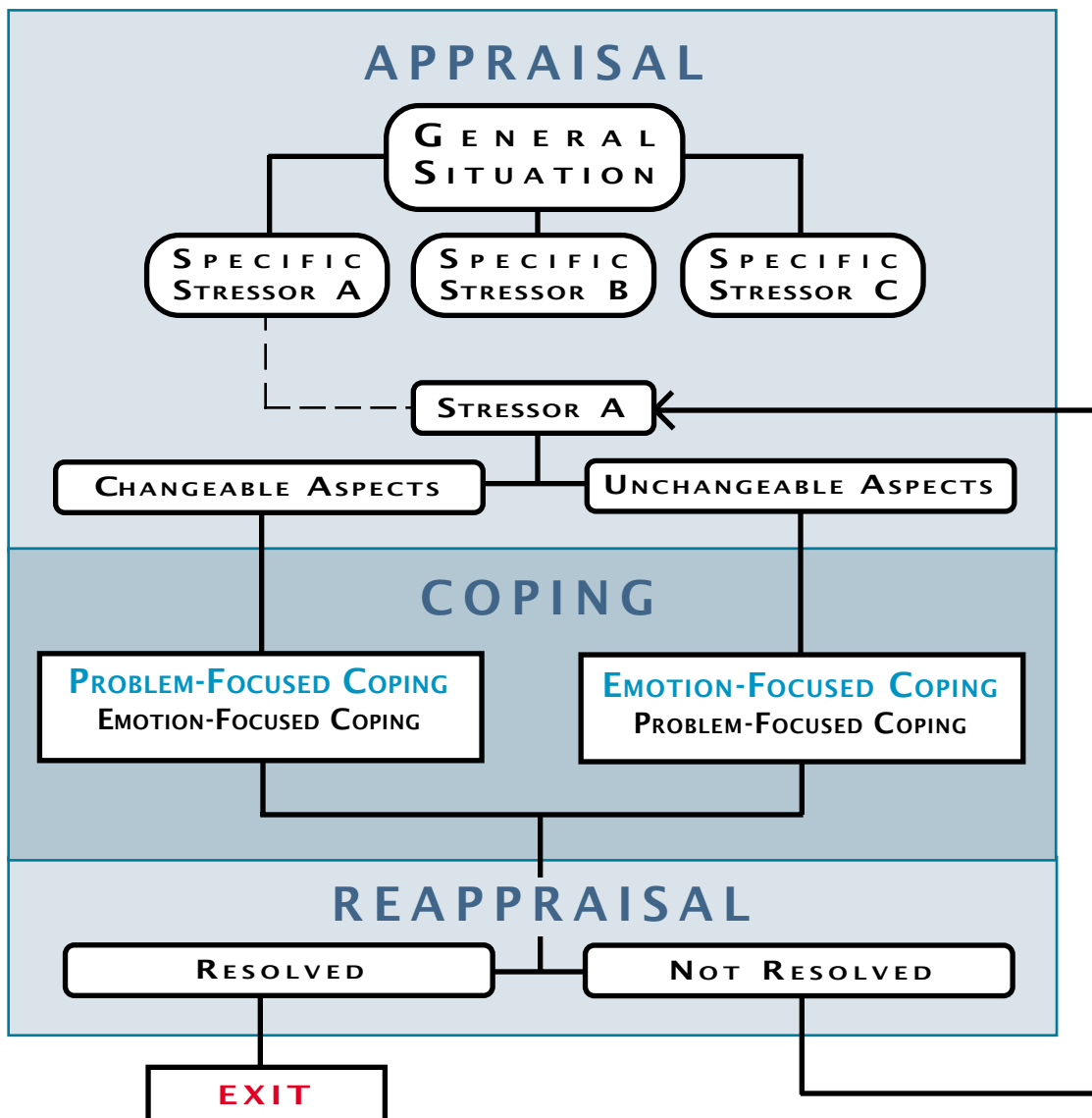


COPING EFFECTIVENESS TRAINING

• FACILITATOR'S MANUAL •



CENTER FOR AIDS PREVENTION STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN FRANCISCO

