest – Posttest | 1.69 | < .05 |
| Posttest – Follow-up | - .41 | > .05 |
| Pretest – Follow-up | 1.01 | > .05 |

Table 8

t-test Comparisons Between Assessments on Knowledge of Stress

| Knowledge of Stress | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> |
|----------------------|----------|----------|
| Pretest – Posttest | - 4.13 | < .00013 |
| Posttest – Follow-up | 1.74 | < .04 |
| Pretest – Follow-up | - 2.61 | < .0069 |

Stomp Out Stress

A grant awarded to the Harris County Community Supervision and Corrections Department to provide a Stress Education and Training Program for Community Supervision and Corrections Officers

Summary Report

to the
National Institute of Justice
Corrections and Law Enforcement Family Support Program

Bob Glazier, Ph.D.
University of Houston – Downtown
Principal Investigator

Bennett Chapman
Harris County Community Supervision and Corrections Department
Program Manager

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Stomp-Out Stress Program

**Harris County Community Supervision
and Corrections Department**

Summary Report

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Staff Development Branch**

The incidence of stress in police officers has been clearly demonstrated in the literature. However, a fellow criminal justice professional, the community supervision, or probation, officer has been widely absent in the stress research. Although both the police and probation officers' jobs entail a great deal of stress associated with safety issues, the job of the probation officer requires greater extended contact with offenders.

Statement of the Problem

Numerous factors overlap to produce potentially stressful situations for the probation officers employed with the Harris County Community Supervision and Corrections Department. The 353 officers in this department are charged with rehabilitating and protecting the public from approximately 44,000 probationers, making the ratio of officers to probationers 1:124. An officer's responsibilities include enforcing the conditions of supervision as ordered by the courts, conducting investigations for treatment recommendations and/or punitive action for offender violations of conditions, assessing risk and need factors, and ensuring regular contact with probationers under court supervision. These conflicting roles are consistently performed under public and media scrutiny and even criticism. In addition, probation departments often have unstable budgets resulting in personnel shortages and limited financial resources.

The stressful nature of the probation officer's job is compounded by the practice of policies being determined by numerous government bodies. Additionally, systemic factors in the organization provide stress for officers. These types of stressors are important because they are often ones that the officer cannot mediate, having little influence or control in identifying solutions.

Conclusion

The stress a probation officer experiences is not caused by a single factor, nor is its alleviation ensured by a single method of intervention. This program utilized a multi-faceted approach of direct intervention to impact the reduction of stress and its effects on officers and their significant others. The outcomes were expected to include: 1) officers reporting lower levels of burnout, using a validated burnout measure; 2) an increase in the officer's knowledge of stress, including: the stressful elements of the job and methods of reducing stress; and 3) a decrease in family/significant others' ratings of the officer's level of burnout and an increase in the significant other's knowledge of stress.

Literature Review

A wealth of research has been conducted on the construct of stress and burnout. Law enforcement officers experience high levels of stress that are different from most other occupations, but a group very similar in job function often goes unnoticed within the field of criminal justice -- probation officers. Very little research has been conducted on probation officers when compared to other occupations. However, most of the existing studies look at these officers through a related concept referred to as burnout, as opposed to stress, as a variable of interest.

The Relation of Stress and Burnout

Hans Selye (1956) provided what continues to be the foundation of what we understand about stress. Selye's theory, the General Adaptation Syndrome, defined stress as "a non-specific, often global, emotional response by an organism to real or imagined demands" (Selye, 1976). According to Selye's triphasic theory, an individual's response to a stressor occurs in three stages: 1) an initial short-term stage of alarm, 2) a longer

period of resistance or adaptation, and 3) a final stage of exhaustion. The pivotal period is in stage two. The organism's ability to resist the stressor or adapt behavior determines whether there is progression to stage three or return to a state of homeostasis (non-threat).

Farber (1991) proposes the following definition of burnout:

Burnout is a work-related *syndrome* [italics added in original] that stems from an individual's perception of a significant discrepancy between effort (input) and reward (output), this perception being influenced by individual, organizational, and social factors. It occurs most often in those who work face to face with troubled or needy clients and is typically marked by withdrawal from and cynicism toward clients, emotional and physical exhaustion, and various psychological symptoms, such as irritability, anxiety, sadness, and lowered self-esteem. (p. 24)

Maslach and Jackson (1981, 1984, 1986) proposed a multidimensional model of burnout that has been widely accepted. According to the authors, there are three fundamental dimensions of burnout: 1) emotional exhaustion (associated with feelings of being worn out, used up, or drained), 2) depersonalization (associated with a feeling of callousness or treating others as if they were impersonal objects), and 3) lack of personal accomplishment (associated with feelings of ineffectiveness and inadequacy). The work of Maslach and Jackson (1981, 1986) led to a widely used burnout instrument entitled the *Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)* which assesses burnout of the individual across the three aforementioned domains.

Individual and Organizational Factors Related to Stress and Burnout

There are two main categories for classifying factors that characterize or mediate stress and burnout -- individual and organizational. Individual factors include such things as: demographics, attitudes, personality traits, and life experiences/changes (Farber, 1991). Organizational factors are elements existent in the organization or even driven by a group associated with the individual. Burisch (1993) noted individuals experiencing high levels of burnout reported a sense of conflict between the need to help and the ability to meet the demand. In 1982, Schwab and Iwanicki concluded that role conflict and role ambiguity were important elements in predicting burnout.

Empirical research on burnout has focused on job factors perhaps more than any other variable (Maslach, 1993). In general, the body of research in the area finds that job factors are more highly related to burnout than are demographic or personal factors (Maslach, 1993). Researchers have established a direct relation between burnout and many job factors, including: caseload (Jackson, Schwab, & Schuler, 1986; Maslach & Jackson, 1984), high levels of direct contact with clients (Lewiston, Conley, & Blessing-Moore, 1981), more difficult client problems (Meadow, 1981), greater role conflict (Birch, Marchant, & Smith, 1986; Jackson, Schwab, & Schuler, 1986; Schwab & Iwanicki, 1982), and low levels of peer support (Burke, Shearer, & Denszca, 1984).

Social Support, Stress, and Burnout

One of the most studied mediating factors in stress and burnout research is social support. Pines (1988) concluded that individuals who have access to social support are less likely to experience burnout. In another study, Russell, Altmaier, and Van Velzen (1987) found that the lack of three social support factors were predictive of burnout:

support from supervisors, reassurance of their worth, and what they termed “reliable alliance” (having someone to whom they could turn in a crisis situation.) These and many other studies have demonstrated the positive role of social support in mediating stress and burnout.

Burnout in Probation Officers

Whitehead (1981) published one of the largest studies of burnout in probation officers, surveying 1000 officers. The study indicated that about 20% of the officers reported feeling burned out at least once a week. Other research by Whitehead and Lindquist (1985) found that probation officers were more highly stressed than police officers and institutional correctional officers.

Summary

To date, little research has been devoted to the treatment of stress and burnout in probation officers. Further, resources for combating this epidemic have been limited and under utilized (e.g., employee assistance programs and training). The purpose of the present study was to provide a cost-effective intervention that did not require a significant commitment of time.

METHOD

This study utilized a multidimensional approach toward the design of a stress intervention program. The program was an education-based stress intervention for probation officers and a member of their family, looking at: education on stress, individual response to stress, organizational sources of stress, and communicating about stress. The study was a quasi-experimental design as the use of a control group and random selection techniques were eliminated. The effectiveness of the study was

demonstrated by a reduction in the level of burnout and increased knowledge about stress.

Participants

Initially, the program included 86 probation officers who were recruited from the Harris County Community Supervision and Corrections Department based in Houston, Texas. However, only 31 completed all four of the training courses and all three assessments. Included in the sample are three officers with personnel supervision duties. Although the original study proposed to include the participation of significant others of these officers, only two of the five significant other participants successfully completed the program. Due to the lack of response, no analyses could be applied to this group.

At the time of the study, the department was comprised of approximately 350 officers from a variety of ethnic groups and possessing a range of experience between one and more than twenty years. Selection of subjects was through a convenience sample as the officers and spouses/significant others participated on a voluntary basis.

Spouses/Significant Others. A "significant other" was defined as a person who had lived with the officer for more than one year. The study started with 23 significant others expressing an interest to participate. Only five attended the first class and only two completed the study.

Materials

Maslach Burnout Inventory. Maslach and Jackson's (1986) *Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)* is a self-report measure containing three subscales: emotional exhaustion (9 items), depersonalization (5 items), and lack of personal accomplishment (8 items). Each item on the *MBI* is a statement about the individual's feelings or attitudes about their

work. The *MBI* has been used extensively in stress and burnout research, and its reliability has been adequately demonstrated (Green & Walkey, 1988; Schaufeli, Enzmann, & Girault, 1993).

Significant Other Rating Scale. The Significant Other Burnout Inventory (Glazier, 1996) was designed for the assessment of burnout by significant others in a subject's life using a behavioral rating scale. The inventory was constructed by transforming the *Maslach Burnout Inventory* items into behaviorally observable items.

Knowledge of Stress Survey. The Knowledge of Stress Survey was a 25 item multiple-choice survey intended to assess the participants' knowledge of stress. The questions on the survey were derived from the curriculum for the present study and assessed all content areas of the curriculum.

Procedure

The program consisted of three assessments, including a pretest, a posttest (administered one month after intervention), and a six-month follow-up. It is noted that the burnout inventory the significant others completed was for them to assess the officer's level of burnout, rather than their own.

Numerous efforts were made to ensure subject response rates on the assessments including: mail-outs with cover letters, email correspondence, personal visits, and telephone calls. Additionally, in order to maintain data confidentiality as well as create a secure environment in which officers could participate, the principal investigator collected and managed all data and data analyses efforts.

Program Design

Using experts in the field of stress and burnout, officers, and in some instances a member of their family, were exposed to a series of interventions related to various aspects of stress, including: stress education, organizational sources of stress, individual response to stress, and finally, a session on how to communicate about stress in the home. The intervention sessions for the education, organizational, and individual components were separated for officers and their significant others as they received somewhat different training on the same topic. The final, joint session allowed not only for synthesis of the previous sessions, but also for the officers and significant others to apply the techniques they had learned in the program.

The first component of the intervention was an eight-hour course associated with educating the participants on stress. The second was a four-hour session that dealt with understanding how organizational factors impact the individual's level of stress. Third was a four-hour module associated with the individual factors that may contribute to high levels of stress. Finally, the fourth component of the intervention was a four-hour session that served to solidify the entire program by discussing good and healthy ways of communicating in the home about stress and burnout.

Program Evaluation

In order to evaluate the program, two sources of data were collected. First, the officers' level of burnout was assessed using the *Maslach Burnout Inventory* (1976, 1978). In addition, the officers' significant other completed a behavior rating scale of burnout based on the work of Maslach (1976) and constructed and validated by Glazier

(1996). Second, both the officer and their significant other completed a knowledge of stress survey.

In order to demonstrate the effectiveness of the program, the researchers applied a pretest –posttest design measuring the aforementioned constructs prior to and after the intervention. In order to establish the durability of the program, a second posttest measure was administered approximately six months from the termination of the program.

RESULTS

The main purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of a training-based intervention program in an attempt to reduce stress and burnout in probation officers. Two variables were utilized for demonstrating post treatment effects – burnout and knowledge of stress.

Incidence of Burnout

The pretest of the officers completing the program suggests the majority of officers were burned out across the three subscales of the MBI. In comparing the pretest, posttest, and follow-up assessments, there was a reduction of burnout as represented by the emotional exhaustion and depersonalization subscales. However, in comparing the assessments within the personal accomplishment subscale, there was an increase in the officers' feelings of a lack of personal accomplishment from the pretest to the posttest. This effect reversed to the original level of the pretest assessment at the time of the follow-up assessment. It is also generally noted that changes in the percentage of officers classified as high in the three burnout subscales across the assessments shows a reduction

of burnout between the pretest and posttest. However, the reduction is not maintained from the posttest to follow-up assessments.

Program Effectiveness

The methodology utilized in this study was a pre-test/post-test design. Statistical analyses were conducted using t-tests to establish statistically significant differences between assessments. All three of the pretest-posttest tests for a reduction in burnout demonstrated lower levels of burnout after assessment. To assess the long-term effects of the program, t-tests were performed on the posttest and the six-month follow-up. The only significant test was on the posttest-follow-up comparison on the emotional exhaustion subscale. To further clarify the long-term impact of the program, data was subjected to a comparison between the pretest and follow-up assessments across the burnout subscales. The pretest-follow-up tests for depersonalization and personal accomplishment did not produce statistically significant results.

In addition to the assessment of program effectiveness in relation to the officers' level of burnout, the present study considered whether knowledge of stress would increase as a result of the program. The pretest-posttest analysis for the officers' knowledge of stress suggested that there was a statistically significant change. The pretest-follow-up analysis also suggested a statistically significant difference. However, the posttest-follow-up analysis suggested there was no statistically significant difference between the assessments.

DISCUSSION

The central element of this study was to mediate the stress and burnout experienced by probation officers through a training program on stress. In addition, the

study attempted to document the level of burnout experienced by probation officers as no studies currently appear in the literature.

Incidence of Burnout

As a group, the results of the probation officers' responses on the MBI appear to match the profile indicative of burned out individuals, with over 50 percent of probation officers in the study being burned out. One interesting finding was that the officers reported higher levels of depersonalization than emotional exhaustion. This pattern is an uncommon observation in the literature. Glazier (1996) found the same pattern in police officers. These results may suggest that criminal justice professionals who work directly with offenders may attempt to alleviate burnout by depersonalizing the individuals they serve. Future stress or burnout interventions may wish to address this unique observation in criminal justice professionals.

Program Effectiveness

The central question of this study was whether an intervention based on training programs would reduce the amount of stress and burnout in probation officers.

Reduction of Burnout. The results of this study support the purpose of this research to reduce experienced burnout through a stress training program. The probation officers' level of burnout across the three subscales of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment were all reduced post intervention. The methodology also attempted to assess the durability of the intervention by conducting a follow-up assessment. It is noted that the officers' average scores were lower at posttest and follow-up. Although there were not entirely statistically different results across the assessments, the pattern of the officers' responses appear to be indicative of effect decay.

Therefore, it appears that the effect of the intervention deteriorates to some degree over time. It is noted that none of the results demonstrated that the officers' scores returned to the baseline established at the pretest assessment.

Increased Knowledge About Stress. The analysis of the officers' knowledge about stress demonstrated statistically significant differences across assessments indicating the officers had increased their knowledge about stress. However, it is noted that the posttest-follow-up analysis, although significant, showed a slight reduction in knowledge about stress at follow-up. As with the level of burnout, the officers' knowledge of stress had not returned to baseline after six months.

Limitations of the Study

Perhaps the most significant limitation of the study was subject recruitment and attrition. The administration of the program was significantly impacted by Tropical Storm Alison that arrived the first week of training. In an effort to reduce subject attrition, the investigators attempted to schedule make-up classes, but these efforts did not positively impact subject retention. Unfortunately, subjects who missed one or more classes were removed from the final analysis as they had missed a portion of the intervention and violated the research methodology. This event may have falsely inflated the level of burnout in the subjects.

Although the original intent of the study was to include probation officers and their significant others, the present study was unable to recruit a significant number of significant others for participation. An effort was made to schedule their sessions at various times of the day and on weekends to make attendance in the program more feasible. However, these efforts did not result in significant other recruitment. By the

end of the study, only two significant others had completed all training sessions and returned all three assessments.

If the program was administered in the future, it is suggested that much more time be devoted to organizational stressors. The future interventions based on this program could be strengthened not only through an increase in presentation time, but also through curricular enhancement in this area.

Future Directions for Research

Future investigations into the incidence of burnout in probation officers may want to explore the high level of depersonalization, as it appears this trend might be unique to criminal justice professionals. Such research endeavors may wish to consider measuring the burnout of probation officers against other occupations. These differences may be due to the individuals that are served by probation officers.

Future studies should provide a greater focus on the impact of organizational sources of stress. In addition, future interventions should address the need to bridge any possible gaps in communication between the line personnel and upper management in order to facilitate dialogue within the organization.

Future applications of the program should consider administration across all classifications of personnel. Such an application would require some modification of the current program, for example, adding sections to the organization module to tailor the curriculum to support staff and correction officer staff, as well as upper and mid-management personnel. Further, adding a section encouraging dialogue between line and management personnel with the expectation that organizational communication on the

sources of workplace stress will be increased might strengthen the communication module of this study.

Conclusion

The present study intended to reduce burnout and increase knowledge about stress in probation officers. The program essentially achieved this goal. Since this study was the first of its kind, the program served as a pilot study. As such, it appears the program holds promise in reducing the stress and burnout experienced by probation officers and, perhaps, those employed in other capacities within probation departments. Through continued modification, the impact of the program may be greater in future administrations.

Appendix A

Maslach Burnout Inventory (entitled Officer Survey)

Utilized with:

- Pretest
- Posttest
- Follow-up

Name: _____
Please print neatly

Officer Survey

The first five questions of this survey ask questions about you. The next set of questions (6 - 27) contains statements of job-related feelings. Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way about your job. You can respond to questions 6 through 27 by using the response key located just before question 6.

For questions 1 -5, please record the number in the blank that corresponds to the option that describes you.

- _____ 1. Your gender
 1 = male
 2 = female
- _____ 2. Your years of experience in community corrections
 1 = 1 - 5 years
 2 = 6 - 10 years
 3 = 11 - 15 years
 4 = 16 - 20 years
 5 = 21 + years
- _____ 3. Your age
 1 = 18 - 25 years
 2 = 26 - 30 years
 3 = 31 - 35 years
 4 = 36 - 40 years
 5 = 41 - 45 years
 6 = 46 - 50 years
 7 = 51 - 55 years
 8 = 56 - 60 years
 9 = 61 + years
- _____ 4. Your ethnicity (please chose only one category)
 1 = Asian
 2 = Black
 3 = Hispanic
 4 = White
 _____ 5 = Other
- _____ 5. Your position
 1 = Officer
 2 = Supervisor/Manager

Using the following scale, please respond to questions 6 – 27:

- 1 = Never
- 2 = A few times a year or less
- 3 = Once a month or less
- 4 = A few times a month
- 5 = Once a week
- 6 = A few times a week
- 7 = Every day

- _____ 6. I feel emotionally drained from my work.
- _____ 7. I feel “used up” at the end of the workday.
- _____ 8. I feel fatigued when I get up for work and have to face another day on the job.
- _____ 9. I can easily understand how clients can blame me for some of their problems.
- _____ 10. I feel I treat some clients as if they were impersonal “objects.”
- _____ 11. Working with people is really a strain for me.
- _____ 12. I deal very effectively with the problems of my clients.
- _____ 13. I feel burned out from my job.
- _____ 14. I feel I’m positively influencing other people’s lives.
- _____ 15. I’ve become more callous toward people since I took this job.
- _____ 16. I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally.
- _____ 17. I feel very energetic.
- _____ 18. I feel frustrated by my job.
- _____ 19. I feel I am working too hard on my job.
- _____ 20. I don’t really care what happens to some citizens.
- _____ 21. Working with people directly puts too much stress on me.
- _____ 22. I can easily create a relaxed atmosphere with my clients.
- _____ 23. I feel exhilarated after working closely with clients.
- _____ 24. I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.
- _____ 25. I feel like I’m at the end of my rope.
- _____ 26. In my work, I deal with emotional problems very calmly.
- _____ 27. I feel some clients blame me for some of their problems.

Thank you for completing the survey.

In order to match your post-test scores, please record your social security number here:

Appendix B

Maslach Burnout Inventory
(entitled Spouse/Significant Other Survey)

Utilized with:

- Pretest
- Posttest
- Follow-up

Name: _____
Please print neatly

Spouse/Significant Other Survey

The first five questions of this survey ask questions about you. The next set of questions (6 - 27) contains statements of job-related behaviors you have observed in your spouse/significant other. *You should not answer these questions in relation to yourself.* Please read each statement carefully and decide if you have ever observed these behaviors in your spouse/significant other in relation to their job. You can respond to questions 6 through 27 by using the response key located just before question 6.

For questions 1–5, please record the number in the blank that corresponds to the option that describes you.

_____ 1. Your gender

- 1 = male
- 2 = female

_____ 2. How long have you known your spouse/significant other?

- 1 = 1 – 5 years
- 2 = 6 – 10 years
- 3 = 11 – 15 years
- 4 = 16 – 20 years
- 5 = 21 + years

_____ 3. Your age

- 1 = 18 – 25 years
- 2 = 26 – 30 years
- 3 = 31 – 35 years
- 4 = 36 – 40 years
- 5 = 41 – 45 years
- 6 = 46 – 50 years
- 7 = 51 – 55 years
- 8 = 56 – 60 years
- 9 = 61 + years

_____ 4. Your ethnicity (please chose only one category)

- 1 = Asian
- 2 = Black
- 3 = Hispanic
- 4 = White
- 5 = Other

_____ 5. To what degree do you feel your spouse's/significant other's job has negatively impacted your home life?

- 1 = Not at all
- 2 = Slightly
- 3 = Significantly

Using the following scale, please respond to questions 6 – 27 while reflecting on the observations you have made about your spouse/significant others job:

- 1 = Never
- 2 = A few times a year or less
- 3 = Once a month or less
- 4 = A few times a month
- 5 = Once a week
- 6 = A few times a week
- 7 = Every day

- _____ 6. My partner appears emotionally drained from work as evidenced by not wanting to discuss the events of the work day.
- _____ 7. My partner appears “used up” at the end of the day (e.g., tired, lethargic, or listless).
- _____ 8. My partner appears fatigued after getting up from sleep and has to face another day on the job.
- _____ 9. My partner makes comments that may suggest they can easily recognize how clients feel about things.
- _____ 10. In conversations, I have heard my partner make comments about clients in impersonal/unfeeling ways.
- _____ 11. My partner makes comments that may suggest that working with people places a great or excessive demand on their emotions.
- _____ 12. My partner appears to be effective in dealing with the problems of clients (e.g., recounts stories where their actions were influential in solving problems).
- _____ 13. My partner makes comments that may suggest they are burned out from their work.
- _____ 14. My partner makes comments that may suggest they see themselves as positive role models in the community.
- _____ 15. My partner appears callous or jaded toward clients.
- _____ 16. My partner appears to be hardened emotionally by others’ plights.
- _____ 17. My partner appears very energetic (e.g., displays enthusiasm toward social and household activities).
- _____ 18. My partner makes comments that may suggest they are frustrated or feel defeated by their work.
- _____ 19. My partner makes comments that may suggest they are working too hard on the job.
- _____ 20. My partner makes comments that may indicate they don’t care about what happens to some clients.
- _____ 21. My partner makes comments that may suggest that direct contact with people often results in high stress.
- _____ 22. My partner makes comments that lead me to believe they are able to create a relaxed atmosphere while dealing with clients.
- _____ 23. My partner returns home “pumped up” or exhilarated after working closely with clients.
- _____ 24. My partner makes comments that may suggest they have accomplished things that were important enough to repay the time or effort spent on the job.
- _____ 25. My partner appears to be at the end of their rope (e.g., makes comments that suggest they can no longer continue at the same pace).
- _____ 26. My partner appears to deal with emotional problems associated with work very calmly (e.g., when emotional problems related to work present themselves, they are able to handle them in a quiet and settling manner).
- _____ 27. My partner makes comments that may suggest some clients blame the criminal justice system for their problems.

Appendix C

Knowledge of Stress Survey

Utilized with:

- Pretest
- Posttest
- Follow-up

Knowledge of Stress Survey – Answer Key

Name: _____
Please print neatly

Knowledge of Stress Survey

- _____ 1. Which of the following statements is not true about stress?
- a. Experiencing stress is a normal part of life.
 - b. If you have no symptoms of stress, then stress is not taking a toll on you.
 - c. If you are taking medications or have developed defense mechanisms to mask the symptoms of stress, then you are unable to reduce the strain on your body.
 - d. When you are highly stressed, it is more difficult to plan and prioritize your activities.
 - e. Our schedules and physical limitations can limit our choices of how to manage the stress in our lives.
- _____ 2. Which of the following is the definition of self-esteem?
- a. the feelings a person has of high or low self worth
 - b. a judgment that one can master and perform needed behaviors when needed
 - c. all our thoughts and feelings about ourselves
 - d. our personality plus our character traits
- _____ 3. According to which theory about stress are there three stages of reaction to stress: reaction, resistance, and exhaustion?
- a. Appraisal and Caring
 - b. Flight or Fight
 - c. General Adaptation Syndrome
 - d. Eustress Syndrome
 - e. none of the above
- _____ 4. Which of the following statements is true regarding organizational stress?
- a. organizations have a finite amount of resources such as time and money
 - b. having support from co-workers has not been found to be particularly helpful in reducing stress at work
 - c. you have control over all of the elements of your job functions
 - d. the organization is responsible for resolving your stress issues
 - e. when your job is really "stressing you out" it is not possible to learn new techniques on how to manage that stress; you have to wait until a period of time when the stress has passed

- _____ 5. Which of the following is not a benefit of a cooperative style of communication?
- a. a healthier lifestyle
 - b. more respect
 - c. greater comfort with conflict
 - d. better coordination of life activities
 - e. none of the above
- _____ 6. "Stress Reaction" means:
- a. an individual response to a given stressor
 - b. the prolonged impact of a stressor on the system that results in overload and fatigue
 - c. a specific problem or personal conflict that can be either an external or internal threat to the individual
 - d. positive experiences of success followed by higher expectations
 - e. disappointment, failure, threat or other negative experiences
- _____ 7. Which of the following is not a commonly recognized and accepted method of stress reduction?
- a. training oneself to exclude an anxiety producing event from the conscious awareness
 - b. assertiveness training
 - c. conflict resolution training
 - d. progressive muscle relaxation
 - e. resistance training
- _____ 8. Listening *responsively* involves a person
- a. acknowledging what another has said
 - b. agreeing with what another has said
 - c. advising another on what to do in a situation
 - d. persuading others to your point of view
- _____ 9. An example of a secondary stressor is:
- a. a student has three final exams in a 2 day period
 - b. a teenager has been denied by her parents the opportunity to go to an overnight party with a group of friends
 - c. the loss of a job leads to a shortage of money which leads to hand me down clothes which leads to an embarrassed child which leads to more stress for the adult
 - d. a boss is mad and yells at a co-worker
- _____ 10. Which type of people take on additional tasks that allow them to remain challenged but then become inefficient and anxious when under stress?
- a. strivers
 - b. inner con artists
 - c. worriers
 - d. pleasers
 - e. internal time keepers

- _____ 11. The practice of bringing together people in order to demonstrate the power of the group as well as ways of appreciating individual differences is known as:
- a. social support networking
 - b. stress mediation
 - c. team building
 - d. peer backing
- _____ 12. Which of the following responses work well for a person in the long run?
- a. distracting
 - b. denying
 - c. generalizing
 - d. a & c only
 - e. none of the above
- _____ 13. Which of the following are indications of "burnout"?
- a. physical fatigue
 - b. development of negative self-concepts and attitudes toward work
 - c. a sense of helplessness or hopelessness
 - d. all of the above
 - e. a and c only
- _____ 14. Examples of coping mechanisms used during times of high levels of anxiety include:
- a. aggressive anger or hostility
 - b. assertive problem solving
 - c. withdrawal, physically and/or emotionally
 - d. all of the above
 - e. a and c only
- _____ 15. All but which of the following are reasons that learning new communication skills takes effort?
- a. we are surrounded by good examples of communication
 - b. cooperation between people is more demanding than coercing or threatening to get what we want
 - c. our ways of communicating are woven into our personalities
 - d. we must participate in and observe conversations at the same time
- _____ 16. Indicate which of the following is an example of nonproductive or unfulfilling conversational intent.
- a. telling you about my experiences/feelings
 - b. negotiating or bargaining with you about a project
 - c. hearing what is happening with you
 - d. hiding what is important to me from you
 - e. resolving a conflict that I have with you

- _____ 17. Which of the following is an example of *denial*, a defense mechanism used as a means of coping with stress?
- a. a woman criticizes her neighbor for being a terrible gossip when in fact the woman gossips herself
 - b. an officer has stacks of case files on his desk with volumes of work to be done, but informs co-workers and supervisors he is keeping up
 - c. an officer expresses anger toward another officer because she just had a disagreement with her supervisor
 - d. an officer forgets the due date of an important report
 - e. an officer is not skilled at making written notations in case files but does excellent casework
- _____ 18. In which personality type is a person likely to be time oriented, tending to watch the clock and make sure that something is not taking too much time?
- a. Type B
 - b. Type A
 - c. Type C
 - d. Type D
 - e. a combination of two or more of the above
- _____ 19. In which of the following systems in humans can signs of stress be noted?
- a. cognitive-perceptual
 - b. behavioral
 - c. psychological
 - d. physical
 - e. all of the above
- _____ 20. Choose the item below that is not one of the techniques for practicing good communication.
- a. inviting consent to pursue the intent of your conversation
 - b. translating your complaints into specific requests and explaining them
 - c. expressing more appreciation to your listener
 - d. expressing yourself more clearly and completely
 - e. none of the above
- _____ 21. What type of communication moves people toward cooperation?
- a. a justified complaint
 - b. asking "why?"
 - c. stating that something "should" be done
 - d. making a generalization about a situation
 - e. explaining a request

- _____ 22. Which behavior are men likely to not demonstrate as a reaction to stress?
- a. providing greater nurturing to their children
 - b. initiating a confrontation
 - c. retreating
 - d. isolating themselves
- _____ 23. Which of the following is not a true statement about our predisposition to stress?
- a. those who have experienced a great deal of stress over their lives tend to react more positively to stress than others
 - b. sensitization occurs because we have "learned" over the years to react in a certain manner
 - c. the amount of stress we have experienced throughout our lives makes us respond more quickly to stressful situations
 - d. future stressful events are likely to be dealt with in the same manner as previously handled
- _____ 24. Which of the following are methods people use to cope with difficult situations when they don't know how to negotiate and work through them?
- a. breaking things, hitting people or running away
 - b. acting out feelings one doesn't have in order to avoid ones they do have
 - c. going "crazy" to get oneself out of a seemingly impossible situation
 - d. all of the above
 - e. a and c only
- _____ 25. The situation where the body that has experienced stress never returns to a state of balance is known as:
- a. residual stress
 - b. forecasting
 - c. role ambiguity
 - d. role overload
 - e. resistance

Name: _____
Please print neatly

Knowledge of Stress Survey

B 1.

Which of the following statements is not true about stress?

- a. Experiencing stress is a normal part of life.
- b. If you have no symptoms of stress, then stress is not taking a toll on you.
- c. If you are taking medications or have developed defense mechanisms to mask the symptoms of stress, then you are unable to reduce the strain on your body.
- d. When you are highly stressed, it is more difficult to plan and prioritize your activities.
- e. Our schedules and physical limitations can limit our choices of how to manage the stress in our lives.

A 2.

Which of the following is the definition of self-esteem?

- a. the feelings a person has of high or low self worth
- b. a judgment that one can master and perform needed behaviors when needed
- c. all our thoughts and feelings about ourselves
- d. our personality plus our character traits

C 3.

According to which theory about stress are there three stages of reaction to stress: reaction, resistance, and exhaustion?

- a. Appraisal and Caring
- b. Flight or Fight
- c. General Adaptation Syndrome
- d. Eustress Syndrome
- e. none of the above

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Which of the following statements is true regarding organizational stress?

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- d. the organization is responsible for resolving your stress issues
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 - d. pleasers
 - e. internal time keepers

C 11. The practice of bringing together people in order to demonstrate the power of the group as well as ways of appreciating individual differences is known as:

- a. social support networking
- b. stress mediation
- c. team building
- d. peer backing

E 12. Which of the following responses work well for a person in the long run?

- a. distracting
- b. denying
- c. generalizing
- d. a & c only
- e. none of the above

D 13. Which of the following are indications of "burnout"?

- a. physical fatigue
- b. development of negative self-concepts and attitudes toward work
- c. a sense of helplessness or hopelessness
- d. all of the above
- e. a and c only

D 14. Examples of coping mechanisms used during times of high levels of anxiety include:

- a. aggressive anger or hostility
- b. assertive problem solving
- c. withdrawal, physically and/or emotionally
- d. all of the above
- e. a and c only

A 15. All but which of the following are reasons that learning new communication skills takes effort?

- a. we are surrounded by good examples of communication
- b. cooperation between people is more demanding than coercing or threatening to get what we want
- c. our ways of communicating are woven into our personalities
- d. we must participate in and observe conversations at the same time

D 16. Indicate which of the following is an example of nonproductive or unfulfilling conversational intent.

- a. telling you about my experiences/feelings
- b. negotiating or bargaining with you about a project
- c. hearing what is happening with you
- d. hiding what is important to me from you
- e. resolving a conflict that I have with you

- B 17. Which of the following is an example of *denial*, a defense mechanism used as a means of coping with stress?
- a. a woman criticizes her neighbor for being a terrible gossip when in fact the woman gossips herself
 - b. an officer has stacks of case files on his desk with volumes of work to be done, but informs co-workers and supervisors he is keeping up
 - c. an officer expresses anger toward another officer because she just had a disagreement with her supervisor
 - d. an officer forgets the due date of an important report
 - e. an officer is not skilled at making written notations in case files but does excellent casework

- B 18. In which personality type is a person likely to be time oriented, tending to watch the clock and make sure that something is not taking too much time?
- a. Type B
 - b. Type A
 - c. Type C
 - d. Type D
 - e. a combination of two or more of the above

- E 19. In which of the following systems in humans can signs of stress be noted?

- a. cognitive-perceptual
- b. behavioral
- c. psychological
- d. physical
- e. all of the above

- E 20. Choose the item below that is not one of the techniques for practicing good communication.

- a. inviting consent to pursue the intent of your conversation
- b. translating your complaints into specific requests and explaining them
- c. expressing more appreciation to your listener
- d. expressing yourself more clearly and completely
- e. none of the above

- E 21. What type of communication moves people toward cooperation?

- a. a justified complaint
- b. asking "why?"
- c. stating that something "should" be done
- d. making a generalization about a situation
- e. explaining a request

- A 22. Which behavior are men likely to not demonstrate as a reaction to stress?
- a. providing greater nurturing to their children
 - b. initiating a confrontation
 - c. retreating
 - d. isolating themselves
- A 23. Which of the following is not a true statement about our predisposition to stress?
- a. those who have experienced a great deal of stress over their lives tend to react more positively to stress than others
 - b. sensitization occurs because we have "learned" over the years to react in a certain manner
 - c. the amount of stress we have experienced throughout our lives makes us respond more quickly to stressful situations
 - d. future stressful events are likely to be dealt with in the same manner as previously handled
- D 24. Which of the following are methods people use to cope with difficult situations when they don't know how to negotiate and work through them?
- a. breaking things, hitting people or running away
 - b. acting out feelings one doesn't have in order to avoid ones they do have
 - c. going "crazy" to get oneself out of a seemingly impossible situation
 - d. all of the above
 - e. a and c only
- A 25. The situation where the body that has experienced stress never returns to a state of balance is known as:
- a. residual stress
 - b. forecasting
 - c. role ambiguity
 - d. role overload
 - e. resistance

Appendix D

Harris County Community Supervision
and Corrections Department Request for Participation in a
Research Project - Officers

Harris County Community Supervision
and Corrections Department Request for Participation in a
Research Project - Spouse/Significant Other

**Harris County Community Supervision and Corrections Department
Request for Participation in a Research Project - Officers**

Dear Potential Participant:

We are requesting your participation in a research project on stress in community corrections officers. The Harris County Community Supervision and Corrections Department (HCCSCD) applied for grant funds through the Corrections and Law Enforcement Family Support (CLEFS) program sponsored by the U. S. Department of Justice to develop a program to address the stress of the community supervision officers in Harris County. The HCCSCD invited the University of Houston – Downtown to participate in the grant to act as the principal research investigator.

This project is being supported by Grant No. 2000-FS-VX-K002 awarded by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U. S. Department of Justice. The points of view in this program are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U. S. Department of Justice.

The purpose of this research is to educate you and possibly your spouse/significant other about stress as it relates to your work. As part of this research you will complete a number of surveys related to stress and some of your job-related attitudes as well as attend four training classes on stress. This project also allows for a spouse or significant other to participate as well – although not all participating officers will have a spouse or significant other participating. This project has two follow-ups. After all the training sessions have terminated, you will be asked to take the two surveys you were given today again. The first follow-up will be one month after the completion of the training. The second follow-up will be five months after completion of the training.

Although subject identity will be linked with subject responses on the two surveys, HCCSCD will NOT know how you responded as the University of Houston - Downtown will be the only party with access to subject identity. At no time will the University of Houston – Downtown release data that would identify either subjects or their responses by name; thus, you will remain anonymous to HCCSCD. The data collected from this study will be used for education and publication purposes; however, when the data is used in this manner it will never identify you personally.

There are two questionnaires in this packet. The first questionnaire asks general questions about what you know about stress. The second questionnaire asks questions about your attitudes and feelings about your work as well as some brief personal information. We estimate that completion of these questionnaires will take approximately 20 minutes.

We do not foresee that you should experience any risks as a result of your participation in this project. We do hope that by participating in this project that you will be more aware of how stress impacts you and your family as well as how you might better deal with stressful situations both at work and at home. Your participation will also allow social scientists to better understand work attitudes in stressful occupations. Such information can contribute to a better

understanding of a complex issue and the development of more efficient interventions for others in your occupation.

You have several choices regarding your level of participation in this project: 1) you may decide not to participate at all; 2) you may decide not to answer some of the questions; 3) you may decide to terminate your participation even after you have begun. Any of these choices is an option and you will not suffer any penalty; nor will it negatively impact your employment status.

WE ASK THAT YOU NOT DISCUSS THE QUESTIONNAIRES WITH YOUR SPOUSE/SIGNIFICANT OTHER UNTIL BOTH QUESTIONNAIRES HAVE BEEN RETURNED AFTER THE FINAL FOLLOW-UP.

After all data has been collected, a debriefing session may be requested by contacting Dr. Bob Glazier with the University of Houston – Downtown at the numbers and address below. If you have any questions, or problems arise in connection with you or your significant other's participation in this study, during or after completion, contact Dr. Glazier.

Dr. Bob Glazier
University of Houston – Downtown
Department of Criminal Justice
One Main Street
Houston, Texas 77002

(713) 221-8425

THIS PROJECT IS BEING CONDUCTED UNDER THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF HUMAN SUBJECT RESEARCH AS OUTLINED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

Please complete the following information and sign below indicating you have read and understand the content of this document.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: _____

Signature: _____

**Harris County Community Supervision and Corrections Department
Request for Participation in a Research Project – Spouse/Significant Others**

Dear Potential Participant:

We are requesting your participation in a research project on stress in community corrections officers. The Harris County Community Supervision and Corrections Department (HCCSCD) applied for grant funds through the Corrections and Law Enforcement Family Support (CLEFS) program sponsored by the U. S. Department of Justice to develop a program to address the stress of the community supervision officers in Harris County. The HCCSCD invited the University of Houston – Downtown to participate in the grant to act as the principal research investigator.

This project is being supported by Grant No. 2000-FS-VX-K002 awarded by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U. S. Department of Justice. The points of view in this program are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U. S. Department of Justice.

The purpose of this research is to educate you and your spouse/significant other about stress as it relates to your work. As part of this research you will complete a number of surveys related to stress and some of your spouse's/significant other's job-related attitudes as well as attend four training classes on stress. This project has two follow-ups. After all the training sessions have terminated, you will be asked to take the two surveys you were given today again. The first follow-up will be one month after the completion of the training. The second follow-up will be five months after completion of the training. As a spouse/significant other, your follow-ups will be administered via U. S. mail.

Although subject identity will be linked with subject responses on the two surveys, HCCSCD will NOT know how you responded as the University of Houston - Downtown will be the only party with access to subject identity. At no time will the University of Houston – Downtown release data that would identify either subjects or their responses by name; thus, you will remain anonymous to HCCSCD. The data collected from this study will be used for education and publication purposes; however, when the data is used in this manner it will never identify you personally.

There are two questionnaires in this packet. The first questionnaire asks general questions about what you know about stress. The second questionnaire asks questions about *your observations* of your spouse's/significant other's attitudes and feelings about their work as well as some brief personal information. We estimate that completion of these questionnaires will take approximately 20 minutes.

We do not foresee that you or your spouse/significant other should experience any risks as a result of your participation in this project. We do hope that by participating in this project that you will be more aware of how stress impacts you and your family as well as how you might better deal with stressful situations as they arise from your spouse's/significant other's work. Your participation will also allow social scientists to better understand work attitudes in stressful occupations. Such information can contribute to a better understanding of a complex issue and

the development of more efficient interventions for others in your spouse's/significant other's occupation.

You have several choices regarding your level of participation in this project: 1) you may decide not to participate at all; 2) you may decide not to answer some of the questions; 3) you may decide to terminate your participation even after you have begun. Any of these choices is an option and you and your spouse/significant other will not suffer any penalty; nor will it negatively impact your spouse's/significant other's employment status.

WE ASK THAT YOU NOT DISCUSS THE QUESTIONNAIRES WITH YOUR SPOUSE/SIGNIFICANT OTHER UNTIL BOTH QUESTIONNAIRES HAVE BEEN RETURNED AFTER THE FINAL FOLLOW-UP.

After all data has been collected, a debriefing session may be requested by contacting Dr. Bob Glazier with the University of Houston – Downtown at the numbers and address below. If you have any questions, or problems arise in connection with you or your significant other's participation in this study, during or after completion, contact Dr. Glazier.

Dr. Bob Glazier
University of Houston – Downtown
Department of Criminal Justice
One Main Street
Houston, Texas 77002

(713) 221-8425

THIS PROJECT IS BEING CONDUCTED UNDER THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF HUMAN SUBJECT RESEARCH AS OUTLINED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

Please complete the following information and sign below indicating you have read and understand the content of this document.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: _____

Your Spouse's Name: _____

Signature: _____

Appendix E

Cover Letters Concerning Completion and Return of
Posttests and Follow-up Surveys

Letter for
Posttest



Harris County
COMMUNITY SUPERVISION AND CORRECTIONS

49 San Jacinto • Houston, TX 77002 • (713) 755-2700

Nancy H. Platt, Director
Mike Enax, Assistant Director

Staff Development Branch (Training & Quality Assurance)
9111 Eastex Freeway, Suite 132 • Houston, TX 77093-7095
(713) 696-4368

Dear SOS Class Participant,

We would like to take this opportunity to tell you how very much we appreciated your participation in the first phase of the Stomp Out Stress (SOS) program. We realize it was a big commitment to attend all of the classes that were concentrated in a single month's time. Your input into the issues in the Department that relate to stress was invaluable. It is our hope that you gained some knowledge about stress, as well as information about yourself and the way that you react to and process stressful situations.

It is now time for Phase 2 of the project: the first post-testing. You may recall from the first session (Education), that we indicated we would be sending two surveys to you one month after the completion of the classes and another set five months later. Enclosed you will find the two surveys that are identical to those you completed during the initial class period. We are looking at your knowledge about stress and your (or your spouse's assessment of your) perception of your current level of stress and burnout.

Will you please take just a few minutes to complete the two surveys and return them in the pre-stamped, addressed envelope to Dr. Glazier at the University of Houston-Downtown address? Because of losing participants due to the flooding and other factors beyond our control, our sample size is diminished. Therefore, it is *imperative* that each of you complete and return the surveys. We would appreciate having them returned to Dr. Glazier no later than August 15, 2001. As was emphasized during the classes, Community Supervision and Corrections Department personnel will not have access to your completed survey instruments.

Again, please accept our sincere thanks for your commitment to this important project.

Sincerely,

Bennett Chapman
Project Manager

Bob Glazier
Principal Investigator

Letter for
Follow-up



Harris County
COMMUNITY SUPERVISION AND CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT

49 San Jacinto • Houston, Texas 77002 • (713)755-2700

Nancy H. Platt, Director
Mike Enax, Assistant Director

Dear SOS Class Participant,

Happy New Year! We hope that 2002 is a great year for you and your family.

Last summer you participated in the Department's Stomp Out Stress grant project by completing two surveys and attending some or all of four classes on stress issues. In August, many of you participated in the second phase of the project by again filling out two surveys and returning them to Dr. Glazier at the University of Houston-Downtown. It is now time to wrap up your involvement in this program by *one more time* completing the inventory about your knowledge of stress and your assessment of your spouse's current level of stress and burnout.

We were able to get a lot of good information from the first two assessments periods, and we need your help in collecting the last bit of data that we need for the grant. We know that many of you are just returning from vacations and may have a lot to do to catch up with your workloads. However, we are asking that you please take a few minutes to complete the two enclosed surveys and return them in the envelope provided to Dr. Glazier no later than Friday, January 18, 2001. It is very important that we receive as many responses as possible in order to be able to give a meaningful report to the Department of Justice, who is funding this project. As has been communicated previously, Community Supervision and Corrections Department personnel will not have access to your completed survey instruments.

Thank you, in advance, for your willingness to help us see this project through to completion. There are finally more studies about stress in community corrections personnel being undertaken by others in the field. The results of the study in which you are participating will provide much needed information to those in Washington who are responsible for providing funding to study and combat stress.

We look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely,

Bennett Chapman
Project Manager

Bob Glazier
Principal Investigator

Appendix F

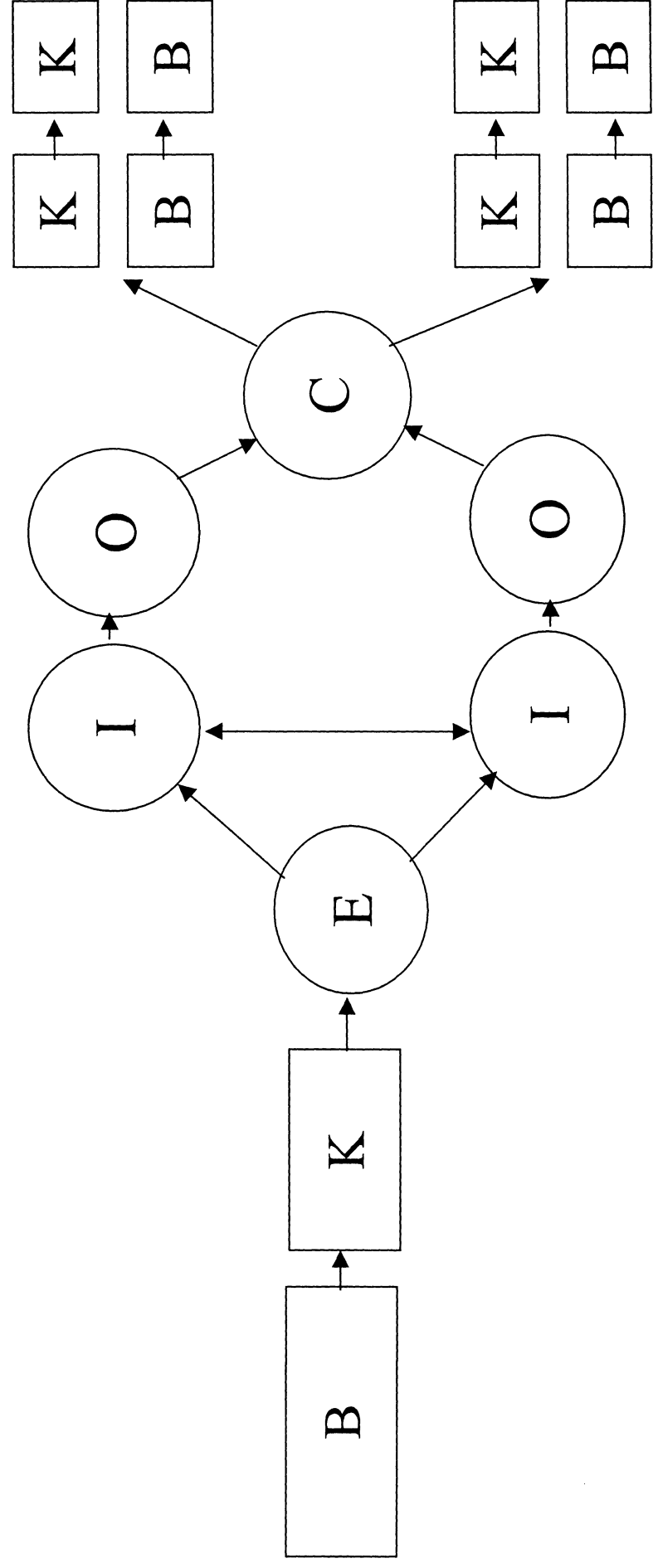
Stress Intervention Model



Assessment/Pretest

Intervention

Posttests



.....