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*DEDICATED TO OUR PARTICIPANTS
WHO HAVE TAUGHT US SO MUCH*

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COPING EFFECTIVENESS TRAINING
FACILITATOR'S MANUALCENTER FOR AIDS PREVENTION STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN FRANCISCO

The purpose of Coping Effectiveness Training (CET) is to teach people skills for coping with stress — from daily hassles to major life events. The program brings together recent developments in the theory of stress, coping and health with advances in stress management. Stress and coping theory emphasizes two processes, appraisal and coping, as mediators of the relationship between stress and an individual's psychological and physiological reactions. Although CET is a manualized intervention program, it seeks not to be merely a “mechanical application of techniques” (Castonguay, Goldfried, Wiser, Raue & Hayes, 1996). Facilitators attempt to strike a balance between delivering the intervention and maintaining flexibility so that they do not get bogged down in the particular language or techniques. CET is a work in progress. Much of what you will see in both the Facilitator's Manual and the Participant's Workbook is currently under revision. We welcome your feedback on what you will read in the pages that follow.

Appraisal refers to the individual's evaluation of a particular personally meaningful situation. Whether or not a situation is stressful is based on how each person evaluates the situation. What is a major stressor for one person may be a minor event to another. The difference is how the two people perceive and evaluate the situation.

Coping refers to what individuals do in response to situations that they appraise or evaluate as stressful. Coping can be internal in the form of thoughts or can be external actions. The overarching question that determines the range of adaptive coping options is whether or not the outcome of the situation can be changed. The range of options is also influenced by the person's resources for coping, including psychological, social, material and physical resources.

Coping has two main functions. First, it can help address the problems that give rise to stress. This is referred to as **problem-focused coping**. Second, it can help regulate feelings that arise from stress including anxiety, anger and sadness. This is referred to as **emotion-focused coping**. In general, the best fit occurs when people use problem-focused coping in situations that are changeable and use emotion-focused coping in situations that are not changeable.

Stress management strategies can be categorized as primarily problem-focused or emotion-focused. Problem-focused coping, for example, relies on problem-solving strategies, communications and interpersonal negotiation skills. Emotion-focused coping includes adaptive strategies such as cognitive reframing or restructuring and humor. There are also maladaptive emotion-focused strategies such as over-use of drugs or alcohol.

With CET, **stress and coping theory supplies the framework** in terms of training individuals to:

- be specific about the stress they encounter, and to
- be explicit about the extent to which each source of stress is changeable.

Then, **stress management supplies the coping strategies**, fitting the strategies to each source of stress, so that:

- problem-focused strategies are applied to stressors that can be changed, and
- emotion-focused strategies are applied to stressors that cannot be changed.

THE INTERVENTION PROGRAM

The intervention program emphasizes training in appraisal, emotion-focused coping, problem-focused coping, the use of social support and the maintenance of coping skills over time.

- **Appraisal training** emphasizes identifying specific personally meaningful stressful situations (as opposed to global chronic conditions), and distinguishing between changeable and unchangeable aspects of these situations.
- **Emotion-focused training** emphasizes relaxation and distancing skills that are useful for reducing distress when dealing with chronic threat and unchangeable situations.
- **Problem-focused training** emphasizes the development of problem-solving skills for use in changeable situations including communication, decision-making, and negotiation.
- **Social support training** emphasizes the development of skills to achieve a fit between the type of support one needs and the type of support that can be obtained from various support providers.
- **Maintenance training** emphasizes the identification of forces that will interfere with maintenance of coping skills and the development of strategies to counteract these forces.

GROUP FACILITATION

This section includes a review of some of the fundamentals of group facilitation and some guidelines for leading CET groups.¹

The effectiveness of a CET group depends, in large measure, on its facilitators.

As a CET group facilitator, you can help to enhance the effectiveness of your group by following some guidelines.

- Create an emotionally safe setting.
- Bring a positive attitude.
- Encourage group members to share their ideas and feelings.
- Build on group members' knowledge and experience.
- Avoid sermon giving.
- Remain aware of goals.

¹ *This section on group facilitation is adapted from the Women's Health Initiative Group Nutritionist Manual.*

A major part of your job is to introduce the session topic and guide the discussion or exercises. At appropriate times, you will summarize or encourage members to summarize what has been going on in the group.

In CET groups, participants have the opportunity to interact with others who have faced similar difficulties. People who are HIV-positive bring an enormous amount of experience and expertise in a variety of areas to a CET group. Although at times you will need to provide examples in order to clarify a concept, more often than not, the group members' experiences will provide examples more meaningful to them than examples you bring in from outside. Integrate participants' expertise and experience with the skills you are teaching for coping with stress. Using participants' knowledge lets them know you are listening and that you are concerned about them.

In addition, active participation by the group members tends to increase their self-esteem, and encourages them to continue participating. It tends to confer a sense of belonging or ownership of the group - a sense that "this is my group." Finally, it allows you to get to know the participants better and to learn from them.

Communication Skills

Try to involve all participants in the groups' process. Encourage those who are quiet, and control those who dominate the group interaction.

Develop rapport by responding to participants' feelings and needs. Communicate empathic understanding through both your verbal and non-verbal actions. See your participants as capable. Each will bring something valuable to the group. Express appropriate warmth and friendliness.

Provide encouragement, support and appropriate challenges to the group.

Listen and attend to what people say so that they know you are paying close attention and you value their thoughts, ideas, and feelings.

Among the members of CET groups, you will encounter differing language patterns and styles, various cultural and ethnic backgrounds, a range of communication skills, varying abilities to absorb and retain information, differential willingness to disclose personal information, and differing levels of concrete or abstract thinking abilities.

A few guidelines:

- Elicit information, ideas, examples from the group.
- Use common language. If you have information to give, give the most important part first, and give it one piece at a time. If you are giving information, be sure it is necessary and useful.
- Give reasons for seeking and giving information. Tell participants why you want the information and how you plan to use it.
- Encourage differing viewpoints to be voiced. Do not show bias for certain answers in your tone of voice.
- Listen for feelings. Attend to how content is given. Respond to the “how” rather than only to the content. Sometimes it will be appropriate to respond to feelings verbally and directly. Other times you will note the feelings to yourself and respond to them more indirectly.

S u m m a r i z i n g

When:

- At the beginning of a CET group, you may summarize from the previous meeting so that everyone begins the present group from common ground.
- Clarification is needed.
- It is time to move the group along to the next step.
- At the end of a CET meeting to provide closure. If you are not able to cover all the segments of any particular session, state in your summary that not everything has been covered. Tell participants that you will address the areas not covered during the next meeting.

How:

- Be brief. Highlight major points. Omit any nonessential information.
- Include only information already discussed. This is not the time to add anything new.

Who:

- You, the facilitator, may summarize. Alternatively, you may ask the group members to summarize and guide them in the process.

Mediating Conflict

Sometimes conflict will arise between participants. Most times, the facilitator must play a neutral role in order to manage and use disagreements. Disagreements related to differences in appraisal may occur.

Guidelines:

- Listen to each side and paraphrase what each participant has said.
- Clarify the issues.
- Point out common elements, and note areas of disagreement.

Discuss possible options:

- Get more information.
- Seek a compromise position.
- Ask for ideas or feedback from the group. Encourage group participants to help each other in resolving disputes.
- Agree to table the issue temporarily (e.g., to let tempers cool) and to revisit it later (maybe next week).
- Agree to disagree. Agreeing to disagree may be a helpful approach when disagreements about appraisal occur. Relating the disagreement back to the discussion of appraisal may be particularly helpful.

Modeling

Modeling is used to help clarify concepts and to demonstrate particular behaviors or skills.

When formally modeling a skill or behavior:

- Explain your purpose.
- Tell participants ahead of time what in particular you want them to notice.
- Have group members themselves do the demonstration or modeling whenever possible.
- Keep it brief.
- Afterwards, review what you hope was demonstrated and get feedback from your group.

Role Playing

Role playing is an activity that often elicits groans from group members when it is first announced. However, members frequently enjoy it after their initial resistance, and can have a lot of fun elaborating on their assumed roles. The primary reason for using role plays is that they provide opportunities to rehearse or practice for a likely or expected situation in the future. A role play allows participants to experiment with new behaviors in a playful, relatively risk-free environment.