- B = Job Satisfaction Level Assessment
- K = Knowledge of Stress/Burnout
- E = Education
- O = Organizational Factors
- I = Individual Factors
- C = Interpersonal Communication about Stress/Burnout

Appendix G

Curriculum:

Stress Education and Training Program for Community
Supervision and Corrections Officers

Stress Education and Training Program for Community Supervision and Corrections Officers

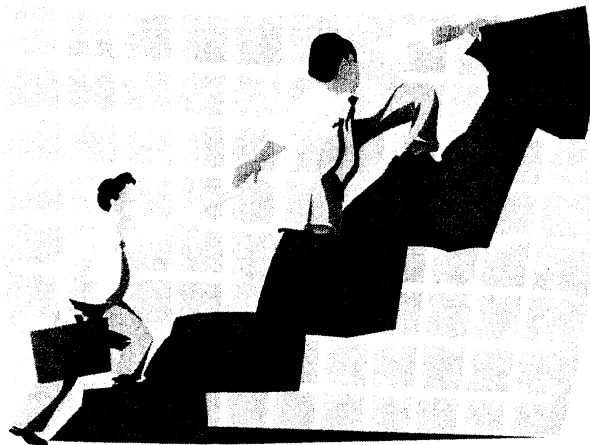
A Curriculum for the Administration of an Education
and Training Program to Address Stress
Experienced by Community Supervision and
Corrections Officers

Bob Glazier, Ph.D.
University of Houston – Downtown
Principal Investigator

Bennett Chapman
Harris County Community Supervision and Corrections Department
Program Manager

This project was supported by Grant No. 2000-FS-VX-K002 awarded by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Introduction to the Stomp Out Stress Program



Introduction Module:

The Beginning of Our Journey

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Time Allocation: | 1 hour |
| Resources: | Program Administrators' Information Sheet; Informed Consent Form (Officers); Informed Consent Form (Spouse/Significant Others); Knowledge of Stress Survey; Knowledge of Stress Survey Answer Key; Maslach Burnout Inventory (titled "Officer Survey" and "Spouse/Significant Other Survey"); Program Model |
| Handouts: | Slides; Notes pages; course evaluation form |
| Equipment: | Dry Erase Board; Dry Erase Markers; Flip Chart Stand and Paper; Permanent Markers; Screen; Projector; Laptop or Desktop Computer |
| Supplies: | 2 large brown sealable envelopes, about 14" x 16"; <u>For each participant:</u> one sheet of colored 8 ½ x 11" paper; name tent; 1 ½ " 3-ring binder with 5 divider tabs; one pen; brown sealable envelopes: one each of 9 ½" x 11" and 10" x 12"; 2 labels (about 2" x 3") per envelope |

| |
|--------------------------------------|
| Slide 1 – introductory module |
|--------------------------------------|

I. Introduction of Key Personnel

Trainer (Introduction and background)

Bennett Chapman

- Program Manager of the grant that funded this program
- Branch Director of Staff Development at Harris County Community Supervision and Corrections Department
- Adjunct Professor of Criminal Justice at University of Houston – Downtown
- Master in Educational Psychology from Texas A & M University

Bob Glazier, Ph.D.

- Principal Investigator of the grant that funded this program
- Ph.D. in Psychology from University of Houston
- Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice at University of Houston – Downtown
- Former United States Probation Officer
- Researched and published in the area of Stress in Police Officers

II. Icebreaker

Hand out a letter size colored piece of paper to each participant.

Tell them to reflect on how stressed they feel on average when at work and rate that stress based on a scale of 1 to 10 (with ten being the most stressed – hardly functioning).

Request that they write in LARGE numbers the rating on their colored paper WITHOUT sharing this rating with others in the class.

Going around the room, ask each participant to state their name and where they work in the department (spouses can share their partner's name).

They can end each individual introduction by holding up their stress rating and saying, "I am this stressed out at work..." [holding up their sign for the rest to see].

III. Program Background and Development

A. Federal grant to study stress and burnout in officers and family members

Almost two years ago, the CSCD received information about a federal grant that was intended to encourage probation departments to apply for monies to study the effects of officer stress on job and home satisfaction.

B. History of CLEFS

In 1994, the U.S. Congress authorized the Law Enforcement Family Support (LEFS) program through Title XXI of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Assistance Act to assist in ameliorating the harmful effects of stress experienced by law enforcement officers and their families.

Slide two - CLEFS

In 1999, NIJ also obtained a ruling from the Office of General Counsel clarifying the term "law enforcement personnel" to include other peace officers (to include correctional, probation, and parole officers). With this change, the LEFS program became the Corrections and Law Enforcement Family Support (CLEFS) program.

Our grant was the first award to address stress in community corrections/probation officers.

The grant solicitation specifically encouraged two things: 1) that family members be involved and 2) that agencies collaborate with each other to make more effective use of resources.

C. Collaboration between UHD and HCCSCD

Slide three – research grant

Hence, the Harris County CSCD combined forces with the University of Houston-Downtown to develop a grant application that would address the stress officers experience at work that effects both their jobs and their relationships outside of work.

D. Research Grant

At its base, this is a research grant.

However, it is also about developing a program that provides officers with information and resources to address job satisfaction, work stress, and how to prevent stress from taking a toll on your family.

When a review of the information/literature was conducted during the preparation phases of the grant, it was learned that virtually no studies had been completed that measure and intervene in the stress community corrections officers experience.

With no information available, it is no wonder that so little success has been seen in addressing this important issue in community corrections.

IV. Administer Pre-tests

Slide four – pre-tests

In order to demonstrate that our program was successful, we are going to administer some surveys before and after training that deal with job satisfaction and your knowledge of stress.

Now seems like a good time to discuss the issue of confidentiality.

I am sure many of you wonder about the confidentiality of material used in this program.

All material, including surveys/questionnaires, personal assessments, and follow-up surveys are strictly confidential.

No employee of the department will have access to the personal material in the program as the trainers are all associated with the university.

Further, we ask that you not share the content of any class discussions that are of a personal nature.

Should you have any concerns about your participation or confidentiality of any of your assessments, you may contact Bob Glazier at UHD at (713) 222-5350.

Before we continue today, we would like to have you complete the first administration of these surveys as well as an informed consent document.

The completion of these documents should take about 25 minutes.

Instructor: Before proceeding, please read verbatim the following from the box:

ADMINISTRATION OF: 1) INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT; 2) OFFICER OR SPOUSE/SIGNIFICANT OTHER SURVEY; 3) KNOWLEDGE OF STRESS SURVEY; AND 3) JOB SATISFACTION SURVEY

Dr. Glazier has asked that I read the following to you verbatim:

First let me say, thank you for participating in the program!

I take confidentiality and the protection of your data VERY seriously.

One of the agreements that I made with Harris County was that if we conducted the study together that I would be totally responsible for all data collection and the protection of your confidentiality.

Harris County will NEVER have access to raw data, even after the program is over!

Harris County agreed completely and all involved parties know that they are never to open ANY material addressed to me.

I considered assigning numbers to you and having some key that I could then connect to your name, but logistically that was not going to work for two reasons:

- 1. The program has follow-up surveys that must be matched to all participants; and**
- 2. You will get the results of the initial assessment during one of your sessions as a part of the program.**

Knowing that I had to identify you, I came up with the following scenario and I hope you feel that these measures will more than protect the confidentiality of your responses.

In a moment your instructor will provide you with an envelope containing four items, including:

- 1. Knowledge of Stress Inventory**
- 2. Job Satisfaction Survey**
- 3. Informed Consent document**
- 4. Another envelope labeled "To Be Opened ONLY by Dr. Bob Glazier, University of Houston – Downtown, Department of Criminal Justice"**

I am asking that you complete the surveys and informed consent writing your name on each document – if that makes you uncomfortable, please hear me out.

Once completed, you will insert ALL pages into the envelope addressed to me and SEAL it by licking the gum on the envelope flap.

Your instructor will then collect all of the sealed envelopes and place them into a very large envelope also addressed to me and seal it as well.

Your instructor WILL NOT turn these into Harris County.

Each instructor will personally deliver the package to me.

None of the instructors of this program work or are associated with Harris County Community Supervision and Corrections Department outside of the peer trainers who never administer any surveys.

When I have to communicate with you, you will receive a sealed envelope from me personally addressed to you.

In the future when it is time for follow-up, officers will have their follow-ups surveys sent to them via interoffice mail, BUT you will mail your completed surveys back to me directly through the U.S. Postal Service.

Significant others will receive their follow-ups through the U.S. mail.

I gave great thought to this system to ensure your confidentiality and feel confident that it is a secure system.

[After the surveys have been administered...]

Now that we have measured your level of job satisfaction and knowledge of stress, let's take a few minutes to brainstorm about job satisfaction.

V. Defining Job Satisfaction

Slide 5 – Job Satisfaction

**BRAINSTORM: Who will define job satisfaction for me?
Write responses on white board or flip chart.**

**BRAINSTORM: What gets in the way of job satisfaction?
Write responses on board or simply discuss them in a way that relates them to the ideas of burnout and stress.**

As you can see, there are many factors that influence job satisfaction. We are pleased to have you with us today and hope that through your participation in this program you will be able to grow both personally and professionally.

We would like to take the first few minutes to give you background on the development of this program and details about how it is designed.

VI. Participant Notebooks

Slide 6 - notebooks

As one of our goals is to assist you in developing resources, you will be given a notebook that you will “build” during your participation in this program.

You will be maintaining your own binder. PLEASE be sure to bring it to every session.

A. Review the sections

If you open the binder, you will see the title page and numerous tabs.

Tab one gives introductory material and also has a copy of the model upon which this instruction is based.

Tabs 2-5 correspond to the four training components in which you will be participating.

You will notice that there is nothing behind most of the tabs.

As we progress through the course, your instructors will be giving you materials to add to your book.

B. Encourage them to use as a resource after the class concludes

It will be an excellent resource for you long after the course has been completed.

Now, let's look at the model to give you a picture of what we will be doing in our time together.

VII. Project Model

Slide 7 - model

We would like to review what will be covered over the next few sessions.

If you will open your binder to the section titled "model," you will notice there are basically four classes that make up the program.

A. Classes

1. Education

The first class is the education component and is an eight hour class.

This is the class we are in now, and we will look at what stress is, what it does to you, and the various ways to reduce it.

2. Individual

Next, we will examine individual factors that can determine how well you handle stress.

This class is a four hour session.

We will discuss your personality type and methods of coping, partly through the use of assessment instruments that will take only a few minutes to complete but which may give you insight into yourself.

3. Organizational

The next module is going to discuss organizational stress and is a four hour class.

This module deals with the work-related factors that directly or indirectly contribute to your level of stress and burnout.

4. Communication

Last, you, and the person who is participating in this program with you if this applies to you, will meet together with the other participants to talk about how to better communicate about stress in the home.

Please note that it is **IMPERATIVE** that you attend each of the sessions in the order they appear in the model.

VIII. Class Schedule and Information

Slide 8 - schedule

You will notice that the model has some classes that have been specifically designed for officers and the significant others to attend separately while some modules allow for officers to attend with their significant other.

We realize this is confusing, so let's review it together.

Here are the basic guidelines for class attendance and participation:

The education and individual modules may be taken together OR separately.

The organizational session is tailored to officers and significant others requiring that you and your significant other attend the class designed specifically for you.

Therefore, if you find that you have enrolled in the wrong class, let me know.

In the communication class, we will bring you together to share what you have learned and to work on how you might communicate about the stressors in your lives.

We have tried to build flexibility into the program by offering multiple sessions and hope you will address any scheduling concerns you have with one of us.

If you are unable to attend a session, please call or email either Bob or Bennett and let them know.

Their phone numbers and email addresses are in the pocket of your binder to remove and take with you.

IX. Follow-up Schedule

Slide 9 – follow-up

One month after you complete the program, you will complete two follow-up surveys to measure the program's effectiveness.

Five months after program completion, you will be asked to complete final follow-up surveys.

X. "Housekeeping"

Before we get into the actual instruction of the Education module, let's go over some "house business".

The restrooms are located in the hallway next to the elevator.

Refreshments can be purchased from the vending machines on the first floor and in the fourth floor snack area.

XI. Program Purposes as Related to Attendance

Slide 10 - attendance

We understand that participation in this program requires a significant time commitment.

With that said, let's review a few points as to why it is important that your participation be full and complete.

Basically, this program has a two-fold purpose.

First, we want to assist you and anyone who is participating with you to more effectively handle the stressors of everyday life, both at work and home.

Second, this is a research program whose results will be used to design programs around the country to address the needs of community supervision officers.

Your attendance is very important to obtaining data that is statistically significant.

While you may not be interested in the statistical implications of our work here, please remember that this is ground-breaking territory!

There are virtually NO studies that have addressed these issues in community corrections agencies.

Our model is being looked at as a state and national example of programs that may be implemented in other departments.

Additionally, at the conclusion of the project, we plan to host a state-wide conference to share the information and research results with other departments who want to address the issues of stress and burnout with their staff.

Lastly, the results of this study will be used to expand the program to other staff within our department – secretaries, managers, corrections officers, and so forth.

We recognize that your participation in this program represents a significant time commitment from you. We firmly believe that it will be worth it to you.

XIV. Conclusion

Before we begin the education module, are there any questions?


STOMP OUT STRESS

**Stress Education and Training
Program for Community
Supervision
and Corrections Officers**

**Bob Glazier, Ph.D.
Bennett Chapman, M.S.**

1

CLEFS



***Corrections and Law
Enforcement Family
Support program*** - to
assist in reducing the
harmful effects of stress
experienced by law
enforcement
officers/corrections
officers and their families

2

Research Grant


Collaborative effort between Harris
County CSCD and the University of
Houston-Downtown

No prior studies have looked at
stress in community corrections staff

3


Pre-Tests

- o Confidentiality of materials
- o Personal issues raised in the classroom
- o Contact person:
Dr. Bob Glazier
713-222-5350



What is job satisfaction to you?

Your Training Notebook



- **Introductory information**
- **"Build-As-You-Go"**
- **Use as a resource after the training**

Project Model

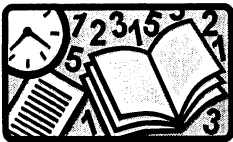
Consists of three parts:

- Assessment/Pretest
- Intervention
- Posttests

Class Schedule – Which modules can I take with my significant other???

- ✓ **Education Module – YES!**
- ✓ **Individual Module – YES!**
- ✓ **Organizational Module – NO!**
- ✓ **Communication Module – YES, you MUST!**

Follow up: A Very Important Step!



- ✳ ONE MONTH
- ✳ FIVE MONTH
- ✳ RESULTS OF STUDY PUBLISHED

WE NEED YOU!

Your attendance at each of the classes is very important!!!

Program Administrators' Information Sheet

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Harris County Community Supervision and Corrections Department
Request for Participation in a Research Project - Officers

Dear Potential Participant:

We are requesting your participation in a research project on stress in community corrections officers. The Harris County Community Supervision and Corrections Department (HCCSCD) applied for grant funds through the Corrections and Law Enforcement Family Support (CLEFS) program sponsored by the U. S. Department of Justice to develop a program to address the stress of the community supervision officers in Harris County. The HCCSCD invited the University of Houston – Downtown to participate in the grant to act as the principal research investigator.

This project is being supported by Grant No. 2000-FS-VX-K002 awarded by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U. S. Department of Justice. The points of view in this program are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U. S. Department of Justice.

The purpose of this research is to educate you and possibly your spouse/significant other about stress as it relates to your work. As part of this research you will complete a number of surveys related to stress and some of your job-related attitudes as well as attend four training classes on stress. This project also allows for a spouse or significant other to participate as well – although not all participating officers will have a spouse or significant other participating. This project has two follow-ups. After all the training sessions have terminated, you will be asked to take the two surveys you were given today again. The first follow-up will be one month after the completion of the training. The second follow-up will be five months after completion of the training.

Although subject identity will be linked with subject responses on the two surveys, HCCSCD will NOT know how you responded as the University of Houston - Downtown will be the only party with access to subject identity. At no time will the University of Houston – Downtown release data that would identify either subjects or their responses by name; thus, you will remain anonymous to HCCSCD. The data collected from this study will be used for education and publication purposes; however, when the data is used in this manner it will never identify you personally.

There are two questionnaires in this packet. The first questionnaire asks general questions about what you know about stress. The second questionnaire asks questions about your attitudes and feelings about your work as well as some brief personal information. We estimate that completion of these questionnaires will take approximately 20 minutes.

We do not foresee that you should experience any risks as a result of your participation in this project. We do hope that by participating in this project that you will be more aware of how stress impacts you and your family as well as how you might better deal with stressful situations both at work and at home. Your participation will also allow social scientists to better understand work attitudes in stressful occupations. Such information can contribute to a better

understanding of a complex issue and the development of more efficient interventions for others in your occupation.

You have several choices regarding your level of participation in this project: 1) you may decide not to participate at all; 2) you may decide not to answer some of the questions; 3) you may decide to terminate your participation even after you have begun. Any of these choices is an option and you will not suffer any penalty; nor will it negatively impact your employment status.

WE ASK THAT YOU NOT DISCUSS THE QUESTIONNAIRES WITH YOUR SPOUSE/SIGNIFICANT OTHER UNTIL BOTH QUESTIONNAIRES HAVE BEEN RETURNED AFTER THE FINAL FOLLOW-UP.

After all data has been collected, a debriefing session may be requested by contacting Dr. Bob Glazier with the University of Houston – Downtown at the numbers and address below. If you have any questions, or problems arise in connection with you or your significant other's participation in this study, during or after completion, contact Dr. Glazier.

Dr. Bob Glazier
University of Houston – Downtown
Department of Criminal Justice
One Main Street
Houston, Texas 77002

(713) 221-8425

THIS PROJECT IS BEING CONDUCTED UNDER THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF HUMAN SUBJECT RESEARCH AS OUTLINED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

Please complete the following information and sign below indicating you have read and understand the content of this document.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: _____

Signature: _____

**Harris County Community Supervision and Corrections Department
Request for Participation in a Research Project – Spouse/Significant Others**

Dear Potential Participant:

We are requesting your participation in a research project on stress in community corrections officers. The Harris County Community Supervision and Corrections Department (HCCSCD) applied for grant funds through the Corrections and Law Enforcement Family Support (CLEFS) program sponsored by the U. S. Department of Justice to develop a program to address the stress of the community supervision officers in Harris County. The HCCSCD invited the University of Houston – Downtown to participate in the grant to act as the principal research investigator.

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The purpose of this research is to educate you and your spouse/significant other about stress as it relates to your work. As part of this research you will complete a number of surveys related to stress and some of your spouse's/significant other's job-related attitudes as well as attend four training classes on stress. This project has two follow-ups. After all the training sessions have terminated, you will be asked to take the two surveys you were given today again. The first follow-up will be one month after the completion of the training. The second follow-up will be five months after completion of the training. As a spouse/significant other, your follow-ups will be administered via U. S. mail.

Although subject identity will be linked with subject responses on the two surveys, HCCSCD will NOT know how you responded as the University of Houston - Downtown will be the only party with access to subject identity. At no time will the University of Houston – Downtown release data that would identify either subjects or their responses by name; thus, you will remain anonymous to HCCSCD. The data collected from this study will be used for education and publication purposes; however, when the data is used in this manner it will never identify you personally.

There are two questionnaires in this packet. The first questionnaire asks general questions about what you know about stress. The second questionnaire asks questions about *your observations* of your spouse's/significant other's attitudes and feelings about their work as well as some brief personal information. We estimate that completion of these questionnaires will take approximately 20 minutes.

We do not foresee that you or your spouse/significant other should experience any risks as a result of your participation in this project. We do hope that by participating in this project that you will be more aware of how stress impacts you and your family as well as how you might better deal with stressful situations as they arise from your spouse's/significant other's work. Your participation will also allow social scientists to better understand work attitudes in stressful occupations. Such information can contribute to a better understanding of a complex issue and

the development of more efficient interventions for others in your spouse's/significant other's occupation.

You have several choices regarding your level of participation in this project: 1) you may decide not to participate at all; 2) you may decide not to answer some of the questions; 3) you may decide to terminate your participation even after you have begun. Any of these choices is an option and you and your spouse/significant other will not suffer any penalty; nor will it negatively impact your spouse's/significant other's employment status.

WE ASK THAT YOU NOT DISCUSS THE QUESTIONNAIRES WITH YOUR SPOUSE/SIGNIFICANT OTHER UNTIL BOTH QUESTIONNAIRES HAVE BEEN RETURNED AFTER THE FINAL FOLLOW-UP.

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Please complete the following information and sign below indicating you have read and understand the content of this document.

Name: _____

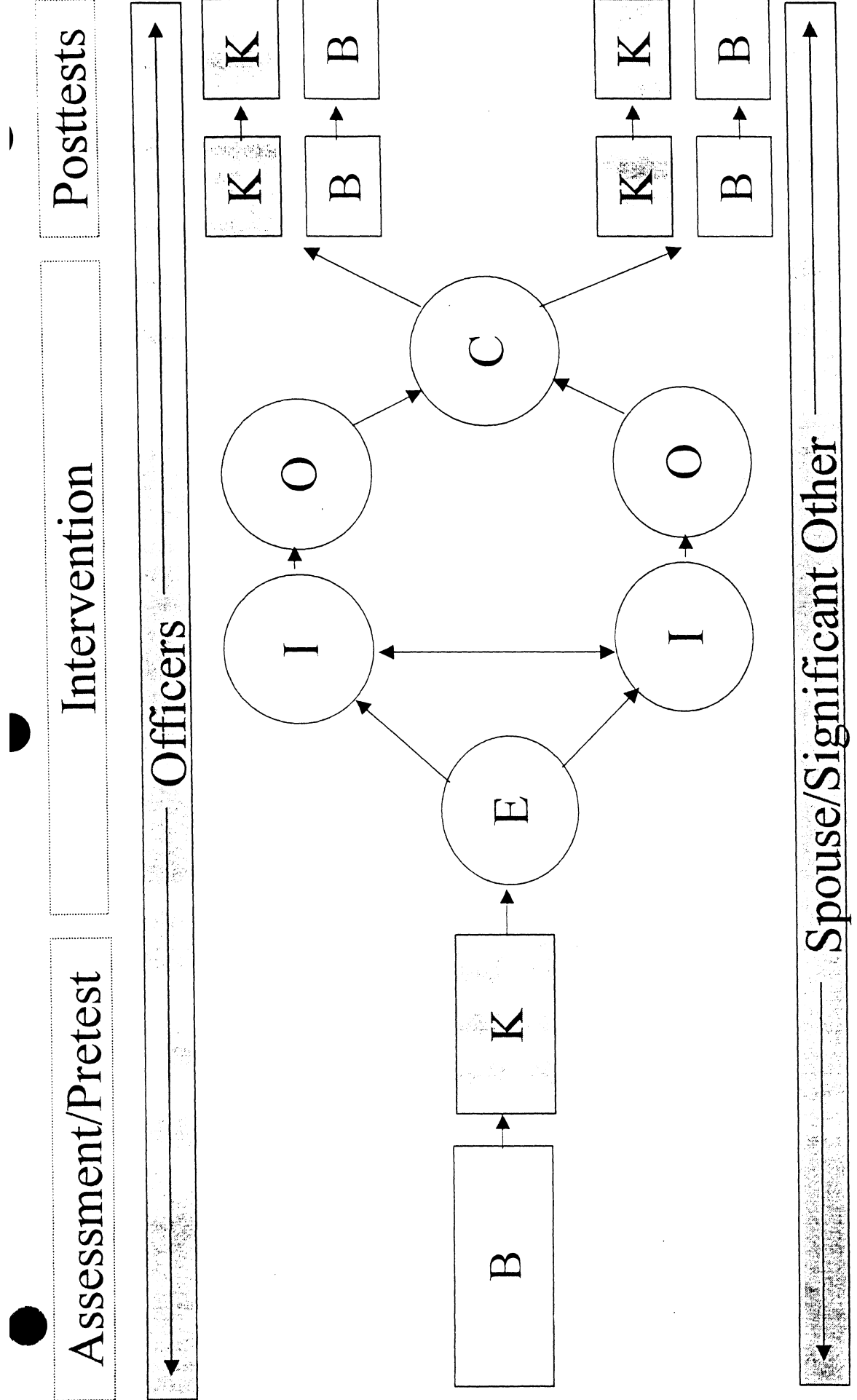
Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: _____

Your Spouse's Name: _____

Signature: _____



B = Job Satisfaction Level Assessment K = Knowledge of Stress/Burnout
 E = Education O = Organizational Factors I = Individual Factors
 C = Interpersonal Communication about Stress/Burnout

Education Module

What is Stress and How Does it Impact You?



Education Module:

What is Stress and How Does it Impact You?

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Time Allocation: | 7 hours |
| Resources: | Type A Behavior; Type A Behavior Feedback; Personal Stress Assessment |
| Handouts: | Six Myths About Stress; Introduction to Stress Related Disorders; Slides; Notes pages; course evaluation form |
| Equipment: | Dry Erase Board; Dry Erase Markers; Flip Chart Stand and Paper; Permanent Markers; Screen; Projector; Laptop or Desktop Computer |

Note: Slide numbers are continued from the Introduction module which flows immediately into the Education module.

Slide 11 – education module

I. Overview of Education Module (Review Module Lesson Plan)

Slide 12 - Stress

II. What is Stress?

BRAINSTORM: What is Stress?

Trainer should organize the responses into various categories such as physical, emotional, causes of stress, etc. and point out similarities to the definition below.

A. ABCs of Understanding Stress

1. General Definition

Slide 13 - definition

Simply, stress is the process by which we appraise and cope with environmental threats and challenges.

When we are challenged, stressors can have positive effects by arousing and motivating us to conquer problems.

More often, stressors threaten our resources, including such things as: our status and security on the job, our loved one's health or well-being, our deeply held beliefs, or our self image.

When such stress is severe or prolonged, it is harmful.

2. Myths - Now that we have defined stress, let's review some of the myths about stress.

| |
|-------------------------------------|
| Slide 14 – myths Handout |
|-------------------------------------|

These myths were taken from the book *The Stress Solution* by Lyle H. Miller and Alma Dell Smith and taken from the American Psychological Association.

Myth 1: Stress is the Same for Everyone

Each of us experience and respond to stress in different ways.

Myth 2: Stress is Always Bad for You

If you believe this then you think that having no stress in your life will make you healthy and happy.

We know this is not true.

A good analogy comes from the strings on a violin.

Consider the tension caused by stress as a string on a violin.

If the tension is loose, then the violin sounds dull.

If the tension is too tight, the violin sounds shrill; and, if extremely tight the string may even break.

Basically, we will always experience stress as a part of a normal life. The key is that learning how to monitor and manage stress makes us productive and happy.

Myth 3: Everything We Do Is Stressful, Why Do Anything About It

Although stress is inevitable in life, you should not ignore its presence.

If you will begin to plan and set priorities you will find it easier to manage.

Always keep in mind that when you are highly stressed it is more difficult to plan and prioritize your activities.

So, begin to learn methods of stress management early, before you think you need them.

Myth 4: The Best Stress Reduction Techniques Are the Ones that Are Used The Most

This is not true – there is no magic cure.

Different techniques work for different kinds of people.

Our schedules and physical capabilities alone can limit our choices.

The best approach is to develop a comprehensive program of techniques that work for you.

Myth 5: If You Have No Symptoms, Then Stress is Not Taking a Toll on You

If you do not sense symptoms this does not mean that you are absent stress.

If you can monitor your current psychological and biological state during a stressful moment and not have any response, then you should probably question your body's ability to warn you of danger.

If you are taking medications or have developed defense mechanisms to mask the symptoms of stress, then you are unable to reduce the strain on your body.

Myth 6: The Only Symptoms that Require Attention Are the Major Ones

If you ignore the smaller symptoms of stress (e.g., headaches or acid reflux), you are ignoring the early warning signs.

If you wait for the major symptoms to appear, the damage may already be done.

Much of what we will discuss during this program will be to contradict these myths.

B. What Stress Is - Lets continue our discussion.

Slide 15 – Types of stress

1. Explain eustress and distress

It is important to distinguish between two types of stress, eustress and distress.

a. Eustress

Positive, exhilarating, challenging experiences of success followed by higher expectations – basically “good stress” (e.g., getting married)

b. Distress

Disappointment, failure, threat, embarrassment and other negative experiences

The point is that whether good or bad stress, stress is still stress and it can have a negative impact on the individual’s ability to appraise and cope with life’s challenges.

2. Distinguish stress from stressors, stress reaction, and strain

Slide 16 - vocabulary

In discussing stress it is important to establish a common vocabulary.

Stressors, stress reaction, and strain are all different concepts that are linearly related.

a. Stressor (Threat or Cause)

A specific problem, issue, challenge, personal conflict that can be either an external or internal threat to the individual

b. Stress Reaction (Individual Response)

An individual response to a given stressor (physiological, behavioral, emotional, cognitive, signs and symptoms)

c. Strain (Effect)

The prolonged impact of a stressor on the system which results in overload, fatigue and leads to physical and mental illness.

By understanding these concepts we will be able to make an often complex term more easy to discuss.

3. Explain Secondary Stressors

Unfortunately, when we experience stress we often find that it is like a disease that is easily spread.

When we are stressed, it is easier to be impacted by more stress because our resources are weakened by already existing stress and strain.

Further, stress is not some thing that is contained solely within the individual.

The initial stress may take on a "life" of its own, so to speak.

a. Definition of Secondary Stressors

indirect effects of stress that are spin-offs from an earlier source of stress.

Example: Loss of job leads to shortage of money which leads to "hand me down" clothes for the children which leads to an embarrassed child which leads to more stress for the adult

BRAINSTORM: Another Example of Secondary Stressors

Ask members of the session to recite further examples of secondary stressors from their own lives.

4. Intensity, Duration and Frequency of Stressful Event

Slide 18 - effectiveness

There are many things that impact how effective we are at dealing with stress.

a. Intensity

the level of threat the stress provides to the individual
the degree of reaction the individual thinks is necessary to reduce
the stress

b. Duration

short (e.g., someone entering a room when you are unaware or
narrowly missing a pedestrian in the street)

moderate (e.g., loss of job)

long (e.g., terminal illness)

c. Frequency

How often does the issue or stressor arise?

All of these factors can impact the individual's ability to cope with stress
as well as their ability to identify resources for avoiding or dealing with
stress.

5. Define Burnout and Distinguish from Stress

It is important to distinguish stress from burnout.

We have defined stress, but what happens to the individual who remains
stressed out for a long period of time?

Slide 19 - brainstorm

BRAINSTORM: What happens when stress is left unattended?

**What do you think happens to those individuals who remain in a
stressed out state? Think of being stressed out in behavioral
terms, rather than physical terms.**

In its simplest form, burnout is the by-product of prolonged stress.

Slide 20 - Burnout

Burnout is most commonly characterized by physical fatigue, a sense of helplessness or hopelessness, emotional devitalization, and development of negative self-concepts and attitudes toward work, life, and others.

Burnout is a work-related syndrome that stems from an individual's perception of a significant discrepancy between effort and reward.

It is important to note that the perception of this discrepancy is influenced by individual, organizational, and social factors.

Burnout occurs most often in those who work face to face with troubled or needy clients and is typically marked by withdrawal from and cynicism toward clients, emotional and physical exhaustion, and various psychological symptoms, such as irritability, anxiety, sadness, and lowered self esteem.

Although the term "burnout" is used constantly within the work place, its use in the scientific realm is restricted to describe those in the helping professions as these jobs that require a greater level of emotional commitment due to the level of human contact, often accompanied by negative or tragic circumstances.

These individuals are more likely to place their needs behind those of their clients.

This is further exasperated by the burned out individual's constant striving to achieve unrealistic expectations imposed by self or society.

With these observations made, you can certainly see how those in community corrections are at risk of experiencing burnout as they are constantly exposed to the emotional problems of their clientele.

C. Stress Theory and Research: What Do We Know About Stress?

Slide 21 - theory

Stress is a very complex concept.

Over the years our understanding of this complex concept has led to a better understanding of what stress is and how it impacts the person.

As a way to better understand stress, let's review what we know historically.

Slide 22 – flight or fight

1. Explain "Fight-or-Flight" Response – Cannon

Perhaps the most common theory of stress is the "Fight-or-Flight" Response proposed by Cannon in 1932.

According to Cannon, we have an instinctual response to threat -- we either take the threat head on or we flee to avoid it; he called it the "fight or flight response."

Cannon also claimed that in moments of great strain, the individual may demonstrate extra-ordinary strength or abilities.

For Cannon, great strain could result in cardiovascular spasms leading to death.

Perhaps one of the best examples of this kind of behavior is to think about the physical response when someone scares you.

Slide 23 – startle

FOR DISCUSSION: WHAT DO YOU PHYSICALLY FEEL WHEN SOMEONE STARTLES OR SCARES YOU?

2. Explain "General Adaptation Syndrome" -- Selye

Slide 24 – general adaptation

The next theory to explain stress was Selye's General Adaptation Syndrome.

According to Selye, the individual goes through three increasingly reactive stages when stress persists.

- a. Alarm Reaction: initial or acute response
- b. Resistance: once the individual senses that the threat is not subsiding it seeks to resolve the threat through avoidance or developing resistance to the stress

- c. Exhaustion: prolonged worry resulting in fatigue and emotional breakdown

Selye's theory was important in its hierarchical approach to describing exposure to continued stress.

3. Explain "Appraisal and Coping" – Lazarus

Slide 25 – appraisal

Selye's theory was criticized for ignoring the cognitive component as well as including everyday stressors in his theory.

In response, Lazarus proposed a cognitive explanation of stress.

Basically, Lazarus thought that when confronted with a potentially stressful event, a person engages in a cognitive appraisal process consisting of two stages:

A primary appraisal is an initial evaluation of whether an event is irrelevant, relevant, but not threatening, or stressful.

A secondary appraisal considers your available resources and options for dealing with the stress.

Understanding the theoretical development of a concept can help you make sense of what the central elements of that concept are all about.

D. Predisposition to Stress

Slide 26 - predisposition

There are a number of factors that can make you more predisposed to stress than others.

1. Personalities

Slide 27 - personalities

Many studies have demonstrated a pattern between personality type and the person's reaction to stress.

To illustrate how personality and stress are related, let's look at a personality typology with which most everyone is familiar, Type A and Type B personalities.

Individuals can be Type A, Type B, or somewhere in between.

Slide 28 – self-assessment

SELF-ASSESSMENT: Type A Behavior

Administer survey and inform participants that you will pass out a feedback handout once everyone has completed their assessment.

Slide 29 – type A

Those with a Type A personality exhibit the following behaviors:

- Highly Competitive – Sometimes even creating competitions where there are none
- Rushing – Taking on many tasks and working on them all at once
- Time Oriented – Tending to watch the clock and make sure that something isn't taking too much time
- Obstinate - Holding dear to their opinions, techniques and schedules. They resent changing them for others.

Slide 30 – type A

By contrast, Type B personalities are less competitive, take more time, and are more flexible.

So is Type A “bad” and Type B “good”? Not necessarily.

It depends on how stress is perceived.

If a Type A person creates competitiveness and then thrives off it, enjoying the “rush” and “drive” that come along with it – they are experiencing eustress and using it to their advantage.

By contrast, if a Type B person tries to reduce competitiveness and can't – they can stress out and fail completely.

Always keep in mind that you are an individual.

Working out may keep your neighbor relaxed, but if you hate to sweat, working out may not help you reduce your stress.

Basically, do not try to force yourself into someone else's solution – discover your own.

Conversely, one should not avoid constructive yet relaxing tasks that you have identified just because others may find them unpleasant.

2. Gender

Slide 31 - gender

There appears to be a difference between men and women and how each reacts to stress. When women are confronted by stressors, regardless of the type of threat (e.g., a predator, disaster, or a bad day at the office), they tend to respond by providing greater nurturing to their children.

Women also tend to seek out contact and support from others. The support they seek is usually from other women.

Men, on the other hand, are more likely to retreat and seek isolation or initiate a confrontation - behavior in line with the "fight or flight" response that's long been associated with stress.

Men and women's different reactions to stress could account for differences in their longevity and health.

Women have a greater life expectancy than men.

Why are men and women different in how they react to stress?

Two theories exist – evolutionary and biological.

From a biological perspective, we know that under stressful conditions both men and women secrete a hormone called oxytocin.

Oxytocin has a calming and relaxing effect that makes the individual feel less fearful.

However, female hormones tend to act as a synergistic agent to oxytocin making its effect greater.

In men, hormones (largely testosterone) reduce the effect oxytocin has on the individual.

Some men, of course, turn to friends and family for support.

Although there appear to be biological differences between men and women and how they respond to stress, like all sex differences, there is some overlap.

It is important to note that human behavior is never easily explained by one factor.

Slide 32 – stress response

Although biology may set a range of responses, it is the social/environmental experiences one has in their life that determines where you fall in that range.

3. Ethnicity and Race

Slide 33 – other factors

Because of the large diversity in the Houston area, we thought it might be advantageous to review what we know about stress as it relates to ethnicity and race.

The research to date seems to show minor differences in reaction to stress.

The minor differences that do appear in the literature seem to stem from physical reactions to stress.

For example, black men and women are more likely to experience high blood pressure.

Generally speaking, all individuals, regardless of race and ethnicity, experience stress in much the same way.

4. Stress Sensitization

Another important factor related to our predisposition to stress is sensitization.

Basically, the amount and level of stress we have experienced throughout our life makes us respond more quickly to stressful situations.

However, those that have experienced a great deal of stress over their life also tend to react more negatively.

Sensitization occurs because we have “learned” over the years to react in this manner.

Because it has become ritualistic, future stressful events are likely to be dealt with in the same manner.

E. Sources of Stress

Slide 34 - sources

There are many events or factors that can become a stressor.

As we have already established, what is stressful for one may not be stressful for another.

Also, a stressor cannot develop if the individual does not identify the event as a threat.

For this class, we are going to group stressors into two categories, personal and occupational.

1. Personal Stressors

Slide 35 – personal

Personal stressors surround non-work related issues such as: financial problems, health concerns, and intimate and family relationships (including: marriage, divorce, and problems with children).

Change is a very large stressor.

Changes in living arrangements (new home), career changes (changing jobs or promotions), and changing relationships provide a great deal of strain on the individual.

Change leads to at least one of the three following reactions, each one leading to stress.

a. Fear

Those experiencing change often have some level of fear.

Why do we experience fear? It is fear of the unknown – what the outcome will be.

In times of stress, we often feel we are not in control of our own destiny and outside sources are given greater perceived influence than what they really have on our lives.

There is hope; most people report after a stressful event that the perceived stress was not as bad as they thought it would be.

This is a good time to point out that stressors can be a valuable motivator. In this case, fear can be a valuable motivator.

b. Resistance

Resistance to change stems from a strong human need for security and structure.

We like predictability even if under tedious conditions.

When there are threats to our structured environment that we find secure, we are likely to resist the change by digging our heels in and displaying stubbornness to avoid the change.

The problem with resistance is that it does not allow us to open our minds to cope with inevitable change. Change is going to occur; you cannot largely stop it.

c. Resentment

Changes that occur which are out of our control or without our input can generate resentment.

If we are forced to make a change that we did not want or do not understand the necessity of, resentment is the result.

2. Occupational Stressors

Slide 36 - occupational

Occupational stressors are those stressors that stem from work-related activity.

For this session, we are going to classify occupational stressors into two categories, job and organizational characteristics.

a. Job Characteristics

Slide 37 – job characteristics

There are three main job-related characteristics that appear consistently in stress research: role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload.

1. Role Conflict

Role conflict results when there is a discrepancy between what the individual thinks their job function is and what it really entails.

For example, officers may see their job purpose as assisting offenders with their needs when in reality much of their time is spent on data entry and paperwork.

For those of you familiar with cognitive dissonance, this is much the same thing but in the context of the work environment.

When a person experiences role conflict, they are likely to significantly increase the attrition rate.

2. Role Ambiguity

Role ambiguity results when the individual's job duties and performance expectations are not made clear by their supervisor.

Role ambiguity leaves the person feeling that they are not sure how to act or behave in certain situations because the role is unclear.

High levels of role ambiguity lead to job dissatisfaction.

3. Role Overload

Role overload results from situations in which the person does not feel they have the skill or organization resources to handle his/her work assignment in a timely manner.

Role overload often results in anxiety, depression, and anger.

b. Organizational Characteristics

Slide 38 – organization: person fit

Organizational characteristics that serve as a source of stress surround the person's connection to the work environment.

1. Person-Organization Fit

Until recently, most organizations and even workers were more interested in whether the applicant had the skills necessary to do a job than whether they fit well in the organization.

More and more companies and individuals are now interested in person-organization fit.

Person-organization fit refers to how well the two factors match on characteristics such as expectations, philosophies, values, and attitudes.

For example, the recent corporate trend to initiate policies that protect same sex employees is an attempt to create an organizational environment that creates a better fit for this class of people.

There has been no government mandate. These companies want to draw gays and lesbians to their company by creating a better person-organization fit.

2. Work Environment

Slide 39 – organizational - environment

The environment in which you work can lead to stressful experiences.

In fact, most research on organizational stressors surrounds the work environment.

Some of the work environment factors that can lead to greater work related stress include:

Continued exposure to loud noises has been shown to increase blood pressure and produce aggressive/irritable behavior.

Shift work can be a severe stressor.

Those who work evenings and late night shifts or inconsistent shifts are more likely to experience fatigue and a deterioration of physical and mental health.

The stress associated with shift work largely surrounds frustration due to a feeling of disenfranchisement from society.

The workers loved ones and family are on a different schedule as well as most of the world.

For example, simple tasks that must be conducted during daylight hours cut into sleep time.

3. Relations with Others

Slide 40 – organization - relations

Perhaps the largest source of stress for community corrections officers is dealing with offenders.

Stressors arising from our relations with others include: stress from conflict, working with difficult individuals, and feelings that you are not being treated fairly.

Having a single difficult coworker can spoil the work environment and generate a more stressful work environment.

Of course, stress associated with relations with others also includes supervisors.

Needless to say, a poor relationship with a supervisor can create a far greater source of stress.

4. Other Sources

Slide 41 – other sources

We have listed just a few sources of stress dividing them into personal and occupational stressors.

However, some sources of stress fall outside these categories.

a. Minor Frustration

Minor frustrations include life's daily aggravations.

Minor frustrations might include waiting in traffic, waiting in lines, getting a person's voice mail when you need to talk to them personally, and the computer server being down when you have work to do.

b. Forecasting

Sometimes we spend a lot of time consumed with worrying about things over which we have no control.

This keeping the body and mind in a constant anxious state is called forecasting.

This constant false state of awareness creates physical and mental fatigue.

c. Residual Stress

Another source of stress has to do with "carry over" stress, or residual stress.

Residual stress is when the body never returns to homeostasis (balance).

Basically, it is stress that results when we hold grudges against the person(s) who caused our stress or simply not letting go of the stressor once it has subsided.

III. Psychophysiology: The Body's Response to Emotional States

Slide 42- psychophysiology

Introduction to the Body's Response to Stress

A. Explain the concepts of stress in physiological terms

1. Excitement

emotional reaction which elevates cognitive and physiological activity levels

2. Stimuli

demands on the system for physical or cognitive action

B. Individual Differences in Physical Responses to Stress

There is a great deal of individual variation in the response to stress.

Further, responses to stress may vary according to the intensity of stress and personal vulnerability.

1. Stress stereotype: unique individual response pattern
2. Vascular responders (heart rate, blood pressure, hypertension)
3. Skeletal muscle responders (EMG — measures muscle tension)
4. Peripheral responders (cold, sweaty hands, blushing or blanching)

C. Signs of Maladaptive Stress

1. Losing sleep worrying about a problem
2. Overeating or failing to eat due to worry

Slide 43 - discussion

FOR DISCUSSION: Can you identify additional signs of maladaptive stress that you might have experienced?

D. Introduction to How Stress Impacts Your Body's Systems

Slide 44 – body systems

1. Autonomic Nervous System
2. Sympathetic vs. Parasympathetic Dominance
3. Skeletal/Muscular System
4. Central Nervous System

5. Endocrine System
6. Respiratory System
7. Cardiovascular System
8. Immune System

IV. Stress-Related Disorders - Introduction

Slide 45 – disorders
Handout

A. Physiological Disorders

Physical disorders caused or exacerbated by stress:

- increased heart rate
- elevated blood pressure
- sweaty palms
- tightness of the chest
- sore jaw and back muscles
- headaches
- diarrhea/constipation
- trembling, twitching
- stuttering and other speech difficulties
- nausea/vomiting
- sleep disturbances
- fatigue
- dryness of the mouth or throat
- susceptibility to minor illness,
- cold hands,
- being easily startled

B. Psychological Disorders

Emotional signs/symptoms of stress:

- irritability/angry outbursts
- depression
- restlessness
- anxiousness
- diminished initiative
- withdrawal/reduction of interaction with others
- lack of interest
- tendency to cry

- being critical of others
- nightmares
- impatience
- decreased perception of positive experiences
- obsessive rumination
- reduced self-esteem
- insomnia
- changes in eating habits

C. Behavioral disorders

Signs and symptoms caused or exacerbated by stress:

- increased smoking
- aggressive behaviors (e.g., while driving)
- increased alcohol or drug use
- carelessness
- under-eating or over-eating
- withdrawal
- accident-proneness
- nervous laughter
- compulsive behaviors

D. Cognitive/perceptual signs and symptoms of stress:

- forgetfulness
- preoccupation
- errors in judging distance
- diminished or exaggerated fantasy life
- reduced creativity
- lack of concentration
- diminished productivity
- lack of attention to detail
- orientation to the past
- decreased psychomotor reactivity and coordination
- attention deficit
- disorganization of thought

As you can see, there is a plethora of signs and symptoms of stress.

To give you some idea about the impact of stress, some professionals estimate that 80 to 90% of all illness and disease susceptibility can be linked to high levels of stress.

V. Introduction to Stress Management

A. What is Stress Management?

As we have seen, stress is caused by many factors, and there are many factors that can mediate stressful situations.

Stress management attempts to teach us how to reduce stress by changing behavior in a positive and more efficient way.

B. Difference between stress management and stress reduction.

Slide 46 - stress

1. Stress Reduction

Stress reduction eliminates stress by taking some action to circumvent its effects (e.g., massage therapy).

2. Stress Management

Stress management is designed to change our way of thinking by learning how to better cope, recover, interpret, and think about stressful situations.

C. Potential benefits of stress management training

Slide 47 - benefits

1. Learn to recognize and respond to early warning signs of overload and burnout (e.g., headache and fatigue)
2. Learn new methods of effective stress management and pick the right one for you (e.g., lifestyle, symptoms)
3. Become aware of the immediate physical signs of stress (cold, sweaty hands; nervousness; tension)
4. Recognize and respond positively to emotionally distressing events.

5. Learn to recognize speech patterns that reflect "tension" (e.g., rapid, accelerating)
6. Develop more efficient and relaxing breathing patterns to reduce tension.
7. Discover ways to use these warning signs as signals to change work or leisure activities in order to reduce stress.

In closing this session, let's answer a survey that measures your level of stress and discuss your individual score in the context of the entire group.

Slide 48 - assessment

SELF-ASSESSMENT: Personal Stress Assessment

After participants have completed the assessment...

Ask the participants to average their score.

Ask the participants as a group to raise their hand as you read off each of the five score ratings.

In this class we have laid the foundation for what stress is, how it affects us, and how we can reduce its impact on our lives.

Over the next three sessions, we will spend more time talking about our personal characteristics, the characteristics of the organization in which we work, and how we communicate within the family can impact how we deal with stress on a daily basis.

Education Module

What is stress and how does it impact you?



Stress

The process by which we appraise and cope with environmental threats and challenges.

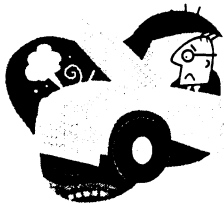
Myths About Stress

1. Stress is the same for everyone.
2. Stress is always bad for you.
3. Everything we do is stressful; why do anything about it?
4. The best stress reduction techniques are the ones that are used the most.
5. If you have no symptoms, then stress is not taking a toll on you.
6. The only symptoms that require attention are the major ones.

Types of stress

Eustress

Distress



VOCABULARY

- ❖ Stressor – threat or cause
- ❖ Stress Reaction – individual response
- ❖ Strain - effect

Secondary Stressors



Indirect effects of stress that are spin-offs from an earlier source of stress

How Effective Are We at Dealing with Stress???

It depends on:

- ✓ Intensity – the level of threat

- ✓ Duration
 - ✓ Short
 - ✓ Moderate
 - ✓ Long

- ✓ Frequency – how often?

BRAINSTORM



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN STRESS IS LEFT UNATTENDED?

BURNOUT



- ➔ A by-product of prolonged stress

- ➔ Stems from a person's perception of a discrepancy between effort and reward

Stress Theory and Research

- Flight or Fight Response
- General Adaptation Syndrome
- Appraisal and Coping



Flight or Fight Response



- Take the threat head on
- Flee to avoid it

For Discussion

What do you physically feel when someone startles or scares you?

General Adaptation Syndrome



- > **Alarm Reaction**
 - > *Initial or acute response*
- > **Resistance**
 - > *Avoidance*
- > **Exhaustion**
 - > *Fatigue and emotional breakdown*

Appraisal and Coping

‡ Two Stages

‡ **Primary** – initial evaluation: is the event irrelevant, stressful, or relevant but not threatening

‡ **Secondary** – considers resources and options for dealing with stress



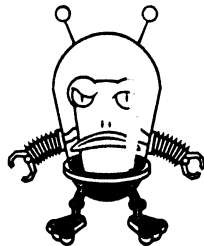
Predisposition to Stress

- > **Personalities**
- > **Gender**
- > **Ethnicity and Race**
- > **Stress Sensitization**

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Personalities

- ▶ Type A
- ▶ Type B
- ▶ In-between (Type C)



SELF ASSESSMENT



Complete the instrument on your own, without help from your classmates

Type A Personality

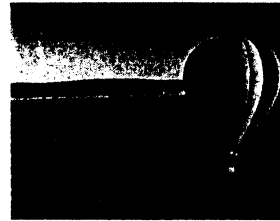
Highly Competitive

Rushing

Time Oriented

Obstinate

Type B Personality



- Less competitive
- Takes more time
- More flexible

Gender and Pre-disposition to Stress

- **Women**
 - Nurture children
 - Seek support, usually from women
- **Men**
 - Retreat
 - Seek isolation or initiate confrontation

Stress Response

Biology sets a range

Environmental experiences determine where you fall in the range

Predisposition to Stress – Other Factors

Ethnicity and Race

Minor differences in reaction to stress

Stress Sensitization

The amount and level of stress we have experienced in our life determine how we respond to stressful situations

Sources of Stress

Personal

Occupational



PERSONAL

Change can lead to...

- ❖ stress
- ❖ fear
- ❖ resistance
- ❖ resentment

Occupational Stressor Categories



- Job
- Organizational

Job Characteristics

- ⊕ **ROLE CONFLICT** – discrepancy between what a person thinks their job function is and what it really is
- ⊕ **ROLE AMBIGUITY** – when job duties and performance expectations are not made clear by the supervisor
- ⊕ **ROLE OVERLOAD** – when a person doesn't feel they have the skill or resources to handle the job in a timely manner

Organization Characteristics

1. Person-Organization Fit

How well the person and organization match on characteristics such as expectations, philosophies, values and attitudes

Organization Characteristics



2. Work environment

Some factors that lead to stress:

- Loud noises
- Shift work
- Schedule problems

Organization Characteristics

3. Relations with Others

These may include:

- stress from conflict
- working with difficult people
- feeling you are not being treated fairly

Other Sources of Stress

- **Minor frustrations**
- **Forecasting (worrying)**
- **Residual, carry-over stress**



Psychophysiology: The Body's Response to Emotional States



Excitement –
emotional reaction

Stimuli – demand for
action

FOR DISCUSSION

Can you identify additional signs of maladaptive stress that you might have experienced?

Stress and Body Systems

- Autonomic Nervous System
- Sympathetic/Parasympathetic Dominance
- Skeletal/Muscular System
- Central Nervous System
- Endocrine System
- Respiratory System
- Cardiovascular System
- Immune System

STRESS RELATED DISORDERS

(see handouts)

Physiological

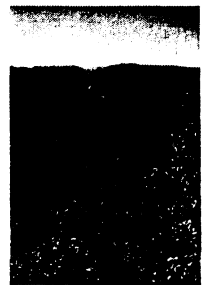
Psychological

Behavioral

Cognitive/perceptual

Stress

- **Reduction:**
eliminates stress by taking some action to circumvent its effects
- **Management:**
changes our way of thinking by learning how to better cope and think about stressful situations



Potential Benefits of Stress Management Training

(see handout)

- **Recognize warning signs**
- **Learn management methods**
- **Be aware of physical signs**
- **Respond positively**
- **Recognize speech patterns**
- **Develop breathing patterns**
- **Use warning signs**

Self Assessment

- ✓ Complete the assessment
- ✓ Average your scores
- ✓ Group scores



Type A Behavior

Please read and check the statements that apply to you. After you are finished, reflect on the number of items checked and ask yourself if you think you might be classified as having a Type A personality. The second page of this assessment contains comments on how your way of thinking may be less than beneficial.

- 1. Are you preoccupied with worrying about how you will finish all the things you have to get done in a day?
- 2. Do you hurry much of the time? Are you always checking your watch or clock?
- 3. Do you feel you have to complete projects yourself in order to get them done right?
- 4. Do you try to do more in less and less time, and then get anxious when tasks do not get completed?
- 5. Are you often disappointed that others do not live up to your standards?
- 6. Do you get impatient and annoyed seeing others working slowly?
- 7. Do you jump in and help others finish a sentence?
- 8. Do you have a hard time sitting still and doing nothing?
- 9. Do you often think about two or more things at once?
- 10. Do you spend as much time at trivial tasks as the important ones?
- 11. Do you feel your ideas alone are absolutely correct?
- 12. Do you measure your success by what others think of you?

Type A Behavior Feedback

For those statements checked on the previous page, find the corresponding number below for feedback.

Recognize that life is basically unfinished business and pleasure; thus learn to enjoy what you get done and what you have to do for tomorrow.

Consider whether, in the past, you have made a mistake, caused an accident, or forgot something that cost you much more time and effort while hurrying.

Recognize that you can never do it all by yourself. Consider that you might be able to help yourself and others by sharing the task.

Consider whether you make poor decisions regarding what you really need to accomplish in any given day. Further, understand that it is okay if some things do not get done.

Consider that others have a right to a different style and that sometimes their approach can be just as good as yours.

Consider whether you can begin another task that is not associated with the work being done by others. Understand that in some cases your impatience could cause others to make a mistake or work slower.

9. Do so only when necessary and encourage others by acknowledging the content of their conversation. Understand that your style of conversation may make others tense and less able to concentrate.
10. Consider that relaxing comfortably without distractions for a few minutes can help prepare you for serious decisions or for a period of very productive work.
11. Consider writing some notes about one or both tasks (so as not to lose them) and then refocus your unencumbered attention on one of the tasks.
12. Recognize that this is a sign of avoidance and procrastination since the important tasks are often more difficult. Choose one task that you feel you can accomplish, then set a goal to complete it. Tell yourself that, once the more important task is completed, that you will allow yourself to do one of the more trivial, more enjoyable tasks after that.
13. Recognize that there are many different opinions of what is correct. Maintaining this attitude will only serve to create more frustration for you. What you think as being right and wrong may not be held by others. This kind of attitude also isolates you socially.
14. If you wish to find true happiness in life, you will have to discover what is deeply meaningful to you more than what others think of you.

Personal Stress Assessment

You are about to begin a series of courses that will assist you and your family in identifying and dealing with stress. Your responses to this assessment are confidential and will not be shared. Your instructor may calculate an average composite score for your group, but any other data will only be reported in aggregate form.

While thinking about your current work and life demands, how strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Each statement should be rated using the scale below. Please record your rating in the blank space after each question.

| Strongly Disagree 1 | Somewhat Disagree 2 | Don't Know Neutral 3 | Somewhat Agree 4 | Strongly Agree 5 |
|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|

1. I get plenty of help and support from friends and family. _____
2. I have trouble dealing with interpersonal conflicts. _____
3. When I feel anxious or stressed I can easily relax myself. _____
4. I feel guilty and have regrets about past events. _____
5. I am good at expressing my needs to others. _____
6. I worry about things for which I have no control. _____
7. I am good at setting priorities and managing my time. _____
8. I am easily depressed. _____
9. I try to make time each day for relaxation. _____
10. I feel capable of handling new situations. _____
11. I get very stressed about personal finances. _____
12. I feel guilty when I take time off from work/school. _____
13. During stressful situations I have the ability to remain calm. _____

| Strongly Disagree 1 | Somewhat Disagree 2 | Don't Know Neutral 3 | Somewhat Agree 4 | Strongly Agree 5 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|

- 14. I get frustrated and angry easily. _____
- 15. I worry about what other people think and say about me. _____
- 16. I have good control over the events in my life. _____
- 17. I have a good sense of humor and can laugh at myself. _____
- 18. I lack the energy necessary to make needed changes in my life. _____
- 19. I find life interesting and exciting. _____
- 20. I have difficulty getting the rest I need. _____
- 21. When events upset me, I am able to think rationally and regain control. _____
- 22. My marriage, or primary relationship, or lack thereof is stressful. _____
- 23. Family relationships are often stressful. _____
- 24. I like the way I feel about myself. _____
- 25. I have pleasant hobbies and leisure time activities that distract me from life's stress. _____
- 26. I am overly concerned with my physical appearance. _____
- 27. I am frequently overwhelmed by life's demands. _____
- 28. I am better than most people at being able to relax. _____
- 29. My spiritual life, or religious activities provide me with solace. _____
- 30. Healthy eating and fitness activities allow me to function at an optimal level. _____
- 31. I am good at solving problems. _____
- 32. My physical health detracts from my quality of life. _____
- 33. Generally, I am happy with my life. _____

Six Myths About Stress

1. *Stress is the same for everyone.*

Each of us experience and respond to stress in different ways.

2. *Stress is always bad for you.*

The key is to learn to monitor and manage stress.

3. *Everything we do is stressful; why do anything at all?*

If you plan and set priorities, stress is easier to manage.

4. *The best stress reduction techniques are the ones that are used by most people.*

You should develop your own, unique program of techniques that work for you.

5. *If you have no symptoms, then stress is not taking a toll on you.*

Your body may not be able to sense the symptoms, or medications/chemicals may be masking the symptoms.

6. *The only symptoms that require attention are the major ones.*

If you ignore the smaller symptoms (e.g., headaches), you are ignoring the warning signs.

Introduction to Stress Related Disorders

A. Physiological Disorders

Physical disorders caused or exacerbated by stress:

- increased heart rate
- elevated blood pressure
- sweaty palms
- tightness of the chest
- sore jaw and back muscles
- headaches
- diarrhea/constipation
- trembling, twitching
- stuttering and other speech difficulties
- nausea/vomiting
- sleep disturbances
- fatigue
- dryness of the mouth or throat
- susceptibility to minor illness,
- cold hands,
- being easily startled

B. Psychological Disorders

Emotional signs/symptoms of stress:

- irritability/angry outbursts
- depression
- restlessness
- anxiousness
- diminished initiative
- withdrawal/reduction of interaction with others
- lack of interest
- tendency to cry
- being critical of others
- nightmares
- impatience
- decreased perception of positive experiences
- obsessive rumination
- reduced self-esteem
- insomnia
- changes in eating habits

C. Behavioral disorders

Signs and symptoms caused or exacerbated by stress:

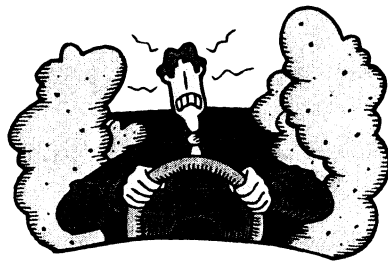
- increased smoking
- aggressive behaviors (e.g., while driving)
- increased alcohol or drug use
- carelessness
- under-eating or over-eating
- withdrawal
- accident-proneness
- nervous laughter
- compulsive behaviors

D. Cognitive/perceptual signs and symptoms of stress:

- forgetfulness
- preoccupation
- errors in judging distance
- diminished or exaggerated fantasy life
- reduced creativity
- lack of concentration
- diminished productivity
- lack of attention to detail
- orientation to the past
- decreased psychomotor reactivity and coordination
- attention deficit
- disorganization of thought

Individual Module

Understanding Our Individualized Response to Stress and How to Better Manage Our Responses



Individual Module: Understanding Our Individualized Response to Stress and How to Better Manage Our Responses

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Time Allocation: | 4 hours |
| Resources: | Life Events Checklist, Life's Challenges Checklist, Maslach Burnout Inventory, scored (titled "Personalized Report") |
| Handouts: | Psychological Impact of Un-addressed Stress/Personality Types and Stress; Defense Mechanisms; Assertiveness Guidelines; Relaxation Training Techniques; Slides; Notes pages; course evaluation form |
| Equipment: | Dry Erase Board; Dry Erase Markers; Flip Chart Stand and Paper; Permanent Markers; Screen; Projector; Laptop or Desktop Computer |
| Supplies: | One per participant: brown sealable envelope (9 ½" x 12"); label (approximately 2" x 3") |

Slide 1 – individual module

I. Review Education Module

Slide 2 – review

II. Overview of Individual Module

III. The Psychology of Stress

Slide 3 – checklist
Handout

SELF ASSESSMENT: Life Events Checklist

When all participants have completed their surveys, give them the opportunity to share their scores with their fellow participants.

Ask the following questions:

- **How does their score compare to those within the group/class?**
- **Do they feel that the score is representative of the stress they are currently experiencing in their life?**

It should be noted that this checklist is one of the oldest measures of stress in one's life. Newer surveys address a wider range of life events.

Handout - checklist

SELF ASSESSMENT: Life's Challenges Checklist

“A moment ago we reviewed certain major life events that can cause stress. However, it is not just these events that can impact our lives. Often, multiple minor events can inflict even a greater deal of stress. The next survey is intended to help you reflect on these “smaller” life events.”

Administer survey.

Discussion questions:

Which category(ies) reveals a larger amount of stress?

How do the patterns of your responses compare to your fellow participants?

The Individual module will begin to explore how your personal stressful events can be recognized and mediated so as to make your life events more manageable.

A. How Stress Impacts Our Thoughts

There are many individualized factors that impact not only the level of stress you experience, but also how you will respond to stressful events.

Slide 4 - discussion

Can you think of some personal factors that could have an impact on how you approach or think about stressful events?

Encourage participants to answer within the confines of the list below. Once they have identified an item from the list, ask them if they could provide an example as to how that factor influences their stress related behavior.

If they are unable to mention some of the items, pose questions that may lead to the intended response.

Slide 5 - factors

1. Factors that Impact Our Evaluation of Stressful Situations

- a. Past experiences
- b. Personality
- c. Cultural background
- d. Moral values
- e. Family background
- f. Social support network
- g. Gender
- h. Lifestyle
- i. Personal belief system

As you can see, there are a large number of factors that influence how we think about and handle stress.

Many of these factors have developed over long periods of time and are not easily adjusted.

However, there are many techniques to assist you in reducing the negative effects of some of these influences.

2. Intervening Factors

Slide 6 – intervening factors

Another individual difference has to do with factors that can intervene in our assessment and impact or response to stressful events.

- a. How stressful the event is to the individual

There is an individual difference in how one person experiences a stressful event as compared to another.

For example, some individuals have a greater fear of authority. Therefore when their supervisor approaches them to discuss some element of their work product they react in a much more stressful way than someone who does not.

- b. Hardiness

Here are some busy and hurried individuals that never seem to be largely affected by stress or illness.

These individuals exhibit some of the following traits:

1. view problems as "mere challenges" and are adaptable to change
2. feel a sense of "commitment" to work, family, community – their life is very meaningful
3. feel a sense of "control" over their life and personal and professional growth
4. Feel "connected" to the world around them, having strong supportive friendships and companionship.

c. Self-generated stressors (e.g., unnecessary worry)

In some cases, we can self-generate our own stressors.

Perhaps the old saying “we can be our own worst enemy” is best applied here.

For example, unnecessary worry can create a more severe or extended reaction to a specific stressor.

B. Psychological Impact of Un-addressed Stress

Slide 7 – psychological impact
Handout

When we are challenged by stress and are unable to identify healthy resources to reduce the stress, we begin to deteriorate psychologically.

The psychological challenge may initially manifest itself by breaking down the self.

There are many facets to the self. Let’s review some of them in relation to stress.

1. Self-concept

Self-concepts are all our thoughts and feelings about ourselves.

Self-concept answers the question, “Who am I?”

When we continue to experience unmediated stress, we may begin making statements such as, “I don’t know who I am anymore” or “I feel like I have lost myself.”

2. Self-esteem

Self-esteem is associated with one’s feeling of high or low self-worth.

It should be noted that those people with low self-esteem do not necessarily see themselves as worthless or wicked, but they do have a hard time saying good things about themselves.

3. Self-worth

Self-worth results from having high self-esteem.

Those with self-worth have fewer sleepless nights, feel less need to conform, are persistent on difficult tasks, and are generally happier.

5. Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is a judgment that one can master and perform needed behaviors whenever necessary.

When a person cannot develop resources to reduce the negative feelings associated with stress then they develop poor self-efficacy because they cannot identify or perform the behaviors to relieve the stress.

The inability to resolve the stressful event(s) can also lead to low self-confidence or learned helplessness where they ultimately give up emotionally (e.g., burnout).

C. Personality Types and Stress

| |
|--|
| Slide 8 – personality Handout |
|--|

In the education module we discussed a simple personality typology in relation to how personality can influence stress.

In this module, we would like to introduce a typology that will allow for greater distinctions in personality traits.

) Using the typology of Dempcy and Tihista (1996), we will discuss seven stress personalities.

This is not a perfect typology. You may see yourself as a mixture. However, most see themselves clearly as more of one than another.

It is important to keep in mind that these personality types may be helpful in seeing what the sources of your stress are as well as how your personality may perpetuate stress.

Hopefully, after identifying your stress personality you will be able to more easily identify how you can reduce personal stressful events.

1. Pleasers

Pleasers want everyone to be happy and are often cooperative and helpful.

They tend to take on many tasks and responsibilities.

When they are no longer able to meet the needs or demands of themselves or others and stress ensues, they are likely to display resentment and anger.

The resentment is largely directed at those that continually added to their responsibilities.

2. Internal timekeepers

Much like pleasers, internal timekeepers take on more and more responsibility. However, timekeepers take on additional tasks and responsibilities as a way to stay busy or fill their day.

These individuals are highly efficient and capable.

They have a variety of interests and assume additional tasks that allow them to remain challenged.

When under stress, they become inefficient and anxious.

As you can see, they are referred to as “internal” timekeepers because they internalize their feelings.

3. Strivers

Strivers are ambitious and competitive.

They have a great internal drive and they generate much of their own stress.

They have a goal to be good at everything.

When they have an opportunity to try something new, they seize the opportunity regardless of the amount of work it might entail. This can lead to a great amount of stress.

These individuals will work themselves until they burnout.

4. Inner con artists

These individuals coast through their jobs.

They do not work too hard, avoid conflict and responsibility, and ignore work related activities that may result in a stressful situation.

These individuals are procrastinators. They will put everyday activities off until they fall way behind.

Although they behave in a manner that allows them to avoid stress, stress ensues when they fall behind in their work product.

5. Critical judges

Critical judges negatively evaluate themselves and the situations they find themselves involved.

They focus on mistakes, and this does not generally allow them to identify options or resolve problems in a positive way.

6. Worriers

Worriers are often negative, like critical judges.

However, they are stressed by unpredictability and unclear goals or situations.

If they are unable to see what the future holds, they will predict the worst.

Perhaps a good example of this stress personality is Chicken Little.

Their stress is derived by negatively obsessing over an uncertain future.

7. Sabertooths

Sabertooths respond to stress in a very loud and physical way.

Their anger during stressful moments may be expressed through sarcasm and insults.

Because of their outward expression in stressful situations, the sabertooth can generate stress for those around him or her.

D. Coping and Defense Mechanisms

Slide 9 – coping mechanisms

Coping mechanisms are active efforts at mastering, reducing or tolerating the demands created by stress.

Defense mechanisms are largely unconscious reactions to stressful or painful events that protect a person from unpleasant emotions such as anxiety and guilt.

Defense mechanisms most often occur after attempts to cope with the stress are unsuccessful.

1. Coping Mechanisms

Coping mechanisms can be positive or negative.

Positive coping mechanisms allow us to find relief from stress and develop healthy ways of dealing with stress.

Negative coping mechanisms also allow us to find relief from stress, but in a temporary fashion.

However, in the long run negative coping can damage our physical and mental health.

a. During times of mild anxiety

When stress has raised our level of anxiety we are likely to produce some of the following behaviors:

1. Positive Coping Mechanisms: laughing, physical, activity/exercise

2. Negative Coping Mechanisms: smoking, drinking, lack of eye contact, and withdrawal

b. During higher levels of anxiety

The following are coping mechanisms displayed as a reaction to a stressful event when we are experiencing high levels of anxiety:

1. Attack behavior

Attack behavior may be constructive as with assertive problem-solving or destructive as with feelings and actions of aggressive anger or hostility.

2. Withdrawal behavior

Withdrawal behavior involves physical withdrawal from the threat or emotional reactions such as admitting defeat, becoming apathetic, or feeling guilty and isolated.

3. Compromise behavior

Compromising behavior is usually a constructive coping mechanism as it involves the substitution of goals or negotiation to fulfill one's needs partially thus reducing the amount of demand.

Slide 10- discussion

FOR DISCUSSION: Can you see one of these coping mechanisms being utilized more than the others for those who work in community corrections?

Although this is a somewhat subjective question, withdrawal behavior is more likely for those in community corrections as they are less likely to use attack behavior toward clients and less likely to compromise with clients.

2. Defense Mechanisms

Slide 11 – defense mechanisms
Handout

Mental mechanisms which develop as the personality attempts to defend itself, establish compromises among conflicting impulses, and align inner tensions

a. Descriptions of Defense Mechanisms:

1. Compensation

occurs when a person attempts to overcome a perceived weakness by strengthening other areas

Examples:

- a short man shows aggressive, dominating traits to suggest strength and authority that his short stature does not convey

- an officer who is not skilled at making written notations in case files, but does excellent casework

2. Denial

occurs when a person refuses to acknowledge the presence of a condition that is disturbing

Examples:

- a child who insists his mother is not dead, but just out of town for a few days

- an officer who has stacks of case files on their desk with volumes of work to be done, but informs co-workers and supervisors he is keeping up

3. Displacement

occurs when a person can satisfy a need, blocked by one type of behavior, by using another type of behavior

Examples:

- a woman who has had an unpleasant experience with a police officer reacts strongly against all police officers

- an officer who expresses anger toward another officer because she just had a disagreement with her supervisor

4. Projection

occurs when a person's undesirable impulses are attributed to another person or object

Examples:

- a woman criticizes her neighbor for being a terrible gossip when in fact the woman gossips herself

- an officer who claims his marital problems are due to his wife's unhappiness with her work when in fact he is really the one who is unhappy at work

5. Rationalization

occurs when a person gives questionable behavior a logical or socially acceptable explanation

Example:

- a student rationalizes not turning in a paper on time because the computer "ate the file"

- a probationer whose work is interrupted by illness prematurely gives up the work and says he wouldn't have been successful in that field anyway

6. Reaction Formation

occurs when a person gives a reason for behavior that is opposite from its true cause

Example:

- a man strongly criticizes pornographic material when he really has a desire to view it

Slide 12 – defense mechanisms, cont.
Handout, cont.

7. Regression

occurs when a person returns to an earlier method of behaving

Examples:

- a child, who is toilet-trained and drinking from a cup, begins soiling his/her diaper and drinking from a bottle when ill
- when an experienced officer begins asking questions of his supervisor that are the kinds of questions expected of a rookie officer

8. Repression

occurs when a person excludes an anxiety-producing event from the conscious awareness

Example:

- an officer who forgets an important report

9. Sublimation

occurs when a person expresses an unacceptable or impossible impulse or feeling in a more acceptable way

Example:

- an officer who does not support faith-based interventions, but spends weekends at their church volunteering

10. Suppression

occurs when a person consciously turns attention away from a perceived threat

Example:

- an officer chooses to ignore a headache because she has too many case files to review before the close of the month

11. Conversion

occurs when a person transfers a mental conflict into a physical symptom

Example:

- before taking a promotional exam, the officer develops a headache

IV. Burnout: When You Just Don't Have Any More to Give

Slide 13 - burnout

A. What are the indicators of burnout?

There are three basic behaviors you are likely to observe in a burned out individual:

1. Depersonalization

Depersonalization is the development of negative or cynical attitudes toward their clients.

2. Lack of Personal Accomplishment

Lack of personal accomplishment is defined as reduced feelings of effectiveness with clients.

3. Emotional Exhaustion

Emotional exhaustion is the inability of workers to give of themselves at a psychological level.

Slide 14 - discussion

FOR DISCUSSION: With the effects of burnout in mind, how might developments such as these reduce the effectiveness of community supervision officers?

Slide 15 – Maslach results
Envelope

SELF ASSESSMENT: Burnout

During the first training session you completed a survey on job satisfaction. Based on this survey, we were able to measure your level of burnout.

Hand out envelopes with burnout scores enclosed.

You will notice that your score is reported using the three categories we just defined. Take a moment to review the scores and the level of burnout associated with each of these scores.

Do you agree with the assessment?

In a moment we will discuss how burnout impacts our work behavior.

B. Work-Related Behaviors that Indicate Burnout

Slide 16 – work behaviors

Considering the indicators of burnout, let's review some of the work-related behaviors you are likely to observe in a burned out individual.

1. Depersonalization

Depersonalization is often observed while a group of employees is gathered as a group.

You will hear a burned out individual discussing their clients in non-human terms and often in demeaning ways.

For example, an officer might call his/her probationers thugs or flunkees.

You are also likely to observe that the officer rarely calls offenders by their names.

For example, they may refer to an offender by some pet name they have developed that is associated with some significant event in the offender's life (e.g., "Ms. Prego" for a client who is now carrying her eighth child).

2. Lack of Personal Accomplishment

Lack of personal accomplishment can be harder to observe.

Generally, you will begin to notice over time that the positive comments and enthusiasm about their role in the system is lost or even “bent.”

You may hear burned out individuals comment on wanting to get another job that has better working conditions – yet, you never see them take action.

3. Emotional Exhaustion

Burned out individuals experience a great deal of emotional exhaustion.

The interesting thing is that you will often see those with high levels of emotional exhaustion complaining about how tired they are getting – or how physically tired they are feeling.

Most of the physical tiredness of a burned out individual is coming from the depression that they feel.

Many in the helping professions, including community supervision/corrections officers, enter the occupation with great enthusiasm – they are going to help people and save the world.

However, if and when burnout sets in, the individual often feels like they just have nothing left to give.

It is this feeling that is a contradiction to what their initial beliefs were when they entered the field.

Since our ultimate goal during this program is to address the officer’s levels of stress and how that stress impacts the family, it is important to make an important point here.

When an officer spends their day working with individuals who draw the emotional energy from them, what is left for the family at the end of the day?

An officer who spends time trying to hold up a brick wall between their work and personal world (i.e., keeping them separate) is spending a lot of psychic energy doing so.

As the officer’s work life begins to exert a great deal of stress, that wall becomes harder to hold back.

By the time the officer gets home they will have no psychic energy left for the family.

So, all the energy spent trying to “protect” or insulate the family from the ills of his or her work, ends up destroying his or her relationship with the family.

There is a very sad commentary to the plight of the burned out individual and even the organization.

Research indicates that the majority of burned out individuals stay in the organization.

Slide 17 - discussion

FOR DISCUSSION: HOW DOES THE RETENTION OF BURNED OUT EMPLOYEES IMPACT THE ORGANIZATION?

PERHAPS MORE IMPORTANTLY, HOW DOES THE RETENTION OF BURNED OUT EMPLOYEES AFFECT THE OTHER EMPLOYEES IN THE ORGANIZATION?

V. Personal Intervention Strategies to Combat Stress

Slide 18 – personal strategies

A. Assertiveness Training

We often experience stress because we are overburdened by those around us.

Sometimes we just don't know how to say, “no” - in a polite way.

When we are unable to say “no,” we often take on too much, and no time management in the world can make us more efficient.

Assertiveness training helps us learn how to express ourselves without offending the other individual.

1. The Basics of Assertiveness Training

Slide 19 – basics

There are many techniques to develop assertive behavior.

Most techniques are based on a 'three-line assertion message,' in which you:

- understand and summarize the facts of the situation
- indicate your feelings towards the situation
- state your requirements, reasons and benefits to the other party, if appropriate.

This technique enables you to confront the other person with your concern without being personally aggressive, but it is not easy and demands skillful conversation control.

Slide 20 - examples

The following are some examples for what you might say:

"When you...." (state facts)

"I feel..." (state feelings)

"I would like... (state requirements)... this way we will be able to work together more productively because..." (benefits to the other party)

When done in this manner, the person states the problematic behavior, says how he/she feels, and then gives a reason why he/she feels that way.

You should note that there are no accusations such as *'You are being unfair;'* there is no fowl language; there are no put-downs of the other person.

The emphasis is on indicating how *you* feel.

When done in this manner, you provide a positive rather than an aggressive response from the other person.

2. Assertiveness Guidelines

Slide 21 – guidelines
Handout

In developing a more assertive you, consider the following points:

a. Ask yourself the following questions:

- How can I express my message more clearly?
- How can I be more specific about what I have to say?
- If my message is not heard, can I repeat myself?
- Am I prepared to respond to their off-hand comments?
- What body language will I use to back up my message?

b. Keep the following elements in mind:

- Acknowledge and be honest about your own feelings
- Adopt new positive inner dialogue for situations where you need to be more assertive
- Be clear, specific and direct in what you say
- Ask for clarification if you are uncertain about something
- If necessary, acknowledge diversion tactics, then repeat your message again
- Keep calm
- Always respect the rights of the other person

c. Practice your Assertiveness

While many of us are not naturally comfortable with role-playing exercises, it has been found to be an effective technique for practicing new communication skills.

Enlist a co-worker's assistance and work through the following steps:

Explain the situation to your friend or colleague, briefing them about the person to whom you will be talking.

In this conversation, the other person should respond as the appropriate character.

Use role-play to talk through the situation.

Make your points clearly.

Ask the other person what you did well and what you could improve.

If it will help, talk through the situation again.

Finally, swap roles - you will experience the other side of the assertive approach.

PRACTICE: In order to practice your assertiveness skills, let's pair up with a fellow classmate using the following scenario:

Your supervisor comes into your office at the end of the day and tells you that you need to work late to cover a caseload for an officer on maternity leave. Ignoring the fact that it might be your turn or that other extenuating circumstances exist, how might you communicate to your supervisor your unwillingness to work late?

B. Time Management Training

Slide 22 – time management

Most of the time when we proclaim we are stressed, it is followed by a comment like, "I just don't have enough time to get everything done."

Such a feeling only adds gas to the stress flame.

Time management is something that can be used both in a preventative and reactive approach to dealing with stress.

It is relatively easy to find a time management course, and it can really provide great rewards.

You might consider some of the following time management skills (Mayer, 1990):

- Clean off your desk

This can be a difficult thing for some.

Take the time at least once a week to clear your desk and organize the things that remain.

Once your desk is cleared and better organized, you will see how good it feels to have "control."

- Sell your time

Take a minute to place a dollar value on your time.

After you have given yourself a fair hourly wage, log the activities of the day and ask yourself if the activities you spent time on were worth your time.

If you assessed your time at \$100 per hour, would a 20 minute personal chat in the hall be worth \$33?

- Make “to do” lists

You might make a practice of starting your day with a “to do” list.

Making a “to do” list a ritual can be very beneficial.

For example, you might consider pouring a cup of coffee and enjoying it as you plan your day with a “to do” list.

There are office supply stores that sell “to do” list forms that some find helpful. They are also helpful because nothing else is on the “to do” list besides what you need to do.

Many people try using note pads but end up using the note pad as a scratch pad, and the “to do” list becomes lost.

There are many time management techniques. If you are interested in further developing these skills, contact the Training Branch of your department.

C. Conflict Resolution Training

| |
|--------------------------------|
| Slide 23 – conflict resolution |
|--------------------------------|

Unresolved conflict leads to stress, and stress can lead to physical and emotional problems. With a little effort, we can learn how to resolve conflicts in a positive way.

1. Basics of Conflict Resolution

We often react to conflict with aggression, denial, or resistance because we see conflict as negative or as a contest.

However, conflict is not negative.

) Conflict is a natural fact of life, and it is inevitable. People are going to disagree and have differences of opinion.

You can probably think of hundreds of images of negative responses to conflict – arguments, fist fights, wars.

When we do not view conflict as a win/lose contest, we can create win/win solutions.

In order to make conflict a win/win situation, one must ensure three conditions:

a. Acknowledgment

Parties in a conflict must acknowledge there is a conflict - rather than trying to avoid or deny it.

b. Acceptance

Accept their involvement

c. Adaptability

Appreciate the feelings and viewpoints of all parties to the problem - without making judgments.

Also of great importance is to be open to new ideas that might lead to solutions.

Conflict resolution must be practiced.

If you will keep in mind the three basic tenets of conflict resolution, you can make great advancements in resolving conflict in your life and ultimately reduce stress.

D. Relaxation Training

| |
|----------------------------------|
| Slide 24 – relaxation Handout |
|----------------------------------|

We will review some of the numerous relaxation techniques that can be used to reduce or manage stress.

If you are interested in additional information, you may refer to your notebook for a list of resources for relaxation training or call your Employee Assistance Program.

1. Techniques

a. Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Progressive muscle relaxation is based on the notion that the body responds to anxiety-provoking thoughts and events with muscle tension.

It is thought that if you “block” the muscle tension, you can prevent the emotional reaction of anxiety that is signaled by the muscle tension.

Basically, progressive muscle relaxation provides a way of identifying and isolating particular muscles and muscle groups and distinguishing between sensations of tension and deep relaxation.

b. Biofeedback Training

Biofeedback increases your ability to recognize and control your personal physiological cues of tension and relaxation.

Through the use of biometric instruments, a person is able to monitor various physical states (e.g., muscle tension, skin temperature, brain wave activity, blood pressure, and heart rate).

Through continued monitoring, the individual is able to become more aware of how stress affects them physically as well as enhance their awareness of what total relaxation feels like to them.

Once the subject develops an awareness of their various body systems, they can continue without the machine.

c. Meditation

The prime objective of meditation is to focus your attention on one thing at a time.

Through meditation, it is thought that the individual can focus on positive endeavors and prevent negative activities from entering the stream of thought.

d. Visualization

The foundation of visualization surrounds the assertion that your thoughts can become reality or the old saying, “you are what you think.”

One of the basic premises is that you cannot will yourself into a relaxed state, but you can imagine relaxation and visualize yourself in a safe place.

Practically speaking, if you are having anxious thoughts, you become tense.

In order to overcome the feeling of unhappiness or tension, you can refocus your mind on positive, healing images.

e. Exercise

Exercise is the most effective means of stress reduction.

It is also the simplest reduction technique for most individuals.

There are three types of exercise we would like to review.

1. Aerobic

The main goal of aerobic exercise is to strengthen your cardiovascular system.

Some examples of aerobic activity are: aerobics, kick-boxing, jump rope and running.

These activities sustain the use of large muscles in the body including your arms and legs.

In order to be effective, you should commit to a minimum of a three day a week regimen at 20-30 minutes per day.

2. Stretching

Stretching includes slow and sustained movements that provide a very relaxing effect.

Through stretching, you can reduce muscle tension and become more flexible.

Perhaps one of the most common stretching exercises is yoga.

However, you can participate in stretching without the more formal structure of yoga.

Simply stretching when you are highly stressed or at the end of the night before bed can have a great effect on your mind and body.

3. Resistance Training

Resistance Training is a popular stress reduction technique.

Those that only see resistance training as weightlifting should not shrug off this type of exercise.

There are two types of resistance training:

Isotonic training is the contraction of muscles against resistance through a range of movement using weights.

Isometrics training is the contraction of muscles against resistance without any movement (e.g., pushing your hands together to create muscle contraction).

2. Choosing the Appropriate Technique for You

Slide 25 – choosing a technique

Not every relaxation technique is for everyone.

You should consider the following points as you select the most appropriate technique for you.

a. based on personality

Some people may not find it easy to relax.

For example, Type A personalities may find it difficult to sit calmly and focus.

b. based on lifestyle

As you review the type of relaxation that is best for you, you should consider your work and family schedule and access to the equipment you may need.

c. based on medical conditions

Before participating in any form of exercise, you should consult a physician to assess the best technique for you and any health related issues you may have.

There are many more relaxation techniques. We have attempted to review some of the most popular. If you are interested in more information on relaxation, you may want to review the reading list for this session.

We are now at the conclusion of the second module, having given you some general information about stress in the Education module and then focused on your own characteristics in the Individual module. We are now ready to move into looking at job satisfaction and stress in terms of the organization. The employee and their significant other often view the officer's job differently. The next module will help to lay the groundwork for better communication and understanding, which will be discussed in our final module.

**Individual Module: Understanding
Our Individualized Response to
Stress and How to Better Manage
Our Responses**



1

Review

Education Module

2

CHECKLISTS

- ✓ *Life Events Checklist*
- ✓ *Life's Challenges Checklist*

*Complete both and
compare scores with
classmates*



3

For Discussion

Can you think of some personal factors that could have an impact on how you think about stressful events?

4

POSSIBLE FACTORS

Related to how we think about stress

- ✓ Past experiences
- ✓ Personality
- ✓ Cultural background
- ✓ Moral values
- ✓ Family background
- ✓ Social support network
- ✓ Gender
- ✓ Lifestyle
- ✓ Personal belief system

5

Intervening Factors
in our response to stress

- How stressful the event is to the person
- Hardiness
- Self-generated stressors



6

PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF UNADDRESSED STRESS

(See Handout)

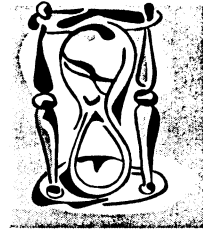
- ❖ Self concept
- ❖ Self esteem
- ❖ Self worth
- ❖ Self efficacy

7

Personality Types and Stress

(See Handout)

1. Pleasers
2. Internal timekeepers
3. Strivers
4. Inner con artists
5. Critical judges
6. Worriers
7. Sabertooths



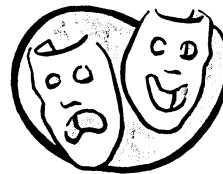
8

Coping Mechanisms

- **During times of mild anxiety**
 - Positive coping mechanisms
 - Negative coping mechanisms
- **During higher levels of anxiety**
 - Attack behavior
 - Withdrawal behavior
 - Compromise behavior

9

FOR DISCUSSION



Can you see one of these coping mechanisms being utilized more than others for those who work in community corrections?

10

Defense Mechanisms

(see handout)

1. Compensation
2. Denial
3. Displacement
4. Projection
5. Rationalization
6. Reaction Formation

continued...

11

Defense Mechanisms, cont.

7. Regression
8. Repression
9. Sublimation
10. Suppression
11. Conversion

12

Burnout: When you Don't Have Any More to Give

Indicators:

- **Depersonalization**
- **Lack of Personal Accomplishment**
- **Emotional Exhaustion**



13

FOR DISCUSSION

With the effects of burnout in mind, how might the effectiveness of community supervision officers be reduced when the officer is experiencing burnout?

14

Maslach Results

Discuss results as they relate to burnout.

15

Work Related Behaviors That Indicate Burnout

Depersonalization –
thinking of others in non-human ways

Lack of Personal Accomplishment –
enthusiasm about job is lost

Emotional Exhaustion –
nothing left to give



16

FOR DISCUSSION

How does the retention of "burned out" employees impact the organization?

How does it impact other employees in the organization?

17

Personal Intervention Strategies to Combat Stress

1. Assertiveness Training

18

Assertiveness Training Basics

Use a three-line assertion message in which you:

- state that you understand by summarizing the facts
- indicate your feelings about the situation
- state your requirements, reasons and benefits to the other party

19

EXAMPLE

"When you..." (*state facts*)

"I feel..." (*state feelings*)

"I would like..." (*state requirements*)...this way we will be able to work together more productively because..." (*benefits to the other party*)

Assertiveness Guidelines



SEE
HANDOUT

21

Intervention Strategies, cont.

2. Time Management Training

- Clean off your desk
- Sell your time
- Make "to do" lists



22

Intervention Strategies, continued...

3. Conflict Resolution Training

In order to make conflict a win/win situation, one must ensure three conditions:

- Acknowledgement
- Acceptance
- Adaptability

23

Intervention Strategies, cont.

4. Relaxation Training

- ✓ Progressive muscle relaxation
- ✓ Biofeedback training
- ✓ Meditation
- ✓ Visualization
- ✓ Exercise
 - ✓ Aerobic
 - ✓ Stretching
 - ✓ Resistance Training



24

Choose the Best Technique
for YOU!



Based on:

- Personality
- Lifestyle
- Medical
Conditions

Life Events Checklist

For each event that has happened to you during the last twelve months, circle the point value that corresponds to that event.

| Life Event | Point Value | If applicable, note how this maybe affecting your stress level |
|--|-------------|--|
| Death of a close family member | 10 | |
| You or a family member arrested with time spent in jail | 8 | |
| Attending school | 6 | |
| Pregnancy (for both parties) | 6 | |
| Severe personal illness or injury | 5 | |
| Getting married or divorced | 5 | |
| Financial difficulties | 4 | |
| Death of a close friend | 4 | |
| Arguments with your spouse/significant other (more than every other day) | 4 | |
| Major disagreement with a family member | 4 | |
| Major change in personal habits | 3 | |
| Change in living environment | 3 | |
| Beginning or ending a job or new assignment | 3 | |
| Problems with your boss | 2 | |
| Outstanding personal achievement | 2 | |
| Change in working conditions | 2 | |
| Change in sleeping habits | 2 | |
| Several-day vacation | 1 | |
| Change in eating habits | 1 | |
| Family reunion | 1 | |
| Change in recreational activities | 1 | |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Minor illness or injury | 1 | |
| Minor violations of the law | 1 | |
| Add up the point values for all the items you circled and record here → | | |

Compare your total score to others around you. Discuss whether you feel this score and these items are a good measure of the stress level in your life.

LIFE'S CHALLENGES CHECKLIST

The following self-assessment may help you identify events that are sources of stress in your everyday life. You will notice that the events are grouped in a manner that allows you to recognize how certain aspects of your life may be causing more stress than others.

| EVENT | CHECK IF "YES" | MAKE SOME NOTES FOR THE REASONS FOR EACH OF THE ITEMS THAT YOU HAVE CHECKED |
|--|-------------------|--|
| HEALTH | | |
| DIFFICULTY SLEEPING | | |
| WEIGHT PROBLEMS | | |
| FEELING PHYSICALLY TIRED AND RUN DOWN | | |
| STOMACH TROUBLE | | |
| CHRONIC PHYSICAL PROBLEMS | | |
| DIFFICULTY GETTING UP IN THE MORNING | | |
| POOR DIET AND NUTRITION | | |
| FINANCES | | |
| DIFFICULTY MAKING ENDS MEET | | |
| INSUFFICIENT MONEY FOR NECESSITIES | | |
| INCREASING AMOUNTS OF DEBT | | |
| UNEXPECTED EXPENSES | | |
| LACKING MONEY FOR RECREATION | | |
| NO STEADY INCOME | | |
| TOO MANY FINANCIAL DEPENDENTS | | |
| WORK | | |
| WORK MONOTONOUS AND BORING | | |
| POOR RELATIONS WITH EMPLOYER | | |
| RUSHED AND UNDER PRESSURE | | |
| WANT A DIFFERENT JOB/CAREER | | |

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| NEED MORE EDUCATION/EXPERIENCE | | |
| AFRAID OF LOSING JOB | | |
| NOT GETTING ALONG WITH CO-WORKERS | | |
| UNEMPLOYED, CANNOT FIND WORK | | |
| UNPLEASANT WORKING CONDITIONS | | |
| NEEDING MORE FREEDOM AT WORK | | |

PERSONAL

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| HAVING A PARTICULAR BAD HABIT | | |
| HAVING COMPETING GOALS OR DEMANDS | | |
| OBSESSED WITH DISTANT, UNOBTAINABLE GOALS | | |
| LACKING MOTIVATION TO COMPLETE TASKS | | |
| FEELING VERY DEPRESSED AT TIMES | | |
| FEELING NERVOUS AT CERTAIN TIMES | | |
| FEELING BLOCKED FROM ATTAINING GOALS | | |
| FEELING ANGRY ABOUT THINGS IN GENERAL | | |
| WORRYING ABOUT THINGS I CANNOT CONTROL | | |

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| TIMID OR SHY AROUND THE OPPOSITE SEX | | |
| FEELING LONELY; NOT HAVING MANY FRIENDS | | |
| NOT GETTING ALONG WITH SOME PEOPLE | | |
| A FAILED OR FAILING LOVE AFFAIR | | |
| FEELING LEFT OUT OR REJECTED | | |
| LACK OF LOVE AND AFFECTION | | |
| VULNERABLE TO CRITICISM FROM OTHERS | | |
| NOT REALLY KNOWING HOW TO SOCIALIZE | | |

RECREATION

| | | |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| NOT HAVING ANY FUN AT ALL | | |
|---------------------------|--|--|

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| NOT GOOD AT SPORTS OR GAMES | | |
| NOT ENOUGH LEISURE TIME | | |
| NO TIME FOR ART OR THEATER | | |
| LITTLE CHANCE TO ENJOY NATURE | | |
| WANT TO TRAVEL, BUT CANNOT AFFORD IT | | |
| NEED A VACATION, BUT CANNOT GET AWAY | | |
| CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING FUN TO DO | | |
| FAMILY | | |
| FEELING REJECTED BY FAMILY | | |
| DISCORD AT HOME WITH MATE | | |
| NOT GETTING ALONG WITH CHILDREN | | |
| FEELING TRAPPED IN A BAD FAMILY | | |
| INSECURE-AFRAID OF LOSING MATE | | |
| UNABLE TO BE OPEN/HONEST W/FAMILY MEMBERS | | |
| CONFLICT WITH PARENTS OR SIBLINGS | | |
| HAVING DIFFERENT INTERESTS FROM MATE | | |
| FACING INTERFERENCE BY RELATIVES | | |
| CHILDREN HAVING PROBLEMS AT SCHOOL | | |
| FAMILY MEMBER WHO IS SICK OR DYING | | |
| EXCESSIVE QUARRELING AT HOME | | |
| ANGER, RESENTMENT TOWARD MATE | | |
| IRRITATED WITH HABITS OF A FAMILY MEMBER | | |
| WORRIED ABOUT FAMILY MEMBER | | |

LIVING SITUATIONS

BAD NEIBORHOOD

TOO FAR FROM WORK OR SCHOOL

CRAMPED LIVING SPACE

UNPLEASANT CONDITIONS

THINGS NEED REPAIR

POOR RELATIONSHIP WITH LANDLORD

June 21, 2001

RE: Personalized Report for «First_Name» «Last_Name»

Dear «First_Name»:

During the education module you completed a survey on job satisfaction. From this survey, we are able to estimate your level of burnout. The scores below represent your personal evaluation. With this survey of burnout you are able to divide the concept of burnout into three separate and distinct scores, including: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. Your scores were:

| Subscale | Your Scores |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Emotional Exhaustion | «EE» |
| Depersonalization | «DP» |
| Personal Accomplishment | «PA» |

Definitions:

To remind you, in summary, the three components of burnout are:

Emotional Exhaustion: assesses feelings of being emotionally overextended and exhausted by one's work

Depersonalization: measures an unfeeling and impersonal response towards the recipients of one's service, care, or treatment.

Personal Accomplishment: assesses feelings of competence and successful achievement in one's work with people. *This scale is interpreted using an inverted numeric sequence as it refers to LACK OF personal accomplishment.*

Interpretation:

Below, you will find two tables. The first table allows you to compare your score to a national sample. The second table shows how the other officers in the study responded using an average score to represent their performance as a whole.

Continued...

Using the following table, you can compare your score to the national average and assess the level of burnout you indicated on your survey for each of the three components:

| Subscale | Low | Average | High |
|-------------------------|------------|----------------|-------------|
| Emotional Exhaustion | ≤ 16 | 17 – 27 | ≥ 28 |
| Depersonalization | ≤ 5 | 6 – 10 | ≥ 11 |
| Personal Accomplishment | ≥ 37 | 36 - 30 | ≤ 29 |

Further, you can assess how your scores compared to the other officers that completed the survey by using the following table:

| Subscale | Average Score of Other Officers |
|-------------------------|--|
| Emotional Exhaustion | 33 |
| Depersonalization | 14 |
| Personal Accomplishment | 37 |

Due to the flooding associated with Alison, I was not able to get your scores back to you as planned during the individual module. As you are probably aware, the University also flooded and I did not have access to the data in time to get your surveys scored and returned in such a short period. If you were a victim of the flood, I hope you are well on your way to restoring your property and spirit.

As I indicated with all of you during the education module, I am available to consult with you individually if you so desire. Further, as we continue to follow-up with you over the next few months, I hope you will contact me should you have questions/concerns about your participation.

Most sincerely,

Bob Glazier, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor

(713) 222-5350 (dedicated grant phone at UHD)
glazier@dt.uh.edu

Psychological Impact of Un-addressed Stress

1. Self-concept: all of our thoughts and feelings about ourselves
2. Self-esteem: associated with one's feelings of high or low self worth
3. Self-worth: results from having high self-esteem
4. Self-efficacy: a judgment that one can master and perform needed behaviors whenever necessary

Personality Types and Stress

1. PLEASERS – want everyone to be happy and are often cooperative and helpful; when cannot meet demands, become resentful and angry
2. INTERNAL TIMEKEEPERS – take on additional tasks as a way to stay busy; highly efficient and capable; internalize their feelings
3. STRIVERS – ambitious and competitive; generate most of their own stress; will work until they burnout
4. INNER CON ARTISTS – coast through their jobs; procrastinate, making them get behind in their jobs
5. CRITICAL JUDGES – negatively evaluate themselves; focus on mistakes, making it difficult to resolve problems positively
6. WORRIERS – stressed by unpredictability and unclear situations; negatively obsess over an uncertain future
7. SABERTOOTHES – respond to stress in a loud, physical way; anger is expressed as sarcasm; create stress for those around them.

Defense Mechanisms

COMPENSATION - a person attempts to overcome a perceived weakness by strengthening other areas

DENIAL - a person refuses to acknowledge the presence of a condition that is disturbing

DISPLACEMENT - a person can satisfy a need, blocked by one type of behavior, by using another type of behavior

PROJECTION - a person's undesirable impulses are attributed to another person or object

RATIONALIZATION - a person gives questionable behavior a logical or socially acceptable explanation

REACTION FORMATION - a person gives a reason for behavior that is opposite from its true cause

REGRESSION - a person returns to an earlier method of behaving

REPRESSION - a person excludes an anxiety-producing event from the conscious awareness

SUBLIMATION - a person expresses an unacceptable or impossible impulse or feeling in a more positive way

SUPPRESSION - a person consciously turns attention away from a perceived threat

CONVERSION - a person transfers a mental conflict into a physical symptom

Assertiveness Guidelines

In developing a more assertive you, consider the following:

Ask yourself these questions:

- How can I express my message more clearly?
- How can I be more specific about what I have to say?
- If my message is not heard, can I repeat myself?
- Am I prepared to respond to their off-hand comments?
- What body language will I use to back up my message?