Encourage participants to take the risk and try role playing, but do not push anyone into an activity if you sense he feels too uncomfortable.

When setting up a role play:

- Introduce the hypothetical situation.
- Ask the whole group for volunteers, or ask particular members if they would be willing to take particular parts. Let people refuse to take an overtly active part in the role play. Many people will be very involved while observing others.
- Give any necessary specific instructions to the players.

- Give instructions to non-players concerning any particular points they should observe.

When the role play itself is over:

- Ask players how the experience was for them.
- Ask group members to report their reactions.
- Discuss the critical events, important issues, and solutions with the group.
- Summarize the discussion.

Group Discussion

Begin a discussion with a clear statement of the area or topic to be talked about and an explicit statement of purpose.

During discussion, provide a non-judgmental, supportive atmosphere in which all members can contribute. Because some members will be more reluctant than others to take an active part in the discussion, you may want to direct some questions in a way that invites specific members to take part but does not stigmatize them for being quieter than others. Encourage group members to talk with each other, not only with the leaders. For example, redirect questions from participants to the group at large. As a leader, your job is to keep the discussion on track and, when necessary, to clarify what has been said. In order to stay on track, you may need to periodically recap what has been said and refocus the group. To keep discussion moving along, try to prevent a lot of repetition.

To end and wrap-up the discussion, recap and emphasize main points.

Dyads and Triads

When you use dyads or triads, begin by explaining to the whole group the purpose and format of the activity, including how much time is allotted. Give directions for breaking into smaller groups. As the time approaches to conclude, warn people that they have a couple minutes left to finish.

Return to the larger group to talk about people's experience in the dyads or triads.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming can be an effective technique for exploring innovative solutions to challenges.

The primary rule of brainstorming is that no criticism (even self-criticism) is allowed. Encourage participants to come up with as many solutions as possible. What seem like wild and crazy options frequently contain an element that can be identified and used in the actual solution chosen. Encourage participants to elaborate on the ideas of others.

Use the white board or a flip chart to write down all ideas stated. You may choose to set a time limit for the brainstorming period. When finished, organize and discuss the list of ideas.

S E S S I O N I

**INTRODUCTION TO COPING
EFFECTIVENESS TRAINING**

OVERVIEW

- 1) Leader Introductions
- 2) Group Member Introductions
- 3) What is Stress?
- 4) Stressful Events: Dyad
- 5) Personal Symptoms of Stress
- 6) Stress is a Personal Experience
- 7) Managing Stress
- 8) Introduce the Coping Exercises
- 9) Ending the Group

GOALS

- A) Begin to establish group rapport.
- B) Orient participants to the goals and structure of the group.
- C) Normalize stress.
- D) Identify stressful situations from participants' own lives.
- E) Introduce the concepts of what makes a situation stressful, meaning & stress management.

LEADER INTRODUCTIONS

Introduce yourselves to the group.

Leader's Note: Remember, this is the group's first exposure to the dynamics between you and your co-leader.

Acknowledge the common bond that brought people to the group - That is, the stress of coping with being positive.

Acknowledge the many changes in the HIV environment.

We realize that one of the things that is very stressful about the HIV world is making decisions about healthcare. It may be more confusing at this particular time than ever. There are so many questions: Should I take protease inhibitors [the latest in new meds]? What if they don't work for me? What if I take them and my numbers look good but I don't feel any better? What if I can't afford them? What if I decide on a non-PI course of health care but my friends and family keep pressuring me to use something I've decided against? Of course, protease isn't the only thing - what about the rest of my health care - non-western approaches, diet, exercise, mental health care, etc. How do I manage all the elements of my healthcare? How do I manage the different pieces of my own plan for myself? Related questions have to do with the rest of life - work, relationships, and so forth.

Describe what the program is and how helpful you think it can be. We have found it hard to know how best to describe our program. It is a combination of a course in which we will teach you some skills and a support group. In a sense, we will be supplying the outline and you will be supplying the content. It may sound a little confusing, but you'll see how it works as we go along. We can't supply concrete answers to all of your individual questions. That's not really our business. We will teach you skills for finding your own solutions to problems, and skills for dealing with feelings. We will start with some general skills and then tackle some particular areas. To start with we are going to group all these kinds of difficult questions and related emotions together under the rubric of stress.