Keep the following elements in mind:

- Acknowledge and be honest about your own feelings
- Adopt new positive inner dialogue for situations where you need to be more assertive
- Be clear, specific and direct in what you say
- Ask for clarification if you are uncertain about something
- If necessary, acknowledge diversion tactics, then repeat your message again
- Keep calm
- Always respect the rights of the other person

Practice your Assertiveness

Relaxation Training Techniques

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Based on the notion that the body responds to anxiety-provoking thoughts and events with muscle tension; if you block the muscle tension, you can prevent the emotional reaction of anxiety

Biofeedback Training

Increases your ability to recognize and control your physiological cues of tension and relaxation through the use of biometric instruments

Meditation

To focus your attention on one thing at a time, focusing on the positive and blocking the negative

Visualization

Your thoughts can become your reality (“you are what you think”); you can imagine relaxation and visualize yourself in a safe place

Exercise

Aerobic – to strengthen the cardiovascular system

Stretching – slow and sustained movements that provide a relaxing effect (example: yoga)

Resistance Training

Isotonic: contraction of muscles against resistance using weights

Isometrics: contraction of muscles against resistance without any movement (example: pushing your hands together to create muscle contraction)

Organizational Module

Understanding Work Related Stress (Officer)



Organizational Module: Understanding Work Related Stress (Officer)

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Time Allocation: | 4 hours |
| Resources: | Team Building Simulation Instructor's Guide; Quality Assurance Criteria for the Topper |
| Handouts: | Organizational Contributors to Stress; Team Building Exercise; Slides; Notes pages; course evaluation form |
| Equipment: | Dry Erase Board; Dry Erase Markers; Flip Chart Stand and Paper; Permanent Markers; Screen; Projector; Laptop or Desktop Computer |
| Supplies: | 4 tables, at least 8 feet in length; 5 index cards per participant; pen for each participant; 2-4 pairs of scissors; 2-4 balls of string; 50 stiff straws (not flexible); 2-4 rolls of masking tape; 1 box of white labels, approximately 1 ½" x 3"; 2 boxes of 5 ounce paper drinking cups; 2-4 hole punches; 4 pens |

Slide 1 – organizational module

I. Review Individual Module

Slide 2 - review

II. Overview of Organizational Module

Slide 3 – ground rules

III. Organizational Issues

Ground Rules: Before we begin today's session, let's talk again about the ground rules we discussed at the beginning of the program regarding confidentiality.

1. Whatever is discussed in class is confidential.
2. If you have negative comments to make, please refrain from using names or identifying pieces of information.
3. Be respectful of others' views and opinions – they are just as entitled to their position as you are of yours.
4. When you present a problem, being willing to share your opinion regarding a possible solution.

Slide 4 – brainstorm activity

BRAINSTORM ACTIVITY: Organizational Factors that Contribute to Stress

Provide each participant with five index cards.

Instruct each participant to write five factors, one on each card, within the organization that contribute to his/her stress level.

Once the instructor has collected the cards, he/she can summarize the factors recorded by the participants by recruiting two participants to record and tally the responses on two boards.

Once completed, the instructor can divide the cards into two stacks, one for things the participant can change within the organization and one for things they cannot.

Once sorted, the instructor can hold up the stacks for a visual comparison and generate a discussion about why the difference exists.

Additionally, the instructor could ask the participants if there was any significant stress-producing factor within the organization that was not recorded.

Slide 5 – organizational issues
Handout

In every organization there are issues that cause stress in employees.

In the planning stages of this program, we met with all levels of staff from this department to brainstorm what some of the issues were in terms of addressing job satisfaction and officer stress.

That group came up with a list of organizational causes of stress within your department.

We do not want to spend a lot of time discussing these because it is not our focus during this class.

However, let's review the ones they identified to establish a common ground for reviewing the sources of organizational stress within your department.

Management Problems

- Inconsistency in decisions between managers
- Lack of support from managers
- Poor communications skills
- Favoritism

Inadequate equipment

- Computer workstations
- Software
- Office furnishings (chairs)

Workload

- Excessive paperwork
- Computer entry demands

Administrative Issues

- Lack of vertical and lateral communication
- Lack of understanding of officer responsibilities
- Lack of professionalism
- Reactive rather than proactive posture

Offender Issues

- Field work concerns (e.g., safety)
- Lack of treatment resources

Personal issues that impact work

- Work schedule
- Childcare
- Aging parents

Slide 6 – organizational issues discussion

FOR DISCUSSION:

Review the previous list and ask participants if they can personally change each item.

Follow-up the response by asking why they cannot change it or how they might go about changing it.

Additionally, ask others in the room whether they have any additional comments.

The instructor can also review the list asking the question, “What can the Administration change?”

Of the things that can be changed, you should understand that there are only so many resources, including the chief resources of time and money.

Obviously, these are resources over which you have no control.

Admittedly, there are elements of your job function that you cannot change, but you can change how you deal with these elements.

The real question becomes what YOU can do to resolve your own stress.

The focus in this session is to establish how you can deal with YOUR health within the context of your current work environment.

The focus of our training so far has been to help you understand what stress is, how you as an individual respond, and how you might mediate stress.

Now, we are going to look at stress as it relates to you as a member of your organization.

Slide 7 - discussion

FOR DISCUSSION:

Ask the participants what they can do within an ORGANIZATIONAL context to reduce their level of stress.

Ask participants to give examples or describe what they can do in behavioral terms.

Slide 8 – social support quote

As we established in previous sessions, one of the greatest mediators of stress is social support.

With that said, your greatest support comes from co-workers.

Our goal in this session is to provide you with skills that allow you to more effectively deal with your work environment.

First we are going to talk about team building in order to develop relationships within the organization that can serve as “on-site” social support.

Second, we are going to look at ways you might mediate stress by reviewing daily operations and how you go about performing your job.

In this portion of the session, we are going to have a peer address the group on ways they have found to deal with stress within the organization.

To further help you in mediating stress in your life, we will follow up the current session with a session on communication.

Team Building

Quote: There is no limit to what a team of dedicated individuals is capable of doing when they are committed to act as one.

As we have discussed previously, social support from family, friends, and co-workers can help alleviate stress.

Feeling part of a team can not only improve work performance, but also increase job satisfaction.

While you are at work, your greatest opportunity for social support comes from those that work around you.

Often in a work environment, members of an organization become isolated or fragmented.

Team building is a method of bringing together groups of people in order to demonstrate the power of the group as well as ways of appreciating individual differences.

Those that have participated in team building exercises often report that they have new insight into not only individual people, but into how they can strengthen their own organizational commitment.

Slide 9: team building simulation
Handout

EXERCISES: Team Building Simulation

The following exercise is intended to provide a team building learning experience for the participants. The participants should be given the handout entitled "Team Building Simulation." Please review this page before proceeding with the exercise.

The following materials have been provided for you and each team should have independent access to these materials:

**Scissors
String
Straws
Masking Tape**

**Labels
Pens
3 oz paper cups
hand held hole puncher (optional)**

After introducing the exercise to the participants using the “Team Building Simulation” handout, you should create two teams by asking for volunteers. Each team should have a minimum of seven workers.

If you have a small class, you may want to form only one team. If you have more volunteers than you expect, you could increase the number of quality assurance representatives to two.

Do not feel that all participants have to participate in the exercise. In many cases it can be beneficial to have participants in the audience serving as an unbiased observer. Once the exercise is complete, they will be able to participate in the discussion just as well as the actual participants.

Basically, you should give each team the materials, let them decide who will fulfill each of the roles and begin the exercise by telling them to construct as many “Toppers” as they can based on the prototype.

Remind them they are in competition with the other team as to who can make the most “Toppers” while paying particular attention to quality.

They should also be told that the quality assurance representatives have the right to reject the “Toppers” that do not meet with their approval of quality. Quality is subjective. However, “Toppers” produced should look exactly like the prototype.

The quality assurance representatives should be instructed to provide feedback to the Supervisor who should then provide feedback to their subordinates.

Any “Topper” that they reject should not be given back to the supervisor. Rather, the quality assurance representative should keep the “rejected Toppers” separate from the “quality assured Toppers.”

There is no specific time limit. However, you should allow enough time for each team to make enough “Toppers” as to give them the opportunity to refine the assembly process and experience some amount of discussion and frustration.

Supervisors should be reminded to communicate effectively with their subordinates and be told that they are allowed to reassign and reorganize.

If there are participants left in the audience, they should be told to observe and note the behavior of the participants in the simulation.

After the Simulation - Upon completion of the simulation, a group discussion should follow that allows time for comments on the behaviors that all participants observed. It is also useful to ask them what they could have changed to improve the quality as well as quantity of the product.

continued...

Once this discussion has concluded, you should guide a discussion that leads to the following discoveries:

- **how they could improve communication**
- **the importance of working as a team**
- **how the work of one person can affect another person**
- ***others you might identify***

It is often very useful to point out how one small problem can grow significantly as it moves through the line.

Slide 10 – stress buddy

Stress Buddy

There are many tools one can use within the organization to alleviate or reduce stress.

One easy way to address stress in the work environment would be to find a stress buddy.

By establishing a stress buddy, you are building relationships that will positively impact your ability to manage stress constructively and effectively.

STRESS BUDDY:

Explain the concept of “stress buddy.”

Participants will write their name, department location and work phone number on an index card. He will then trade cards with someone in the room. (If the class prefers, the cards can be taken up, with the instructor randomly assigning the buddies.) The person who gave him a card will be his “stress buddy,” in addition to the person who received the card. These two people will serve as his/her “life preserver” in times of high stress.

Basically, each participant will be asked to call his/her stress buddy whenever they are feeling stressed.

Regardless, each buddy team should communicate with their buddy at least every week.

Contacts do not have to be lengthy and may not even be centered around a discussion of how stressed they are feeling.

The buddy system will allow you to communicate with a “neutral” party within the organization in order to secure social support when you are highly stressed.

Dealing with Stress at HCCSCD: An Applied Perspective (Peer Trainer):

This portion of the session is devoted to the presentation by a peer trainer. The peer trainers are officers within the organization that have demonstrated that they are able to effectively handle stress as indicated by their work history and a recommendation from a supervisor. The trainers will cover certain common topics, but will also be asked to interject some of their own personal opinions and experiences about how they manage their work and personal life while being associated with what can be a highly stressful job.

Below you will find a number of topics that can be discussed by peer trainers. The topics are divided into two lists, one for officers and one for managers, as the needs of these work groups are often different.

Slide 11 – stress at HCCSCD

- Setting priorities
- Dealing with complaining employees
- Putting your best into the job
- Accepting your limitations – you can't help every probationer
- Taking breaks/lunch to rejuvenate

Slide 12 – form support group

- Form support group at work to talk about issues not related to work
- Doing good casework to minimize crises
- Manage time effectively
- Use “to-do” lists
- Set an example for other staff by having a good attitude
- Work consistently and steadily
- Leave the job at work
- Get involved in significant, fulfilling activities away from work

Slide 13 – attend relevant trainings

- Attend relevant and helpful trainings
- Accept those things you cannot change (at work and home)
- Ask a peer what you need to change about yourself – accountability
- Think as a team (team mentality) at work
- Remind yourself that you DO have choices – about how you view your job, where you work, how you do your job, etc.
- Forgive yourself for prior mistakes and poor decisions
- Ask yourself what YOU have done to make a bad situation better

Slide 14 – practice a spiritual faith

- Practice a spiritual faith of your choice
- Improve family interactions – learn when to talk to your spouse and about what; don't always talk about the negative things at work; don't treat your family as if they were defendants (giving orders, etc.). The instructor may choose to have the trainees brainstorm about how they communicate with their significant other and the negative impact it may be having on the relationship.

Organizational Module (Officer)

Understanding
Work Related
Stress



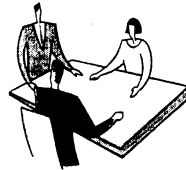
REVIEW

Individual Module

Class Ground Rules

- A. Keep information confidential (What is said in the room, stays in the room.)
- B. If speaking of negative factors, don't name the names of those about whom you are talking.
- C. Respect each other's views, even if you don't agree with them.
- D. If you present a problem, try to also propose a solution.

Brainstorm Activity



- Five index cards
- Five organizational factors that contribute to stress
- Things that can be changed
- Things that may not be changeable

Organizational Issues (see Handout)

Management Problems
Inadequate Equipment
Workload
Administrative Issues
Offender Issues
Personal Issues that Impact Work

Which organizational issues can
you change?
How?

Of those issues that you cannot
change, what can you change
about how you deal with these
elements?

FOR DISCUSSION



What can you do within an organizational context to reduce your level of stress?

(Respond in behavioral terms.)

7

Social Support and Team Building Activity

“There is no limit to what a team of dedicated individuals is capable of doing when they are committed to act as one.”



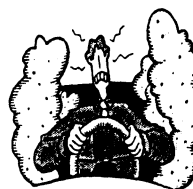
8

Team Building Simulation

Instructor will give instructions. Listen carefully!

9

Stress Buddy



- Write your name and phone number on an index card
- Everyone choose a card
- Each person will have two stress buddies
- Communicate weekly about stressful situations

10

DEALING WITH STRESS AT HCCSCD An Applied Perspective

- Setting priorities
- Dealing with complaining employees
- Putting your best into the job
- Accepting your limitations in helping offenders
- Taking breaks/lunch to rejuvenate

11

- Form support group at work to talk about issues not related to work
- Doing good casework to minimize crises
- Manage time effectively
- Use “to-do” lists
- Set an example for other staff by having a good attitude
- Work consistently and steadily
- Leave the job at work
- Get involved in significant, fulfilling activities away from work

12

- **Attend relevant and helpful training**
- **Accept things you cannot change (at work and home)**
- **Ask a peer what you need to change about yourself (accountability)**
- **Think as a team (team mentality) at work**
- **Remember you DO have choices**
- **Forgive yourself for prior mistakes & poor decisions**
- **Ask yourself what YOU could have done to make a bad situation better**

13

- **Practice a spiritual faith of your choice**
- **Improve family interactions...**
 - **Learn when to talk to your significant other about work & about what (not always negative things)**
 - **Don't treat family members like defendants**

COMMUNICATION

14

**Topics for SOS Peer Trainers
of CSOs
Organization Module**

- Setting priorities
- Dealing with complaining employees
- Putting your best into the job
- Accepting your limitations – you can't help every probationer
- Taking breaks/lunch to rejuvenate
- Having a support group at work who can talk with you about things that are not work related
- Doing good casework to minimize crises
- Manage time effectively
- Use "to-do" lists
- Set an example for other staff of a good attitude
- Work consistently and steadily
- Leave the job at work
- Get involved in significant activities away from work that will bring you fulfillment
- Attend relevant and helpful trainings
- Accept those things you cannot change about home and work situations – learn ways to work around things that you cannot change
- Ask a peer what you need to change about yourself – accountability
- Think as a team (team mentality) - you are part of the team at your worksite
- Remind yourself that you DO have choices – about how you view your job, where you work, how you do your job, etc.
- Forgive yourself for prior mistakes and poor decisions
- Ask yourself what YOU have done to make a bad situation better
- Practice a spiritual faith of your choice
- Improve family interactions – learn when to talk to your spouse and about what; don't always talk about the negative things at work; don't treat your family as if they were defendants (giving order, etc.). The instructor may choose to have the trainees brainstorm about how they communicate with their significant other and the negative impact it may be having on the relationship.

Team Building Simulation Instructor's Guide

The following exercise is intended to provide a team building learning experience for the participants. The participants should be given the page following your instructions, titled "Team Building Exercise." Please review this page before proceeding with the exercise.

The following materials have been provided for you and each team should have independent access to these materials:

- Scissors
- String
- Straws
- Masking Tape
- Labels
- Pens
- Cups
- Hole Punch

After introducing the exercise to the participants using the "Team Building Simulation" handout, you should create two teams by asking for volunteers. Each team should have a minimum of seven workers.

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If you have more volunteers than you expect, you could increase the number of quality assurance representatives to two.

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Basically, you should give each team the materials, let them decide who will fulfill each of the roles and begin the exercise by telling them to construct as many "Toppers" as they can based on the prototype.

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Supervisors should be reminded to communicate effectively with their subordinates and be told that they are allowed to reassign and reorganize.

If there are participants left in the audience, they should be told to observe and note the behavior of the participants in the simulation.

After the Simulation

Upon completion of the simulation, a group discussion should follow that allows time for comments on the behaviors that all participants observed. It is also useful to ask them what they could have changed to improve the quality as well as quantity of the product.

Once this discussion has concluded, you should guide a discussion about how they could improve communication, the importance of working as a team, and how the work of one person can affect another person. It is often very useful to point out how one small problem can grow significantly as it moves through the line.

Quality Assurance Criteria for the “Topper”

When judging the quality of the Toppers, the Quality Assurance team member should look for consistency in the following characteristics:

- Length of the string
- Cutting, rather than tearing, of the masking tape
- Trimming of the label to fit the cup, rather than tucking the end of the label onto the bottom of the cup
- Placement of the label on the cup (check for proper positioning)
- Contents of the label (should match exactly, including the use of capital letters, where indicated)
- The location of the taping of the string to both the pencil and the cup

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTRIBUTORS TO STRESS

Management problems

- Inconsistency in decisions between managers
- Lack of support from managers
- Poor communication skills
- Favoritism

Inadequate equipment

- Computer workstations
- Software
- Office furnishings (chairs)

Workload

- Excessive paperwork
- Computer entry demands

Administrative issues

- Lack of vertical and lateral communication
- Lack of understanding of officer responsibilities
- Lack of professionalism
- Reactive rather than proactive posture

Offender issues

- Field work concerns (e.g., safety)
- Lack of treatment resources

Personal issues that impact work

- Work schedule
- Childcare
- Aging parents

Team Building Exercise

Purpose

The exercise we are about to undertake is intended to provide you with a simulated work-related challenge. The simulation is designed to provide you with a typical work environment experience in order to explore work roles.

Activity

You will work with others in a group to make a product. The outcomes of this exercise are not predetermined and you should work with the others in your group to produce as many products as possible while being mindful of the quality of that product. As with any operation, there are many variables that impact daily work activities and various ways to address problems that arise during these daily activities. Therefore, there are no right and wrong ways to approach this exercise.

The materials and instructions for this exercise have been provided in a manner that allows your team to be successful. Therefore, any issues that arise during production should be resolved outside of a need for additional materials or adjustment to the instructions.

As you proceed through the exercise, make mental notes about your performance, the performance of your team members, and the performance of the group as a whole.

Orientation to the Exercise

Hands On, Inc. designs performance tests for the assessment of many forms of career placement. Recently, a manufacturing firm requested the development of a test to measure eye-hand coordination. In response to this request, Hands On, Inc. developed the "Topper" to measure the eye-hand coordination of potential assembly line personnel.

Much to Hands On's surprise, the "Topper" has become the principle method of assessing one's ability to perform assembly line work. The sales of the "Topper" have gone through the roof and the manufacturing of the "Topper" has created a great strain on the Hands On manufacturing department.

How the "Topper" Works

The subject being tested holds the straw with one hand in the upright position with the string and cup hanging down their forearm. The subject then swings the cup up into the air and hooks the cup with the straw. The subject is instructed to repeat this task as many times as possible within one minute.

Work-Roles and Workflow

Cutter, Taper, Puncher, Writer, Stamper, Quality Assurance, Supervisor, Customer

Organizational Module

Understanding Work Related Stress (Manager)



Organizational Module: Understanding Work Related Stress (Manager)

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Time Allocation: | 4 hours |
| Resources: | Team Building Simulation Instructor's Guide; Quality Assurance Criteria for the Topper |
| Handouts: | Organizational Contributors to Stress; Team Building Exercise; Slides; Notes pages; course evaluation form |
| Equipment: | Dry Erase Board; Dry Erase Markers; Flip Chart Stand and Paper; Permanent Markers; Screen; Projector; Laptop or Desktop Computer |
| Supplies: | 4 tables, at least 8 feet in length; 5 index cards per participant; pen for each participant; 2-4 pairs of scissors; 2-4 balls of string; 50 stiff straws (not flexible); 2-4 rolls of masking tape; 1 box of white labels, approximately 1 ½ " x 3"; 2 boxes of 5 ounce paper drinking cups; 2-4 hole punches; 4 pens |

Slide 1 – organizational module

I. Review Individual Module

Slide 2 - review

II. Overview of Organizational Module

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Handout

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That group came up with a list of organizational causes of stress within your department.

We do not want to spend a lot of time discussing these because it is not our focus during this class.

However, let's review the ones they identified to establish a common ground for reviewing the sources of organizational stress within your department.

Management Problems

- Inconsistency in decisions between managers
- Lack of support from managers
- Poor communications skills
- Favoritism

Inadequate equipment

- Computer workstations
- Software
- Office furnishings (chairs)

Workload

- Excessive paperwork
- Computer entry demands

Administrative Issues

- Lack of vertical and lateral communication
- Lack of understanding of officer responsibilities
- Lack of professionalism
- Reactive rather than proactive posture

Offender Issues

- Field work concerns (e.g., safety)
- Lack of treatment resources

Personal issues that impact work

- Work schedule
- Childcare
- Aging parents

Slide 6 – organizational issues discussion

FOR DISCUSSION:

Review the previous list and ask participants if they can personally change each item.

Follow-up the response by asking why they cannot change it or how they might go about changing it.

Additionally, ask others in the room whether they have any additional comments.

The instructor can also review the list asking the questions: “What can you as a manager change?”; “What can the Administration change?”

Of the things that can be changed, you should understand that there are only so many resources, including the chief resources of time and money.

Obviously, these are resources over which you have no control.

Admittedly, there are elements of your job function that you cannot change, but you can change how you deal with these elements.

The real question becomes what YOU can do to resolve your own stress.

The focus in this session is to establish how you can deal with YOUR health within the context of your current work environment.

The focus of our training so far has been to help you understand what stress is, how you as an individual respond, and how you might mediate stress.

Now, we are going to look at stress as it relates to you as a member of your organization.

Slide 7 - discussion

FOR DISCUSSION:

Ask the participants what they can do within an ORGANIZATIONAL context to reduce their level of stress.

Ask participants to give examples or describe what they can do in behavioral terms.

As we established in previous sessions, one of the greatest mediators of stress is social support.

With that said, your greatest support comes from co-workers. In a management position, this can be especially important since there may be fewer of you and, thus, less opportunity to build supportive relationships.

Our goal in this session is to provide you with skills that allow you to more effectively deal with your work environment.

First we are going to talk about team building in order to develop relationships within the organization that can serve as “on-site” social support.

Second, we are going to look at ways you might mediate stress by reviewing daily operations and how you go about performing your job.

In this portion of the session, we are going to have a peer address the group on ways they have found to deal with stress within the organization.

To further help you in mediating stress in your life, we will follow up the current session with a session on communication.

Team Building

Slide 8 – social support quote

Quote: There is no limit to what a team of dedicated individuals is capable of doing when they are committed to act as one.

As we have discussed previously, social support from family, friends, and co-workers can help alleviate stress.

Feeling part of a team can not only improve work performance, but also increase job satisfaction.

While you are at work, your greatest opportunity for social support comes from those that work around you.

Often in a work environment, members of an organization become isolated or fragmented.

Team building is a method of bringing together groups of people in order to demonstrate the power of the group as well as ways of appreciating individual differences.

Those that have participated in team building exercises often report that they have new insight into not only individual people, but into how they can strengthen their own organizational commitment.

Slide 9: team building simulation
Handout

EXERCISES: Team Building Simulation

The following exercise is intended to provide a team building learning experience for the participants. The participants should be given the handout entitled “Team Building Simulation.” Please review this page before proceeding with the exercise.

The following materials have been provided for you and each team should have independent access to these materials:

**Scissors
String
Straws
Masking Tape**

**Labels
Pens
3 oz paper cups
hand held hole puncher (optional)**

After introducing the exercise to the participants using the “Team Building Simulation” handout, you should create two teams by asking for volunteers. Each team should have a minimum of seven workers.

If you have a small class, you may want to form only one team. If you have more volunteers than you expect, you could increase the number of quality assurance representatives to two.

Do not feel that all participants have to participate in the exercise. In many cases it can be beneficial to have participants in the audience serving as an unbiased observer. Once the exercise is complete, they will be able to participate in the discussion just as well as the actual participants.

Basically, you should give each team the materials, let them decide who will fulfill each of the roles and begin the exercise by telling them to construct as many “Toppers” as they can based on the prototype.

Remind them they are in competition with the other team as to who can make the most “Toppers” while paying particular attention to quality.

They should also be told that the quality assurance representatives have the right to reject the “Toppers” that do not meet with their approval of quality. Quality is subjective. However, “Toppers” produced should look exactly like the prototype.

The quality assurance representatives should be instructed to provide feedback to the Supervisor who should then provide feedback to their subordinates.

Any “Topper” that they reject should not be given back to the supervisor. Rather, the quality assurance representative should keep the “rejected Toppers” separate from the “quality assured Toppers.”

There is no specific time limit. However, you should allow enough time for each team to make enough “Toppers” as to give them the opportunity to refine the assembly process and experience some amount of discussion and frustration.

Supervisors should be reminded to communicate effectively with their subordinates and be told that they are allowed to reassign and reorganize.

If there are participants left in the audience, they should be told to observe and note the behavior of the participants in the simulation.

After the Simulation - Upon completion of the simulation, a group discussion should follow that allows time for comments on the behaviors that all participants observed. It is also useful to ask them what they could have changed to improve the quality as well as quantity of the product. continued...

Once this discussion has concluded, you should guide a discussion that leads to the following discoveries:

- how they could improve communication
- the importance of working as a team
- how the work of one person can affect another person
- *others you might identify*

It is often very useful to point out how one small problem can grow significantly as it moves through the line.

Slide 10 – stress buddy

Stress Buddy

There are many tools one can use within the organization to alleviate or reduce stress.

One easy way to address stress in the work environment would be to find a stress buddy.

By establishing a stress buddy, you are building relationships that will positively impact your ability to manage stress constructively and effectively.

STRESS BUDDY:

Explain the concept of “stress buddy.”

Participants will write their name, department location and work phone number on an index card. He will then trade cards with someone in the room. (If the class prefers, the cards can be taken up, with the instructor randomly assigning the buddies.) The person who gave him a card will be his “stress buddy,” in addition to the person who received the card. These two people will serve as his/her “life preserver” in times of high stress.

Basically, each participant will be asked to call his/her stress buddy whenever they are feeling stressed.

Regardless, each buddy team should communicate with their buddy at least every week.

Contacts do not have to be lengthy and may not even be centered around a discussion of how stressed they are feeling.

The buddy system will allow you to communicate with a “neutral” party within the organization in order to secure social support when you are highly stressed.

Dealing with Stress at HCCSCD: An Applied Perspective (Peer Trainer):

This portion of the session is devoted to the presentation by a peer trainer. The peer trainers are officers within the organization that have demonstrated that they are able to effectively handle stress as indicated by their work history and a recommendation from a manager. The trainers will cover certain common topics, but will also be asked to interject some of their own personal opinions and experiences about how they manage their work and personal life while being associated with what can be a highly stressful job.

Below you will find a number of topics that can be discussed by peer trainers. The topics are divided into two lists, one for officers and one for managers, as the needs of these work groups are often different.

Slide 11 – stress at HCCSCD

- Setting priorities
- Dealing with complaining employees
- Putting your best into the job
- Accepting your limitations – you can't help every staff member
- Taking breaks/lunch to rejuvenate

Slide 12 – form support group

- Form support group at work to talk about issues not related to work
- Practicing good management skills to minimize crises
- Manage time effectively
- Use “to-do” lists
- Set an example for other staff by having a good attitude
- Work consistently and steadily
- Leave the job at work
- Get involved in significant, fulfilling activities away from work

Slide 13 – attend relevant trainings

- Attend relevant and helpful trainings
- Accept those things you cannot change (at work and home)
- Ask a peer what you need to change about yourself – accountability
- Think as a team (team mentality) at work
- Remind yourself that you DO have choices – about how you view your job, where you work, how you do your job, etc.
- Forgive yourself for prior mistakes and poor decisions
- Ask yourself what YOU have done to make a bad situation better

Slide 14 – practice a spiritual faith

- Practice a spiritual faith of your choice
- Improve family interactions – learn when to talk to your spouse and about what; don't always talk about the negative things at work; don't treat your family as if they were subordinates (giving orders, etc.). The instructor may choose to have the trainees brainstorm about how they communicate with their significant other and the negative impact it may be having on the relationship.

Organizational Module (Managers)

Understanding
Work Related
Stress



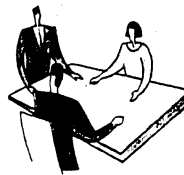
REVIEW

Individual Module

Class Ground Rules

- A. Keep information confidential (What is said in the room, stays in the room.)
- B. If speaking of negative factors, don't name the names of those about whom you are talking.
- C. Respect each other's views, even if you don't agree with them.
- D. If you present a problem, try to also propose a solution.

Brainstorm Activity



- Five index cards
- Five organizational factors that contribute to stress
- Things that can be changed
- Things that may not be changeable

Organizational Issues (see Handout)

Management Problems
Inadequate Equipment
Workload
Administrative Issues
Offender Issues
Personal Issues that Impact Work

Which organizational issues can
you change?
How?

Of those issues that you cannot
change, what can you change
about how you deal with these
elements?

FOR DISCUSSION



What can you do within an organizational context to reduce your level of stress?

(Respond in behavioral terms.)

7

Social Support and Team Building Activity

"There is no limit to what a team of dedicated individuals is capable of doing when they are committed to act as one."



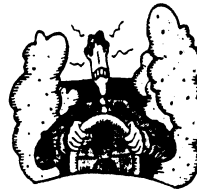
8

Team Building Simulation

Instructor will give instructions. Listen carefully!

9

Stress Buddy



- Write your name and phone number on an index card
- Everyone choose a card
- Each person will have two stress buddies
- Communicate weekly about stressful situations

10

DEALING WITH STRESS AT HCCSCD An Applied Perspective

- Setting priorities
- Dealing with complaining employees
- Putting your best into the job
- Accepting your limitations in helping staff
- Taking breaks/lunch to rejuvenate

11

- Form support group at work to talk about issues not related to work
- Doing thorough monitoring of casework to minimize crises
- Manage time effectively
- Use "to-do" lists
- Set an example for staff by having a good attitude
- Work consistently and steadily
- Leave the job at work
- Get involved in significant, fulfilling activities away from work

12

- **Attend relevant and helpful training**
- **Accept things you cannot change (at work and home)**
- **Ask a peer what you need to change about yourself (accountability)**
- **Think as a team (team mentality) at work**
- **Remember you DO have choices**
- **Forgive yourself for prior mistakes & poor decisions**
- **Ask yourself what YOU could have done to make a bad situation better**

13

- **Practice a spiritual faith of your choice**
- **Be aware of the pace you set for your subordinates**
- **Be supportive of your staff & consistent/fair in management of them**
- **Take a stand when necessary**

COMMUNICATION

14

- **Learn to communicate with subordinates when their behavior needs correcting**
- **Improve family interactions...**
 - **Learn when to talk to your significant other about work & about what (not always negative things)**
 - **Don't treat family members like defendants**

15

**Topics for SOS Peer Trainers
of Managers
Organization Module**

- Setting priorities
- Dealing with complaining employees
- Putting your best into the job
- Accepting your limitations – you can't help every probationer
- Taking breaks/lunch to rejuvenate
- Having a support group at work who can talk with you about things that are not work related
- Doing good casework to minimize crises
- Manage time effectively
- Use "to-do" lists
- Set an example for other staff of a good attitude
- Work consistently and steadily
- Leave the job at work
- Get involved in significant activities away from work that will bring you fulfillment
- Attend relevant and helpful trainings
- Accept those things you cannot change about home and work situations – learn ways to work around things that you cannot change
- Ask a peer what you need to change about yourself – accountability
- Think as a team (team mentality) - you are part of the team at your worksite
- Remind yourself that you DO have choices – about how you view your job, where you work, how you do your job, etc.
- Forgive yourself for prior mistakes and poor decisions
- Ask yourself what YOU have done to make a bad situation better
- Practice a spiritual faith of your choice
- Improve family interactions – learn when to talk to your spouse and about what; don't always talk about the negative things at work; don't treat your family as if they were defendants (giving order, etc.). The instructor may choose to have the trainees brainstorm about how they communicate with their significant other and the negative impact it may be having on the relationship.

- Be aware of the pace you set for your subordinates – if you are stressed, they may also be
- Be supportive of your staff and consistent/fair in how you manage them
- Take a stand – not everyone will like you, but they will respect you
- Learn to communicate with subordinates when they have behavior that needs to be corrected – letting a bad situation fester increases the stress level

Team Building Simulation Instructor's Guide

The following exercise is intended to provide a team building learning experience for the participants. The participants should be given the page following your instructions, titled "Team Building Exercise." Please review this page before proceeding with the exercise.

The following materials have been provided for you and each team should have independent access to these materials:

- Scissors
- String
- Straws
- Masking Tape
- Labels
- Pens
- Cups
- Hole Punch

After introducing the exercise to the participants using the "Team Building Simulation" handout, you should create two teams by asking for volunteers. Each team should have a minimum of seven workers.

If you have a small class, you may want to form only one team.

If you have more volunteers than you expect, you could increase the number of quality assurance representatives to two.

Do not feel that all participants have to participate in the exercise. In many cases it can be beneficial to have participants in the audience serving as an unbiased observer. Once the exercise is complete, they will be able to participate in the discussion just as well as the actual participants.

Basically, you should give each team the materials, let them decide who will fulfill each of the roles and begin the exercise by telling them to construct as many "Toppers" as they can based on the prototype.

Remind them they are in competition with the other team as to who can make the most "Toppers" while paying particular attention to quality.

They should also be told that the quality assurance representatives have the right to reject the "Toppers" that do not meet with their approval of quality. Quality is subjective. However, "Toppers" produced should look exactly like the prototype.

The quality assurance representatives should be instructed to provide feedback to the Supervisor who should then provide feedback to their subordinates.

Any “Topper” that they reject should not be given back to the supervisor. Rather, the quality assurance representative should keep the “rejected Toppers” separate from the “quality assured Toppers.”

There is no specific time limit. However, you should allow enough time for each team to make enough “Toppers” as to give them the opportunity to refine the assembly process and experience some amount of discussion and frustration.

Supervisors should be reminded to communicate effectively with their subordinates and be told that they are allowed to reassign and reorganize.

If there are participants left in the audience, they should be told to observe and note the behavior of the participants in the simulation.

After the Simulation

Upon completion of the simulation, a group discussion should follow that allows time for comments on the behaviors that all participants observed. It is also useful to ask them what they could have changed to improve the quality as well as quantity of the product.

Once this discussion has concluded, you should guide a discussion about how they could improve communication, the importance of working as a team, and how the work of one person can affect another person. It is often very useful to point out how one small problem can grow significantly as it moves through the line.

Quality Assurance Criteria for the “Topper”

When judging the quality of the Toppers, the Quality Assurance team member should look for consistency in the following characteristics:

- Length of the string
- Cutting, rather than tearing, of the masking tape
- Trimming of the label to fit the cup, rather than tucking the end of the label onto the bottom of the cup
- Placement of the label on the cup (check for proper positioning)
- Contents of the label (should match exactly, including the use of capital letters, where indicated)
- The location of the taping of the string to both the pencil and the cup

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTRIBUTORS TO STRESS

Management problems

- Inconsistency in decisions between managers
- Lack of support from managers
- Poor communication skills
- Favoritism

Inadequate equipment

- Computer workstations
- Software
- Office furnishings (chairs)

Workload

- Excessive paperwork
- Computer entry demands

Administrative issues

- Lack of vertical and lateral communication
- Lack of understanding of officer responsibilities
- Lack of professionalism
- Reactive rather than proactive posture

Offender issues

- Field work concerns (e.g., safety)
- Lack of treatment resources

Personal issues that impact work

- Work schedule
- Childcare
- Aging parents

Team Building Exercise

Purpose

The exercise we are about to undertake is intended to provide you with a simulated work-related challenge. The simulation is designed to provide you with a typical work environment experience in order to explore work roles.

Activity

You will work with others in a group to make a product. The outcomes of this exercise are not predetermined and you should work with the others in your group to produce as many products as possible while being mindful of the quality of that product. As with any operation, there are many variables that impact daily work activities and various ways to address problems that arise during these daily activities. Therefore, there are no right and wrong ways to approach this exercise.

The materials and instructions for this exercise have been provided in a manner that allows your team to be successful. Therefore, any issues that arise during production should be resolved outside of a need for additional materials or adjustment to the instructions.

As you proceed through the exercise, make mental notes about your performance, the performance of your team members, and the performance of the group as a whole.

Orientation to the Exercise

Hands On, Inc. designs performance tests for the assessment of many forms of career placement. Recently, a manufacturing firm requested the development of a test to measure eye-hand coordination. In response to this request, Hands On, Inc. developed the “Topper” to measure the eye-hand coordination of potential assembly line personnel.

Much to Hands On’s surprise, the “Topper” has become the principle method of assessing one’s ability to perform assembly line work. The sales of the “Topper” have gone through the roof and the manufacturing of the “Topper” has created a great strain on the Hands On manufacturing department.

How the “Topper” Works

The subject being tested holds the straw with one hand in the upright position with the string and cup hanging down their forearm. The subject then swings the cup up into the air and hooks the cup with the straw. The subject is instructed to repeat this task as many times as possible within one minute.

Work-Roles and Workflow

Cutter, Taper, Puncher, Writer, Stamper, Quality Assurance, Supervisor, Customer

Organizational Module

Understanding Work Related Stress (Significant Other)



Organizational Module: Understanding Work Related Stress (Significant Other)

Time Allocation: 4 hours

Handouts: Organizational Contributors to Stress; Field Visit Video Instructor Guidelines; Slides; Notes pages; course evaluation form

Equipment: Dry Erase Board; Dry Erase Markers; Flip Chart Stand and Paper; Permanent Markers; Screen; Projector; Laptop or Desktop Computer

Slide 1 – organizational module

I. Review Individual Module

Slide 2 - review

II. Review of Organizational Module

III. Review the Officer's Organizational Model (Key points)

IV. Understanding Your Significant Other's Job

Slide 3 – understanding the job

A. What do you think your significant other's job entails? (Discussion)

FOR DISCUSSION:

Ask participants to state their understanding of what their significant others do at work.

After the discussion is exhausted, ask them to estimate the amount of time the officer spends at those activities.

B. The typical day in the life of a community supervision officer

Slide 4 - videos

1. "A Day in the Life of a CSO" (Video)

This video captures the daily activities of an officer in the office setting.

2. "Conducting Field Visits" (Video)

This film was produced by the United States Probation Service for the Southern District of Texas and the Harris County Community Supervision and Corrections Department. The film is an overview of the various safety issues officers face and how to best secure his/her safety.

FOR DISCUSSION:

Have participants compare and contrast what the significant others thought their partners do on a daily basis with those they have observed in the film.

C. General Discussion Points

Slide 5 – organizational issues
Handout

In every organization there are issues that cause stress in employees.

In the planning stages of this program, we met with all levels of staff from the Community Supervision and Corrections Department to brainstorm what some of the issues were in terms of addressing job satisfaction and officer stress.

That group came up with a list of organizational causes of stress within the department.

Let's review and discuss some of the issues your spouses and significant others have reported that they face on a daily basis that cause stress in their daily lives.

Your ability to understand these issues or hassles will assist you in communicating more effectively with your spouse or significant other and may also allow you to be more empathic when work issues begin to impact your family life.

Management Problems

- Inconsistency in decisions between managers
- Lack of support from managers
- Poor communications skills
- Favoritism

Inadequate equipment

- Computer workstations

- Software
- Office furnishings (chairs)

Workload

- Excessive paperwork
- Computer entry demands

Administrative Issues

- Lack of vertical and lateral communication
- Lack of understanding of officer responsibilities
- Lack of professionalism
- Reactive rather than proactive posture

Offender Issues

- Field work concerns (e.g., safety)
- Lack of treatment resources

Personal issues that impact work

- Work schedule
- Childcare
- Aging parents

Of the things that can be changed, your significant other must understand that there are only so many resources, including the chief resources of time and money.

Obviously, these are resources over which they have no control.

Slide 6 – organizational issues discussion

Admittedly, there are elements of their job function that they cannot change, but they can change how they deal with these elements, and you can help them do that.

The real question becomes what THEY can do to resolve their own stress.

The focus of this session is to establish how they can deal with their health within the context of the current work environment.

Through your understanding their work environment, you may be able to positively impact how they function.

The focus of our training so far has been to help you understand what stress is, how you as an individual respond, and how you might mediate stress.

Now, we are going to look at stress as it relates to your significant other as a member of their organization. (You might be thinking of yourself in your own job, also!)

Slide 7 – social support quote

As we established in previous sessions, one of the greatest mediators of stress is social support.

Slide 8 – sources of social support

With that said, a person's greatest support comes from co-workers.

Our goal in this session is to provide your significant others with skills that allow them to more effectively deal with their work environment.

We are talking with them about team building in order to develop relationships within the organization that can serve as "on-site" social support. You are their "off-site" social support.

We also are looking at ways stress might be mediated by reviewing daily operations and how they go about performing their job.

Now that you understand their jobs better, you might be able to help them develop systems for conducting their job assignments more efficiently and effectively.

D. Additional Areas

We are going to briefly look at some more areas that the trainers are discussing with the officers and managers in their Organizational session.

Slide 9 – stress at HCCSCD

- Setting priorities
- Dealing with complaining employees
- Putting your best into the job
- Accepting your limitations – you can't help every staff member
- Taking breaks/lunch to rejuvenate

Slide 10 - form support group

- Form support group at work to talk about issues not related to work
- Practicing good management skills to minimize crises
- Manage time effectively
- Use "to-do" lists

- Set an example for other staff by having a good attitude
- Work consistently and steadily
- Leave the job at work
- Get involved in significant, fulfilling activities away from work

Slide 11 – attend relevant trainings

- Attend relevant and helpful trainings
- Accept those things you cannot change (at work and home)
- Ask a peer what you need to change about yourself – accountability
- Think as a team (team mentality) at work
- Remind yourself that you DO have choices – about how you view your job, where you work, how you do your job, etc.
- Forgive yourself for prior mistakes and poor decisions
- Ask yourself what YOU have done to make a bad situation better

Slide 12 – practice a spiritual faith

- Practice a spiritual faith of your choice
- Improve family interactions – learn when to talk to your spouse and about what; don't always talk about the negative things at work; don't treat your family as if they were subordinates (giving orders, etc.). The instructor may choose to have the trainees brainstorm about how they communicate with their significant other and the negative impact it may be having on the relationship.

Slide 13 – impact at home

V. Dealing with the Impact of On-the-Job Stress at Home

Hopefully, you have gained a better understanding of the job and the work environment of your significant other. Each day is different, but you have a general picture of what the daily activities are.

You have also learned about your own personalities as they relate to stress management, as well as about various stress interventions.

The key now is to APPLY this knowledge to your home environment.

The application process, of course, starts with you applying the appropriate information and techniques to how YOU deal with stress.

In the next module on communication, we will bring you and your significant other together to discuss and practice ways to improve your communication. This, combined with the other knowledge you have gained, should assist you in lowering the stress that is experienced in your home, as well as in your working environments.

**Organizational Module
(Significant Other)**

Understanding
Work Related
Stress



REVIEW

Individual Module

**Understanding Your Significant
Other (Partner's) Job**



DISCUSSION

- What does your partner do at work?
- How much time do they spend on those activities?

**Video: A Day in the Life of a
Community Supervision
Officer**

**Video: Officers Conducting
Field Visits**

**Organizational Issues
(see Handout)**

Management Problems
Inadequate Equipment
Workload
Administrative Issues
Offender Issues
Personal Issues that Impact Work

Which organizational issues can
your partner change?

Of those issues that they cannot change,
what can YOU do to help them to
resolve their own stress and function
better in their work environment?

Social Support

"There is no limit to what a team of dedicated individuals is capable of doing when they are committed to act as one."



Sources of Social Support



- ❖ *Co-workers*
- ❖ *Family*
- ❖ *Friends*

YOU are your partner's "off-site" social support.

Peer Trainers

The Impact of On-the-job Stress at Home



You have:

- gained an understanding of your partner's work environment and duties
- learned about your own personality and manners of dealing with stress

NOW, you need to:

- apply your knowledge to your home environment
- apply the techniques to how **YOU** deal with stress

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTRIBUTORS TO STRESS

Management problems

- Inconsistency in decisions between managers
- Lack of support from managers
- Poor communication skills
- Favoritism

Inadequate equipment

- Computer workstations
- Software
- Office furnishings (chairs)

Workload

- Excessive paperwork
- Computer entry demands

Administrative issues

- Lack of vertical and lateral communication
- Lack of understanding of officer responsibilities
- Lack of professionalism
- Reactive rather than proactive posture

Offender issues

- Field work concerns (e.g., safety)
- Lack of treatment resources

Personal issues that impact work

- Work schedule
- Childcare
- Aging parents

Field Visit Video Instructor Guidelines Organizational Module for Significant Others

- 1) Introduce the video by explaining the officers conduct field visits on their cases as an addition to their office supervision efforts. Explain that officers receive training on field visit procedures and that they can choose to do field work in teams.

Explain to the class that the purpose of showing them the video is to help them understand another of the sources of stress that an officer may experience, not to make them afraid of the field work aspect of their partner's job.

- 2) Show the first video clip then discuss with the class, keeping in mind the purpose of this segment of the training.
- 3) Show the second video clip and discuss.
- 4) The instructor may decide to show other clip, but two should accomplish the objective. If you show more than the first 4 or 5 you need to warn the class that some of the videos clips contain strong language that may be offensive.

Communication Module

Building a Lifetime of Better Communication



Communication Module

Time Allocation: 4 hours

Resources: “Creating the Life That Lives Between Us – The Seven Challenges Communication Skills Workbook and Reader”

Handouts: Fulfilling Conversational Intentions; Unfulfilling Conversational Intentions; Five Messages Examples; Five Messages in Action; Exercise for Challenge 3; “Saying What’s in Our Hearts”; Examples of Open-Ended Questions; Open Ended Questions Optional Exercise; Five Messages Model; Exploring Examples of Three-Part Appreciations; Conversation: Creating the Life that Lives Between Us; Learning to Bring Out the Best; Appendix One; Slides; Notes pages; course evaluation form

Equipment: Dry Erase Board; Dry Erase Markers; Flip Chart Stand and Paper; Permanent Markers; Screen; Projector; Laptop or Desktop Computer; 4 tables, at least 8 feet in length

Slide 1 – communication module

I. Review Organizational Module

Slide 2 - review

II. Overview of Communication Module

In relation to stress, when an adult has only so much time and emotion to share in their life and the job consumes a large portion, by the time the adult divides this time between work, kids, and other commitments there is little time for the partner.

So, the family system can either cause additional stress or assist in reducing or managing stress.

Improving communication within the family can not only reduce the amount of stress experienced by its members but can also provide for an optimal source of social support.

We have made many points throughout this program about how stress not only impacts the individual officer, but also the officer’s family.

Slide 3 - discussion

FOR DISCUSSION: WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU FOUND OUT THAT YOU HAD BEEN INFECTED BY A FLU VIRUS THAT MADE YOU VERY SICK?

WHAT STEPS OR SPECIFIC BEHAVIORS WOULD YOU PERSONALLY TAKE TO PREVENT THE VIRUS FROM SPREADING?

The point of this dialogue is to get the class to see that they take a number of steps to insure that the disease does not spread and why we generally do not follow that same course of action against things that are not as clearly seen, such as stress.

Generally speaking, the class should mention the steps they would take to prevent infection to their family, including: communicating to them about the illness, what the family members may have to do to avoid infection, monitoring family health to detect early signs of infection, etc.

Strengthening communication within the family will provide a sort of vaccine against the foreign invader of stress.

Another benefit of strengthening communication is the improved amount of social support one can receive from those in the family.

Professionals in the criminal justice system often feel like they cannot discuss their work at home.

Many have reported that they do not want to bring the negative aspects of their work into their home environment.

Certainly there are details that are confidential or even developmentally inappropriate for children.

However, when work is such a major part of who and what we are as adults and has such a strong influence on our emotions can you really successfully build this brick wall to keep the two separate?

II. Why is Communication Important to the Family Unit During Times of Stress?

Slide 4 - communication

Communicating during times of stress is not always easy.

Individual differences in personality, communication styles and skills, and expectations all play a part.

Sometimes it is best to let issues rest for a while before trying to communicate.

Other times, lack of communication can interfere with regular daily living.

After all, the family is a team, and communication is essential for the family to function.

In addition, without communication, individual family members may be unaware of differing expectations and perceptions of the stressors in their lives.

For many families, stressful situations bring about issues not previously addressed.

For example, two-generation families may need to communicate about equity and decision-making powers within the family.

Often in two-generation families, the older generation maintains a great deal of decision-making power.

However, in times of financial stress, younger generation family members may feel the need for more equitable decision-making power.

This perceived inequality could lead to problems and miscommunication if left unresolved.

Similarly, the family operates systematically with each member maintaining different roles and responsibilities.

However, often during stressful times, individual differences and values may raise concerns that can lead to strained relationships.

| |
|-------------------------|
| Slide 5 - relationships |
|-------------------------|

For example, many women play the role of peacemaker in the family.

However, during difficult times, women report feeling a great deal of stress as they maintain the role of peacemaker.

Similarly, often one family member oversees the finances.

This person may have a long history of operating the family expenses, but in bad times, finds it difficult to know what to do or which way to turn.

In this example, the family member may feel as if it is their "job" to find a way out of the current situation on their own.

Feeling backed against the wall, they may begin to resent the lack of support or understanding by other family members.

Thus, understanding individual issues and perceptions of the same situations is extremely important.

In short, the lack of communication can lead to increased stress, strained relationships, and problems.

Conversely, effective communication can help families pull together, understand one another, and cope with the short- and long-term stressors.

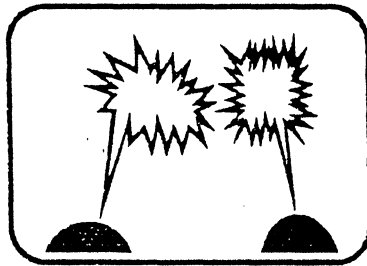
Slide 6 – seven challenges

III. Skills to Improve Communication

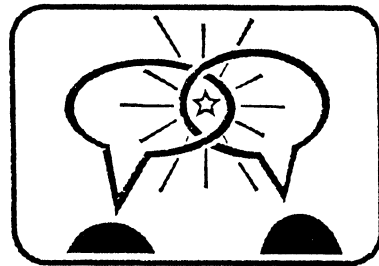
*NOTE: For this portion of the program, we will adopt an existing communication improvement curriculum entitled *Creating the Life That Lives Between Us: Seven Challenges to Communication Skills Workbook and Reader* by Dennis Rivers (1999). This curriculum is free to all users as it was funded under a grant that required its use be available without a fee.*

This curriculum follows this page.

from:



to:



Creating the Life That Lives Between Us

~ ~ ~

The SEVEN CHALLENGES
Communication Skills Workbook and Reader

*a structured, intensive exploration
of seven challenging skills
for a lifetime of better communication
in work, family, friendship & community*

Dennis Rivers, MA

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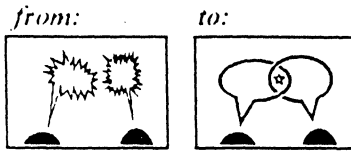


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Introduction

HOW THIS WORKBOOK CAME TO BE, THE SEVEN CHALLENGES, AND HOW WE BENEFIT FROM A MORE COOPERATIVE STYLE OF LISTENING AND TALKING

Searching for what is most important.

This workbook proposes seven ways to guide your conversations in directions that are more satisfying for both you and your conversation partners. I have selected these suggestions from the work of a wide range of communication teachers, therapists and researchers in many fields. While these seven skills are not *all* a person needs to know about talking, listening and resolving conflicts, I believe they are a large and worthwhile chunk of it, and a great place to begin.

The interpersonal communication field suffers from a kind of “embarrassment of riches.” There is so much good advice out there that I doubt than any one human being could ever follow it all. To cite just one example of many, in the early 1990s communication coach Kari Anderson wrote a delightful book¹ about negotiation that included one hundred specific ways to get more of what you want. The problem is that no one I know can carry on a conversation and juggle one hundred pieces of advice in his or her mind at the same time.

So lurking behind all that good advice is the issue of priorities: What is most important to focus on? What kinds of actions will have the most positive effects on people’s lives? This workbook is my effort to answer those questions. My goal is to summarize what many agree are the most important

principles of good interpersonal communication, and to describe these principles in ways that make them easier to remember, easier to adopt and easier to weave together. Much of the information in this workbook has been known for decades, but that does not mean that everyone has been able to benefit from it. This workbook is my contribution to closing that gap.

How we benefit from learning and using a more cooperative style. I have selected for this workbook the seven most powerful, rewarding and challenging steps I have discovered in my own struggle to connect with people and heal the divisions in my family. None of this came naturally to me, as I come from a family that includes people who did not talk to one another for decades at a time. The effort is bringing me some of each of the good results listed below (and I am still learning). These are the kinds of benefits that are waiting to be awakened by the magic wand of your study and practice.

Get more done, have more fun, which could also be stated as better coordination of your life activities with the life activities of the people who are important to you. Living and working with others is a *communication-intensive* activity. The better we understand what other people are feeling and wanting, and the more clearly others understand our goals and feelings, the easier it will be to make sure that everyone is pulling in the same direction.

¹ Kare Anderson, *Getting What You Want*. New York: Dutton. 1993.

More respect. Since there is a lot of mutual imitation in everyday communication (I raise my voice, you raise your voice, etc.), when we adopt a more compassionate and respectful attitude toward our conversation partners, we invite and influence them to do the same toward us.

More influence. When we practice the combination of responsible honesty and attentiveness recommended here, we are more likely to engage other people and reach agreements that everyone can live with, we are more likely to get what we want, and for reasons we won't regret later.²

More comfortable with conflict. Because each person has different talents, there is much to be gained by people working together, and accomplishing together what none could do alone. But because each person also has different needs and views, there will always be some conflict in living and working with others. By understanding more of what goes on in conversations, we can become better team problem solvers and conflict navigators. Learning to listen to others more deeply can increase our confidence that we will be able to engage in a dialogue of genuine give and take, and be able to help generate problem solutions that meet more of everyone's needs.

More peace of mind. Because every action we take toward others reverberates for months (or years) inside our own minds and bodies, adopting a more peaceful and creative attitude in our interaction with others can be a significant way of lowering our own stress levels. Even in unpleasant situations, we can feel good about our own skillful responses.

More satisfying closeness with others. Learning to communicate better will get us involved with exploring two big questions:

² Thanks to communication skills teacher Dr. Marshall Rosenberg for this pithy saying.

“What’s going on inside of me?” and “What’s going on inside of you?” Modern life is so full of distractions and entertainments that many people don’t know their own hearts very well, nor the hearts of others nearby. Exercises in listening can help us listen more carefully and reassure our conversation partners that we really do understand what they are going through. Exercises in self-expression can help us ask for what we want more clearly and calmly.

A healthier life. In his book, *Love and Survival*,³ Dr. Dean Ornish cites study after study that point to supportive relationships as a key factor in helping people survive life-threatening illnesses. To the degree that we use cooperative communication skills to both give and receive more emotional support, we will greatly enhance our chances of living longer and healthier lives.



Respecting the mountain we are about to climb together: why learning to talk and listen in new ways is challenging. I hope putting these suggestions into practice will surprise you with delightful and heartfelt conversations you never imagined were possible, just as I was surprised. And at the same time, I do not want to imply that learning new communication skills is easy.

I wish the skills I describe in this workbook could be presented as “Seven Easy Ways to Communicate Better.” But in

³ Dean Ornish, MD, *Love and Survival*. New York: HarperCollins, 1998. Chap. 2.

reality, the recommendations that survived my sifting and ranking demand a lot of effort. Out of respect for you, I feel the need to tell you that making big, positive changes in the way you communicate with others will probably be one of the most satisfying and most difficult tasks you will ever take on, akin to climbing Mt. Everest. If I misled you into assuming these changes were easy to make, you would be vulnerable to becoming discouraged by the first steep slope. Forewarned of the amount of effort involved, you can plan for the long climb. My deepest hope is that if you understand the following four reasons why learning new communication skills is challenging, that understanding will help you to be more patient and more forgiving with yourself and others.

First of all, learning better communication skills requires a lot of effort because cooperation between people is a much more complex and mentally demanding process than coercing, threatening or just grabbing what you want. The needs of two people (or many) are involved rather than just the needs of one. And thinking about the wants of two people (and how those wants might overlap) is a giant step beyond simply feeling one's own wants.⁴

The journey from fighting over the rubber ducky to learning how to share it is the longest journey a child will ever make, a journey that leads far beyond childhood. Reaching this higher level of skill and fulfillment in living and working with others requires effort, conscious attention, and practice with other people.

A second reason that learning more effective and satisfying communication skills

⁴ I am grateful to the books of developmental psychologist Robert Kegan, *The Evolving Self* and *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life*, for introducing me to the idea that cooperation is more mentally demanding than coercion. After that idea, nothing in human communication looked the same.

does not happen automatically is that our way of communicating with others is deeply woven into our personalities, into the history of our hearts. For example, if, when I was little, someone slapped me across the face or yelled at me every time I spoke up and expressed a want or opinion, then I probably would have developed a very sensible aversion to talking about what I was thinking or feeling. It may be true that no one is going to hit me now, but a lot of my brain cells may not know that yet. So learning new ways of communicating gets us involved in learning new ways of feeling in and feeling about all our relationships with people. We can become more confident and less fearful, more skillful and less clumsy, more understanding of others and less threatened by them. Changes as significant as these happen over months and years rather than in a single weekend.

A third side of the communications mountain concerns self-observation. In the course of living our attention is generally pointed out toward other people and the world around us. As we talk and joke, comfort others and negotiate with them, we are often lost in the flow of interaction. Communicating more cooperatively involves exerting a gentle influence to guide conversations toward happier endings for all the participants. But in order to guide or steer an unfolding process, a person needs to be able to observe that process. So communicating more cooperatively and more satisfyingly requires that we learn how to participate in our conversations and observe them at the very same time! It takes a while to grow into this participating and observing at the same time. At first we look back on conversations that we have had and try to understand what went well and what went badly. Gradually we can learn to bring that observing awareness into our conversations.

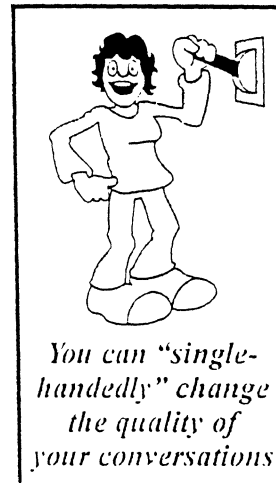
A final reason (four is surely enough) that learning new communication skills takes

effort is that we are surrounded by a flood of bad examples. Every day movies and TV offer us a continuing stream of vivid images of sarcasm, fighting, cruelty, fear and mayhem. And as beer and cigarette advertisers have proven beyond a shadow of a doubt, you can get millions of people to do something if you just show enough vivid pictures of folks already doing it. So at some very deep level we are being educated by the mass media to fail in our relationships.⁵ For every movie about people making peace with one another, there seem to be a hundred movies about people hacking each other to death with chainsaws or literally kicking one another in the face, which are not actions that will help you or me solve problems at home or at the office. Learning to relate to others generally involves following examples, but our examples of interpersonal skill and compassion are few and far between.

These are the reasons that have led me to see learning new communication skills as a demanding endeavor. My hope is that you will look at improving your communication skills as a long journey, like crossing a mountain range, so that you will feel more like putting effort and attention into the process, and thus will get more out of it. Living a human life is surprisingly similar to playing baseball or playing the violin. Getting better at each requires continual practice. You probably already accept this principle in relation to many human activities. I hope this workbook will encourage and support you in applying it to your own talking and listening.

Seven ways of being the change you want to see. Because conversations are a bringing together of both persons' contributions, when you initiate a positive change in your way of talking and listening, you can single-

handedly begin to change the quality of all your conversations. The actions described in this work-book are seven examples of "being the change you want to see" (a saying I recently saw attributed to the great teacher of nonviolence, Mahatma Gandhi). While this



may sound very idealistic and self-sacrificing, you can also understand it as a practical principle: model the behavior you want to evoke from other people. The seven challenges are also examples of another saying of Gandhi's, "the means are the ends." Communicating more

awarely and compassionately can be satisfying ends in themselves, both emotionally and spiritually.

A brief summary of each challenge is given in the paragraphs that follow, along with some of the lifelong issues of personal development that are woven through each one. In Chapters One through Seven you will find expanded descriptions of each one, with discussions, examples, exercises and readings to help you explore each suggestion in action.

Challenge 1. Listen more carefully and responsively. Listen first and acknowledge what you hear, even if you don't agree with it, before expressing your experience or point of view. In order to get more of your conversation partner's attention in tense situations, pay attention first: listen and give a brief restatement of what you have heard (especially feelings) before you express your own position. The kind of listening recommended here separates acknowledging from approving or agreeing. Acknowledging another person's thoughts and feelings **does**

⁵ For an extended examination of this issue, see Sissela Bok, *Mayhem: Violence as Public Entertainment*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley. 1998.

It **have to mean** that you **approve of** or **agree with** that person's actions or way of experiencing, or that you will do whatever someone asks. .

✎ Some of the deeper levels of this step include learning to listen to your own heart, and learning to encounter identities and integrities quite different from your own, while still remaining centered in your own sense of self. (In what ways and contexts would you like other people to adopt this way of listening, to learn it from you and with you?)

Challenge 2. Explain your conversational intent and invite consent. In order to help your conversation partner cooperate with you and to reduce possible misunderstandings, start important conversations by inviting your conversation partner to join you in the specific kind of conversation you want to have. The more the conversation is going to mean to you, the more important it is for your conversation partner to understand the big picture. Many successful communicators begin special conversations with a preface that goes something like: *"I would like to talk with you for a few minutes about [subject matter]. When would be a good time?"* The exercise for this step will encourage you to expand your list of possible conversations and to practice starting a wide variety of them.

✎ Some deeper levels of this step include learning to be more aware of and honest about your intentions, gradually giving up intentions to injure, demean or punish, and learning to treat other people as consenting equals whose participation in conversation with us is a gift and not an obligation.(In what ways and contexts would you like other people to express more of their intent and invite more of your consent, to learn this new way of starting conversations from you and with you?)

Challenge 3. Express yourself more clearly and completely. Slow down and give your listeners more information about what you are experiencing by using a wide range of "I-statements." One way to help get more of your listener's empathy is to express more of the five basic dimensions of your experience: Here is an example: (Please read down the columns)

| <i>The Five Messages = Five dimensions of experience</i> | <i>Example of a "Five Message" communication</i> |
|---|---|
| 1. What you are seeing, hearing or otherwise sensing. | "When I saw the dishes in the sink... |
| 2. The emotions you are feeling. | ...I felt irritated and impatient... |
| 3. The interpretations or wants <u>of yours</u> that support those feelings? | ...because I want to start cooking dinner right away... |
| 4. What action, information or commitment you want to request now. | ...and I want to ask you to help me do the dishes right now... |
| 5. What positive results receiving that action, information or commitment will lead to in the future. | ...so that dinner will be ready by the time our guests arrive." |

Anytime one person sincerely listens to another, a very creative process is going on in which the listener mentally reconstructs the speaker's experience. The more facets or dimensions of your experience you share with easy-to-grasp "I statements," the easier it will be for your conversation partner to reconstruct your experience accurately and understand what you are feeling. This is equally worthwhile whether you are trying to solve a problem with someone or trying to express appreciation for them. Expressing yourself this carefully might appear to take

longer than your usual quick style of communication. But if you include all the time it takes to unscramble everyday misunderstandings, and to work through the feelings that usually accompany not being understood, expressing yourself more completely can actually take a lot less time.

✦ Some deeper levels of this step include developing the courage to tell the truth, growing beyond blame in understanding painful experiences, and learning to make friends with feelings, your own and other people's, too. (In what ways and contexts would you like other people to adopt this way of expressing themselves, to learn it from you and with you?)

Challenge 4. Translate your (and other people's) complaints and criticisms into specific requests, and explain your requests.

In order to get more cooperation from others, whenever possible ask for what you want by using specific, action-oriented, positive language rather than by using generalizations, "why's," "don'ts" or "somebody should's." Help your listeners comply by explaining your requests with a "so that...", "it would help me to... if you would..." or "in order to... ." Also, when you are receiving criticism and complaints from others, translate and restate the complaints as action requests.").

✦ Some of the deeper levels of this step include developing a strong enough sense of self-esteem that you can accept being turned down, and learning how to imagine creative solutions to problems, solutions in which everyone gets at least some of their needs met. (In what ways and contexts would you like other people to translate their complaints into requests, to learn that process from you and with you?)

Challenge 5. Ask questions more "open-endedly" and more creatively. "Open-endedly...": In order to coordinate our life

and work with the lives and work of other people, we all need to know more of what other people are feeling and thinking, wanting and planning. But our usual "yes/no" questions actually tend to shut people up rather than opening them up. In order to encourage your conversation partners to share more of their thoughts and feelings, ask "open-ended" rather than "yes/no" questions. Open-ended questions allow for a wide range of responses. For example, asking "How did you like that food movie /speech/doctor/etc.?" will evoke a more detailed response than "Did you like it?" (which could be answered with a simple "yes" or "no"). In the first part of Challenge Five we explore asking a wide range of open-ended questions.

"and more creatively..." When we ask questions we are using a powerful language tool to *focus conversational attention* and *guide our interaction with others*. But many of the questions we have learned to ask are totally fruitless and self-defeating (such as, parents to a pregnant teen, "Why???! Why have you done this to us???!"). In general it will be more fruitful to ask "how" questions about the future rather than "why" questions about the past, but there are many more creative possibilities. Of the billions of questions we might ask, not all are equally fruitful or illuminating; not all are equally helpful in solving problems together. In the second part of Challenge Five we explore asking powerfully creative questions from many areas of life.

✦ Deeper levels of this step include developing the courage to hear the answers to our questions, to face the truth of what other people are feeling. Also, learning to be comfortable with the process of looking at a situation from different perspectives, and learning to accept that people often have needs, views and tastes different from your own (I am not a bad person if you love

eggplant and I hate it). (In what ways and contexts would you like other people to adopt these open-ended ways of asking questions, to learn them from you and with you?)

Challenge 6. Express more appreciation.

To build more satisfying relationships with the people around you, express more appreciation, delight, affirmation, encouragement and gratitude. Because life continually requires us to attend to problems and breakdowns, it gets very easy to see in life only what is broken and needs fixing. But satisfying relationships (and a happy life) require us to notice and respond to what is delightful, excellent, enjoyable, to work well done, to food well cooked, etc. It is appreciation that makes a relationship strong enough to accommodate differences and disagreements. Thinkers and researchers in many different fields have reached similar conclusions: healthy relationships need a core of mutual appreciation.

✠ One deeper level of this step is in how you might shift your overall level of appreciation and gratitude, toward other people, toward nature, and toward life and/or a "Higher Power." (In what ways and contexts would you like other people to express more appreciation and gratitude, to learn this practice from you and with you?)

Challenge 7. Make better communication an important part of your everyday life. In order to have your new communication skills available in a wide variety of situations, you

will need to practice them in as wide a variety of situations as possible, until, like driving or bicycling, they become "second nature." The Seventh Challenge is to practice your evolving communication skills in everyday life, solving problems together, giving emotional support to the important people in your life, and enjoying how you are becoming a positive influence in your world. This challenge includes learning to see each conversation as an opportunity to grow in skill and awareness, each encounter as an opportunity to express more appreciation, each argument as an opportunity to translate your complaints into requests, and so on.

✠ One deeper level of this Step 7 concerns learning to separate yourself from the current culture of violence, insult and injury, and learning how to create little islands of cooperation and mutuality. (In what ways and contexts would you like other people to adopt this way of participating in each day, to learn it from you and with you?)

Conclusion. I hope the information and exercises in this workbook will help you discover that listening and talking more consciously and cooperatively can be fun and rewarding. Just as guitar playing and basketball take great effort and bring great satisfaction, so does communicating more skillfully.

Dennis Rivers

● **Introduction exercise.** Before you continue reading, take some time and write down the ways in which you would like to improve your communication and interaction with others. For example, what are some situations you would like to change with new communication skills?

●

●

Challenge One

LISTENING MORE CAREFULLY AND RESPONSIVELY

SUMMARY (repeated from Introduction): Listen first and acknowledge what you hear, even if you don't agree with it, before expressing your experience or point of view. In order to get more of your conversation partner's attention in tense situations, pay attention first: listen and give a brief restatement of what you have heard (especially feelings) before you express your own position. The kind of listening recommended here separates acknowledging from approving or agreeing.⁶ Acknowledging another person's thoughts and feelings **does not have to mean** that you **approve of** or **agree with** that person's actions or way of experiencing, or that you will do whatever someone asks.



By listening and then repeating back in your own words the essence and feeling of what you have just heard, *from the speaker's point of view*, you allow the speaker to feel the satisfaction of being understood (a major human need). Listening responsively is always worthwhile as a way of letting people know that you care about them. Our conversation partners do not automatically know how well we have understood them,

⁶ While at least some people have probably been listening in this compassionate way over the centuries, it was the late psychologist Carl Rogers who, more than any other person, advocated and championed this accepting way of being with another person. For a summary of his work see, *On Becoming a Person: A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. 1995.

and they may not be very good at asking for confirmation. When a conversation is tense or difficult it is even more important to listen first and acknowledge what you hear. Otherwise, your chances of being heard by the other person may be very poor.

Listening to others helps others to listen. In learning to better coordinate our life activities with the life activities of others, we would do well to resist two very popular (but terrible) models of communication: arguing a case in court and debating.⁷ In courts and debates, each side tries to make its own points and listens to the other side only to tear down the other side's points. Since the debaters and attorneys rarely have to reach agreement or get anything done together, it doesn't seem to matter how much ill will their conversational style generates. But most of us are in a very different situation. We probably spend most of our lives trying to arrange agreement and cooperative action, so we need to be concerned about engaging people, not defeating them. *In business (and in family life, too) the person we defeat today will probably be the person whose cooperation we need tomorrow!*⁸

Cooperation always involves a creative fitting together of different people's needs and wants, but how do we find the possible areas of common ground? And generate the

⁷ For a sobering and inspiring book on this issue, see Deborah Tannen, *The Argument Culture: Moving From Debate to Dialogue*. New York: Random House. 1998.

⁸ The now classic work on cooperative negotiation, that includes a strong emphasis on empathic listening, is *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In* (2nd ed.) by Roger Fisher, William Ury and Bruce Patton. New York: Penguin Books. 1991.

ood will required to do expand them? This is where listening comes in. Listening more attentively will help you know the people around you better and feel closer to them. And your listening more responsively will help others feel known and understood by you. When people feel that they have been heard, they are much more likely to listen. And when both sides listen and know one another better, they are more likely to be able to invent solutions that meet more of everyone's needs.

When people are upset about something and want to talk about it their capacity to listen is greatly diminished. Trying to get your point across to a person who is trying to express a strong feeling will usually cause the other person to try even harder to get that emotion recognized. On the other hand, once people feel that their messages and feelings have been heard, they start to relax and they have more attention available for listening. For example, in a hospital a nurse might say, after listening to a patient: *"I hear that you are very uncomfortable right now, Susan, and you would really like to get out of that bed and move around. But your doctor says your bones won't heal unless you stay put for another week."* The patient in this example is much more likely to listen to the nurse than if the nurse simply said: *"I'm really sorry, Susan, but you have to stay in bed. Your doctor says your bones won't heal unless you stay put for another week."* What is missing in this second version is any acknowledgment of the patient's present experience.

The power of simple acknowledging. The practice of responsive listening described here separates *acknowledging* the thoughts and feelings that a person expresses from *approving, agreeing, advising, or persuading*. Acknowledging another person's thoughts and feelings...

...still leaves you the option of agreeing or disagreeing with that person's point of view, actions or way of experiencing.

...still leaves you with the option of saying yes or no to a request.

...still leaves you with the option of saying more about the matter being discussed.

One recurring problem in conflict situations is that many people don't separate acknowledging from agreeing. They are joined together in people's minds, somewhat like a two-boxes-of-soap "package deal" in a supermarket. The effect of this is, let us say, that John feels that any acknowledgment of Fred's experience implies agreement and approval, therefore John will not acknowledge any of Fred's experience. Fred tries harder to be heard and John tries harder not to hear. Of course, this is a recipe for stalemate (if not disaster).

People want both: to be understood and acknowledged on the one hand, and to be approved and agreed with, on the other. With practice, you can learn to respond first with a simple acknowledgment. As you do this, you may find that, figuratively speaking, you can give your conversation partners half of what they want, even if you can't give them all of what they want. In many conflict situations that will be a giant step forward. Your conversation partners will also be more likely to acknowledge your position and experience, even if they don't sympathize with you. This mutual acknowledgment can create an emotional atmosphere in which it is easier to work toward agreement or more gracefully accommodate disagreements. Here are three examples of acknowledgments that do not imply agreement:

A counselor to a drug abuse client: "I hear that you are feeling terrible right now and that you really want some drugs. And I want you to know that I'm still concerned this stuff you're taking is going to kill you."

A mother to a seven-year-old: "I know that you want some more cake and ice cream, Jimmy, because it tastes so good, but you've already had three pieces and I'm really worried that you'll get an upset tummy. That's why I don't want you to have any more."

A union representative to company owner's representative: "I understand from your presentation that you see XYZ Company as short of cash, threatened by foreign competition, and not in a position to agree to any wage increases. Now I would like us to explore contract arrangements that would allow my union members to get a wage increase and XYZ Company to advance its organizational goals."

In each case a person's listening to and acknowledgment of his or her conversation partner's experience or position increases the chance that the conversation partner will be willing to listen in turn. The examples given above are all a bit long and include a declaration of the listener's position or decision. In many conversations you may simply want to reassure your conversation partner with a word or two that you have heard and understood whatever they are experiencing. For example, saying, "You sound really happy [or sad] about that," etc.

As you listen to the important people in your life, give very brief summaries of the experiences they are talking about and name the want or feeling that appears to be at the heart of the experience. For example:

"So you were really happy about that..."

"So you drove all the way over there and they didn't have the part they promised you on the phone. What a let-down..."

"Sounds like you wanted a big change in that situation..."

"Wow. Your dog got run over. You must be feeling really terrible..."

The point here is to empathize, not to advise. If you added to that last statement, "That total SLOB!!! You should sue that person who ran over your dog. People need to pay for their mistakes, etc.", you would be taking over the conversation and also leading the person away from her or his feelings and toward your own.

Other suggestions about listening more responsively:

As a general rule, do not just repeat another person's exact words. Summarize their experience in your own words. But in cases where people actually scream or shout something, sometimes you may want to repeat a few of their exact words in a quiet tone of voice to let them know that you have heard it just as they said it.

If the emotion is unclear, make a tentative guess, as in "So it sounds like maybe you were a little unhappy about all that..."

Listening is an art and there are very few fixed rules. Pay attention to whether the person speaking accepts your summary by saying things such as "yeah!", "you got it," "that's right," and similar responses.

If you can identify with what the other person is experiencing, then in your tone of voice (as you summarize what another person is going through), express a little of the feeling that your conversation partner is

expressing. (Emotionally flat summaries feel strange and distant.)

Such compassionate listening is a powerful resource for navigating through life, and it also makes significant demands on us as listeners. We may need to learn how to hold our own ground while we restate someone else's position. That takes practice. We also have to be able to listen to people's criticisms or complaints without becoming disoriented or totally losing our sense of self worth. That requires cultivating a deeper sense of self worth, which is no small project. In spite of these difficulties, the results of compassionate, responsive listening have been so rewarding in my life that I have found it to be worth all the effort required.

Real life examples. Here are two brief, true stories about listening. The first is about listening going well and the second is about the heavy price people sometimes pay for not listening in an empathic way.

John Gottman describes his discovery that listening really works: "I remember the day I first discovered how Emotion Coaching [the author's approach to empathic listening] might work with my own daughter, Moriah. She was two at the time and we were on a cross-country flight home after visiting with relatives. Bored, tired, and cranky, Moriah asked me for Zebra, her favorite stuffed animal and comfort object. Unfortunately, we had absentmindedly packed the well-worn critter in a suitcase that was checked at the baggage counter.

"I'm sorry, honey, but we can't get Zebra right now. He's in the big suitcase in another part of the airplane," I explained. "I want Zebra," she whined pitifully.

"I know, sweetheart. But Zebra isn't here. He's in the baggage compartment underneath the plane and Daddy can't get him until we get off the plane. I'm sorry."

"I want Zebra! I want Zebra!" she moaned again. Then she started to cry, twisting in her safety seat and reaching futilely toward a bag on the floor where she'd seen me go for snacks.

"I know you want Zebra," I said, feeling my blood pressure rise. "But he's not in that bag. He's not here and I can't do anything about it. Look, why don't we read about Ernie," I said, fumbling for one of her favorite picture books.

"Not Ernie!" she wailed, angry now. "I want Zebra. I want him NOW!"

By now, I was getting "do something" looks from the passengers, from the airline attendants, from my wife, seated across the aisle. I looked at Moriah's face, red with anger, and imagined how frustrated she must feel. After all, wasn't I the guy who could whip up a peanut butter sandwich on demand? Make huge purple dinosaurs appear with the flip of a TV switch? Why was I withholding her favorite toy from her? Didn't I understand how much she wanted it?

I felt bad. Then it dawned on me: I couldn't get Zebra, but I could offer her the next best thing -- a father's comfort. "You wish you had Zebra now," I said to her. "Yeah," she said sadly.

"And you're angry because we can't get him for you."

"Yeah."

"You wish you could have Zebra right now," I repeated, as she stared at me, looking rather curious, almost surprised. "Yeah," she muttered. "I want him now."

"You're tired now, and smelling Zebra and cuddling with him would feel real good. I wish we had Zebra here so you could hold him. Even better, I wish we could get out of these seats and find a big, soft bed full of all your animals and pillows where we could just lie down." "Yeah," she agreed.

"We can't get Zebra because he's in another part of the airplane," I said. "That

makes you feel frustrated.” “Yeah,” she said with a sigh.

“I’m so sorry,” I said, watching the tension leave her face. She rested her head against the back of her safety seat. She continued to complain softly a few more times, but she was growing calmer. Within a few minutes, she was asleep.

Although Moriah was just two years old, she clearly knew what she wanted -- her Zebra. Once she began to realize that getting it wasn’t possible, she wasn’t interested in my excuses, my arguments, or my diversions. My validation, however, was another matter. Finding out that I understood how she felt seemed to make her feel better. For me, it was a memorable testament to the power of empathy.”

Sam Keen describes a friend’s lament about the consequences of not listening deeply: “Long ago and far away, I expected love to be light and easy and without failure.

“Before we moved in together, we negotiated a prenuptial agreement. Neither of us had been married before, and we were both involved in our separate careers. So our agreement not to have children suited us both. Until... on the night she announced that her period was late and she was probably pregnant, we both treated the matter as an embarrassing accident with which we would have to deal. Why us? Why now? Without much discussion, we assumed we would do the rational thing -- get an abortion. As the time approached, she began to play with hypothetical alternatives, to ask in a plaintive voice with half misty eyes: ‘Maybe we should keep the baby. Maybe we could get a live-in helper, and it wouldn’t interrupt our lives too much. Maybe I could even quit my job and be a full-time mother for a few years. Maybe

...’ To each maybe I answered: ‘Be realistic. Neither of us is willing to make the sacrifices to raise a child.’ She allowed herself to be convinced, silenced the voice of her irrational hopes and dreams, and terminated the pregnancy.

“It has been many years now since our ‘decision,’ and we are still together and busy with our careers and our relationship. Still no children, even though we have recently been trying to get pregnant. I can’t help noticing that she suffers from spells of regret and guilt, and a certain mood of sadness settles over her. At times I know she longs for her missing child and imagines what he or she would be doing now. I reassure her that we did the right thing. But when I see her lingering guilt and pain and her worry that she missed her one chance to become a mother, I feel that I failed an important test of love. Because my mind had been closed to anything that would interrupt my plans for the future, I had listened to her without deep empathy or compassion. I’m no longer sure we made the right decision. I am sure that in refusing to enter into her agony, to share the pain of her ambivalence, I betrayed her.

“I have asked for and, I think, received forgiveness, but there remains a scar that was caused by my insensitivity and self-absorption.”¹⁰

[Workbook editor’s note: I have not included this real life excerpt to make a point for or against abortion. The lesson I draw from this story is that whatever decision this couple made, they would have been able to live with that decision better if the husband had listened in a way that acknowledged all his wife’s feelings rather than listening only to argue her out of her feelings. What lesson do you draw from this story?]

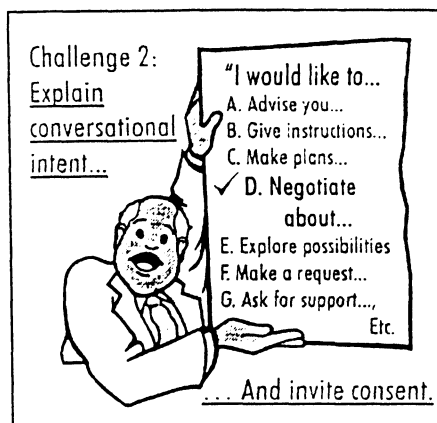
⁹ From *The Heart of Parenting - How to Raise an Emotionally Intelligent Child*, by John M. Gottman with Joan DeClaire. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1997. Pages 69 & 70.

¹⁰ From *To Love and Be Loved*, by Sam Keen. New York: Bantam Books. 1997. Pages 138 & 139.

Challenge Two

EXPLAINING YOUR CONVERSATIONAL INTENT AND INVITING CONSENT

SUMMARY(repeated from Introduction): In order to help your conversation partner cooperate with you and to reduce possible misunderstandings, start important conversations by inviting your conversation partner to join you in the specific kind of conversation you want to have. The more the conversation is going to mean to you, the more important it is for your conversation partner to understand the big picture. If you need to have a long, complex, or emotion-laden conversation with someone, it will make a big difference if you briefly explain your conversational intention first and then invite the consent of your intended conversation partner.



Why explain? Some conversations require a lot more time, effort and involvement than others. If you want to have a conversation that will require a significant amount of effort from the other person, it will go better if that person understands what he or she is getting into and consents to participate. Of course, in giving up the varying amounts of coercion and surprise that are at work when

we just launch into whatever we want to talk about, we are more vulnerable to being turned down. But, when people agree to talk with us, they will be more present in the conversation and more able to either meet our needs or explain why they can't (and perhaps suggest alternatives we had not thought of).

Many good communicators do this **explaining intent/inviting consent** without giving it any thought. They start important conversations by saying things such as:

"Hi, Steve. I need to ask for your help on my project. Got a minute to talk about it?"

"Uh...Maria, do you have a minute? Right now I'd like to talk to you about... Is that OK?"

"Well, sit down for a minute and let me tell you what happened..."

"Hello there, Mr. Sanchez. Say, uh...I'm not completely comfortable about this job. Can we talk about it for a few minutes?"

"Hi, Jerry, this is Mike. How ya doin'? I want to talk to you about Fred. He's in jail again. Is this a good time to talk?"

When we offer such combined *explanations-of-intent* and *invitations-to-consent* we can help our conversations along in four important ways:

First, we give our listeners a chance to consent to or decline the offer of a specific conversation. A person who has agreed to participate will participate more fully.

Second, we help our listeners to understand the “big picture,” the overall goal of the conversation-to-come. (Many scholars in linguistics and communications now agree that understanding a person’s overall conversational intention is crucial for understanding that person’s message in words and gestures.¹¹)

Third, we allow our listeners to get ready for what is coming, especially if the topic is emotionally charged. (If we surprise people by launching into emotional conversations, they may respond by avoiding further conversations with us or by being permanently on guard.)

And fourth, we help our listeners understand the role that we want them to play in the conversation: fellow problem solver, employee receiving instructions, giver of emotional support, and so on. These are very different roles to play. Our conversations will go better if we ask people to play only one conversational role at a time.

Getting explicit. Often people conduct this “negotiation about conversation” through body language and tone of voice during the first few seconds of interaction. But since we often have to talk with people whose body language and tone of voice patterns may be quite different from ours, we may need to be more explicit and direct in the way we ask people to have conversations with us. The more important the conversation, the more important it is to have your partner’s consent. Just saying, “Hi!”, or talking about the weather does not require agreement, because people can easily

indicate with their tone of voice whether or not they are interested in chatting.

To be invited into a conversation is an act of respect. A consciously consenting participant is much more likely to pay attention and cooperate than someone who feels pushed into an undefined conversation by the force of another person’s talking. It’s not universal, but to assume without asking that a person is available to talk may be interpreted by many people as lack of respect. When we begin a conversation by respecting the wishes of the other person, we start to generate some of the goodwill (trust that their wishes will be considered) needed for creative problem solving. I believe that the empathy we get will be more genuine and the agreements we reach will be more reliable if we give people a choice about talking with us.

As you become consciously familiar with various kinds of conversations, you will find it easier to:

- Invite someone to have one of a wide range of conversations, depending on your wants or needs
- Agree to someone’s conversational invitation
- Say, “no.” Decline or re-negotiate a conversational invitation from someone
- When in doubt, gently prompt a person to clarify what kind of conversation she or he is trying to have with you
- Avoid conversations that are negative, self-defeating or self-destructive

In the exercises at the end of this chapter you will find a list of the most common conversational intentions. *You can use the Exploratory List of Conversational Intentions to expand the range of the conversations you feel comfortable starting.* The exercise pages provide a place for you to make notes as you work with a practice partner and explore how

¹¹ For intensely scholarly reflections on this complex issue, see Adrian Akmajian (*et al.*), *Linguistics: An Introduction to Language and Communication*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1990. Chap.9, and Philip R. Cohen (*et al.*), Editors, *Intentions in Communication*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1990, especially Chap. 2, Michael E. Bratman’s essay.

it feels to start each of the conversations on the list.

Finding your voice in different situations. Although few conversations are exactly alike, for the sake of exploration we can group most English conversations into approximately forty overlapping types of intention. I classify about thirty of these intents as fulfilling and about twelve as unfulfilling. The goal here is not to develop rigid logical categories, but instead to suggest many of the “flavors” of conversational intention that can be distinguished in everyday talking and listening (including exits and “time-outs”). The goal of presenting the list of fulfilling intentions is to help you feel empowered to start a wide range of new and more satisfying conversations. As you explore these lists feel free to add your own entries.

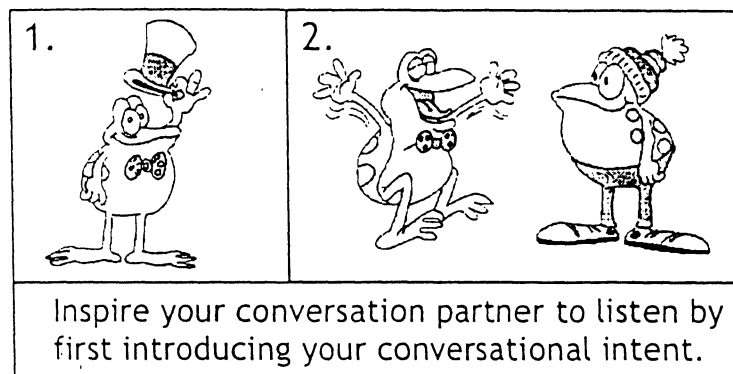
Intentions worth avoiding. In order to be realistic about how people actually behave, I have included a second list, at the end of this chapter, that contains what I call unfulfilling conversational intentions. Here I have included motives such as to coerce, to deceive, to punish, to demean, etc. In our time TV, movies, popular music and books continually bombard us with ready-made examples of extraordinary sarcasm, cruelty, and violence. So in the process of developing a positive personal style of interaction, we may have to struggle against what is almost a cultural brainwashing in favor of violence and against cooperation, respect and kindness. There are many moral arguments about these matters and I leave it to you to

decide the issues of morality. I would, however, like to point out two of the most serious pragmatic liabilities of the intent to harm others.

The first is that whatever we do to others, we teach others to do back to us, both in conversation and in life in general. This was brought home to me quite chillingly over a period of years, as I observed a stressed-out, single-mother friend of mine use sarcasm as a way of trying to discipline her bright ten-year-old son. The ten-year-old became a teenager who would speak to his mother with the same withering sarcasm she had used on him only a few years before.

The unfulfilling intentions and actions on the second list may provide some short-term satisfaction as ways of venting feelings of anger or frustration. But the second drawback of these actions is that anyone who can avoid being the target of them will probably not stay around to be coerced or demeaned. And if someone can't leave, no one involved will be happy. These highly advertised and promoted intentions to abuse represent a kind of “Science of Misery.” Do these twelve things and you can be certain that your relationships will end or turn bitter. These considerations suggest that it is in our own best interest to make a careful self-inventory of our interaction styles and to explore more positive ways of interacting with the people around us.

1. **First exercise for Challenge 2:** With your practice partner, try starting each of the conversations on the list. Note which feel easy to start and which feel more challenging. Begin with: “Right now I’d like to...” or “I’d like to take about 1/5/30 minutes and...”



| | AN EXPLORATORY LIST OF FULFILLING CONVERSATIONAL INTENTIONS |
|-----|---|
| 1. | ...tell you about my experiences/feelings... ...that involve no implied requests or complaints toward you OR ...so that you will understand the request, offer, complaint, etc., I want to make |
| 2. | ...hear what’s happening with you. (More specific: ...hear how you are doing with [topic]...) |
| 3. | ...entertain you with a story. |
| 4. | ...explore some possibilities concerning ... (requiring your empathy but not your advice or permission) |
| 5. | ...plan a course of action for myself (with your help or with you as listener/witness only) |
| 6. | ...coordinate/plan our actions together concerning... |
| 7. | ...express my affection for you (or appreciation of you concerning...) |
| 8. | ...express support for you as you cope with a difficult situation. |
| 9. | ...complain/make a request about something you have done (or said) (for better resolution of conflicts, translate complaints into requests) |
| 10. | ...confirm my understanding of the experience or position you just shared. (this usually continues with “I hear that you...,” “Sounds like you...,” “So you’re feeling kinda...,” or “Let me see if I understand you...”) |
| 11. | ...resolve a conflict that I have with you about... |
| 12. | ...negotiate or bargain with you about... |
| 13. | ...work with you to reach a decision about... |

| | AN EXPLORATORY LIST OF FULFILLING CONVERSATIONAL INTENTIONS (continued) |
|-----|--|
| 14. | ...give you permission or consent to.../...get your permission or consent to... |
| 15. | ...give you some information about .../...get some information from you about... |
| 16. | ...give you some advice about .../...get some advice from you about... |
| 17. | ...give you directions, orders or work assignments... / get directions or orders from you |
| 18. | ...make a request of you (for action, time, information, object, money, promise, etc.) |
| 19. | ...consent to (or refuse) a request you have made to me. |
| 20. | ...make an offer to you (for action, information, object, promise, etc.) |
| 21. | ...accept or decline an offer you have made to me. |
| 22. | ...persuade or motivate you to adopt (a particular) point of view. |
| 23. | ...persuade or motivate you to choose (a particular) course of action. |
| 24. | ...forgive you for... / ask for your forgiveness concerning... |
| 25. | ...make an apology to you about... / request an apology from you about... |
| 26. | ...offer an interpretation of... (what ... means to me) / ask for your interpretation of... |
| 27. | ...offer an evaluation of... (how good or bad I think ... is) / ask for your evaluation of... |
| 28. | ...change the subject of the conversation and talk about... |
| 29. | ...have some time to think things over. |
| 30. | ...leave/end this conversation so that I can... |

Notes on this exercise:

Second Exercise for Challenge 2: (to be explored in private or with a therapist) To what degree do you find yourself relying on these kinds of conversations to influence the people in your life? What possibilities do you see for change? To what degree are you the target of these behaviors? What possibilities do you see for change?

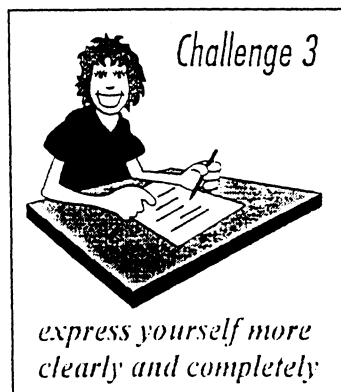
| | AN EXPLORATORY LIST OF <u>UN-FULFILLING</u> CONVERSATIONAL INTENTIONS (These conversational intentions and related actions are unfulfilling, at the very least, because we would not like someone to do these things <u>to us</u> . Yet if and when we do any of these things, we teach and encourage others to do them <u>to us</u> and/or to avoid contact with us.) |
|-----|--|
| 1. | To lie, deceive or mislead (sometimes partly redeemed by good overall intentions, but usually not) |
| 2. | To threaten |
| 3. | To hurt or abuse |
| 4. | To punish (creates resentment, avoidance and desire for revenge) |
| 5. | To blame (focuses on past instead of present and future) |
| 6. | To control or coerce (force, influence someone against their will and consent) |
| 7. | To manipulate (to influence someone without his or her knowledge and consent) |
| 8. | To demean or shame ...to try to make someone look bad in eyes of others OR ...to try to make people doubt themselves or feel bad about themselves |
| 9. | To deny the existence of a problem in the face of evidence and appeals from others |
| 10. | To hide what is important to me from you (if you are an important person in my life) |
| 11. | To suppress or invalidate someone's emotional response to a given event or situation (as in "Don't cry!", or the even more coercive "You stop crying or I'll <i>really</i> give you something to cry about!") |
| 12. | To withdraw from interaction in order to avoid the consequences of something I have done. (stonewalling) |

Notes on this exercise:

Challenge Three

EXPRESSING YOURSELF MORE CLEARLY AND COMPLETELY

SUMMARY(repeated from Introduction): Slow down and give your listeners more information about what you are experiencing by using a wide range of "I-statements." You are likely to get more of your listener's empathy if you express more of what you are seeing and hearing, feeling, interpreting, wanting, and envisioning. In the pages that follow we will explore each of these aspects of experience and how to express them more clearly.



Anytime one person sincerely listens to another, a very creative process is going on in which the listener mentally reconstructs the speaker's experience. The more facets or dimensions of your experience you share with easy-to-grasp "I statements," the easier it will be for your conversation partner to reconstruct your experience accurately and understand what you are feeling. This is equally worthwhile whether you are trying to solve a problem with someone or trying to express appreciation for them. Expressing yourself this carefully might appear to take longer than your usual quick style of communication. But if you include all the time it takes to unscramble everyday

misunderstandings, and to work through the feelings that usually accompany not being understood, expressing yourself more completely can actually take a lot less time.

Filling in the missing information. If you observe people in conversation very carefully, you will begin to notice that human communication works by leaving many things unsaid and depending on the listener to fill in the missing-but-implied information. For example, a receptionist may say to a counselor, "**Your two o'clock is here,**" a sentence which, on the face of it, makes no sense at all. She means "**Your client who made an appointment for two o'clock is has arrived,**" and the counselor knows that. It's amazing how much of the time this abbreviating and implying process works just fine. But, in situations of change, ambiguity, conflict, or great emotional need, our "shorthand" way of speaking may not work at all. Our listeners may fill in a completely different set of details than the one we intended, or our listeners may not understand the significance of what we are saying (they may get some of the details but miss the big picture). *The more serious the consequences of misunderstanding would be, the more we need to help our listeners by giving them a full picture of our experience.*

According to various communication researchers, there are five main dimensions of experience that your conversation partners can use to recreate your experience inside their minds. The more elements you provide, the higher the probability that your listener's re-creation will match your experience. In this Workbook I will refer to these elements or dimensions of experience as "the five messages."

Examples in table format. The example in the table below outlines a five-part way of saying more of what we are experiencing. The shorthand version of the message below would be something like, “Stop that racing!” Here are the details of the five messages that are left out in the shorthand version: (Please read down the columns)

| The Five Messages | express: | Example (in a hospital, nurse to young patient): |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| <i>seeing, hearing...</i> | 1. What are you seeing, hearing or otherwise sensing? (facts only) | “John, when I see you racing your wheelchair down the hall... |
| <i>and feeling...</i> | 2. What emotions are you feeling? | ...I feel really upset... |
| <i>because I...</i> | 3. What interpretations, wants, needs, memories or anticipations <u>of yours</u> support those feelings? | ...because I imagine that you are going to hurt yourself and someone else, too... |
| <i>and now I want...</i> | 4. What action, information or commitment do you want now? | ...so I want you to promise me right now that you will slow down... |
| <i>so that...</i> | 5. What <u>positive</u> results will that action, information or commitment lead to in the future? (no threats) | ...so that you can get out of here in one piece and I can stop worrying about a collision.” |

Note: My deep appreciation goes to the work of Marshall Rosenberg¹² for helping me to understand Messages 1 through 4, and to the work of Sharon and Gordon Bower¹³ for helping me understand Message 5.

In the table that starts below and continues on the next page you will find eight examples of statements that would give your listener a full range of information about your experience. Notice how a person’s feelings can change according to the needs and interpretations they bring to a situation. (Please read across the rows)

| 1. <i>When I saw/heard...</i> | 2. <i>I felt...</i> | 3. <i>because I... (need, want, interpret, associate, etc.)</i> | 4. <i>and now I want (then I wanted)...</i> | 5. <i>so that (in order to)...</i> |
|--|--------------------------------|--|---|---|
| When I saw the bear in the woods with her three cubs... | ...I felt overjoyed!... | ...because I needed a picture of bears for my wildlife class... | ...and I wanted the bear to stand perfectly still... | so I could focus my camera. |
| When I saw the bear in the woods with her three cubs... | ...I felt terrified!... | ...because I remembered that bears with cubs are very aggressive... | ...and I wanted to get out of there fast... | so that the bear would not pick up my scent. |

¹² Marshall Rosenberg, *A Model for Nonviolent Communication*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers. 1983.

¹³ Sharon Anthony Bower and Gordon H. Bower, *Asserting Yourself: A Practical Guide for Positive Change*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley. 1976.