Provide a framework for what will be coming in the weeks ahead. The first 12 weeks you will be learning and putting into practice a set of skills. During the ongoing maintenance meetings, you will be developing your facility with those skills and further integrating them into your life. The meetings will each focus on a particular area. Let's take a look at the session-by-session contents for the first 12 weeks. Turn to the Table of Contents. Tonight we're going to introduce you to some of the basics (more on that in a minute). In the next three weeks we will be developing our basic model of coping skills. Then there is a retreat on a Saturday or Sunday after the fourth or fifth session. It is held in a beautiful setting, and provides the opportunity for group members to get to know each other better as well as providing an opportunity to practice using the skills you will have learned and to expand on them. We will help you set up carpools so transportation is not a big problem. In the past, participants have said they enjoyed the retreat and found it meaningful. In fact, they wanted more than one retreat, and those who missed it, wished they had come. So, we'll encourage you to come, but you don't have to make a commitment now.

Let's take a minute now and turn to the diagram in the very front of your workbooks. The diagram shows the most basic components of the coping model we will be using. In the weeks to come we will be elaborating on that model and then adding some supplementary skills which enhance it. If you look back at the Table of Contents again, you will see negotiation skills, social support, thinking about priorities, and coping sabotage (which is about how we tend to sabotage ourselves and how to recover from the times we do sabotage our own good coping.) The last chapter of this workbook is session 12 in which we will review our first 11 weeks together and begin the transition to a less frequent meeting schedule for the ongoing maintenance sessions. At the first follow-up meeting, we will give you the workbook chapter for session 13. As I mentioned, chapters for the rest of our meetings together will focus on refining and integrating the skills you will have learned into your life.

Give an overview of this session's activities. Tonight we want to introduce the program and begin to get to know one

another. As described on page one, the workbook closely follows our sessions. It includes a summary of the areas we'll be talking about. It also includes some exercises which are designed to help you personalize and use what you'll be learning here. Past participants have told us at the end of their participation that they wished they had been more diligent about doing the exercises and they suggested that we nag people more about doing them. We aren't here to nag you, but we do suggest that you do them.

Discuss Confidentiality. Discuss issues of confidentiality. Use the example in the workbook.

GROUP MEMBER INTRODUCTIONS

Ask participants to give their names, tell a little about themselves (some identifying information), say what brought them to the group, and what their expectations of the group are. At the end of these introductions, if their expectations and what the group offers differ, discuss the differences with participants.

WHAT IS STRESS?

Refer back to the stresses that brought people to the group and to the focus of the group being coping with stress.

Stress is tension or pressures that are a natural part of living our lives. Stress can result both from changes we want as well as from those we don't want. Change, in and of itself, can be stressful.

STRESSFUL EVENTS: DYAD

Ask the group to break into dyads of participants who do not know each other. Request that each participant select a stressful situation to talk about with their dyad partner. Ask them to include how they experienced the stress or how the stress affected them (i.e., did you get short tempered, feel

depressed, have trouble sleeping, lose yourself in activity, etc.). After both men in each dyad have had approximately 5 minutes to talk about their stressful situations (about 10 minutes total), re-form the group. Each man will then introduce his dyad partner to the group in terms of the stressful situation just discussed. Give the person being introduced the opportunity to change or clarify the information being presented about him.

Leader's Note: Sometimes events from the recent past are too close, intense, or personal for this early in the group. Participants will bring up more current events as they feel safer. When you introduce this exercise, acknowledge that you are aware that it is a stressful thing to do. Give permission to talk about HIV/AIDS.

PERSONAL SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

Refer back to the specific information you just received from participants about how they react to stress in their lives (i.e., their symptoms of stress). Ask them to expand on this list by identifying additional personal symptoms of stress.

Look for examples from the following categories. Add some that are missing.