THE FIVE MESSAGES IN ACTION!

| 1. <i>When I saw/heard...</i> | 2. <i>I felt...</i> | 3. <i>because I...(need, want, interpret, associate, etc.)</i> | 4. <i>and now I want (then I wanted)...</i> | 5. <i>so that (in order to)...</i> |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| When I saw the dishes in the sink... | ...I felt happy... | ...because I guessed that you had come back from your trip to Mexico... | ...and I want you to tell me all about the Aztec ruins you saw... | ...so that I can liven up some scenes in the short story I'm writing. |
| When I saw the dishes in the sink... | ...I felt irritated... | ...because I want to start cooking dinner right away... | ...and I want to ask you to help me do the dishes right now... | ...so that dinner will be ready by the time our guests arrive. |
| When I saw the flying saucer on your roof... | ... felt more excited than I have ever been in my life... | ...because I imagined the saucer people would give you the anti-gravity formula... | ...and I wanted you to promise that you would share it with me... | ...so that we would both get rich and famous. |
| When I saw the flying saucer on your roof... | ...I felt more afraid than I have ever been in my life... | ...because I imagined the saucer people were going to kidnap you... | ...and I wanted you to run for your life... | ...so that you would not get abducted and maybe turned into a zombie. |
| When I saw the grant application in the office mail... | ...I felt delighted... | ...because I think our program is good enough to win a large grant... | ...and I want to ask you to help me with the budget pages... | ...so that we can get the application in before the deadline. |
| When I saw the grant application in the office mail... | ...I felt depressed... | ...because I can't see clients when I'm filling out forms... | ...and I want you to help me with the budget pages... | ...so that I can keep up my case work over the next three weeks. |

Exercise for Challenge 3: Re-tell the story of some of your conflicts, frustrations and delights using the five-message format. Write one Five Messages statement a day in a journal or notebook. Here are some suggestions for expressing each of the Five Messages more clearly:

| The Five Messages: | Suggestions for expressing more clearly: |
|---|---|
| <p>1. What are you seeing, hearing or otherwise sensing? (facts only)</p> | <p>A. Begin by stating what you actually see or hear rather than how you feel about it or what you think of it.</p> <p>B. Describe specific actions observed, avoid generalizing such as “you always...” or “you never...”</p> <p>C. Be specific about place, time, color, texture, position and how often.</p> <p>D. Describe rather than diagnose. Avoid words that label or judge the actions you observe such as “slimy,” “lousy,” “neurotic,” etc..</p> <p>E. Avoid descriptions of a situation that imply emotions without actually stating them, such as “totally disgusting” and “horrible.” State your feelings explicitly in Message 2 (described next).</p> <p>For example:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“When I saw the big coffee stain on the rug...” is easier to hear and understand than</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“When you ruined my day, as always, with your slimy, stinking, totally disgusting, rotten antics...”</p> |
| <p>2. What emotions are you feeling?</p> | <p>A. Use specific emotion describers such as “I feel...”: glad, angry, delighted, sad, afraid, resentful, embarrassed, calm, enthusiastic, fearful, manic, depressed, happy, etc.</p> <p>B. Avoid feeling words that <u>imply</u> the action of another person: “I feel..., ignored, manipulated, mistreated, neglected, rejected, dominated, abandoned, used, cheated (etc.)”</p> <p>Notice how these words indirectly blame the listener for the speaker’s emotions. In order to help your listener understand what you are feeling, translate these “implied blame” words into an explicitly named emotion (see Suggestion A, above) and an interpretation or unmet want (Message 3).</p> <p>For example: “I am feeling totally ignored by you” probably means</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“I am feeling really sad (or angry) <u>because</u> I want you to pay more attention to me, (spend more time with me, etc.)...”</p> |

Exercise for Challenge 3 (continued):

| The Five Messages: | Suggestions for expressing more clearly: |
|--|--|
| <p>3. What interpretations, wants, needs, memories or anticipations of <u>yours</u> support those feelings?</p> | <p>A. Express the interpretations, wants, hopes, understandings and associations that support your feelings:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">... because I imagine that... ... because I see that as...</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">... because I remember how... ... because I take that to mean ...</p> <p>instead of ... because YOU ...(did, said, did not, etc.)</p> <p>B. Under our interpretations there are often unmet wants, hopes and needs. Explore and express the unmet wants that also support your feelings:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">... because I wanted because I would have liked ...</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">... because I was hoping that... ... because I needed ...</p> <p>instead of ... because YOU ...(did, said, did not, etc.)</p> |
| <p>4. What action, information or commitment do you want now?</p> | <p>A. Ask for action or information, or for a present commitment to future action or information giving. Since most people cannot produce emotions on request, it is generally not productive to ask a person for an emotion (“I want you to cheer up.” “I want you to be angry about this issue.” Etc.)</p> <p>B. If your want is general, ask for a specific step toward it. Translate open-ended requests, such as for “consideration, respect, help, understanding, support” etc., into specific action verbs such as please “listen, sit, lift, carry, tell me, hold me,” etc.</p> <p>C. State your want in <u>positive</u> terms: “Please arrive at eight...” rather than “Don’t be late...”</p> <p>D. Include when, where, how. Including the details can help you to avoid big misunderstandings.</p> |
| <p>5. What <u>positive</u> results will that action, information or commitment lead to in the future? (no threats)</p> | <p>In describing the specific positive results of receiving your request, you allow the other person to become motivated by feeling capable of giving something worthwhile. This prepares the ground for later expressions of appreciation, and points your relationship toward mutual appreciation and the exercise of competence (more enjoyable to live with), rather than guilt, duty, obedience or resentment (much less enjoyable to live with).</p> |

Exercise for Challenge 3 (continued): Re-tell the story of some of your conflicts, frustrations and delights using the five-message format.

| <i>Elements of your experience:</i> | <i>...expressed as five different "I-messages":</i> |
|---|---|
| 1. What are you seeing, hearing or otherwise sensing? (the facts without evaluation) | (I saw, heard, etc., ...) |
| 2. What emotions are you feeling? | (I felt...) |
| 3. What interpretations or wants <u>of yours</u> support those feelings? | (because I...) |
| 4. What action, information or commitment do you want now. | (and now I would like...) |
| 5. What positive results will that action, information or commitment lead to in the future? | (so that...) |

| <i>Elements of your experience:</i> | <i>...expressed as five different "I-messages":</i> |
|---|---|
| 1. What are you seeing, hearing or otherwise sensing? (the facts without evaluation) | (I saw, heard, etc., ...) |
| 2. What emotions are you feeling? | (I felt...) |
| 3. What interpretations or wants <u>of yours</u> support those feelings? | (because I...) |
| 4. What action, information or commitment do you want now. | (and now I would like...) |
| 5. What positive results will that action, information or commitment lead to in the future? | (so that...) |

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| 4. What action, information or commitment do you want now. | (and now I would like...) |
| 5. What positive results will that action, information or commitment lead to in the future? | (so that...) |

SAYING WHAT'S IN OUR HEARTS

Conversations viewed as counseling
and counseling viewed as a conversation.

Reflections on telling the truth and on
listening so that someone else can tell the truth

by Dennis Rivers, MA

I wrote this essay for my students during a time when I was teaching a class on peer counseling. I was trying to describe in everyday language some of the good things that happen in counseling, that ALSO happen in friendship, ministering and good parenting.

According to the psychotherapists Carl Rogers¹⁴ (in the 1960's), Margaret and Jordan Paul¹⁵ (in the 1980s) and Brad Blanton¹⁶ (in the 1990's), there is one main reason people suffer. It's not some jargon about ids and egos and superegos. It's that we need to face more of the truth and tell more of the truth about what's happening in our lives, about how we feel, and about what we ourselves are doing.

Many people, probably most of us at some time or other, struggle to deal with troubling feelings and problem situations in life by using a whole range of avoidance maneuvers: we may pretend nothing is happening, focus on blaming others, or try to find ways of avoiding embarrassment, distracting ourselves and/or minimizing conflict. The problem with these ways of dealing with inner and outer conflicts is that they don't work well in the long run. If we try to deal with our problems by pretending that nothing is wrong, we run the risk of becoming numb or getting deeply confused

¹⁴ Carl R. Rogers, *On Becoming a Person: A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. 1995.

¹⁵ Margaret and Jordan Paul, *Do I Have To Give Up Me To Be Loved By You*. Minneapolis: CompCare Publishers. 1983.

¹⁶ Brad Blanton, *How to Transform Your Life By Telling the Truth*. New York: Dell. 1996.

about what we actually want and how we actually feel. From this point of view, a counselor is someone to whom you can really tell the truth. And as you start to tell more of the truth to that significant listener, you start to admit the more of the truth to yourself.

This is not an easy task. Early in life, according to Rogers, most of us discovered that if we said what we really felt and wanted, the big important people in our lives would get unhappy with us. And since we needed their love and approval, we started being good little boys and good little girls and saying whatever would get us hugs, birthday presents, and chocolate cake. If we are lucky in life, our parents and teachers help us to learn how to tell the truth in conciliatory ways, but this is a complex process. And more often, our parents and teachers didn't get much help on this issue themselves, so they were not able to give us much help. As a result of this, many people arrive in adult life with a giant gap between what they actually feel and what the role they play says they are supposed to feel, and with no skills for closing that gap. Nobody in particular is to blame for this. It's like childhood colds and scraped knees: it's part of being human, which is not a tidy process.

For example, as a child you were supposed to love your parents, right? But what if your dad came home drunk every night and hit your mom? How do you handle the gap between the fact that you're supposed to love your dad and the fact that you don't like him? These are the kinds of situations that bring people to counseling (or to the nightly six-pack of beer). And life is full of them.

It all boils down to this: Life is tough and complex, ready or not. It is always tempting to try to get what you want (or to escape what you fear) by saying or doing whatever will avoid conflict, even if that means saying things you don't really mean,

doing things you don't feel good about, or just blanking out. After you've been around for a while you start to realize that the cost of this kind of maneuvering is a heavy heart.

From what I've seen, there is no secret magic wand of psychotherapy that can instantly lighten a heart thus burdened. Psychotherapists are in the same human boat as the rest of us; they get depressed and divorced and commit suicide just like ordinary folks. You and the person you are trying to help are in the same human boat. There is no life without troubles. Roofs leak. The people you love get sick and die. Our needs turn out to be in conflict with the needs of people we care about. The best made agreements come unglued. People fall out of love. And it is always tempting to pretend that everything is just fine. But I believe very strongly that we will all like ourselves a lot more if we choose the troubles that come from being more honest and more engaged, rather than the troubles that come from various forms of conflict avoidance and self-deception, such as "I'll feel better if I have another drink." or "What she doesn't know won't hurt her." etc.

Our truthful lives will probably not get any easier, but they will get a lot more satisfying. Good counselors, psychotherapists, mentors and friends whatever their degree (or not), hold that knowledge for us, as we struggle to learn it and earn it. As adults there are many new possibilities open to us. We can learn to negotiate more of our conflicts, to confront more of our difficulties and to be honest without being mean.

A counselor is someone who does not condemn you for your evasions, mistakes or lack of skill, and believes in your worth as a person, your capacity to tell the truth and your strength to bear the truth, no matter what you've done up to now. That's what makes counseling similar to being a priest, a rabbi, a minister or a really good friend.

When we started pretending in order to please others at age three or four, that was the only way we could figure out how to get what we wanted. Now that we are adults we are capable of learning to tell the truth in conciliatory ways and we are capable of getting a lot more of what we want just by being courageous enough to ask for it. A good counselor, whether that person is a peer-counselor or a psychiatrist, is someone who invites us out of the role of maneuvering child and into the role of straightforward adult.

As adults we are capable of doing creative problem-solving and capable of negotiating in ways that were totally beyond our reach as children. So the fact is that we don't need to run away from our problems any more. What we need is to get in touch with ourselves and to learn new skills.

A counselor won't force you to tell the truth. It wouldn't be the truth if it were forced, it would just be one more thing you were saying to keep someone off your back. But a counselor is willing to hear how you actually feel. In this approach there are no bad feelings, there are only bad actions. It's OK to hate your drunken father; it's not OK to pick up a gun and shoot him. A big part of counseling is teaching people to make that distinction. In fact, the more people can acknowledge their feelings, the less they need to blindly act them out.

It's not the counselor's job to pull that stuff out of people; it's the counselor's job to be there to receive it and acknowledge it when it comes out in its own time. And to encourage the new skills and all the little moments of honesty that help a person toward a deeper truthfulness. There's a direct link between skill and awareness at work here. People are reluctant to acknowledge problems they feel they can't do anything about. As counseling conversations help a person to feel more confident

about being able to talk things over and talk things out, a person may become more willing to face and confront conflicts and problems.

As we realize that the counselor accepts us warts and all, clumsy coping maneuvers and all, we start to accept ourselves more. We are not angels and we are not devils. We are just ordinary human beings trying to figure how to get through life. There is a lot of trial and error along the way and that is nothing to be ashamed of. No one, absolutely no one, can learn to be human without making mistakes. But it is easy to imagine, when I am alone with my mistakes, that I am the stupidest, crummiest person in the world. A good counselor, (...friend, minister, parent, support group member) is someone who helps us develop a more realistic and forgiving picture of ourselves.

These relationships based on deep acceptance help to free us from the fantasy of being all-good or all-bad, help to free us from the need to keep up appearances. Thus, we can start to acknowledge and learn from whatever is going on inside us. Freed from the need to defend our mistakes, we can actually look at them, and get beyond the need to repeat them. But these are hard things to learn alone. It really helps if someone accompanies us along that road.

Sometimes you will be the receiver of that acceptance and sometimes the giver. Whichever role you happen to play at a given moment, it's helpful to understand that honest, caring, empathic conversations (Carl Rogers' big three), just by themselves, set in motion a kind of deep learning that has come to be known as "healing." "Healing" is a beautiful word and a powerful metaphor for positive change. But "healing" can also be a

misleading word because of the way it de-emphasizes learning and everyone's capacity to learn new ways of relating to people and navigating through life.

Here are five of the "deep learnings" that I see going on in almost all supportive and empathic conversations.

- In paying attention to someone in a calm, accepting way, you teach that person to pay attention to themselves in just that way.
- In caring for others, you teach them to care for themselves and you help them to feel more like caring about others.
- The more you have faced and accepted your own feelings, the more you can be a supportive witness for another person who is struggling to face and accept his or her feelings.
- In forgiving people for being human and making mistakes and having limits, you teach people to forgive themselves and start over, and you help them to have a more forgiving attitude toward others.
- By having conversations that include the honest sharing and recognition of feelings, and the exploration of alternative possibilities of action, you help a person to see that, by gradual degrees, they can start to have more honest and fruitful conversations with the important people in their lives.

These experiences belong to everyone, since they are part of being human. They are ours to learn and, through the depth of our caring, honesty and empathy, ours to give. I believe they are the heart of counseling.

Peer Counseling With the Five Messages

*A three-point analysis of using the Five Messages
to help people face their problems in more satisfying ways.*

by Dennis Rivers. MA

Point 1. Life includes conflicts and difficult situations. People who are in need of emotional support and/or who show up for counseling are usually feeling some combination of fear, confusion, “stuckness”, frustration and loss. These are usually healthy distresses, signals from the person’s body-mind and life that something needs attention. (As psychology professor Lawrence Brammer points out in his book, *The Helping Relationship*, most people who need counseling and emotional support are not “mentally ill.”) From a humanistic, existential or Rogerian perspective, the point of counseling is not simply to make these distressing feelings go away, it is to encourage a person to find their own way of changing what needs to be changed, learning what needs to be learned and accepting what needs to be accepted. Here is a list of the typical kinds of life stresses that cause people to reach out for emotional support and guidance.

Afraid: (examples)

to face the feelings I’m having, (don’t know any safe way to “let off steam”)
to tell people I don’t like what they are doing
to face the mistakes I’ve made because I’ll feel ashamed,
(so I keep on making the same mistakes)
to confront people with a mistake I think they have made / are making
to admit that my needs are in conflict with the needs of important people in my life
of losing people’s love, respect and acceptance if I say what I really feel or want

Confused by changes in life, and need to develop new sense of competence and inner strength: (examples)

kids grow up and leave home -- the struggle to stay connected with them
new boss at work -- lose job -- change job -- no job
go to college or move to a new community -- no emotional support
start or end a relationship -- have to reorganize my life -- who am I now?
get pregnant -- have to make big decisions and reorganize life -- who am I now?
parents get old, need me to take care of them, feels like I’m *their* parent now
my body is changing without asking my permission, and I don’t know what to
expect next (truest for young teens & elders)

Stuck/frustrated: (examples)

in a family that I both love and hate, always colliding with other people
in a job that I don’t like, or stuck in jail -- don’t know where to go next
in a relationship that seems to have gone flat -- don’t know how to
restart some good feelings between me and my partner

Feeling a sense of loss: (examples)

my best friend moved to another town
my child died -- one of my parents died
in order to have a place of my own, I have to leave home
one of my parents became an alcoholic and I don’t like being around him/her

Point 2. People often don't know how to negotiate and how to work their way through difficult situations like the ones just listed, so they cope by using a variety of avoidance maneuvers or they act out their distress in ways that hurt themselves or others. The problem with the responses listed below is that they don't work well past the first moment.

- Deleting -- I just don't mention that I took that money out of your wallet.
- Distorting -- I say "it broke" when what happened was that I broke it.
- Generalizing -- I get mad and say "you never" or "you always" in order to avoid having to say "I'm frustrated" or "I need your help/love/time..."
- Distracting -- I start a fight, get drunk, watch lots of TV, start a new romance, move to a new town -- all these can be done with the unconscious intention of running away from my feelings
- Pretending -- I act out feelings that I don't have in order to avoid the ones I do have. (Anger is frequently substituted for sorrow.)
- Denying -- Blanking out -- I don't feel anything and I don't know what you're talking about -- often accompanied by alcohol
- Spacing out -- I'm not really here -- I'm somewhere else -- often accompanied by drugs or alcohol. Extreme forms include going crazy to extricate oneself from what seems like an impossible situation.
- "Acting out" -- I express my distress by breaking things, hitting people, running away or doing something that will get me arrested (and out of the original problem situation).

What people actually need is consciously to express more of their feelings and more of the significance of their situation, usually in words and conversations (but it could be in drawing or clay, etc.), in order to be able to think about what is happening in their lives and feel their way to their next step. Feelings of embarrassment ("I'm no good if I've got a problem.") and lack of skill make it harder for a person to face their difficulties.

By adopting an attitude of deep acceptance, a counselor reassures a person of their fundamental worth, and thus makes it easier for people to admit their feelings and get actively engaged in changing what needs to be changed, learning what needs to be learned and accepting what needs to be accepted.

Point 3. Encouraging people to listen and express themselves with the Five Messages is one way of helping people become more directly engaged with their life challenges. Those processes of changing, learning and accepting mentioned in Point 2 require intense involvement. Working with the Five Messages is one way of overcoming one's own avoidance maneuvers -- by systematically exploring the questions, "What am I experiencing?" and "What are you experiencing?"

From the Five Messages' point of view there are five different activities going on inside a person, whether that person is you or I. It would help our self-understanding if we would pay more attention to all five. And it would help our communication in conflict situations if we would express all five:

1. observing - what I am seeing, hearing, touching
(a simple description of "just the facts")
2. emoting - the emotions I am experiencing, such as joy, sorrow, frustration, fear, delight, anger, regret, etc., acknowledged in an "I statement"
3. interpreting, evaluating, associating and past wants -- a large part of my emotional response (sometimes all) to a situation can be caused by my own wants and my interpretation and evaluation of other people's actions.
4. wanting, hoping -- what I want now in terms of action, information, conversation or promise
5. envisioning, anticipating results -- what good situation will come about if I get what I'm asking for. It helps people understand and empathize with requests when the "happy ending" is expressed as part of the request itself.

Here is an example of a person understanding and communicating her or his own feelings and wants, in a situation where it would be easy to be bossy or condescending:

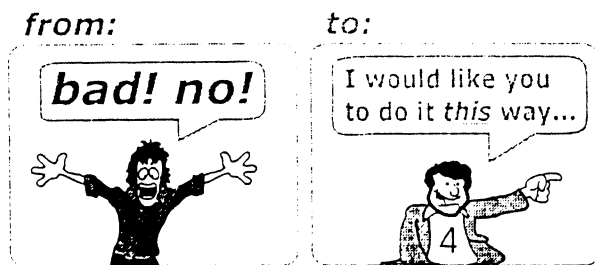
| The Five Messages: | Example (social worker to runaway): |
|---|---|
| 1. What are you seeing, hearing or otherwise sensing? (facts only) | "Hi there! I'd like to talk to you for a second... When I see you sitting out here on the street in the cold..." |
| 2. What emotions are you feeling? | ...I feel really concerned about you... |
| 3. What interpretations, wants, needs, memories or anticipation's <u>of yours</u> support those feelings? | ...because I imagine that you are going to get sick... |
| 4. What action, information or commitment do you want now? | ...and I want to ask you to come with me to out city's teen shelter... |
| 5. What <u>positive</u> results will that action, information or commitment lead to in the future? (no threats) | ...so that you can get some food to eat and have a safe place to stay tonight" |

Challenge Four

TRANSLATING COMPLAINTS AND CRITICISMS INTO REQUESTS

SUMMARY (repeated from Introduction): Translate your (and other people's) complaints and criticisms into specific requests, and explain your requests. In order to get more cooperation from others, whenever possible ask for what you want by using specific, action-oriented, positive language rather than by using generalizations, "why's," "don'ts" or "somebody should's." Help your listeners comply by explaining your requests with a "so that...", "it would help me to... if you would..." or "in order to..." Also, when you are receiving criticism and complaints from others, translate and restate the complaints as action requests.

(I introduced these two topics -- making requests and sharing our positive expectations -- in Chapter 3, but they are so important they deserve a chapter all their own.)



Why many people have a hard time making requests. It often feels easier to say, "You're wrong," than it is to say "I need your help." Making requests leaves us much more vulnerable in relation to our conversation partners than making criticisms or complaints. So people have a tendency to complain rather than to request. If we make a request, the other person could turn us down or make fun of us, and the *risk* of

disappointment and loss of face is hard to bear. If we complain, on the other hand, we stand on the emotional high ground and our listener is usually on the defensive. However, to improve our chances of getting cooperation from another person, we need to ask for what we want and risk being turned down. With practice we can each learn to bear those risks more skillfully and gracefully.

Why criticisms usually don't get the positive result we want: Whenever we place people on the defensive, their capacity to listen goes down. Their attention and energy will often go into some combination of defending their position, saving face and counter-attacking. Only when they feel safe are they likely to listen and consider how they might meet our needs. The truth of the complaint is not the issue. Because mutual imitation or emotional "echoing" is so much a part of ordinary conversation, a criticism from one partner, no matter how justified, tends to evoke a criticism from the other, bogging the pair down in a spiral of accusations. To avoid this trap, try to approach the other person not as an adversary in a debate but as a problem-solving partner.

Specific action requests help to focus your listener's attention on the present situation. Focus on the actions you want to take and the actions you want others to take in the present and future. (For example, use verbs and adverbs, such as "meet our deadlines regularly.") Avoid proposing changes in a person's supposed character traits (nouns

nd adjectives, such as “slow worker” or “bad team player”). “How can we solve this problem quickly?” will generally produce much better results than, “Why are you such an awful slow-poke?” In the latter kind of statement, I am actually suggesting to my conversation partner that the behavior I want changed is a fixed and perhaps unchangeable part of their personality, thus undermining my own goals and needs.

Talking about specifics will help to keep the current conversation from becoming one more episode in whatever unresolved conflicts might be in the background of your conversations. Your listener, like all of us, may sometimes be in the grip of feelings of embarrassment, resentment or self-doubt unrelated to the present situation. The more vague and open-ended a criticism is, the easier it is for your listener to hear it as part of those other conflicts. Instead of saying something like “Why does it always take you so long to get things done?”, try saying things like “I would like you to fix the faucet in Apartment #4 by five o’clock, so the tenants can use the kitchen sink when they get home tonight.” Of course, your tone of voice is important here. It’s important that you yourself are not carrying forward old complaints. Life is lived best one day at a time.

“We criticize people for not giving us what we ourselves are afraid to ask for.”

Marshall Rosenberg

Explanatory clauses can move people to cooperate. Research in social psychology has revealed that many people respond more positively to explained requests than to unexplained requests, even when the supposed explanation is obvious or doesn’t actually explain much of anything. Notice the difference between the following two ways of expressing requests:

“Will you please open the window?”

“May I please have a glass of water?”

AND...

“Will you please open the window so that we can get more fresh air in here?”

“May I please have a glass of water? I’m really thirsty.”

For many people the second form of the requests is much more inspiring. Why this is so is not certain. My hunches include that by explaining the reason, the speaker is treating the listener as a social equal, worthy of being persuaded and informed as to why a request is being made. The listener is invited to comply with a request to accomplish the stated goal rather than simply to submit to the will of the speaker. Another possibility is that since many requests are linguistically ambiguous and could easily be taken as orders, the explanation emphasizes that the statement is a real request. Whatever the reason, explaining your request makes it more likely that your listener will cooperate.

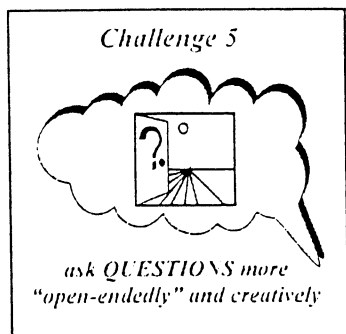
Explanatory clauses allow your conversation partners to imagine new solutions.

While any sort of explanatory clause seems to help, a real explanation of your goal allows your conversation partners to understand the context and purpose of your request. When for some reason they cannot meet your needs in the way you have asked, they may be able to meet your needs in some way that you had not thought of. (For an inspiring discussion of this topic, see *Getting to Yes*, by Fisher, Ury and Patton. They suggest that if you explain your overall goals rather than sticking to a very specific bargaining position, your negotiating adversaries may be able to propose mutually beneficial solutions that satisfy more of the needs of all parties. One main idea of the book is to turn your adversaries into problem-solving partners)

Challenge Five

ASKING QUESTIONS MORE "OPEN-ENDEDLY" AND MORE CREATIVELY

PART 1: Asking questions more "open-endedly." (Summary repeated from Introduction) In order to coordinate our life and work with the lives and work of other people, we all need to know more of what other people are feeling and thinking, wanting and planning. But our usual "yes/no" questions actually tend to shut people up rather than opening them up. You can encourage your conversation partners to share more of their thoughts and feelings by asking "open-ended" rather than "yes/no" questions.¹⁷ Open-ended questions allow for a wide range of responses. For example, asking "How did you like that food/movie/speech/doctor, etc.?" will evoke a more detailed response than "Did you like it?" (which could be answered with a simple "yes" or "no").



Consider the difference between two versions of the same question, as each might occur in a conversation between two people in a close relationship:

"Well, honey, do you want to go ahead and rent that apartment we

saw yesterday?"
AND...

"Well, honey, how do you feel about us renting that apartment we saw yesterday?"

The first version suggests a "yes" or "no" answer, favors "yes" and does not invite much discussion. A person hearing such a question may feel pressured to reach a decision, and may not make the best decision.

Both versions imply a suggestion to rent the apartment, but the second question is much more inviting of a wide range of responses. Even if our goal is to persuade, we can't do a good job of that unless we address our listener's concerns, and we won't understand those concerns unless we ask questions that invite discussion.

When you are under time pressure, it is tempting to push people to make "yes-no" decisions. But pressing forward without addressing people's concerns has played a key role in many on-the-job accidents and catastrophes (such as the Challenger Space Shuttle explosion).

On the next page you will find some examples of open-ended questions that could be helpful in:

- solving problems in a way that meets more of everyone's needs,
- getting to know and understand the people around you better, and
- simply creating richer and more satisfying conversations.

¹⁷ For more practical information on how to ask questions more fruitfully, see Chapter 5 of Gerald Goodman's *The Talk Book* (Emmaus, PA: Rodale Press, 1988).

PART 2: Asking questions more creatively. (Summary repeated from Introduction) What sort of questions are truly worth asking? When we ask questions we are using a powerful language tool to *focus conversational attention and guide our interaction with others*. But many of the questions we have learned to ask are totally fruitless and self-defeating (such as, parents to pregnant teen, "Why???! Why have you done this to us???!"). In general it will be more fruitful to ask "how" questions about the future rather than "why" questions about the past, but there are many more creative possibilities. Of the billions of questions we might ask, not all are equally fruitful or illuminating; not all are equally helpful in solving problems together. In this section we will explore asking powerfully creative questions (with the help of researchers in many fields).

Please note: Some of the questions discussed below, if asked without any preparation, may be experienced by others as *demanding* or as *invading one's privacy*. Start by asking these questions of yourself first. Before asking them of others, practice the "introductions to a conversation" described in the Challenge Two chapter.

Question-asking in everyday life. As we wrestle with each new challenge in life, we ask ourselves and others a continuous stream of questions. Question-asking is one of the main ways that we try to get a grip on whatever is going on, but we are usually not very conscious of the quality of questions we ask.

"Why are you always such a jerk?"

or...

"How could we work together to solve this problem?"

As noted above, not all questions are of equal value. Many are a waste of effort but a few can be amazingly helpful. Learning to ask conscious, fruitful questions of others, of oneself, and about one's situation or task at hand, is an important part of the training of many professionals: psychotherapists,¹⁸ engineers, architects,¹⁹ mathematicians,²⁰ doctors and others. All of these groups ask deeply penetrating questions. They do so in order to apply a body of knowledge to solve problems in a way that respects the unique elements of each new situation, person, piece of land, broken leg, canyon to be bridged, and so on. (A structured kind of self-questioning is also part of the communal life of the Quakers, as I have observed in attending various Quaker meetings, and part of Jesuit religious practice, as a Jesuit friend shared with me.)

"How could I have been so stupid?"

or...

"What could I learn from this experience?"

A tool for everyone. Asking conscious, creative and exploratory questions is not just for professionals; it is for all of us. We are each engaged in the process of trying to build a better life, a better family, a better workplace, a better world, just as if we were trying to build the world's tallest building. We can apply in our own lives some of the styles of creative questioning that engineers

¹⁸ This is especially true in narrative therapy. For dozens of inspiring examples see Jill Freedman and Gene Combs, *Narrative Therapy: The Social Construction of Preferred Realities*. New York: Norton, 1996. Chap. 5.

¹⁹ Donald A. Schön describes this as a process of inquiry and reflection-in-action in *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. New York: Basic Books, 1983.

²⁰ For a list of questions that constitute a method of solving mathematical problems, see George Polya, *How to Solve It: A New Aspect of Mathematical Method*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1957. xvi.

se to build better bridges, psychotherapists
se to help their clients and negotiators use
o reach agreements.

How am I going to nail that bastard?

or...

What would be best for me in this situation?

The many examples of exploratory questions given by Donald Schön in *The Reflective Practitioner*²¹ suggest that we use questions to make a kind of 'space' in our minds for things we do not know yet (in the sense of understand), or have not decided yet, or have not invented yet, or have not discovered yet. "Hmmm," an architect might think, "how could we arrange this building so that it follows the contour of the land?"

The answer will involve a complex mix of discovering, inventing, understanding, and deciding, all pulled together partly by the creative power of the question. This thinking process is easier to imagine when we use visual examples, such as designing a house to blend into a hillside (but not cause a landslide!). But these same elements are present in all our cooperative problem-solving activities. Asking questions can allow us to start thinking about the unknown, because questions focus our attention, and provide a theme for continued exploration. Questions are like the mountain climber's hook-on-the-end-of-a-rope: we throw the hook into the unknown, and we pull ourselves into the future. But we need to learn how and where to throw, so that we pull ourselves into a better future.

**How can I do this without
anybody finding out?**

or...

**If I do what I am thinking about doing,
what kind of person will that
help to make me?**

As far as I know, there is no straightforward set of rules about how to ask questions that are more helpful or more tuned to the needs of a particular situation. But you can get an intuitive sense of how to do it by studying a wide range of creative questions. The exercise that follows will give you a chance to try out some of the best questions ever asked.

Questions of power. In many situations you may not have the emotional, social or political power to ask creative questions. Political power often works to narrow the range of permissible questions and narrow the range of who is allowed to ask them. For example, it is difficult to get US decision-makers to consider the question "Now that the Cold War is over, why is the United States spending more money than ever on nuclear weapons?" Totalitarian governments, modern advertising agencies and abusive families all want us to obey in unthinking silence rather than to question and explore possibilities. Learning to ask creative questions, in a compassionate and conciliatory way, can be a large step forward in reclaiming your lost power as a person, a family member, a citizen and a problem-solver.

²¹ Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner*

Third exercise for Challenge 5: Expanding your tool kit of creative questions

The list of questions presented below contains the most intense and creative questions I have been able to find, drawn from the works of many deep question-askers. Next to each question in the table below I have given the field in which I have encountered that question. Take each question on the list and imagine a situation in your life in which you might ask that question. This is a demanding exercise. You may want to break it up into several sessions. (In real life, as discussed in Chapter 2, it works better if you let people know what kind of conversation you want to have, before you start a conversation that includes challenging questions or intimate inquiries.)

| Question | Source fields | When and where you could ask these questions in your own life. |
|--|---|--|
| 1. How does this feel to me? 2. What (am I / are you) experiencing right now? | Gestalt therapy and general psychotherapy. | |
| 3. How could I have done that differently? How could you have done that differently? 4. What could (I / you) learn from this... (situation, mistake, painful experience)? | General psychotherapy. | |
| 5. What kind of explanations do I give myself when bad events happen? 6. How easy would it be for me to view this difficult situation as temporary, specific to one location and partly the result of chance? | Martin Seligman's research on learned helplessness, optimism and explanatory style. ²² <i>Note: Seligman found that over-generalizing plays a key role in making people feel depressed. When bad things happen, pessimists are more likely to say to themselves "That's how it will always be, everywhere." and "It's totally and completely my fault."</i> | |

²²Martin E. P. Seligman, *Learned Optimism*. New York: Knopf, 1991.

A list of creative, exploratory questions (continued).

| Question | Source fields | When and where you could ask these questions in your own life. |
|---|---|--|
| <p>7. What is the most important thing that I want in this situation?</p> <p>8. What solutions might bring everyone more of what they want?</p> <p>9. What is my best alternative to a negotiated agreement?</p> <p>10. What kind of self-fulfilling prophecy to I want to set in motion in this situation?</p> | <p>Conflict resolution, negotiation, management, especially <i>Getting to Yes</i>.²³</p> <p>(Note: A self-fulfilling prophecy is a stance that generates its own validation. For example, a person walking down a crowded street screaming "You will not like me!" at passersby is making their statement come true.)</p> | |
| <p>11. What possibilities would be suggested if I were to look at this situation as if it were an airplane... a car... a circus... a movie... a Broadway musical..., etc.?</p> <p>12. What does this situation remind me of?</p> | <p>Creative problem-solving in the arts, architecture, engineering and management.²⁴</p> | |
| <p>13. If I do what I am thinking about doing, what kind of person will that help to make me?</p> | <p>Social constructionist communication theory.</p> <p>(Note: In the social constructionist view of being a person, a sense of self is the overarching story that persons tell to make sense out of their actions and the events of their lives. Each of <u>our</u> actions supports the development of some stories and inhibits the development of others.)</p> | |

²³Fisher, Ury and Patton, *Getting to Yes*.

²⁴Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner*.

A list of creative, exploratory questions (continued).

| Question | Source fields | When and where you could ask these questions in your own life. |
|---|--|--|
| 14. What were the times like when we all got along together just fine, when we didn't have this problem? How did that work and what did that feel like? | Narrative therapy. ²⁵ (These are typical questions from narrative therapy that I have translated into a first person inquiry.) | |
| 15. (focusing on success) Looking back on this accomplishment, what seem to be the turning points that made this possible? | <i>Note: The central concern of narrative therapy is that the stories we tell ourselves to make sense of our lives and our life difficulties tend to leave out the kinds of events in our lives that might support a more energizing story. Narrative therapy tries to bring these "sparkling moments" into the foreground of attention, and to use them as a basis for creating a story that emphasizes strength and resourcefulness rather than illness, dysfunction and disability.</i> | |
| 16. What were all the details of that moment of success? | | |
| 17. Reviewing all these moments of success up to now, what kind of future could be possible? | | |

Notes on asking questions more creatively:

²⁵Freedman and Combs, *Narrative Therapy*.

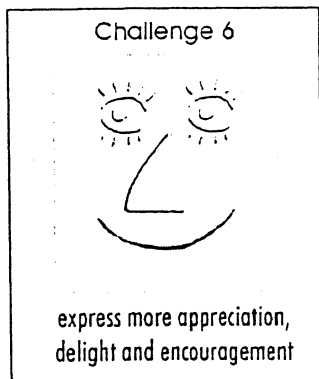
Challenge Six

EXPRESSING MORE APPRECIATION

SUMMARY(repeated from Introduction): In order to build more satisfying relationships with the people around you, express more appreciation, delight, affirmation, encouragement and gratitude.

Because life continually requires us to attend to problems and breakdowns, it gets very easy to see in life only what is broken and needs fixing. But satisfying relationships (and a happy life) require us to notice and respond to what is delightful, excellent, enjoyable, to work well done, to food well cooked, etc.

It is appreciation that makes a relationship strong enough to accommodate differences and disagreements. Thinkers and researchers in many different fields have reached a similar conclusion: healthy relationships need a core of mutual appreciation.



Expressing more appreciation is probably the most powerful and rewarding of the steps described in this workbook, and it is one of the most demanding. Some writers on the

subject go so far as to propose that gratefulness is key to a happy life and peace with God! (If only how to get there were so clear!) Expressing appreciation is certainly a much more personal step than, say, learning to ask open-ended questions.

To express gratitude in a meaningful way, a person needs to actually feel grateful, and that often involves looking at a person or situation from a new angle. Expressing appreciation thus involves both an expressive action and an inner attitude. So this chapter includes both exercises in how to express appreciation and also a lot of background information to help you explore your attitudes about gratefulness. My hope for this chapter is that it will help to put "Explore and Express More Appreciation" on your lifetime Do List. Unfortunately, there is no button in our brains that we can push to make ourselves instantly more grateful and appreciative. But there are countless opportunities each day to grow in that direction.

RESEARCH ON THE POWER OF APPRECIATION AND GRATEFULNESS

Couples. If, like me, you have not given much attention to the topic of appreciation, you will probably be as amazed as I was to learn the results of recent research on appreciation. What researchers call "positive interactions" are at the heart of good marriages, healthy development in children and successful businesses! For example, researchers at the University of Washington have discovered that couples who stay together tend to have *five times* more positive

interactions than negative ones.²⁶ Couples who stay together often have real disagreements, but a strong pattern of appreciative and affirming interaction appears to give them the positive momentum they need to work through their problems.

Bringing up kids. The child development research of Betty Hart and Todd Risley produced a strikingly parallel conclusion regarding parent-child interaction. "They found that children who are the most intelligent, self-confident and flexible ... at ages six to eight had experienced five times more positive than negative interchanges with their parents by age three"²⁷ By age three, the children who would thrive had received an average of around 500,000 positive interactions! (The most important implication of the Hart and Risley research for this workbook is that *appreciation nurtures!* Self-esteem in both children and adults contains a large component of internalized appreciation. It is never too late to begin listening and appreciating, and paying attention to the qualities and behaviors you want to encourage in others.)

Creating successful businesses. In his book for managers, *Bringing Out the Best in People*,²⁸ management consultant Aubrey Daniels argues that recognition and appreciation are the most powerful motivators of improved performance. But in spite of this many managers are still more focused on punishing the low performers than on recognizing the high performers. Building a successful business means most of

all bringing out the best in people, according to Daniels, and only people-oriented positive reinforcement, in the form of appreciation, recognition and gratitude, can do that.

Living more gratefully. In his book, *Gratefulness, the Heart of Prayer*,²⁹ Brother David Steindl-Rast suggests that spiritual life makes much more sense if we see all spiritual virtues as radiating out from gratefulness. To be grateful for the goodness of the simplest things, bread baked by a neighbor, the turning of the seasons, the sound of water running in a brook, the sound of children playing in a schoolyard, is to affirm that there is a source of goodness in life, in spite of the many sorrows that life also includes. For Brother David, our gratefulness is our deepest prayer, prayed not with words but with our hearts.

EXPLORING THE PERSONAL SIDE OF GRATEFULNESS

Gratitude as a way of seeing. The only problem with all these great discoveries in favor of gratitude is that appreciation and gratitude are not like mental faucets that we can just turn on at will. Gratefulness has two sides. Expressing gratitude is partly a conscious action, like opening a door or telling a story. It is also a result of deep attitudes: *the way we look at our lives and the way we turn the events of our lives into meaningful stories.* Parents teach their children to say "thank you," the action part, in the hope that their children will grow into the attitude part. For adults, I believe, the path toward gratitude includes an exploration of both.

²⁶ See *Lifeskills*, by Virginia and Redford Williams. New York: Random House, 1977. Pg. 100, and *Why Marriages Succeed or Fail*, by John Gottman with Nan Silver. New York: Simon & Shuster, 1994.

²⁷ *Lifeskills*. by Virginia and Redford Williams. New York: Random House, 1977. Pg. 101.

²⁸ *Bringing Out the Best in People*, by Aubrey C. Daniels. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994.

²⁹ *Gratefulness, the Heart of Prayer, An Approach to Life in Fullness*, by David Steindl-Rast. Ramsey, NJ: Paulist Press, 1984.

Stories, suffering and gratitude. Human beings need to make sense out of what can be a bewildering variety of life experiences. Life is not particularly consistent. Joy comes one day, sorrow the next. Success alternates with failure. Sometimes our efforts matter a lot and sometimes it is a matter of luck, good or bad. One of the main ways we bring coherence to this mind-boggling variety is to develop our own personal organizing “themes” such as “my life of adventure” or “my struggle with alcohol.” Since no one theme can hold all the events in our lives, we pick out and emphasize the experiences that illustrate our main theme and let all the other events fade into the background.

Most people do not consciously pick their themes. We more often borrow them from our parents, or are pushed into them by powerful events in our lives such as love, war, abuse, success or failure. A former soldier might weave his life story around the theme of “I went to Vietnam and got totally messed up.” Another soldier from the same combat unit might organize his life around the theme “In my family we get through difficult times by staying close.” These two men might have experienced the same horrors of war, but their different themes are going to keep them *looking for* and *paying attention to* different kinds of experiences in the present.

The important thing to remember about themes is that although they may be deeply true, they are never all of the truth about a person’s life or about life in general. Life is always larger than all our stories, and the events of a person’s life can be arranged, with effort, to illustrate many different themes, not just one. This fact can open a path toward gratitude, even for people who have endured great suffering and deprivation.

Exploring a new theme: Receiving each day as a gift. Becoming aware that our themes emphasize some events in our lives and ignore many others can be a real jolt. But this jolt can empower us to explore more energizing and more life-supporting story-lines. In offering for your consideration the theme of *receiving each day as a gift*, I draw on the inspiring work of two monks, Brother David Steindl-Rast, a Catholic, and Thich Nhat Hanh, a Buddhist, who are modern apostles of the grateful heart. I also draw on the many wonderful current writers on narrative therapy.³⁰

With great inner kindness we can thank the themes that have helped us make sense of life up to now (they were the best we could do), and gently move toward themes that emphasize more of the good things that have happened in our lives. This conscious work on developing a new story will make it easier for us to see opportunities for appreciation in all our daily environments (work, home, community).

One possible first step in receiving each day as a gift is to think of *any* days in your life that have felt like gifts or blessings. This can be even more helpful if you write down these wonderful times as part of developing a journal of gratitude. Slowly, over weeks and months, you can begin to feel out an alternative way of telling the story of your life. I will never forget the smell of Christmas trees in our living room when I was a child. And the glow of the multi-colored lights when all the other lights in the room had been turned off. So in spite of the fact that I was part of a troubled family, I had moments of amazing wonder and delight,

³⁰ For a very engaging example of the narrative therapy approach, see *Narrative Therapy: The Social Construction of Preferred Realities*, by Jill Freedman and Gene Combs. New York: Norton, 1996.

Thank you equals yes to life. Another possible step in cultivating a grateful heart is to look for small ways to say thank you to total strangers. When you are in a restaurant and the food tastes good, say something about it to the person who is serving you. When I get out of the dentist's chair, I thank the person who has just spent half an hour of their life trying with great effort and discipline to make sure that my teeth stay in my head. I have spent many an afternoon in front of some market gathering signatures for one cause or another, so when I see someone gathering signatures for a cause I support, I walk up to them and say "Thank you for being here." The possibilities are endless.

Behind this practice is the fact that, for me, my long history as an anti-nuclear advocate has required me to say "no" a great deal, and to say "no" very thoughtfully and consistently for years on end, a deep and heartfelt "no" to leaking waste tanks, contaminated water, radiation-induced cancers and so on. I realized some years ago that I seemed to be losing my capacity to say "yes." My practice of thanking people whenever I get the chance is my way of saying yes to life in small installments.

Expressing gratitude in the middle of a difficult life. Considered on a wider level, part of the problem of suffering and oppression is that people who are oppressed tend to become obsessed with the source of their suffering. Whether the oppressing force is nuclear weapons, an alcoholic parent, a chronic illness or a boss in a sweatshop, the oppressor tends to become the central feature in the oppressed person's life story. In this context, the practice of gratitude can be seen as a deep resistance to having one's life taken over.

A dear friend of mine, bedridden for years with a debilitating disease, has learned

to find sustaining comfort in the stars that shine through her windows at night. She has become grateful for the galaxies, and is filled with wonder that the universe created her, limited though her movements may be. This kind of experience suggests to me that moments of gratitude, and expressing more appreciation for one another, do not have to mean that we are saying everything in life is just fine. Quite to the contrary, in opening ourselves to experience even the smallest delight and gratitude we can be gathering strength to change what needs to be changed in our lives. And to struggle with our difficult life assignments.

Ultimately, it is even possible to give thanks for one's troubles. The difficulties of our lives, after all, challenge us to become deeper people, more aware and more compassionate. We would not grow without them, as Judith Viorst explains with great kindness in her book *Necessary Losses*.³¹ But this is a very advanced form of gratitude and probably not the best place to begin, just as you would not try to climb Mt. Everest as your very first experience of hiking. I also doubt that it is fruitful to preach to others that they should be more grateful for their painful challenges. This lesson is best taught by our own example. By practicing gratitude in many small ways, we can learn from our own life experience how to go deeper. In the following section we explore one possible way of expressing this everyday appreciation more consciously and more clearly

³¹ *Necessary Losses*, by Judith Viorst. New York: Ballantine Books, 1987.

EXPLORING THREE-PART APPRECIATIONS

The inner structure of appreciation. In Chapter 3 of this workbook, I introduced the “Five Messages” model as a way of understanding what we need to tell people in order for them to understand us better. Good listening involves the listener reconstructing the speaker’s experience. That can be done a lot more easily when speakers share all five of the basic dimensions of their experience. Here is an example of a fully expressed experience of appreciation, using all of the messages in the Five Messages model to express the various aspects.

STARTING WITH THE FIVE MESSAGES IN ACTION

| The Five Messages | express: | Example: |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| <i>seeing, hearing...</i> | 1. What are you seeing, hearing or otherwise sensing? (facts only) | “When I saw my paycheck in the mailbox today... |
| <i>and feeling...</i> | 2. What emotions are you feeling? | ...I felt really relieved... |
| <i>because I...</i> | 3. What interpretations, wants, needs, memories or anticipations <u>of yours</u> support those feelings? | ...because I need to pay my rent tomorrow morning... |
| <i>and now I want...</i> | 4. What action, information or commitment do you want now? | ...and I want to run down to the bank and deposit it right now... |
| <i>so that...</i> | 5. What <u>positive</u> results will that action, information or commitment lead to in the future? (no threats) | ...so that my rent check will clear if my landlord cashes it tomorrow.” |

Note: My deep appreciation goes to the work of Marshall Rosenberg³² for helping me to understand messages 1 through 4, and to the work of Sharon and Gordon Bower³³ for helping me understand message 5.

Although the Five Messages model has a space for everything, many expressions of appreciation do not need Messages 4 and 5. Most expressions of gratitude convey a message of satisfaction that is not necessarily connected to any future actions (*and now I want*) or anticipations of positive results (*so that*). Every now and then you may need to include Messages 4 and 5 in order to express your feelings in a complex situation, but as you can see in the examples on the next page, Three-Part Appreciations really can tell the whole story in most situations.

³² Marshall Rosenberg, *A Model for Nonviolent Communication*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers. 1983

³³ Sharon Anthony Bower and Gordon H. Bower, *Asserting Yourself: A Practical Guide for Positive Change*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley. 1976

EXPLORING EXAMPLES OF THREE-PART APPRECIATIONS

| 1. When I saw/heard... | 2. I felt... | 3. because I...(need, want, interpret, associate, etc.) |
|--|--|--|
| When I saw the flowers on the table... | ...I felt so grateful to you... | ...because the flowers reminded me of all the nice things you do around here” |
| “When I tasted those strawberry pancakes... | ...I felt amazed and delighted... | ...because I don’t remember ever tasting pancakes so good in my whole life!” |
| “When I heard you reading the Blue Burp story to Susie and Jimmy... | ...I felt a quite kind of happiness... | ...because I know how much the kids love that story.” |
| “When I saw how neatly the tools were hung up in the garage... | ...I felt very thankful... | ...because I hate it when I’m in the middle of a job and I can’t find the tools I need.” |
| “When I saw Big Joe #37 hit that home run all the way out of the park... | ...man! I was really excited... | ...because I thought the Wranglers had a chance of winning the game after all.” |
| “When I finally got a call through to you in San Francisco... | ...I was so relieved and happy... | ...because I had been worrying that you had been hurt in the earthquake.” |
| “When I felt you put your arm around me at Aunt Nell’s funeral... | ...I felt very appreciative... | ...because I was feeling really awful at just then and needed some comfort.” |
| “When I smelled that chicken cooking in the kitchen... | ...I felt soooooo happy... | ...because I didn’t get any lunch today and I am really hungry.” |

“I-Statement” appreciations versus positive judgments. One very important aspect of Three-Part Appreciations is that the appreciator is sharing the details of her or his experience of another person’s action. These are quite different statements than saying “You are wonderful!”, “You are such a great guy.”, “You are the greatest cook in the world.”, “You are so beautiful.” and so on. Although such statements sound like the highest praise, there can be a big gap between what they intend to convey and how they are actually received by others. Here are three reasons why.

First of all, even though these are positive judgments, they still put the recipient in the position of being judged and the praise-giver in the position of judge, which is not necessarily a chair you want to sit in. Many people have experienced an unhappy lifetime of being judged by others, sometimes harshly, sometimes erratically, with the effect of making all judgments an unpleasant experience.

Secondly, notice how in the “You are so beautiful”-type statements the person doing the appreciating has disappeared. These are actually very impersonal statements. There is no “I feel” to anchor the feelings as belonging specifically to the giver of appreciation. One popular song said it better by at least saying “*You are so beautiful...to me!*”, making it more personal. Another popular song said it much better by saying “*Sometimes... all I need is the air that I breathe and to love you,*” which would bring the listener much closer to the speaker’s experience. This is a moving statement of appreciation because it connects the “I” with

the “you” very creatively in the same sentence.