- **Physical:** shortness of breath, pounding heart, stiff or tense muscles, headaches, upset stomach, clenching jaw or fists, dizziness, trembling, diarrhea, grinding teeth, sweating, feeling faint, loss of interest in sex, tiredness, restlessness.
- **Emotional:** irritability, anger, worry, trouble concentrating, negative attitudes, loneliness, feeling down or depressed, feeling tense, grouchiness, inability to relax.
- **Behavioral:** overeating, loss of appetite, trouble sleeping, accident proneness, using more alcohol, avoiding tasks, sleep problems, trouble completing work assignments, fidgeting, tremors, crying, smoking more.
- **Cognitive:** anxious or racing or slowed thoughts, fearful anticipation, poor concentration, difficulty with memory.
- **Social:** avoiding others, isolating, not wanting to be alone, venting, getting easily irritated with others.

Often one of these feelings or behaviors is the first cue that we are stressed.

STRESS IS A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Just as the symptoms of stress vary from person to person, so does the experience of what is stressful. A given situation may be stressful for one person and not for another. It's not wrong or bad to feel stressed when someone else doesn't. People are simply stressed by different kinds of things. The point really is that stress is a personal experience.

What is it, then, that makes something stressful for one person and not another? The amount of stress each person experiences depends on his or her understanding of the situation. Stress results from your belief that an event is dangerous, difficult or painful, and that you can't (or may not be able to) cope with it. Different things are stressful for different people largely because the meaning of the event differs from person to person, and because people have different resources available for coping with stress.

Leader's Note: Resources refers to both internal and external resources.

MANAGING STRESS

During this first session, we've been talking about what stress is. In the weeks ahead, we'll be talking a lot about what helps you deal with stress. Just as we all experience stress in a variety of ways, we tend to cope with stress in a variety of ways as well. Some ways of coping are more effective than others in relieving how stressed a person feels. One of the things we'll be doing as we go along is helping you identify what the most effective ways are for you and maybe introduce you to some you haven't been using.

Management not Mastery

Introduce the concept of stress management rather than

stress mastery. Some situations cannot be mastered in the sense that the stress cannot be eliminated from your life. However, not mastering or eliminating stress from one's life does not mean that a person is not coping effectively. Our focus is on developing a way of making stress more manageable.

Leader's Note: The concept of management tends to reduce participants' anxiety.

INTRODUCE THE COPING EXERCISES

Toward the end of each group, give participants the exercises to do before coming back the following week.

Why do them?

The Coping Exercises build on the key points of each session. Because the group meetings are each only 90 minutes out of 5,040 minutes in a week, the exercises are designed to help you integrate what you learn here into your life in the rest of the world. The exercises are for you. No one else has access to them unless you want them to.

Why not do them (Barriers to doing the exercises)

Discuss some of the barriers to doing the exercises. Acknowledge any feelings participants express about the exercises. Brainstorm all of the excuses that members can think of for not doing the exercises.

Exercises for next week

- **Barriers to Doing the Exercises** - What are all the reasons you came up with for putting off doing these exercises? (If you are a person who doesn't put things off, you have one less exercise to do!)
- **Personal Signs & Symptoms of Stress**

ENDING THE GROUP (10 - 15 MINUTES)

Next week we're going to talk some more about dealing with stress.

Before participants leave, ask for their reactions to the first group. Help them debrief/decompress. (If they are feeling too stressed out when they leave, they are less likely to return.) Ask what doing the dyads was like for them. Do a brief relaxation exercise (e.g., breathing for calming, stand in circle and massage the neck and shoulders of the person in front of you, etc.) with members before they leave. Give permission to not participate actively (e.g., some people may be uncomfortable touching someone else and so not want to give/receive a shoulder massage.)

Breathing for calming - Breathe in for the count of 4, hold to the count of 4, exhale to the count of 4, and hold to the count of 4.

Keep the ending exercise simple and brief. Check in with participants afterwards for their reaction to the exercise.

**S E S S I O N I I
C E T : F I R S T S T E P S**

O V E R V I E W

- 1) Group Check-in
- 2) Review Exercises from Session 1
- 3) Positive Experiences
- 4) Communication Skills: Listening and Acknowledging
- 5) Introduce Coping
- 6) Breaking General Situations into Specific Events: Dyad
- 7) Exercises
- 8) Visualization Exercise

G O A L S

- A) Introduce idea of positive experiences.
- B) Practice new communication skills.
- C) Distinguish between general conditions and specific situations.
- D) Provide experience using visualization technique.