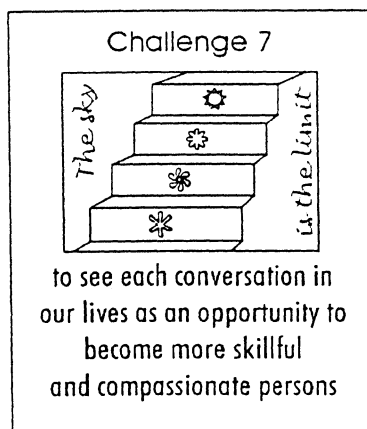
And finally, “You are wonderful”-type statements are often vague and may lack descriptive richness and meaning. The person being appreciated has to do a lot of mental work trying to figure out exactly what about them is being appreciated. It would be more informative if I were to say something like “I love the way you take care of all the trees on your farm.” or “I love the way the sun shines through your hair.” By comparison, you can hear how Three-Part Appreciations say much more than that.

Challenge Six - Conclusion. I hope these ideas, examples and arguments have intrigued you about the possibilities of expressing deeper appreciation to the important people in your life, to the web of life that sustains us all, and for all the simple things that could delight us if we let them. Part of that process involves seeing with new eyes: standing back from the struggles and troubles of everyday life and making a space to notice what is good, healthy and delightful. Another part of the process involves expressing appreciation more mindfully and more self-revealingly. The reward for all this effort will be that the people you like will really understand that you like them. You will not always need the three-part format, but mastering it to the point where you can produce Three-Part Appreciations at a moment’s notice, to the point where you truly “know it by heart,” will greatly expand your vocabulary of appreciation. The exercise on the next page will help.

Challenge Seven

SEEING EVERY CONVERSATION AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN –
MAKING BETTER COMMUNICATION AN IMPORTANT PART OF EVERYDAY LIVING

Developing faith in your own development. In this chapter I hope to get you excited about the *possibilities of practice* and *the horizons of personal development*. That probably sounds about as exciting as washing dishes. But, as far as I have been able to figure it out, better listening and better self-expression are very similar to better basketball-playing, better guitar-playing and better everything else. They all develop through attention, practice and faith. People everywhere plant and tend the vegetables in their gardens with the faith that there will be a harvest. Musicians practice every day with the faith that their skills will improve.



In order for us to invest the necessary time and effort required to become radiantly successful communicators, it is vital to develop a faith in the possibilities of our own development (and in the development of our families, and of all the teams of which we are members). At their best, parents and coaches believe in us so that we can learn to believe in

ourselves. As your coach via the printed page, I hope the information in this chapter (and readings) will support you in believing in yourself more deeply, so that you will practice enough to discover your own many capacities for skillfulness and excellence.

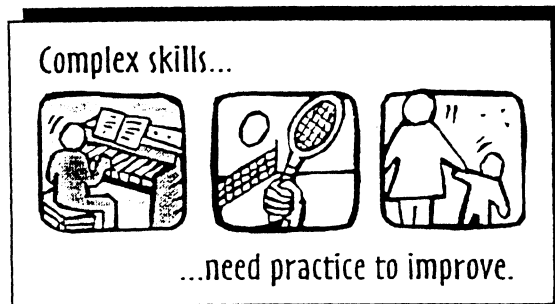
Practice matters more than talent

A recent statistical analysis of Olympic gold medal winners produced a result that is both startling and reassuring. The single most important factor in winning a gold medal was having practiced longer than one's competitors. The analysis showed that the winners had consistently started to practice their skills earlier in life than everyone else in the contests. The evidence strongly suggests that gold medal winners are not necessarily more talented than everybody else. They just work much harder and much longer at being athletes than everyone else does. What this implies is that, with practice, most skills are within the reach of most people.³⁴

Over-learning. There is an important psychological principle at work in all skill development and that principle is called *over-learning*. If we learn something just well enough to do it once successfully, we will not actually remember how to do it for very long.

³⁴ From an article in the New York Times, October 11, 1994.

To master a skill, we have to practice it a lot more than would seem necessary. In order to remember better communication skills in the middle of arguments and tense negotiations, a person needs to feel very competent and comfortable in using those skills, just as an accomplished musician can play musical scales without even thinking about it. (Even the greatest of musicians still practice many hours a week.) The reward for practicing your communication skills is that you will feel better about yourself and your connections to the people around you, and be able to face conflict situations more confidently. You will probably also be able to get more of what you want -- by being skillful enough to help your partners in living and working get more of what they want, too.



Doing what comes naturally. It might seem as though we ought to be able to get through life by just “doing what comes naturally,” that we should not have to try so hard. I certainly wish that were possible. But if you stop to reflect on how humans learn to talk, it is clear that, as far as communication skills are concerned, we are

born knowing how to cry, how to grunt, and how to learn everything else. That’s about it. Almost all of what seems ‘natural’ to us now is the result of intense learning all through our lives. As natural as it may feel to use sarcasm or ask self-defeating questions, these are actions we learned by copying others. We can learn new skills that will in time feel as natural as the old ones. In fact, learning new skills is the most natural thing in the world. It is what we are designed to do as creatures with big brains and multipurpose hands.

Exercise 7-infinity: A homework assignment for the rest of our lives. A big part of mastering the communication skills described in this workbook is learning to see opportunities to practice them, and learning to link together long chains of the six conversational actions described in chapters 1 through 6. This involves seeing everyday conversations and disagreements in a new light, seeing them as opportunities to learn, grow, practice your skills and enjoy being skillful. On the following page you will find my list (one interpretation, of course) of the basic situations in which people talk and listen, seen as opportunities to grow. Each of these situations represents an open horizon: there is no limit to how much awareness, skill, and compassion we can bring into each of these communication activities. And there is no limit to how good we can feel when we do them well. The homework assignment for this Challenge is to continue the process that began at the moment of your birth: to keep on learning about the life that lives between us.

CONVERSATION: CREATING THE LIFE THAT LIVES BETWEEN US
(and within us, too)

**Talking about my thoughts, feelings, experiences and wants
with the people who are close to me in my life...**

*directions of possible development >>> ...in ways that express
more of what is going on inside of me and in ways that are
easier for my listeners to understand and empathize with.*

Listening to people share their experiences, thoughts, feelings...

*directions of possible development >>> ...more carefully, expressing
more acknowledgment, responding in ways that confirm to my
partners-in-conversation that I have understood their experiences.*

Talking with people to express my appreciation of them...

*directions of possible development >>> ...in a richer and more complete
vocabulary, that allows people to understand more of my satisfaction
and delight with them and with what they have done.*

Talking with people to resolve my conflicts with them...

*directions of possible development >>> ...speaking in ways that express
more of my needs without attacking my partners-in-conflict, listening
in ways that help my partners-in-conflict express more of their needs
without attacking me.*

**Talking and listening to coordinate my actions with the actions of the
important people in my life (at home, in work, in community projects, etc.)...**

*directions of possible development >>> ...by expressing myself more clearly
and listening more carefully to increase the level of mutual understanding.
Also, by learning to discuss difficult topics without criticizing my listeners,
learning to translate my own and other people's criticisms into requests
for action, and learning to ask questions more creatively..*

Communicating with myself through journal writing and "inner conversations"...

*directions of possible development >>>
...in ways that allow me to get a clearer picture of what's happening in my life,
to feel more present in my life, to accept and forgive myself more,
to imagine and plan the next step in my life, etc.*

Listening and clarifying the issues as a mediator between people in conflict...

*directions of possible development >>> ...as an extension of all the above,
listening in a more responsive way, that confirms to each speaker that I
have understood his or her experiences and feelings; encouraging and coaching
each of the partners-in-conflict to listen to the other and to express wants
and needs as actions requests rather than attacks on the other. Acting as a
mediator generally requires training and practice. (The skills described in
this workbook are key elements in the process of mediation.)*

Learning to bring out the best in myself and others in and through conversation. Conversations are one of most important activities in which we become deeper and more fully realized persons. (See essay on page 63.) Conversations express our character, but they also create our character as we listen and speak...

(directions of possible development >>>)

... more awarely (of self, other and context)

... more skillfully, competently and wisely

... more honestly, sincerely, genuinely, congruently (inner matches outer)

... more caringly, compassionately, acceptingly, respectfully, warmly, forgivingly

... more creatively and "exploratorily" (with more creative openness to new experience)

... more courageously, hopefully and faithfully

... more generously and nurturingly, delighting in the happiness of others

... more meaningfully and expressively, organizing and expressing our experiences in coherent patterns of words, music, movement and imagery

... more gratefully and appreciatively, open to delight and the gift of each moment

... more engagingly, energetically and responsively

... more gracefully and beautifully (in the Navajo sense of beauty as cosmic harmony)

Upward and onward! As you can see from the list above, the qualities of good conversations shade off into the deeper qualities of being a person. The adverbs that apply to conversations (honestly, courageously) become the adjective of someone's character (honest, courageous, etc.) I am deeply convinced that we become persons largely in and through our communication with other persons. For some interesting explorations of the power of communication, please see the readings at the end of this chapter.

In the *Suggestions for Further Study* at the end of this workbook I have listed the books from which much of this workbook has been developed. Among the many approaches expressed in these books there are sure to be some that will help you continue your quest for better communication and conflict resolution skills. I urge you to study these books with friends and colleagues and I hope they will expand your life as much as they have expanded mine.

Perspectives on the power of communication:

Keep On Singing, Michael

Posted on the Internet by Joan Levy, MSW, ACSW, LCSW
The Body Mind & Breath Center of Kauai,
PO Box 160, Kapaa, Kauai, HI 96746

Like any good mother, when Karen found out that another baby was on the way, she did what she could to help her 3-year-old son, Michael, prepare for a new sibling. They find out that the new baby is going to be a girl, and day after day, night after night, Michael sings to his sister in Mommy's tummy.

The pregnancy progresses normally for Karen, an active member of the Panther Creek United Methodist Church in Morristown, Tennessee. Then the labor pains come. Every five minutes ... every minute. But complications arise during delivery. Hours of labor. Would a C-section be required?

Finally, Michael's little sister is born. But she is in serious condition. With siren howling in the night, the ambulance rushes the infant to the neonatal intensive care unit at St. Mary's Hospital, Knoxville, Tennessee. The days inch by. The little girl gets worse. The pediatric specialist tells the parents, "There is very little hope. Be prepared for the worst."

Karen and her husband contact a local cemetery about a burial plot. They have fixed up a special room in their home for the new baby - now they plan a funeral.

Michael keeps begging his parents to let him see his sister, "I want to sing to her," he says.

Week two in Intensive Care: It looks as if a funeral will come before the week is over. Michael keeps nagging about singing to his sister, but kids are never allowed in Intensive

Care. But Karen makes up her mind. She will take Michael whether they like it or not. If he doesn't see his sister now, he may never see her alive.

She dresses him in an oversized scrub suit and marches him into ICU. He looks like a walking laundry basket, but the head nurse recognizes him as a child and bellows, "Get that kid out of here now! No children are allowed in ICU." The mother rises up strong in Karen, and the usually mild-mannered lady glares steel-eyed into the head nurse's face, her lips a firm line. "He is not leaving until he sings to his sister!"

Karen tows Michael to his sister's bedside. He gazes at the tiny infant losing the battle to live. And he begins to sing. In the pure-hearted voice of a 3-year-old, Michael sings: "You are my sunshine, my only sunshine, you make me happy when skies are gray --- "

Instantly the baby girl responds. The pulse rate becomes calm and steady. Keep on singing, Michael. "You never know, dear, how much I love you, Please don't take my sunshine away---" The ragged, strained breathing becomes as smooth as a kitten's purr. Keep on singing, Michael. "The other night, dear, as I lay sleeping, I dreamed I held you in my arms..."

Michael's little sister relaxes as rest, healing rest, seems to sweep over her. Keep on singing, Michael. Tears conquer the face of the bossy head nurse. Karen glows. "You are my sunshine, my only sunshine. Please don't, take my sunshine away."

Funeral plans are scrapped. The next day -- the very next day -- the little girl is well enough to go home! Woman's Day magazine called it "the miracle of a brother's song." The medical staff just called it a miracle. Karen called it a miracle of God's love.

[Workbook editor's note: Dennis Rivers calls it the power of appreciation expressed!]

Perspectives on the power of communication:
Guy Louis Gabaldon, a compassionate
and creative Mexican American soldier

(Excerpted and adapted from an 8/31/98 story in the Los Angeles Times by David Reyes. Copyright 1998 by the Los Angeles Times. Reprinted with permission.)

Pete Limon, a retired San Clemente businessman, has never met World War II hero Guy Louis Gabaldon, but he feels as if he knows him--so much so that he is on a personal mission to see that Gabaldon gets the recognition Limon feels he deserves.



Guy Louis Gabaldon at 18.

Limon and others in the Latino community want to see Gabaldon awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for exploits that earned him the Navy Cross and that were depicted in the 1960 movie "Hell to Eternity."

"I feel [Gabaldon] should have been granted the Medal of Honor," Limon said, "but he was slighted because of his Mexican descent."

Limon, 74, and Gabaldon, 72, have much in common. Both are Latino, natives of Southern California. Both saw combat in the war--Limon is a Pearl Harbor survivor. Both

became successful businessmen: Limon a hotelier, Gabaldon a seafood merchant.

Limon said he has been fascinated for decades by the story of Gabaldon, whose heroics Mexican American veterans regard as equaling those of Audie Murphy, the most decorated U.S. soldier of World War II.

"I got involved in this project because, as a survivor of Pearl Harbor, I had this tremendous hate for the Japanese," Limon said. "Then I heard about Gabaldon and I softened."

Gabaldon, who served in the Western Pacific, was commended for having captured hundreds of Japanese prisoners -- mostly by persuasion.

His citation for the Navy Cross reads: "Working alone in front of the lines, he daringly entered enemy caves, pillboxes, buildings and jungle brush, frequently in the face of hostile fire, and succeeded in not only obtaining vital military information but in capturing well over one thousand civilians and troops."

Gabaldon's most effective weapon was his command of the Japanese language, which he learned as a child in East Los Angeles. One of seven children growing up in a tiny house, Gabaldon spent much of his time on the streets, where he was befriended by two Japanese-American brothers. Fascinated by their customs, he began spending time at their home and eventually moved in with them. He lived with his foster family for six years, learning their language and traditions, until the war broke out [in 1941] and they were sent to an internment camp. Gabaldon, then 17, joined the Marine Corps.

He was ... [sent to fight in the battle for] Saipan, one of the Mariana Islands [and a scene of some of the most intense fighting in World War II]. That is where he lives now, having owned businesses in California and Mexico over the years but finally returning to Saipan.

Speaking by telephone from there last week, Gabaldon related his wartime experience: On his first day in combat, he killed 33 Japanese soldiers but was then overcome with remorse. He took a new tack: He began going out alone and [speaking the Japanese he had learned in his adopted family] persuading Japanese soldiers to surrender to him, telling them they would be treated well, given food, water and medical care.

He would capture six soldiers at gunpoint but release three, telling them to spread the word about fair treatment as POWs. He would release them with a warning: "If they didn't come back, I would blast the hell out of the three left behind."

That was a ruse, but it worked. That was how he managed to take 800 prisoners in a single day.

Gabaldon harbors some bitterness over the Marine Corps' decision to award him the Silver Star instead of the Medal of Honor. Though his citation was upgraded to the Navy Cross after "Hell to Eternity" spawned a letter-writing campaign on his behalf, he has questions.

Gabaldon said he doesn't want the award "because I'm a Latino," but does feel that an explanation is in order, given his military record.

Gabaldon said he captured more prisoners than Sgt. Alvin York, who received the Medal of Honor after he killed 25 German soldiers and captured 132 in France in 1918.

"No Mexican American was awarded a Medal of Honor" in either World War, Gabaldon said. "I think it was blatant discrimination by the Marine Corps." Since then, 37 Latinos have received the Medal of Honor for bravery in combat in all branches of the service, but Gabaldon, though nominated in 1944, has yet to be chosen.

Limon says that is an injustice, especially because Gabaldon used wiles, rather than weapons, to take his prisoners.

"He used their own language and he didn't kill them," Limon said. "In the process, he saved the lives of the Japanese but also probably thousands of GIs who would have had to face them in battle."

Workbook Editor's Notes:

I included this story because it shows how even under extreme circumstances the power of communication can transform a situation. This is a complex story for many reasons, one of which is that Gabaldon used deception, coercion, compassion and truthfulness all at the same time! I would not recommend that anyone lie or threaten others with injury, but I am not in a battle zone, and since the conduct of war almost always includes deception, Gabaldon would probably have deceived these same soldiers in the course of trying to kill them, if that had been his goal.

My feeling about this story is that by living with a Japanese family, Gabaldon not only learned to speak Japanese, he probably also learned to see and to love Japanese people (his adopted family) as real people. That made him willing to risk his own life to save the lives of the Japanese soldiers (who were probably seen by the other American soldiers as just "the enemy"). Why did the Japanese soldiers believe him? His sincere concern for them might have been expressed in his bizarre behavior (going out alone to talk with them) and in his tone of voice, which is something that would have been hard to fake, and hard to adopt as a mere strategy.

One lesson that I draw from this story is that making peace demands more skill and mental effort than making war. Another is that more things are possible than we usually imagine. What lessons do you draw from this story?

What Kind of Person am I Becoming?
What Kind of People are We Becoming Together?

Reflections on Interpersonal Communication
and the Struggle to Become Persons

by Dennis Rivers, MA

The journey toward compassionate skill

Each year I have been teaching two four-week courses in communication skills to groups of university students who are about to volunteer in social service agencies, prisons, county jails, and juvenile halls. We focus on topics such as the power of supportive listening and how we come to know ourselves better in the process of explaining our experiences to someone. In their role as peer mentors they will be both using their communication skills and encouraging their mentored companions to develop better ways of communicating their way through everyday conflicts. The focus of my course is pragmatic rather than psychological or philosophical: how to listen more empathetically and express oneself more competently. There are, however, larger issues connected with interpersonal communication and subtle but important transactions going on between coach and trainee, between the giver of support and the receiver of support. I would like to be able to tell my students, all of them headed toward challenging encounters, just what these issues are, but I have had a difficult time putting the issues into words. In this essay, dedicated to my CSUN-V students, I will be exploring how the way we talk and listen is related to the way we live, so that coaching a person to communicate differently is at the same time inviting a person to live differently.

To give just one preliminary example of what I'm talking about, one of the largest

issues in moment-to-moment interpersonal communication is that many people do not express their thoughts, feelings and wants very clearly, perhaps out of fear of rejection. That vagueness prevents people from getting their needs met. But this particular issue, that surfaces in conversational coaching, is also, on a larger scale, the main issue addressed by Rogerian psychotherapy: that in hopes of winning the approval of others, we learn to present a stance to the world that can be totally disconnected from our own deepest feelings (our "organismic experiencing," in Rogers' terms), with which we may have lost touch altogether. In this light you can see that something sounding as simple as "communicating your needs more clearly" can have several levels of significance in a person's life.

In the course of teaching communication skills, I have tried to make the subject easy to grasp by keeping the focus on short-term goals. There are many helpful books that do the same. But the communication training encounter is also an encounter of persons exploring more satisfying ways of becoming persons together. The challenge for me as a trainer is to get people engaged and motivated at both levels. In this essay I concentrate on our desire to unfold as persons, and our urges to become more fully human.

Motivations for learning new communication skills

My experience has been that what brings most people to communication classes is usually an immediate need to have more satisfying conversations with a particular person or in a particular setting. These reasons are perfectly good ones as far as they go, but they are often not very deep or long-term. The problem here is that developing one's speaking, listening,

questioning, reflecting and negotiating skills takes a fair amount of effort. In my view, the short term motivations that people bring to the process may not keep them involved long enough for them to reach their goals. No one expects to become an athlete or a violinist in a single weekend, but many people hope to make major improvements in their communication style with a minimum investment of time and effort, only to be disappointed at the meager results.

What seems to be needed in communication training are motivations that are deeper and perhaps encompass entire seasons of a person's life, or perhaps one's entire life. Whenever we find examples of high competence and excellence in human life, we also find examples of deep, long-term motivations. I fully encourage (almost) all of my students' pragmatic motivations. But in order to get my students inspired with more of the motivation they will need to reach their competence goals, I have begun to introduce them to such life-long questions as:

- "What kind of person do I want to become?" (or, alternatively, "Who's life inspires me?")
- "What kind of person do I enjoy being?"
- "How can I deepen my relationships with the important people in my life, *how can we nurture the life that lives between us?*"
- "What kind of world do I want to create with my conversations and actions"

These are tough questions but they are also powerful questions. These questions challenge a person to develop more inner and relational goals, rather than being only outer-directed by the immediate needs of coping with

work and family situations. Again, I am not saying that there is anything bad about such immediate goals and I do everything within my power to help people reach them. My only reservation about these goals is that they may not be energizing enough to provide for their own fulfillment.

What I propose, both to my students and to you, my reader, is that developing better communication skills can be a central way of becoming more of the person one wants to be, and creating more of the world one wants to create. To explain this idea, I will first explore some of the things we mean when we say someone is a "person." Then I will present a kind of synthesis of what many deep thinkers have agreed are the qualities of personhood toward which we are all growing (some of us more willingly than others). From there I will present five arguments suggesting that our personhood emerges largely in and through our conversations, which means that we can have some influence over how we develop as persons. Finally I will discuss some of the formidable challenges we face in trying to steer both our conversations and our lives toward the qualities-in-action that make all of us more fully human.

Three meanings of personhood

While legal personhood is something we achieve simply by the fact of being born in a particular country, psychological or familial personhood seems to me to be much more like a set of muscles. Our psychological personhood grows by being exercised in the classic human relationships: parent, child, sibling, friend, enemy, coworker, supervisor, teacher and student. And within these relationships it is exercised primarily in an ongoing stream of interpersonal encounters that include talking, listening, fighting, cooperating, making and keeping commitments, turning

our experiences into coherent stories, and so on. Just as a baby struggles to stand up, we all struggle to develop the awareness and skill that will allow us to function fully as a person among persons. While the Declaration of Independence asserts that we are all born with certain inalienable rights, unfortunately we are not born with the skills we need to exercise those rights wisely or the skills we need to make a happy life with others. We start out with a big gap between rights and capabilities.

Discussions about being a person can be confusing because they can mix together several different meanings of “person,” especially:

- the unfinished and evolving personhood of family, psychology and literature,
- the already achieved personhood of law (“You are a citizen.”) and
- the already achieved personhood religion (“You are a person because God created you with an immortal soul”).

With each of these meanings we offer respect to other people and we ask for respect from them. In my experience all three of these meanings offer something special and worth pondering, but no one of these meanings is a very good substitute for either of the other two. For example, one may be able to fulfill many of the requirements of being a citizen (for example, don’t steal, pay your taxes, vote, etc.) without being a very well-developed person (for example, being a friend to your friends in times of trouble, being an influence for reconciliation when conflicts arise, etc.).

This sorting out of meanings is necessary in order to make a kind of separate and accepting mental space for our perpetual un-finished-ness as persons, to disentangle the “already given” from the “continuously created.” To say that we are

continually learning, growing and evolving as persons is not to say that we are less than full citizens (or that we are less than children of God, for those who think in religious terms). While being less than a full citizen would be an insult to one’s dignity, to be a not-yet-fully-completed person is simply to be human like everyone else. Each season of life offers us a different set of lessons and skills to learn. (I thought a lot about this a few years ago when I became like a parent to my frail and elderly father.) The fact that being a person is ongoing process of *becoming* makes it possible to live hopefully: no matter how we may have succeeded or failed in the past, each day allows us to start over with a new set of challenges.

The possibilities of personhood

At this point you may be starting to feel, “Enough with these abstractions! If life is a process of becoming, *what is it that we are trying to become?*” To provide a working answer to that question I offer you the following list of the qualities of what one might call a “fully developing” person. This list is drawn from many sources, ancient and modern, among which there is actually a lot of agreement. You will recognize the influence of Jesus, St. Paul and St. Francis on this list, along with Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow, Martin Buber, Erik Erikson, Rom Harré, and Gautama Buddha. In compiling this synthesis, it has helped me a great deal to think often in terms of styles of engaged action (such as “honestly” and “compassionately”) rather than only in terms of fixed qualities of character (such as “honest” or “compassionate”).

Thus translated into adverbs (and grouped into related clusters), we can say that at every stage along life’s way we are challenged to act (and converse with one another)...

- ... more awarely (of self, other and context)
- ... more skillfully, competently and wisely
- ... more honestly, sincerely, genuinely, congruently
(inner matches outer)
- ... more caringly, compassionately, acceptingly,
respectfully, warmly, forgivingly
- ... more creatively and "exploratorily" (with
more creative openness to new experience)
- ... more courageously, hopefully and faithfully
- ... more generously and nurturingly, delighting
in the happiness of others
- ... more meaningfully and expressively,
organizing and expressing our experiences
in coherent patterns of words, music,
movement and imagery
- ... more gratefully and appreciatively,
open to delight
- ... more engagingly, energetically and responsively
- ... more gracefully and beautifully (in the
Navajo sense of beauty as cosmic harmony)

It is interesting to note that, along with overlapping and interweaving, all these qualities of action are open-ended. There is no limit to any of them. Now matter how much we had achieved in any of them, creativity, for example, we would want to go on and develop more. For another example: because there is no upper bound to kindness, I imagine that most people who are very kind would not admit to being so, but might admit that they were "growing toward kindness along with all of us."

Every now and then you will meet someone who embodies the opposite of many of these qualities (fearful, miserly, hostile, resentful). What you will notice about such people is that they are usually also very unhappy and isolated. I am not arguing here that we should practice these styles of action in order to be "good" as defined by some external authority. That

would imply that if we could get away from the all-seeing eye of that authority, we could just relax and go back to being deceptive and resentful. I am arguing instead that *these qualities appear to be the inherent directions of human fulfillment*. They are our own built-in recipe for becoming fully human persons. Where this recipe originally came from I will leave to theologians and evolutionary biologists, who have filled many volumes discussing the source of human virtues. The unfolding of these qualities in people seems equally miraculous to me, whether I think of these qualities as the flowering of a billion years of evolution or as the gradual revelation of God's presence in our own hearts.

Wherever these qualities have come from, what is clear to me is that *these are the qualities of successful and complex long-term human cooperation*. And successful cooperation means better survival for the group that practices it, although the emergence of successful cooperation is not at all automatic. It is not like growing hair. It is much more like searching for food, a process which, although it has life and death biological significance, may or may not be fully realized. Consider for a moment that the speech folds of our brains contain no specific language when we are born, but await completion from human culture. In a similar way, our capacity to develop all the cooperation-facilitating qualities-in-action just listed awaits actualization in nurturing families, schools and cultures. (*That is what communication training is about: to improve the chances that people will be able to cooperate with one another to meet life's challenges.*)

Following in the very large footsteps of Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, I believe that each human being is born with both a capacity and a gentle yearning to grow in these many directions: toward awareness, caring, creativity and so on. The

more actions we perform that express these qualities, the more we have feelings of coherence, community, integrity, and well-being. We like ourselves more. The fewer of these kinds of actions we perform the more we have feelings of fragmentation, alienation, self-dislike, and perhaps numbness. Unfortunately, our “gentle yearning” to grow in these directions is easily overruled by harsh circumstances. Thus we need to work together to nurture those impulses in ourselves and others and so create a social world that feels good to live in.

Focusing on the qualities-in-action that I have compiled into the list presented above is one possible context for understanding *where are we going and what are we doing together*.

The story of my life, in this context, becomes the story of my journey into awareness, kindness, insight, courage, and so on, perhaps as exemplified by the heroes and archetypes of my culture.

And my deepest way of relating to you is to encourage your development in these directions, first by my own embodiment of these qualities, and second by becoming your companion on this journey of development. Such companionship, whether in parenting, friendship or psychotherapy, contains a powerful creative tension between, on one side, a vision of and a hope for the best that you can become, and, on the other side, a profound acceptance and forgiveness of all the trial and error along the way. We give and receive crucial forms of this kind of developmental encouragement in conversation: receiving the story of another person’s struggles and sharing the story one’s own successes and failures.

Seven arguments in favor of the centrality of conversation in human development

At his point you might quite reasonably be thinking, “Well, that we should all strive to act in ways that are more aware, caring and skillful is a nice idea but not a new one, and furthermore, what do these various noble qualities have to do with communication?” The answer that I offer to this question is already implied in the last few paragraphs. As I see it, *the world of conversation between us is a uniquely important and available arena in which to adopt more of these qualities*. Since this is a weighty proposition, allow me to present several arguments that support it.

First of all, it is in our conversations that we rehearse our actions. Therefore, the more skillful and creative our rehearsals, the better our actual performances will be. If we can’t imagine doing something, we probably won’t be able to do it. Conversations, both inner and outer, are where we do most of this essential imagining (“I wonder what would happen if I...”). So the qualities of our conversations spill over into our actions, for better or for worse, which we then remember as part of our life story, which is an important component of our personhood. Our actions and society’s reaction to them become a significant part of our personhood. (Rob a bank and you’ve just transformed yourself into a “bank robber.”) We become the qualities of what we do, after we talk ourselves into doing it, or don’t talk ourselves *out* of doing it.

Second, conversation itself is an action, and it is the context in which we both encounter essential human tasks and practice many significant human virtues (understood as qualities of action). For example, major forms of honesty, kindness, awareness, are creativity are utterly conversational. To begin with the first of these, one of the primary forms of honesty

concerns speaking truthfully in conversations with others. "Thou shalt not lie." This is not a warm-up for some other more fundamental virtue, this is a virtue itself that lives (or dies) in conversation. For another example, think of the kindness involved in listening supportively to a friend who is going through some great trial, perhaps having just learned of the death of a loved one. The kindness of listening caringly is not some lesser kindness, some practice for the real thing that will come later. This conversational kindness is the real thing.

Continuing with the qualities that I noted at the beginning of this paragraph, if we look at awareness as a virtue, we see that our horizon of awareness is shaped by the possibilities allowed by our vocabulary and grammar, which are elaborated in our conversations. It's hard to pay attention to something until we have a conversationally-transmitted word for it. With regard to creativity as a virtue, stringing words together into unique sequences is one of the primary forms of human creativity, and a form that nurtures many other non-linguistic forms of creativity. My illustrations could be expanded to show how all the other qualities-in-action I have listed (hopefully, courageously, beautifully, etc.) find a major form of expression in conversation.

Third, we use conversation both to assert ourselves and to commune with others, the essential tasks of human development. According to the developmental psychologist Robert Kegan,³⁵ two overarching tasks, *communion and assertion*, stand out as being equally at the core of a fully human life. Communion means understanding, empathizing with and

nurturing the people around us. Assertion includes our ability to press for the fulfillment of our own needs and our gradually unfolding ability to conceive of and guide our own lives. Although Kegan does not especially emphasize conversation as a central part of the developmental process, conversing is the main way most people assert themselves and commune with others. The conclusion I draw from Kegan's work is that the way we learn to converse, clearly or confusedly, creatively or dully, compassionately or demeaningly, will have a giant impact on how well or how poorly we accomplish the central tasks of personhood he describes.

Fourth, conversations are small enough units of behavior that we can, with effort, steer them toward the qualities we want to embody. It is very difficult to make direct changes in one's character or overall attitudes, but conversations provide us with endless opportunities to move in positive directions. The adverbial qualities of our conversations (wisely, honestly, awarely, acceptingly, etc.) become the adjectival qualities of our character (wise, aware, accepting, etc.). The qualities-in-action adverbs are a sort of gentle "on-ramp" of personal character: conversations are an accessible starting place for working on the kind of persons we would like to become, one that allows us to begin again and again. The same can be said for communing and asserting. We learn to balance these competing pulls one conversation at a time.

Fifth, we use conversational storytelling to recognize ourselves and others as persons to be loved and protected, or as objects to be used and broken. This is true throughout life, from the baby's emerging sense of self-and-other that grows out of the gradually unfolding mother-infant dialogue, to the mythic themes that peoples and nations use to define themselves in

³⁵ Robert Kegan. *The Evolving Self: Problem and Process in Human Development*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1982

relation to other peoples and nations. We have been told many times that words are not objects or people, but merely words. That is true as far as it goes, but I submit to you that such understanding does not go far enough. A lot of current thinking and research suggests that how well we recognize others as people depends on our memories of nurturing conversations, the richness or poverty of our vocabulary of experience, the labels we are taught to use, and how we use that vocabulary and labeling to weave our experiences and expectations of others into coherent stories shared and reinforced in further conversation.

The war that accompanied the breakup of the former Yugoslavia provides a tragic example of this story-making at work. Both the Serbs and the Croats used stories of World War Two atrocities to whip up hatred against the other side. This created a coherent context in which new atrocities could be committed in the name of just revenge. Such processes of demonizing and vilifying are strongly rooted in conversation and storytelling, as are the processes of honoring and appreciating.

Because we use story-making and story-sharing to organize our experience of other people and define our relationship to others, we are especially vulnerable to manipulative story-tellers, whether they are advertisers, cult gurus, or demagogic politicians. The story that I tell you to express and justify how I see other people is an important part of "me," my personhood, as we all realize when we meet someone on the street who is convinced that half the people in town are malevolent agents from outer space. How different this is from the "all children of the same loving God" theme elaborated by The Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., and what a different sense of "me" this latter theme evokes. The qualities of

these kind of conversations both reflect and create the qualities of our lives.

Sixth, conversations are the primary medium through which we heal the emotional wounds of living. As Judith Viorst so eloquently states in her book, *Necessary Losses*,³⁶ even in a life full of advantages and good health, every step of human development is accompanied by and catalyzed by deep experiences of loss. We leave the womb to gain the world. We raise our kids only to have them leave home just about the time when they could become our friends. By the time we reach middle age and can truly understand our parents, our parents often die, leaving us with a complex burden of grief at the loss and gratitude for life, fragile and finite though it is.

In addition to these sufferings that are built into life, many lives, perhaps most, are marked by some degree of trauma and deprivation. Several of my close friends, for example, had in childhood a parent who was mentally ill or a violent alcoholic. Other friends participated in the Vietnam war, to their eternal regret. And for others, who protested the war, the Vietnam war era was so disorienting that they lost confidence in being able to have a normal life of fulfillment in family and work. I want to make two points here that are unpopular in an optimistic culture: first, that life includes suffering, and second, that much of the suffering and loss in life has nothing to do with our misbehavior (although it is also true that we can cause our-selves enormous suffering). That is to say, being wounded by life and learning to heal are central, inescapable parts of becoming a mature person. And, it is through many heartfelt *conversations* that we engage in this healing process, that we bring these painful experiences into focus and create a

³⁶ Judith Viorst. *Necessary Losses*. New York: Fawcett. 1986.

meaningful life story out of a seemingly random sequence of sorrows and disappointments. Sometimes these conversations are called, “psycho-therapy,” but even more often we call them “deep friendship” and “parenting.”

In all these contexts, according to Carl Rogers, healing conversations have the same qualities.³⁷ The helping partners in these dialogues communicate honestly, caringly, respectfully, understandingly, expressively, and in a way that is open to new experience. In the company of such supportive conversation partners we reconcile ourselves to the sorrows and losses in life, and find the strength to start over, to meet life anew. (Although it is certainly possible for many people heal their life wounds through art and dance, for most people the focus of emotional healing is in conversation. Even therapies centered in art, movement or music include the kinds of conversations just mentioned.)

Finally, seventh, there is a good deal of evidence to suggest that just plain thinking itself is internalized conversing. It is in the styles, themes and cognitive challenges of our conversations that we help our children learn to think. (The scholar I find most inspiring on this topic is Jerome Bruner.) While spatial perception and motor skills are absolutely essential dimensions of human development, the same must be said for conversation skills (which are usually referred to as the disembodied abstraction, “language”). Daily conversations challenge the growing child to perform ever larger and more complex feats of memory, logic, creativity, and understanding the experience of others. The sentence is the seed of the story, and the story is the seed of an autobiography: a story

about myself and others that allows me to imagine my own life and thus think of myself as a person among persons.

The mind unfolds in conversation and story-telling, which remain major forms of mental exercise throughout life. But not only do we learn to think and imagine in conversation, *we learn to think and imagine in a particular personal style* shown to us by our earliest caregivers. Appreciatively or resentfully, hopefully or cynically, honestly or deceptively, creatively or routinely: our styles of making contact with one another and making sense of life are the gifts or curses we bestow upon our children. And it will be largely through their conversations that they will keep alive and deepen whatever style of thinking we have passed on to them.

Here, then, in recapitulation, are my seven arguments in favor of the proposition that we become persons largely in and through our conversations with others (and with ourselves, also, after we have absorbed early in life a large amount of conversational interaction):

- 1) In conversations we conceive and rehearse the important actions of our lives, including cooperation with others.
- 2) In conversation we can embody all the fundamental human virtues (or faults).
- 3) We use conversation both to assert ourselves and to commune with others, which are the two essential tasks of human development.
- 4) Conversations allow us to approach and practice all those virtues and tasks in small steps.
- 5) In conversations we learn and put into action our understanding of ourselves and others as persons to be

³⁷ Carl R. Rogers, *On Becoming a Person: A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. 1995.

loved and protected or as objects to be used and broken.

6) Conversations are the primary medium through which we heal the emotional wounds of living.

7) In conversation we learn and renew our fundamental style of thinking.

In light of these seven arguments, it is a mistake to imagine that our “real” life takes place beyond all words, and we then have “mere” conversations about it, as if life and conversation were two were separate circles. A truer picture, I believe, would be to locate the conversation circle *inside* the life circle. Our conversations are real life activities, as real as running or swimming or planting food.

For me, these seven arguments are deeply important because they all imply that by improving the way we talk and listen we can create gentle waves of change in both our relationships with other people and our inner relationship with ourselves. In much the same way that the smallest part of a fern has the same shape as the entire fern branch, the moment of conversation holds the shape of a lifetime. Although from the “whole life” perspective we can speak of moments combining to make a life story, the whole giving meaning to each of the parts, this point of view can tend to devalue each moment. From the “eternal moment” perspective, our lives unfold one moment at a time and *the quality we give our present moment is the quality of our life*. The life we are given is given to us one moment at a time. Therefore we would live more fulfilling lives if we cultivated each moment (and each conversation) as an enormous opportunity to live more awarely, compassionately, courageously, appreciatively, and so on. (I advocate using both of these points of view, the whole life

and the eternal moment, and alternating between them, as a way of thinking about one’s life.)

Because we converse with one another day in and day out, it is easy lose track of how significant all these individual moments and everyday conversations are in our journey of becoming. I hope the arguments I have just presented will inspire you to *see the familiar as strange*, to see your everyday conversations as full of wonderful possibilities. No matter where we find ourselves on the spectrum of development, I believe, *each of us was born to embody all these qualities-in-action and the capacity to grow more fully in these directions lies within each of us at every moment*.

The challenges we face in striving to become more fully human

That we have within us these wonderful capacities does not mean that it will be easy to develop them. Having brain folds for speech does not automatically provide us with language, and being born with lots of muscle cells does not provide us with fully-formed muscles. Similarly, my experience has been that developing more of these inherently human qualities and nurturing them in others is the most challenging task in a human life. (I actually believe that task is what we are here for.) So in concluding this essay, allow me to share with you what I see as some of the most significant challenges and barriers to this kind of human development and possible responses to those challenges.

THE MOMENTUM OF THE OLD WAYS. First of all, however we talk, listen, interrupt, fight, nurture and/or demean one another has a great amount of psychological ‘momentum’ behind it. We have been practicing doing it that way for a long time. We identify with our current conversation style as an

important part of our being. And the style connects us to the people who taught us to talk this way (usually our parents). Not all of this momentum is bad. If we did not have some established patterns of our own we would be led astray by the first pied piper or cult guru who passed through town. But the momentum of the styles we learned as children and developed up to now can keep us trapped in ways of relating that need changing, that will never bring us any real fulfillment or happiness. For me, the answer to this problem is not to try forcibly to break a person's identification with his or her present pattern, as is the case in Marine boot camp, cult indoctrination and some drug treatment programs. From my perspective that still leaves a person completely other-directed, without an inner compass to follow. For me the answer to the problem of momentum *is to raise the issue of momentum*, to challenge people to wrestle with that issue consciously and to choose consciously the people they want to emulate, the heroes they want to follow and the qualities they want to embody.

THE MENTAL WORKOUT OF PAYING ATTENTION. Second of all, aside from the effort it might take to change our ways of communicating, it takes a considerable amount of mental effort just to focus one's attention on conversations and the qualities they express. In contrast to an object or a single event, each conversation is like a little novel: a complex sequence of events, each one of which is meaningful because of its relationship to all the others. As each new conversational event takes place, we have to imagine the many possible meanings it might have in relation to the various conversational and life events that came before it. Beyond the mental workout demanded by the need to remember and interweave long sequences of actions, paying conscious attention to the qualities of those action sequences requires that we exercise

our capacities for abstract thought and self-observation. Forewarned of these mental demands, we can develop more realistic expectations and make a place for more practice in our lives (more discussions, support groups, long talks, less TV).

THE TENSION AMONG HUMAN VIRTUES. A third challenge is that many of the qualities-in-action that make us most fully human are in deep and creative tension with one another. For example, while we are told from an early age both to be kind and to tell the truth, it takes years of practice to learn how to bring both these qualities into the same encounter. The same can be said for the many problem-solving situations in life that require us to think both honestly *and* creatively. The developmental theorist Robert Kegan has gone so far as to describe the human personality as, figuratively speaking, stretched into existence by the tension between our need to commune with others and our equally strong need to assert ourselves. It appears that our personhood is like a living fabric which grows by being simultaneously pulled strongly in many directions. Knowing that our development will be a challenging balancing act rather than a placid flowering, we can adopt a more forgiving attitude toward the setbacks in our own development and the development of others.

RESISTING THE SHORT-TERM APPARENT BENEFITS OF DECEPTION AND COERCION. A fourth challenge might be called, "the eternal temptations." In the course of living, it often seems much easier to tell less than the whole truth, both to others and to ourselves. It also can seem much easier to try to get what we want by threatening other people rather than by negotiating with them and honoring their needs. While lying, self-deception and bullying may give a person some momentary advantages, relying on such maneuvers will make it impossible to

form long-term relationships of trust and cooperation. And the lack of such warm, supportive relationships is one of the deepest wounds a person can experience. If we deceive or bully our friends and partners in life, we soon will not have any friends or partners. The sooner in life we figure this out, the better off we will be, but resisting these temptations is a deep lesson and we may or may not get the help we need to learn it.

One measure of a culture is how it helps its members outgrow these temptations by developing a long-term sense of relationship-building and community-building, how it helps its members make the journey from coercing to cooperating. Since most societies rely on quite a bit of coercion to maintain social order we are, in general, more likely to learn how to obey than how to cooperate. This leads us to the final challenge in my list...

AN ENVIRONMENT HOSTILE TO PERSONHOOD. To me, a fifth challenge to our development as persons comes from the particular social world in which we live. Although our fulfillment as persons may depend on our cultivation of the qualities-in-action I described in the opening pages of this paper, the society we live in may not want its members to be all that aware, honest, creative or courageous. Consider, for example, the social pressure during almost a century of American history (1776-1860) for many Americans to ignore the glaring contradiction between the institution of slavery and the national ideal that "all men are created equal." Or consider the pressure on ordinary Germans to look the other way as their supposedly refined and highly civilized nation descended into bloodshed and madness. Or contemplate the current culture of violence-as-entertainment, which, in countless movies, books and video games, celebrates and idealizes cruelty, injury and

murder, making kindness more and more unthinkable.

As Arno Gruen points out in *The Insanity of Normality*,³⁸ our struggle for integrity is often, unfortunately, partly a struggle against the socially accepted world around us. Following Gruen, I see us encountering this taken-for-granted insanity in many forms: as lying bosses, alcoholic parents, dramatized murder as daily entertainment, programs to build weapons of mass destruction that are really collective suicide devices, and state governments that supposedly save their citizens' money by running lotteries that take even more money from those same citizens, to name only a few of many issues that come to mind. In terms of living more honestly and awarely, and developing more of all the other qualities-in-action I have discussed in this essay, one would have to admit that we are surrounded by bad examples

If and when we numb ourselves enough to blot all of this out of awareness, we numb ourselves enough to lose track of our own lives, the very lives we were hoping to protect and cultivate. If we could consciously acknowledge that some aspects of our world are going to be hostile to our fulfillment as persons, we might be able to find healthier ways of protecting ourselves. (Spending less time in front of the TV and more time in nature with friends and family, for example.) Becoming a person would be a challenge even if we did not have large companies offering us 24-hour-a-day kickboxing to stir us up and alcohol to calm us down, an endless stream of large-screen bad news to depress us and then Prozac to cheer us up. Between the blind faith that everything is all right and the paranoia that the world is out to injure and destroy us lies the realistic acknowledgment

³⁸ Arno Gruen, *The insanity of normality: Realism as sickness - Toward understanding human destructiveness*. New York: Grove Press. 1992.

that we will probably not get much help in becoming persons from the dominant institutions of our culture. This realistic disappointment could bear good fruit. We might get more actively involved both in creating the life and personhood we want to live and creating the kind of world in which we would like to live it.

Conclusion

As much as the seven arguments presented in the middle of this paper have convinced me that we become persons largely in and through the qualities of our communication with others, these last five considerations just given convince me with

equal force that steering one's conversations and one's life toward genuineness, creativity, compassion, etc., will probably never be easy. But this struggle is what will allow us to feel more fully alive and more deeply human. The good news is that we can approach all the virtues of full humanness one conversation at a time. Our lives are, among other things, a series of conversations, and therein lies one of the most significant doorways to personal development. We vote with each conversation, both for what kind of person we want to become, and (to borrow a phrase from Ram Dass) for what kind of world we ourselves want to live in.

Appendix One

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY GREAT BOOKS ON INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Here are some excellent books on interpersonal communication and relationship building. These books are the source of much of the material in this workbook. You are invited to find these great books at your local library, order them from your favorite bookstore (using the ISBN number given for each), or order them from the Cooperative Communication book link at www.coopcomm.org.

How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish. New York: Avon Books. 1980. A book for parents and anyone wanting to improve their communication with kids. Full of wonderfully informative cartoon sequences illustrating the major points. (Price: appx. \$12.50. ISBN: 0380570009. Order from your favorite local bookstore or from www.coopcomm.org)

The Talk Book: The Intimate Science of Communicating in Close Relationships, by Gerald Goodman and Glen Esterly. Emmaus, PA: Rodale Press. 1988. This book presents Goodman's vision of the six most important "Talk Tools." His chapters include lively transcripts of phone conversations showing exactly how the "Talk Tools" can help. The principles discussed are applied in both work and family contexts. Includes a great reference section that will introduce you to the most interesting and promising work in the area of interpersonal communication studies. (Look for this book at your local library or order from UCLA Academic Publishing Service at (310) 825-2831. Price: \$20.50, postage included.)

Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In (2nd ed.), by Roger Fisher, William Ury and Bruce Patton. New York: Penguin Books. 1991. If these folks did not invent the idea of "win-win" solutions, they deserve credit for popularizing it around the world. They propose that by understanding your own long-term interests better and by understanding your

bargaining opponent's long-term interests, you can work toward agreements in which everyone gets more of what they want and need. These kinds of agreements take more work to create but they are more likely to last than simple "split the difference" compromises. A great introduction to negotiation with examples from business and politics. According to John Kenneth Galbraith, "This is by far the best thing I've ever read about negotiation. It is equally relevant for ... individual[s] who would like to keep [their] friends, property, and income and [diplomats] who would like to keep the peace." (Price: appx. \$13.00. ISBN: 0140157352. Order from your favorite local bookstore or from www.coopcomm.org)

MESSAGES: The Communication Skills Book by Matthew McKay, Martha Davis and Patrick Fanning. Oakland: New Harbinger. 1983. This book is an easy-to-read but comprehensive introduction to the many-faceted process of interpersonal communication at home and at work. Among the many topics it introduces, it includes chapters on self-expression, fighting fairly, assertiveness and negotiation. (Price: appx. \$14.00. ISBN: 1572240229. Order from your favorite local bookstore or from www.coopcomm.org)

The Heart of Parenting - How to Raise an Emotionally Intelligent Child, by John M. Gottman with Joan DeClaire. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1997. This book explores Gottman's vision of "emotion coaching," a process through which parents help their children observe and guide their own emotional responses. Drawing on two ten-year studies of more than 120 families, Gottman explains how children who learn to acknowledge and master their emotions are more self-confident as well as physically healthier. They also do better in school and are more likely to grow into emotionally healthy adults. (Price: appx. \$22.00. ISBN: 0-684-80130-2. Order from your favorite local bookstore or from www.coopcomm.org)

Straight Talk by Sherod Miller, Daniel Wackman, Elam Nunnally and Carol Saline. New York: Signet Books. 1982. Reading this book is like going to a week-long seminar. It will give you a thorough introduction to a pioneering communications training program created at the University of Minnesota. Uses the "awareness wheel" model to encourage people to understand themselves better and express themselves more clearly. (Look for this book at your local library.)