GROUP CHECK-IN

Check in with everyone. Touch base with any members who might have new news.

Leader's Note: Start each group by taking roll and inquiring about absences. Make sure that no one is overlooked and that no one can slip away unnoticed. If there is an unexpected absence, plan to call and find out what happened.

When a participant reports to the group about medical treatments, try to focus the discussion around what it means to the person (e.g., Is it worrisome? Does it set the person at ease?) rather than getting into a comparison of what treatments, trials, etc. participants are using.

REVIEW EXERCISES FROM SESSION 1

- **Barriers to Doing the Exercises** - What are all the reasons you came up with for putting off doing these exercises? (If you are a person who doesn't put things off, you have one less exercise to do!)
- **Personal Signs and Symptoms of Stress**

POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

We spent most of our last meeting talking about stress. We want to check in with you this week and ask whether there has been a time in the last couple of weeks that you felt good about something or there was something good that happened or that you felt positive about in your life?

It doesn't have to be something major in the eyes of the world (like winning the Nobel prize last week). We're talking about the kinds of experiences that help you make it through the day, the positive experiences in ordinary life that will never make the papers.

Exercise: Leaders model sharing positive events.

Leader's note: One of the leaders should be sure to describe a positive experience that could be seen as small (e.g., planting flowers, feeding goldfish, watching a sunrise, enjoying a good cup of

coffee, etc.). Briefly include a statement of what made it positive for the person.

Participants practice sharing positive events.

Leader's Note: Ensure that each person's experience is respected. One participant may subtly devalue another's positive experience - e.g., "Glad I didn't see the sunrise." If any devaluing should occur, this is a good opportunity to bring in the idea of appraisal i.e., "One man's meat [pleasure] is another man's poison." Ask each person to identify, if possible, what made it a positive event in his life.

Allow people to respond.

Leader's Note: If anyone says that there has been nothing good in his life, accept that. Do NOT push for there to have been anything good or positive.

We asked this question for a couple of reasons. One is that these seemingly little events are often the kinds of things that can help us make it through the really rough times. A second reason we asked about whether there has been anything positive is that sometimes it can be difficult to find places where the good feelings you may have can be talked about and accepted. It's kind of like being the only person who loves the winter holidays in the midst of a mass of people who find them depressing, dis-spiriting, too materialized, and so forth.

For some of us there either aren't or haven't been many places where pleasures and successes can be shared and respected. We think that the sharing and treasuring of pleasant or good events with others is important just as is having an arena for giving voice to the stresses and distresses of life.

COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS: LISTENING AND ACKNOWLEDGING

Much of our lives involves communication with others. Communication is often equated with telling. Yet, listening is an equally important skill.

Group Exercise

- What makes a good listener?
- Think of a good listener you know. What do they do?

Leaders Note: List responses on the blackboard. Help the group refine their ideas into the following:

- Allow people to finish their thoughts; don't interrupt.
- Allow the person to tell his story; don't steal the floor.
- Listen without giving advice.
- Listen carefully to the content of what others say.
- After someone has spoken, repeat briefly what was said, and ask if you heard it correctly.
- Listen carefully to any corrections.
- Repeat what you have heard in brief including the corrections.

Leader's Note: Add any of the skills above to the group-generated list on the board (if not already there).

INTRODUCE COPING

Definition

Last week we began to talk about the idea of **managing** rather than **mastering** stressful situations. In doing so, we began to define coping. Coping is the thoughts and behaviors that we use to manage the demands of stressful situations.

General Conditions vs. Specific Situations

Part of managing stress is learning to break a larger situation that may feel overwhelming down into more manageable chunks. Knowing that you only have to deal with one chunk at a time may allow you to feel less anxious overall. Sometimes things can feel so overwhelming that it is hard

to even try to find solutions to problems. Breaking things down into smaller parts can help.

Distinguish between general conditions (e.g., bad health, poor economy, life is too busy) and specific stressful situations (e.g., having a specific illness, not having enough money to cover expenses, not meeting deadlines).

Narrow the focus further to a specific event that illustrates the stressful situation (e.g., had to stay out of work because of a respiratory infection; had to borrow money to pay the rent; got reprimanded for getting a job in late).