Do I Have To Give Up Me To Be Loved By You? by Jordan and Margaret Paul. Minneapolis: CompCare Publishers. 1983. This book is built around the concept of courageous honesty and the psychological insight that, in order to feel close, partners need to tell one another the truth about what they are thinking and feeling. According to the Pauls, the peace that a couple buys by avoiding difficult issues will eventually destroy the relationship they hope to protect. (Price: appx. \$15.00. ISBN: 1568380682. Order from your favorite local bookstore or www.coopcomm.org)

On Becoming a Person: A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy, by Carl R. Rogers. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. 1995. A classic (first published in 1961), scholarly but very readable book on the challenges of becoming a more authentic person who is open to new experience. Rogers was a pioneer advocate of the healing power of supportive listening in both psychotherapy and everyday life. His most revolutionary idea was that the therapist did not have to 'fix' the client; if the therapist simply provided a deeply accepting environment and LISTENED, the client's own sense of inner rightness would come into play and guide the client to find a solution that was right for him/her. (Price: appx. \$15.00. ISBN: 039575531X. Order from your favorite local bookstore or www.coopcomm.org)

Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Compassion, by Marshall B. Rosenberg. (Del Mar, CA: PuddleDancer Press. 1998.) This book presents Rosenberg's vision of empathic communication and the four essential messages

that we need to express so that other people can understand what we are experiencing. These same four elements are what we need to listen for in order to understand other people (and ourselves) better. One reader wrote: "A clinical psychologist who studied with Carl Rogers, Dr. Rosenberg pulls together in lucid, flowing prose, information from many respected sources on the art and science of the practical use of language in creating empathy and human connection. Beautifully written in language that demonstrates his compassion." Marshall Rosenberg's book and workshops were the inspiration for Challenge Three in this workbook. (Price: appx. \$16.00. ISBN: 1880396408. Order from your favorite local bookstore or www.coopcomm.org)

Love & Survival: The Scientific Basis for the Healing Power of Intimacy, by Dean Ornish, M.D. (New York: HarperCollins. 1998. As of 10/98 only available in hardback.) If you are wondering about how much energy to put into close, nurturing relationships, this book will provide you with a mountain of amazing evidence that supportive relationships make a life and death difference in people's lives. As Dr. Andrew Weil comments, "This is the most important book ever written about love and health." (List price. \$25.00. hardback (actual price varies because this is a popular book.) ISBN: 0060172134. Order from your favorite local bookstore or www.coopcomm.org)

To Love and Be Loved, by Sam Keen. New York: Bantam Books. 1997. With the wisdom that comes from much thought and many struggles, Keen carefully examines the many distinct strands of feeling that we weave together into our experience of loving. "In the depths of our being, in body, mind, and spirit, we know intuitively that we are created to love and be loved, and that fulfilling this imperative, responding to this vocation, is the central meaning of our life." (Price: appx. \$22.00. ISBN: 0-553-08904-8. Order from your favorite local bookstore or www.coopcomm.org)

Appendix Two

ABOUT THIS WORKBOOK AND THE COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS INTERNET RESOURCE CENTER

This workbook is a public service project of Dennis Rivers and the Cooperative Communication Skills Internet Resource Center. Because my goal is to distribute this information as widely and inexpensively as possible, all the chapters and readings in this Workbook are available free of charge on the World Wide Web at www.coopcomm.org.

Please let me know your learning experiences with the workbook. You can write to me at Cooperative Communication, c/o Dennis Rivers, 133 E. De la Guerra St. - PMB 420, Santa Barbara, CA 93101, USA, or send e-mail to *workbook* @www.coopcomm.org. You can subscribe to the free, e-mail *Journal of Cooperative Communication Skills* by sending a blank e-mail message to:

subscribe@coopcomm.org

You are invited to submit your learning experiences to the *Journal* by e-mailing them to us at journal@coopcomm.org. Using some new traffic analysis software, I have discovered that approximately 40,000 people a year from around the world find their way to the Cooperative Communication Workbook web site. So whatever contributions you make to the evolution of the Workbook will be shared with this wide and growing community.

I would like to express my special appreciation to Cathy Holt, Belinda Day, Sharon Smallwood, Dr. Sandra Lewis, Dr. David Richo

and the Rev. Dr. John Mabry for their many helpful suggestions; to Gene Hoffman, Michael Bean, Edwin Shaw, and Drs. Barnett Pearce, Marshall Rosenberg and Margaret Pavel for years of encouragement; and to the Estate of Hector and Winnifred Tate for extended financial support.

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Communication Module

The family system can either cause additional stress or it can assist in reducing or managing stress.



1

Review Organization Module



2

Question: Why is communication important to the family unit during times of stress?

- Lack of communication can interfere with daily living
- Family members may be unaware of differing expectations and perceptions of the stressors in their lives



3

Communication Tid-bits

- ❖ During stressful times, individual differences and values may raise concerns that strain relationships
- ❖ Lack of communication can lead to increased stress and problems
- ❖ Effective communication can help families pull together and cope with stress

Creating the Life That Lives Between Us

The Seven Challenges
Communication Skills Workbook
and Reader
by Dennis Rivers, MA

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5

How We Benefit from Using a More Cooperative Communication Style



- Better coordination of YOUR life activities with those who are important to you.
- More respect
- More influence
- More comfortable with conflict
- More peace of mind
- More satisfying closeness with others
- A healthier lifestyle

6

Learning to Talk and Listen in New Ways is Challenging



7

Communicating Cooperatively

- It is more complex and mentally demanding than coercing, threatening or grabbing what you want.
- Our way of communicating is woven into our personalities.
- It requires that we participate in our conversations and observe *at the very same time*.

8

7 Ways of Being the Change You Want to See



1. Listen more carefully and responsively
2. Explain your conversational intent and invite consent
3. Express yourself more clearly and completely (see *handout* on "I" statements)

9

4. Translate your (and other people's) complaints and criticisms into specific requests, and explain your requests.
5. Ask questions more "open-endedly" and more creatively.
6. Express more appreciation.
7. Make better communication an important part of your everyday life.

10

FOR DISCUSSION

What are some ways that you would like to improve your communication and interaction with others?



11

Challenge One: Listening More Carefully and Responsively

Listen first and acknowledge what you hear, *even if you don't agree with it*, before expressing your experience or point of view.



12

Listening to Others Helps Others to Listen

- Most of our lives are spent trying to arrange agreement and cooperative action, so we need to be concerned about engaging people, not defeating them.
- Cooperation involves the fitting together of different people's needs.

13

Communication Examples

"Susan, you have to stay in bed. Your doctor says your bones won't heal unless you stay put for another week."

Acknowledging the patient's present experience:

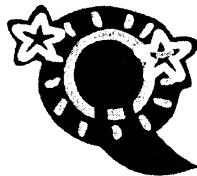
"I hear that you are very uncomfortable right now, Susan, and you would really like to get out of that bed and move around. But your doctor says your bones won't heal unless you stay put for another week."

The Power of Acknowledging

You can acknowledge a person's thoughts and feelings without agreeing with or approving of them.

Acknowledging leaves you...

- the option of agreeing or disagreeing
- with the option of saying yes or no to a request
- with the option of saying more about the matter being discussed



15

Other suggestions for listening more responsively...

- Do not just repeat another's exact words. Summarize their experience in your own words.
- If the emotion is unclear, make a tentative guess, as in, "So it sounds like maybe you were a little unhappy about all that..."

16

Challenge Two: Explaining Your Conversational Intent and Inviting Consent



- A. Give your listener a chance to consent to or decline the offer of a specific conversation.**
- B. Help your listener to understand the "big picture," the overall goal of the conversation-to-come.**

17

C. Allow your listener to get ready for what is coming, especially if the topic is emotionally charged.

D. Help your listener understand the role that we want them to play in the conversation.

18

Fulfilling and Unfulfilling Conversational Intentions (See Handouts)



19

Challenge Three – Expressing Yourself More Clearly and Completely

- Slow down and give information by using “I-statements”
- Fill in missing information, rather than implying and abbreviating
- The more serious the consequences of misunderstanding would be, the more we need to help listeners by giving them a full picture of our experiences



20

Saying More of What We Are Experiencing

Five messages:

1. What are you seeing, hearing or sensing? (facts only)
2. What emotions are you feeling?
3. What interpretations, wants, needs, memories or anticipations of yours support those feelings?
4. What action, information or commitment do you want now?
5. What positive results will that action, information or commitment lead to in the future? (no threats)

Challenge Four: Translating Complaints and Criticisms into Requests

Translate your complaints and criticisms into specific requests and explain your requests



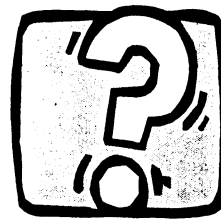
22

General Information

- Ask for what you want, even if it means risking getting turned down.
- Approach people not as adversaries but as problem-solving partners.
- Focus on the actions you want to take and those you want others to take.
- Use explanations of reasons for requests to move people to cooperate.
- Explanatory clauses allow your conversation partner to imagine new solutions.

23

Challenge Five: Asking Questions More “Open-Endedly” and Creatively



Open ended questions allow for a variety of responses, rather than just “yes” and “no.”

Say: “Tell me about your meeting today.”
NOT: “Did the meeting go OK?”

24

Ask Questions More Creatively

It is more beneficial to ask "how" questions about the future than "why" questions about the past.

Ask conscious, creative and exploratory questions to get a grip on whatever is going on.

25

Challenge Six: Expressing More Appreciation

thanks!!!

Expressing appreciation involves both an expressive action and an inner attitude.

26

Research on the Power of Appreciation and Gratefulness

- Couples: Couples who stay together tend to have **five times** more positive interactions than negative ones
- Bringing up children: Children who are the most intelligent, self-confident and flexible at ages six to eight had experienced **five times** more positive than negative interchanges with their parents by age three.

28

- Creating successful businesses: Bring out the best in people through people-oriented positive reinforcement, in the form of appreciation, recognition and gratitude.
- Living more gratefully: Be grateful for the goodness of the simple things in life.

Exploring Gratefulness



Expressing gratitude is a conscious action that results from deep attitudes – the way we look at our lives and the way we turn the events of our lives into meaningful stories.

Humans need to make sense out of what can be a bewildering variety of life experiences. We pick out and emphasize events that illustrate our main "theme" in life – whether good or bad.

We need to receive each day as a gift!



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Class Exercise



Write down the ten happiest events in your life or the names of ten people who have been a blessing in your life.

Notice your mood at the end of the writing.

More Thoughts on Gratefulness

- ❖ Thank you equals YES to life!
Look for small ways to say thank you to total strangers.
- ❖ Express gratitude in the middle of a difficult life.
Gratitude and expressing more appreciation for one another do not have to mean we are saying everything in life is just fine. We are simply *refusing to be obsessed with the source of our sufferings.*

32

Three Part Appreciations

< See Handout >

33

Challenge Seven – Seeing Every Conversation as an Opportunity to Learn – Making Better Communication an Important Part of Everyday Living



34

Main Ideas

- Develop faith in your own ability to develop.
- Practice “over-learning” – practice new skills more than would seem necessary in order to feel comfortable with the skills.

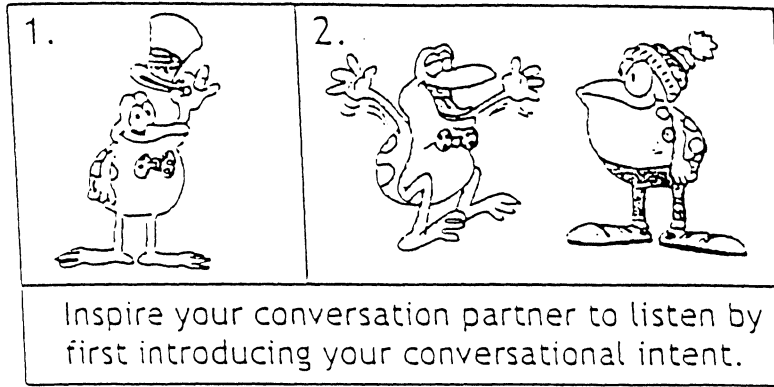


35

Conversation – Upward and Onward (See Handout)

- ✓ Talking about my thoughts, feelings, experiences and wants with the people who are close to me in my life
- ✓ Listening to people share their experiences, thoughts, feelings
- ✓ Talking with people to express my appreciation of them
- ✓ Talking with people to resolve my conflicts with them

- ✓ Talking and listening to coordinate my actions with those of the important people in my life
- ✓ Communicating with myself through journal writing and “inner conversations”
- ✓ Listening and clarifying issues as a mediator between people in conflict
- ✓ Learning to bring out the best in myself and others in and through conversation.



| AN EXPLORATORY LIST OF FULFILLING CONVERSATIONAL INTENTIONS | |
|---|--|
| 1. | ...tell you about my experiences/feelings... ...that involve no implied requests or complaints toward you OR ...so that you will understand the request, offer, complaint, etc., I want to make |
| 2. | ...hear what's happening with you. (More specific: ...hear how you are doing with [topic]...) |
| 3. | ...entertain you with a story. |
| 4. | ...explore some possibilities concerning ... (requiring your empathy but not your advice or permission) |
| 5. | ...plan a course of action for myself (with your help or with you as listener/witness only) |
| 6. | ...coordinate/plan our actions together concerning... |
| 7. | ...express my affection for you (or appreciation of you concerning...) |
| 8. | ...express support for you as you cope with a difficult situation. |
| 9. | ...complain/make a request about something you have done (or said) (for better resolution of conflicts, translate complaints into requests) |
| 10. | ...confirm my understanding of the experience or position you just shared. (this usually continues with "I hear that you...," "Sounds like you...," "So you're feeling kinda...," or "Let me see if I understand you...") |
| 11. | ...resolve a conflict that I have with you about... |
| 12. | ...negotiate or bargain with you about... |
| 13. | ...work with you to reach a decision about... |

| AN EXPLORATORY LIST OF FULFILLING CONVERSATIONAL INTENTIONS (continued) | |
|---|--|
| 14. | ...give you permission or consent to.../...get your permission or consent to... |
| 15. | ...give you some information about .../...get some information from you about... |
| 16. | ...give you some advice about .../...get some advice from you about... |
| 17. | ...give you directions, orders or work assignments... / get directions or orders from you |
| 18. | ...make a request of you (for action, time, information, object, money, promise, etc.) |
| 19. | ...consent to (or refuse) a request you have made to me. |
| 20. | ...make an offer to you (for action, information, object, promise, etc.) |
| 21. | ...accept or decline an offer you have made to me. |
| 22. | ...persuade or motivate you to adopt (a particular) point of view. |
| 23. | ...persuade or motivate you to choose (a particular) course of action. |
| 24. | ...forgive you for... / ask for your forgiveness concerning... |
| 25. | ...make an apology to you about... / request an apology from you about... |
| 26. | ...offer an interpretation of... (what ... means to me) / ask for your interpretation of... |
| 27. | ...offer an evaluation of... (how good or bad I think ... is) / ask for your evaluation of... |
| 28. | ...change the subject of the conversation and talk about... |
| 29. | ...have some time to think things over. |
| 30. | ...leave/end this conversation so that I can... |

Notes

id Exercise for Challenge 2: (to be explored in private or with a therapist) To degree do you find yourself relying on these kinds of conversations to influence eople in your life? What possibilities do you see for change? To what degree are he target of these behaviors? What possibilities do you see for change?

| AN EXPLORATORY LIST OF <u>UN-FULFILLING</u> CONVERSATIONAL INTENTIONS (These conversational intentions and related actions are unfulfilling, at the very least, because we would not like someone to do these things <u>to us</u> . Yet if and when we do any of these things, we teach and encourage others to do them <u>to us</u> and/or to avoid contact with us.) | |
|--|---|
| 1. | To lie, deceive or mislead (sometimes partly redeemed by good overall intentions, but usually not) |
| 2. | To threaten |
| 3. | To hurt or abuse |
| 4. | To punish (creates resentment, avoidance and desire for revenge) |
| 5. | To blame (focuses on past instead of present and future) |
| 6. | To control or coerce (force, influence someone against their will and consent) |
| 7. | To manipulate (to influence someone without his or her knowledge and consent) |
| 8. | To demean or shame ...to try to make someone look bad in eyes of others OR ...to try to make people doubt themselves or feel bad about themselves |
| 9. | To deny the existence of a problem in the face of evidence and appeals from others |
| 10. | To hide what is important to me from you (if you are an important person in my life) |
| 11. | To suppress or invalidate someone's emotional response to a given event or situation (as in "Don't cry!", or the even more coercive "You stop crying or I'll <i>really</i> give you something to cry about!") |
| 12. | To withdraw from interaction in order to avoid the consequences of something I have done. (stonewalling) |

Notes on this exercise:

Examples in table format. The example in the table below outlines a five-part way of saying more of what we are experiencing. The shorthand version of the message below would be something like, "Stop that racing!" Here are the details of the five messages that are left out in the shorthand version: (Please read down the columns)

| The Five Messages | express: | Example (in a hospital, nurse to young patient): |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| <i>seeing, hearing...</i> | 1. What are you seeing, hearing or otherwise sensing? (facts only) | "John, when I see you racing your wheelchair down the hall... |
| <i>and feeling...</i> | 2. What emotions are you feeling? | ...I feel really upset... |
| <i>because I...</i> | 3. What interpretations, wants, needs, memories or anticipations <u>of yours</u> support those feelings? | ...because I imagine that you are going to hurt yourself and someone else, too... |
| <i>and now I want...</i> | 4. What action, information or commitment do you want now? | ...so I want you to promise me right now that you will slow down... |
| <i>so that...</i> | 5. What <u>positive</u> results will that action, information or commitment lead to in the future? (no threats) | ...so that you can get out of here in one piece and I can stop worrying about a collision." |

Note: My deep appreciation goes to the work of Marshall Rosenberg¹² for helping me to understand Messages 1 through 4, and to the work of Sharon and Gordon Bower¹³ for helping me understand Message 5

In the table that starts below and continues on the next page you will find eight examples of statements that would give your listener a full range of information about your experience. Notice how a person's feelings can change according to the needs and interpretations they bring to a situation. (Please read across the rows)

| 1. When I saw/heard... | 2. I felt... | 3. because I... (need, want, interpret, associate, etc.) | 4. and now I want (then I wanted) ... | 5. so that (in order to) ... |
|---|-------------------------|---|--|--|
| When I saw the bear in the woods with her three cubs... | ...I felt overjoyed!... | ...because I needed a picture of bears for my wildlife class... | ...and I wanted the bear to stand perfectly still... | so I could focus my camera. |
| When I saw the bear in the woods with her three cubs... | ...I felt terrified!... | ...because I remembered that bears with cubs are very aggressive... | ...and I wanted to get out of there fast... | so that the bear would not pick up my scent. |

¹² Marshall Rosenberg, *A Model for Nonviolent Communication*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1983.

¹³ Sharon Anthony Bower and Gordon H. Bower, *Asserting Yourself: A Practical Guide for Positive Change*. Reading, Addison-Wesley, 1976.

THE FIVE MESSAGES IN ACTION!

| 1. <i>When I saw/heard...</i> | 2. <i>I felt...</i> | 3. <i>because I... (need, want, interpret, associate, etc.)</i> | 4. <i>and now I want (then I wanted)...</i> | 5. <i>so that (in order to)...</i> |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| When I saw the dishes in the sink... | ...I felt happy... | ...because I guessed that you had come back from your trip to Mexico... | ...and I want you to tell me all about the Aztec ruins you saw... | ...so that I can liven up some scenes in the short story I'm writing. |
| When I saw the dishes in the sink... | ...I felt irritated... | ...because I want to start cooking dinner right away... | ...and I want to ask you to help me do the dishes right now... | ...so that dinner will be ready by the time our guests arrive. |
| When I saw the flying saucer on your roof... | ... felt more excited than I have ever been in my life... | ...because I imagined the saucer people would give you the anti-gravity formula... | ...and I wanted you to promise that you would share it with me... | ...so that we would both get rich and famous. |
| When I saw the flying saucer on your roof... | ...I felt more afraid than I have ever been in my life... | ...because I imagined the saucer people were going to kidnap you... | ...and I wanted you to run for your life... | ...so that you would not get abducted and maybe turned into a zombie. |
| When I saw the grant application in the office mail... | ...I felt delighted... | ...because I think our program is good enough to win a large grant... | ...and I want to ask you to help me with the budget pages... | ...so that we can get the application in before the deadline. |
| When I saw the grant application in the office mail... | ...I felt depressed... | ...because I can't see clients when I'm filling out forms... | ...and I want you to help me with the budget pages... | ...so that I can keep up my case work over the next three weeks. |

Exercise for Challenge 3: Re-tell the story of some of your conflicts, frustrations and delights using the five-message format. Write one Five Messages statement a day in a journal or notebook. Here are some suggestions for expressing each of the Five Messages more clearly:

| The Five Messages: | Suggestions for expressing more clearly: |
|---|--|
| <p>1. What are you seeing, hearing or otherwise sensing? (facts only)</p> | <p>A. Begin by stating what you actually see or hear rather than how you feel about it or what you think of it.</p> <p>B. Describe specific actions observed, avoid generalizing such as "you always..." or "you never..."</p> <p>C. Be specific about place, time, color, texture, position and how often.</p> <p>D. Describe rather than diagnose. Avoid words that label or judge the actions you observe such as "slimy," "lousy," "neurotic," etc..</p> <p>E. Avoid descriptions of a situation that imply emotions without actually stating them, such as "totally disgusting" and "horrible." State your feelings explicitly in Message 2 (described next).</p> <p>For example:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">"When I saw the big coffee stain on the rug..." is easier to hear and understand than "When you ruined my day, as always, with your slimy, stinking, totally disgusting, rotten antics..."</p> |
| <p>2. What emotions are you feeling?</p> | <p>A. Use specific emotion describers such as "I feel...": glad, angry, delighted, sad, afraid, resentful, embarrassed, calm, enthusiastic, fearful, manic, depressed, happy, etc.</p> <p>B. Avoid feeling words that <u>imply</u> the action of another person: "I feel..., ignored, manipulated, mistreated, neglected, rejected, dominated, abandoned, used, cheated (etc.)"</p> <p>Notice how these words indirectly blame the listener for the speaker's emotions. In order to help your listener understand what you are feeling, translate these "implied blame" words into an explicitly named emotion (see Suggestion A, above) and an interpretation or unmet want (Message 3).</p> <p>For example: "I am feeling totally ignored by you" probably means "I am feeling really sad (or angry) <u>because</u> I want you to pay more attention to me, (spend more time with me, etc.)..."</p> |

Exercise for Challenge 3 (continued):

| Five Messages: | Suggestions for expressing more clearly: |
|--|---|
| <p>What interpretations, wants, needs, priorities or expectations of <u>us</u> support these feelings?</p> | <p>A. Express the interpretations, wants, hopes, understandings and associations that support your feelings:</p> <p>... because I imagine that... ... because I see that as...</p> <p>... because I remember how... ... because I take that to mean ...</p> <p>instead of ... because YOU ...(did, said, did not, etc.)</p> <p>B. Under our interpretations there are often unmet wants, hopes and needs. Explore and express the unmet wants that also support your feelings:</p> <p>... because I wanted because I would have liked ...</p> <p>... because I was hoping that... ... because I needed ...</p> <p>instead of ... because YOU ...(did, said, did not, etc.)</p> |
| <p>What action, information or commitment do you want now?</p> | <p>A. Ask for action or information, or for a present commitment to future action or information giving. Since most people cannot produce emotions on request, it is generally not productive to ask a person for an emotion ("I want you to cheer up." "I want you to be angry about this issue." Etc.)</p> <p>B. If your want is general, ask for a specific step toward it. Translate open-ended requests, such as for "consideration, respect, help, understanding, support" etc., into specific action verbs such as please "listen, sit, lift, carry, tell me, hold me," etc.</p> <p>C. State your want in <u>positive</u> terms: "Please arrive at eight..." rather than "Don't be late..."</p> <p>D. Include when, where, how. Including the details can help you to avoid big misunderstandings.</p> |
| <p>i. What <u>positive</u> results will that action, information or commitment lead to in the future? (no threats)</p> | <p>In describing the specific positive results of receiving your request, you allow the other person to become motivated by feeling capable of giving something worthwhile. This prepares the ground for later expressions of appreciation, and points your relationship toward mutual appreciation and the exercise of competence (more enjoyable to live with), rather than guilt, duty, obedience or resentment (much less enjoyable to live with).</p> |

Exercise for Challenge 3 (continued): Re-tell the story of some of your conflicts, frustrations and delights using the five-message format.

| <i>Elements of your experience:</i> | <i>...expressed as five different "I-messages":</i> |
|---|---|
| 1. What are you seeing, hearing or otherwise sensing? (the facts without evaluation) | (I saw, heard, etc., ...) |
| 2. What emotions are you feeling? | (I felt...) |
| 3. What interpretations or wants of yours support those feelings? | (because I...) |
| 4. What action, information or commitment do you want now. | (and now I would like...) |
| 5. What positive results will that action, information or commitment lead to in the future? | (so that...) |

| <i>Elements of your experience:</i> | <i>...expressed as five different "I-messages":</i> |
|---|---|
| 1. What are you seeing, hearing or otherwise sensing? (the facts without evaluation) | (I saw, heard, etc., ...) |
| 2. What emotions are you feeling? | (I felt...) |
| 3. What interpretations or wants of yours support those feelings? | (because I...) |
| 4. What action, information or commitment do you want now. | (and now I would like...) |
| 5. What positive results will that action, information or commitment lead to in the future? | (so that...) |

Exercise for Challenge 3 (continued): Re-tell the story of some of your conflicts, frustrations and delights using the five-message format.

| <i>Elements of your experience:</i> | <i>...expressed as five different "I-messages":</i> |
|---|---|
| 1. What are you seeing, hearing or otherwise sensing? (the facts without evaluation) | (I saw, heard, etc., ...) |
| 2. What emotions are you feeling? | (I felt...) |
| 3. What interpretations or wants <u>of yours</u> support those feelings? | (because [...]) |
| 4. What action, information or commitment do you want now. | (and now I would like...) |
| 5. What positive results will that action, information or commitment lead to in the future? | (so that...) |

| <i>Elements of your experience:</i> | <i>...expressed as five different "I-messages":</i> |
|---|---|
| 1. What are you seeing, hearing or otherwise sensing? (the facts without evaluation) | (I saw, heard, etc., ...) |
| 2. What emotions are you feeling? | (I felt...) |
| 3. What interpretations or wants <u>of yours</u> support those feelings? | (because [...]) |
| 4. What action, information or commitment do you want now. | (and now I would like...) |
| 5. What positive results will that action, information or commitment lead to in the future? | (so that...) |

SAYING WHAT'S IN OUR HEARTS

Conversations viewed as counseling
and counseling viewed as a conversation.
Reflections on telling the truth and on
saying so that someone else can tell the truth

by Dennis Rivers, M.A.

I wrote this essay for my students during a time I was teaching a class on peer counseling. I was to describe in everyday language some of the good that happen in counseling, that ALSO happen in hip, ministering and good parenting.

According to the psychotherapists Carl Rogers¹⁴ (in the 1960's), Margaret and Jordan Paul¹⁵ (in the 1980s) and Brad Blanton¹⁶ (in the 1990's), there is one main reason people don't tell the truth. It's not some jargon about ids and superegos. It's that we need to face up to the truth and tell more of the truth about what's happening in our lives, about how we feel, and about what we ourselves are doing.

Many people, probably most of us at some time or other, struggle to deal with conflicting feelings and problem situations in part by using a whole range of avoidance maneuvers: we may pretend nothing is happening, focus on blaming others, or try to find ways of avoiding embarrassment, protecting ourselves and/or minimizing conflict. The problem with these ways of dealing with inner and outer conflicts is that they don't work well in the long run. If we try to deal with our problems by pretending that nothing is wrong, we run the risk of becoming numb or getting deeply confused

about what we actually want and how we actually feel. From this point of view, a counselor is someone to whom you can really tell the truth. And as you start to tell more of the truth to that significant listener, you start to admit the more of the truth to yourself.

This is not an easy task. Early in life, according to Rogers, most of us discovered that if we said what we really felt and wanted, the big important people in our lives would get unhappy with us. And since we needed their love and approval, we started being good little boys and good little girls and saying whatever would get us hugs, birthday presents, and chocolate cake. If we are lucky in life, our parents and teachers help us to learn how to tell the truth in conciliatory ways, but this is a complex process. And more often, our parents and teachers didn't get much help on this issue themselves, so they were not able to give us much help. As a result of this, many people arrive in adult life with a giant gap between what they actually feel and what the role they play says they are supposed to feel, and with no skills for closing that gap. Nobody in particular is to blame for this. It's like childhood colds and scraped knees: it's part of being human, which is not a tidy process.

For example, as a child you were supposed to love your parents, right? But what if your dad came home drunk every night and hit your mom? How do you handle the gap between the fact that you're supposed to love your dad and the fact that you don't like him? These are the kinds of situations that bring people to counseling (or to the nightly six-pack of beer). And life is full of them.

It all boils down to this: Life is tough and complex, ready or not. It is always tempting to try to get what you want (or to escape what you fear) by saying or doing whatever will avoid conflict, even if that means saying things you don't really mean,

¹⁴ Carl R. Rogers, *On Becoming a Person: A Psychiatrist's View of Psychotherapy*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1995.

¹⁵ Margaret and Jordan Paul, *Do I Have To Give Up To Be Loved By You*. Minneapolis: CompCare Publishers, 1983.

¹⁶ Brad Blanton, *How to Transform Your Life By Facing the Truth*. New York: Dell, 1996.

ing things you don't feel good about, or just blanking out. After you've been around for a while you start to realize that the cost of this kind of maneuvering is a heavy heart.

From what I've seen, there is no secret magic wand of psychotherapy that can instantly lighten a heart thus burdened. Psychotherapists are in the same human boat as the rest of us; they get depressed and divorced and commit suicide just like ordinary folks. You and the person you are trying to help are in the same human boat. There is no life without troubles. Roofs leak. The people you love get sick and die. Our needs turn out to be in conflict with the needs of people we care about. The best made agreements come unglued. People fall out of love. And it is always tempting to pretend that everything is just fine. But I believe very strongly that we will all like ourselves a lot more if we choose the troubles that come from being more honest and more engaged, rather than the troubles that come from various forms of conflict avoidance and self-deception, such as "I'll feel better if I have another drink." or "What she doesn't know won't hurt her." etc.

Our truthful lives will probably not get any easier, but they will get a lot more satisfying. Good counselors, psychotherapists, mentors and friends whatever their degree (or not), hold that knowledge for us, as we struggle to learn it and earn it. As adults there are many new possibilities open to us. We can learn to negotiate more of our conflicts, to confront more of our difficulties and to be honest without being mean.

A counselor is someone who does not condemn you for your evasions, mistakes or lack of skill, and believes in your worth as a person, your capacity to tell the truth and your strength to bear the truth, no matter what you've done up to now. That's what makes counseling similar to being a priest, a rabbi, a minister or a really good friend.

When we started pretending in order to please others at age three or four, that was the only way we could figure out how to get what we wanted. Now that we are adults we are capable of learning to tell the truth in conciliatory ways and we are capable of getting a lot more of what we want just by being courageous enough to ask for it. A good counselor, whether that person is a peer-counselor or a psychiatrist, is someone who invites us out of the role of maneuvering child and into the role of straightforward adult.

As adults we are capable of doing creative problem-solving and capable of negotiating in ways that were totally beyond our reach as children. So the fact is that we don't need to run away from our problems any more. What we need is to get in touch with ourselves and to learn new skills.

A counselor won't force you to tell the truth. It wouldn't be the truth if it were forced, it would just be one more thing you were saying to keep someone off your back. But a counselor is willing to hear how you actually feel. In this approach there are no bad feelings, there are only bad actions. It's OK to hate your drunken father; it's not OK to pick up a gun and shoot him. A big part of counseling is teaching people to make that distinction. In fact, the more people can acknowledge their feelings, the less they need to blindly act them out.

It's not the counselor's job to pull that stuff out of people; it's the counselor's job to be there to receive it and acknowledge it when it comes out in its own time. And to encourage the new skills and all the little moments of honesty that help a person toward a deeper truthfulness. There's a direct link between skill and awareness at work here. People are reluctant to acknowledge problems they feel they can't do anything about. As counseling conversations help a person to feel more confident

Without being able to talk things over and talk things out, a person may become more willing to face and confront conflicts and problems.

As we realize that the counselor accepts uswarts and all, clumsy coping maneuvers and all, we start to accept ourselves more. We are not angels and we are not devils. We are just ordinary human beings trying to figure how to get through life. There is a lot of trial and error along the way and that is nothing to be ashamed of. No one, absolutely no one, can learn to be human without making mistakes. But it is easy to imagine, when I am alone with my mistakes, that I am the stupidest, crummiest person in the world. A good counselor, (...friend, minister, parent, support group member) is someone who helps us develop a more realistic and forgiving picture of ourselves.

These relationships based on deep acceptance help to free us from the fantasy of being all-good or all-bad, help to free us from the need to keep up appearances. Thus, we can start to acknowledge and learn from whatever is going on inside us. Freed from the need to defend our mistakes, we can actually look at them, and get beyond the need to repeat them. But these are hard things to learn alone. It really helps if someone accompanies us along that road.

Sometimes you will be the receiver of that acceptance and sometimes the giver. Whichever role you happen to play at a given moment, it's helpful to understand that honest, caring, empathic conversations (Carl Rogers' big three), just by themselves, set in motion a kind of deep learning that has come to be known as "healing." "Healing" is a beautiful word and a powerful metaphor for positive change. But "healing" can also be a

misleading word because of the way it de-emphasizes learning and everyone's capacity to learn new ways of relating to people and navigating through life.

Here are five of the "deep learnings" that I see going on in almost all supportive and empathic conversations.

- In paying attention to someone in a calm, accepting way, you teach that person to pay attention to themselves in just that way.
- In caring for others, you teach them to care for themselves and you help them to feel more like caring about others.
- The more you have faced and accepted your own feelings, the more you can be a supportive witness for another person who is struggling to face and accept his or her feelings.
- In forgiving people for being human and making mistakes and having limits, you teach people to forgive themselves and start over, and you help them to have a more forgiving attitude toward others.
- By having conversations that include the honest sharing and recognition of feelings, and the exploration of alternative possibilities of action, you help a person to see that, by gradual degrees, they can start to have more honest and fruitful conversations with the important people in their lives.

These experiences belong to everyone, since they are part of being human. They are ours to learn and, through the depth of our caring, honesty and empathy, ours to give. I believe they are the heart of counseling.

Examples of Open-Ended Questions

“How comfortable are you with Plan B?”

“How could I modify this proposal to meet more of your requirements?”

“What kind of information do you need in order to go forward?”

“How did you like that movie?”

“What do you think about...moving the office to Boston?”
(rather than, “Is it OK with you if we move...?”)

“How are you feeling about all of this?”

“How ready are you to...?”
(rather than, “Are you ready to...?”)

Open Ended Questions Optional Exercise

Translate each of the following “yes-no” questions into an “open-ended” one. What problems can you imagine arising from each of the “yes-no” versions?

(On talking with a person who looks disappointed...)

“So, you didn’t like that, huh?”

(A pilot to a new co-pilot...)

“D’you know how to fly this thing?”

(A nurse to a patient...)

“Have you been taking your medication?”

(Parent to teen...)

“Don’t you think it would be better if you did your homework first?”

Five Messages Model

Example of Expression of Appreciation

STARTING WITH THE FIVE MESSAGES IN ACTION

| The Five Messages | express: | Example: |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| <i>seeing, hearing...</i> | 1. What are you seeing, hearing or otherwise sensing? (facts only) | "When I saw my paycheck in the mailbox today..." |
| <i>and feeling...</i> | 2. What emotions are you feeling? | ...I felt really relieved... |
| <i>because I...</i> | 3. What interpretations, wants, needs, memories or anticipations of yours support those feelings? | ...because I need to pay my rent tomorrow morning... |
| <i>and now I want...</i> | 4. What action, information or commitment do you want now? | ...and I want to run down to the bank and deposit it right now... |
| <i>so that...</i> | 5. What <u>positive</u> results will that action, information or commitment lead to in the future? (no threats) | ...so that my rent check will clear if my landlord cashes it tomorrow." |

Note: My deep appreciation goes to the work of Marshall Rosenberg¹² for helping me to understand messages 1 through 4, and to the work of Sharon and Gordon Bower¹³ for helping me understand message 5.

Although the Five Messages model has a space for everything, many expressions of appreciation do not need Messages 4 and 5. Most expressions of gratitude convey a message of satisfaction that is not necessarily connected to any future actions (*and now I want*) or anticipations of positive results (*so that*). Every now and then you may need to include Messages 4 and 5 in order to express your feelings in a complex situation, but as you can see in the examples on the next page, Three-Part Appreciations really can tell the whole story in most situations.

¹² Marshall Rosenberg, *A Model for Nonviolent Communication*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers. 1983

¹³ Sharon Anthony Bower and Gordon H. Bower, *Asserting Yourself: A Practical Guide for Positive Change*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley. 1976

EXPLORING EXAMPLES OF THREE-PART APPRECIATIONS

| 1. When I saw/heard... | 2. I felt... | 3. because I...(need, want, interpret, associate, etc.) |
|--|--|--|
| When I saw the flowers on the table... | ...I felt so grateful to you... | ...because the flowers reminded me of all the nice things you do around here" |
| "When I tasted those strawberry pancakes... | ...I felt amazed and delighted... | ...because I don't remember ever tasting pancakes so good in my whole life!" |
| "When I heard you reading the Blue Burp story to Susie and Jimmy... | ...I felt a quite kind of happiness... | ...because I know how much the kids love that story." |
| "When I saw how neatly the tools were hung up in the garage... | ...I felt very thankful... | ...because I hate it when I'm in the middle of a job and I can't find the tools I need." |
| "When I saw Big Joe #37 hit that home run all the way out of the park... | ...man! I was really excited... | ...because I thought the Wranglers had a chance of winning the game after all." |
| "When I finally got a call through to you in San Francisco... | ...I was so relieved and happy... | ...because I had been worrying that you had been hurt in the earthquake." |
| "When I felt you put your arm around me at Aunt Nell's funeral... | ...I felt very appreciative... | ...because I was feeling really awful at just then and needed some comfort." |
| "When I smelled that chicken cooking in the kitchen... | ...I felt soooooo happy... | ...because I didn't get any lunch today and I am really hungry." |

CONVERSATION: CREATING THE LIFE THAT LIVES BETWEEN US
(and within us, too)

Talking about my thoughts, feelings, experiences and wants
with the people who are close to me in my life...

*directions of possible development >>> ...in ways that express
more of what is going on inside of me and in ways that are
easier for my listeners to understand and empathize with.*

Listening to people share their experiences, thoughts, feelings...

*directions of possible development >>> ...more carefully, expressing
more acknowledgment, responding in ways that confirm to my
partners-in-conversation that I have understood their experiences.*

Talking with people to express my appreciation of them...

*directions of possible development >>> ...in a richer and more complete
vocabulary, that allows people to understand more of my satisfaction
and delight with them and with what they have done.*

Talking with people to resolve my conflicts with them...

*directions of possible development >>> ...speaking in ways that express
more of my needs without attacking my partners-in-conflict, listening
in ways that help my partners-in-conflict express more of their needs
without attacking me.*

Talking and listening to coordinate my actions with the actions of the
important people in my life (at home, in work, in community projects, etc.)...

*directions of possible development >>> ...by expressing myself more clearly
and listening more carefully to increase the level of mutual understanding.
Also, by learning to discuss difficult topics without criticizing my listeners,
learning to translate my own and other people's criticisms into requests
for action, and learning to ask questions more creatively..*

Communicating with myself through journal writing and "inner conversations"...

*directions of possible development >>>
...in ways that allow me to get a clearer picture of what's happening in my life,
to feel more present in my life, to accept and forgive myself more,
to imagine and plan the next step in my life, etc.*

Listening and clarifying the issues as a mediator between people in conflict...

*directions of possible development >>> ...as an extension of all the above,
listening in a more responsive way, that confirms to each speaker that I
have understood his or her experiences and feelings; encouraging and coaching
each of the partners-in-conflict to listen to the other and to express wants
and needs as actions requests rather than attacks on the other. Acting as a
mediator generally requires training and practice. (The skills described in
this workbook are key elements in the process of mediation.)*

Learning to bring out the best in myself and others in and through conversation. Conversations are one of most important activities in which we become deeper and more fully realized persons. (See essay on page 63.) Conversations express our character, but they also create our character as we listen and speak...

(directions of possible development > > >)

... more awarely (of self, other and context)

... more skillfully, competently and wisely

... more honestly, sincerely, genuinely, congruently (inner matches outer)

... more caringly, compassionately, acceptingly, respectfully, warmly, forgivingly

... more creatively and "exploratorily" (with more creative openness to new experience)

... more courageously, hopefully and faithfully

... more generously and nurturingly, delighting in the happiness of others

... more meaningfully and expressively, organizing and expressing our experiences in coherent patterns of words, music, movement and imagery

... more gratefully and appreciatively, open to delight and the gift of each moment

... more engagingly, energetically and responsibly

... more gracefully and beautifully (in the Navajo sense of beauty as cosmic harmony)

HARRIS COUNTY COMMUNITY SUPERVISION AND CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT

Class Evaluation for Stomp Out Stress Program

Module Name (circle one): Education Individual Organization Communication

Date/Time: _____

Please circle the numbers below which most closely represent your experience in today's training session, according to the guide below.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|--------------------|------------------|---------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|
| | Not At All True | Somewhat True | Doesn't Apply To Me | Mostly True | Almost Completely True |
| 1. The material was relevant to issues that I face in my life. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. I learned information that can help me at work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. I learned information that can help me at home and in personal relationships. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. The instructor presented the material in a way that helped me understand the concepts. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. The instructor welcomed questions and was willing to clarify questions that arose. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. The audio visual materials were helpful, interesting and relevant. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. The printed materials were helpful, interesting and relevant. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. The amount of time spent on the topic was (circle one): | | | | | |
| Just right | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Too short | | | | | |
| Too long | | | | | |

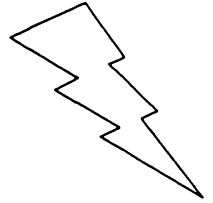
Other comments. Please include anything that will help us improve the program.

Name (optional)

Appendix H

Focus Group
Issues Identification

Causes and Factors of Stress



Provide a solution for each problem

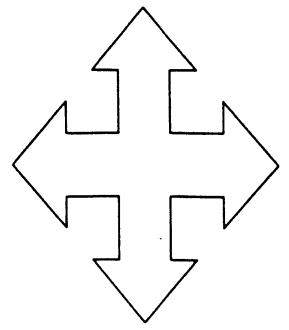
Things to consider:

Employment – i.e., burnout, close to retirement, dislike job assignment, etc.

Personal issues – i.e., health, goals, interests, etc.

Family – i.e., children, aging parents, spouse, single parenting, etc.

Logistics of the Program

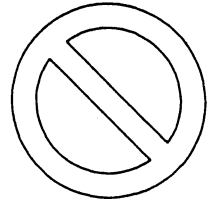


Provide a solution for each problem

Things to consider:

- How often to have the classes
- When to have classes (time of day, day(s) of week)
- How many times to offer each module
- Whether to have make-up classes
- How many participants per class
- Student to instructor ratio
- Length of each module

Obstacles to Participation

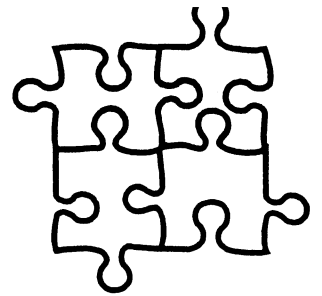


Provide a solution for each problem

Things to consider:

- Time away from regularly scheduled work
- Attending after hours
- Other's perception of why they are participating
- Don't believe it will help
- Don't believe in research
- Not enough time
- Manager won't let them
- Schedule interferes with their other responsibilities
- Don't believe it will be confidential

Motivation for Family Participation



Provide a solution for each problem

Things to consider:

What will make family members want to participate?

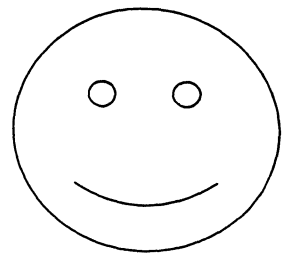
How to encourage them to participate?

What incentives can be given to them?

How can the schedule of classes accommodate their personal schedules?

What is in it for them?

Motivation for Staff Participation



Provide a solution for each problem

Things to consider:

Use of incentives

What is in it for them?

How will it benefit the Department?

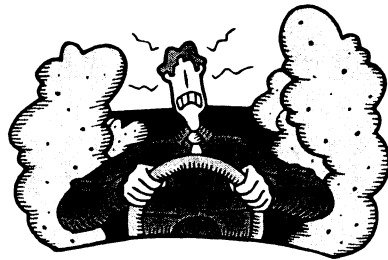
Recognition

Diversion from normal job functions

Appendix I

Stomp Out Stress (S.O.S) Signs

Have you taken time for yourself lately?



Be a part of a group of CSOs who have made the choice to take care of themselves by participating in SOS (STOMP OUT STRESS) classes.

Bring a family member or “significant other” and join us!

Dates to be announced soon.

S.O.S.

**STOMP
OUT
STRESS**

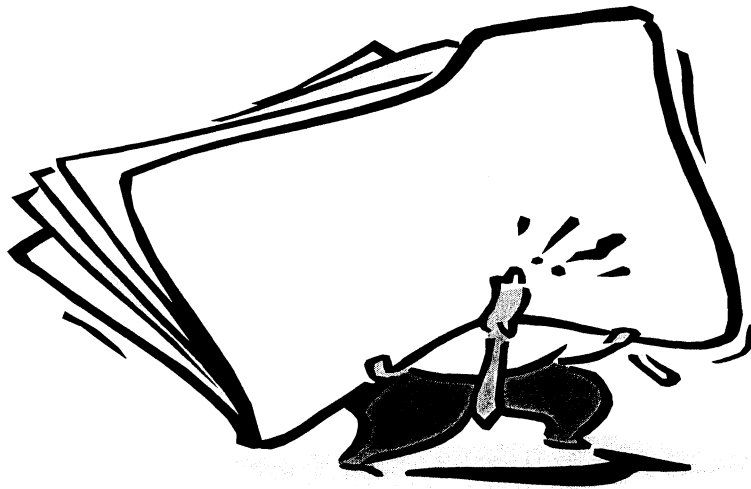
A program for CSOs (and a family member or significant other) designed to address and reduce the level of burnout and stress CSOs experience every day.

Details coming soon to a region near you!!!

STRESS

It affects your...

- Health
- Job performance and satisfaction
- Personal well being
- Morale
- Moods
- Relationships



Have you done ALL you can to constructively cope with the stressors that affect you and your family?

CSOs are invited to participate in our SOS (Stomp Out Stress) classes which will begin in early 2001. Details coming soon.



CSOs: In the last two weeks, have you made any of these statements?

- ✓ I am so burned out!
- ✓ My job is really getting to me!
- ✓ I need a vacation!
- ✓ I can't handle all of this stress anymore!
- ✓ I am so tired all of the time!

If so, plan to bring a spouse or significant other to the upcoming SOS (STOMP OUT STRESS) classes. Learn about stress and burnout and what you can do to get control of your life and improve your situations.

Dates to be announced soon!

Appendix J

Stress Inventory Questionnaire

Stress Inventory Questionnaire

Are you wondering if YOU could benefit from attending the Stomp Out Stress) S.O.S. training series that is being offered in June? Take this short questionnaire and get some insight into what you could be doing to improve your job satisfaction. Put a check mark by all that apply.

Do you find yourself saying or thinking...

I am so burned out!
 I need a vacation!
 I need a drink!
 I can't stand all this change!
 My job is really getting to me! I need a new job!
 I can't handle all of this stress anymore!
 I am so tired all of the time, but I can't sleep!
 I'm tired of having headaches!
 I'm so forgetful lately!
 Every little thing upsets me!
 I'm not even sure what is expected of me!
 No one appreciates anything I do!
 There is so much disorganization in my life!
 I can't sleep at night!
 I have so much trouble concentrating!
 I'm so glad I have ___days/months/years to retirement!
 I'm taking my frustrations out on probationers.
 Is this what I spent 4 years in college for?
 I feel trapped!

Does your spouse or significant other say to you...

You stay at the office too long!
 You never talk to me about your work!
 You're always in a bad mood after work!
 I'm afraid your job is too dangerous!
 Why do you always bring work home?
 When is your next raise?
 You're no fun anymore!
 You're not here to help me with...
 You fly off the handle so easily!
 You always seem so stressed out!
 Why are you so forgetful?
 We never spend time together!
 You're drinking too much!
 You need a vacation!
 You never listen to me when we talk!
 When can you retire?
 Can't you find a new job?
 You're never happy anymore!
 You've got to get away from there!

I want more job satisfaction, a more positive outlook on my professional future, and (where applicable) a better relationship with my significant other!

Take a look at your responses.

If you and/or your significant other could answer yes to two (2) or more of the above questions, the S.O.S. sessions being offered have the potential to help you improve your life and job situation. Come join us and learn about stress and burnout and – most importantly – what YOU can do to increase your satisfaction with your job and with your life.

Appendix K

Registration for S.O.S. Classes

REGISTRATION FOR S.O.S. CLASSES

CSO Name: _____ Region/Program: _____

Dates of Attendance Requested (Circle ONE for each module):

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| Education (8 hours) | 6/6, 8-5 | 6/8, 8-5 | 6-11, 8-5 |
| Individual Module (4 hours) | 6/13, 1-5 | 6/14, 8-12 | 6/19, 1-5 |
| Organization Module (4 hours) | 6/20, 1-5 | 6/21, 8-12 | 6/25, 1-5 |
| Communication (4 hours) | 6/26, 8-12 | 6/27, 8-12 | 6/27, 1-5 |

CSO Signature

Date

Supervisor Signature

Date

Would your significant other be interested in participating in the program?

_____ I do not have a significant other who would want to participate.

_____ I do have a significant other who would want to participate.

_____ I will deliver the invitation to them.

_____ UHD may mail the invitation letter to them.

Name of significant other: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Estimated best time for significant other to attend classes (circle one):

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 8:00-5:00 Weekdays | 5:30-9:30 p.m. Weekdays | Saturdays 9:00 am-1:00 pm | Saturdays 1:00-5:00 pm | Any of the times listed |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|