Clues to identifying general stressful conditions:

- *Always, everywhere* and *everyone* suggest that a general condition is being described.
- To get to specifics, ask *Who, What, Where* and *When*.

Leader's Note: Stay away from asking *Why*. "Why" is often an interesting question, but tends to broaden rather than narrow the focus. Our task here is to try to get very specific. (Asking why can be very useful at other times, e.g., "why is this stressful to me?" can help to determine what is stressful about the event and may be useful in finding coping options.)

- Asking, "When was this last stressful for you?" frequently helps participants narrow the focus to a specific stressful situation.

BREAKING GENERAL SITUATIONS INTO SPECIFIC EVENTS: DYAD

Break the group into dyads.

Ask each dyad partner to:

- a) identify a stressful situation in his life (with a specific example) (or if his life has been stress free, describe the event of a friend or make up an event);
- b) describe it to his dyad partner.

Then the partner will describe the person's stressful event to the group. Dyad members will take turns so that each

member of the dyad occupies each role in the dyad. Ask them to use the communication skills above. Give the dyads 10-15 minutes to talk with each other before reporting back to the group. Give the person who owns the event the opportunity to make corrections or changes to the reporting of his event. The focus of the report back should be the general event and the specific event.

Leader's Note: Visit each dyad twice in order to listen to each of the partners. Focus on the ease or difficulty of getting to a specific situation and the experience of using the listening skills.

EXERCISES

Go over exercises for next session.

Think back to last week's exercises and to what, if anything, got in the way of doing them. Do you need to do anything differently this week in order to get the exercises done? Do you need to plan a time to do them? Link doing them to something else as a reminder?

- **Positive Experiences** - Think back over the week and describe something that you did, or something that happened to you, that made you feel good and that was meaningful to you and helped you get through a day.
- **Communication Skills: Listening & Acknowledging** - One time during the week consciously practice the listening skills given above in this chapter with a friend, relative, significant other, or someone else outside of the group.
- **General Conditions vs. Specific Situations** - Sort the given list into general conditions and specific stressful situations.

VISUALIZATION EXERCISE

End the session with a short visualization exercise. This visualization is meant to be a simple tool which you can use anytime you are feeling stressed out. All you need is a relatively quiet space where you can close your eyes for a few minutes.

Leader's note: You may use this visualization exercise or one of your own. Keep it brief.

- Sit or lie comfortably.
- Close your eyes.
- Take in three very deep breaths: with each breath, take a little longer to exhale all the air, and try to breath in a little more with each inhale.
- As you breathe, picture yourself in your safe, comfortable space.
- See, feel and hear this place as you continue to breathe.
- See yourself lying down in your space.
- As you are lying down, picture inside your lungs any stress that you are feeling. Give the stress a shape, color and texture (gray fuzz, black dots, purple squiggles....).
- Now take in a very deep breath of air from the calm, comfortable place where you are.
- With each breath, picture the air you inhale rushing into your lungs and picking up the stress residue; and as you exhale; see the air carry the residue out of your lungs, clear out of your body, and off into the distance, until it disappears.
- Repeat these cleansing breaths until your lungs are clear of all the stress you had pictured there.
- Take a few more breaths, noticing the increased capacity of your lungs, and the ease with which your chest rises and falls as you breath.
- Feeling relaxed, energized and full of good clean oxygen, allow yourself to return to wherever you were when you began, but bring with you a very deep breath of good clean oxygen from the space you have just visited.

**S E S S I O N I I I
E M O T I O N - F O C U S E D C O P I N G**

O V E R V I E W

- 1) Group Check-in
- 2) Review Exercises from Session 2
- 3) Changeable and Unchangeable Situations
- 4) Two Major Types of Coping
- 5) Emotion-Focused Coping
- 6) The Three O's
- 7) Exercises
- 8) Closing Exercise

G O A L S

- A) Sort aspects of stressful situations into those that are changeable or unchangeable.
- B) Understand the difference between emotion-focused coping and problem-focused coping.
- C) Apply emotion-focused coping skills to specific stressful situations.
- D) Use the Three O's strategy.

GROUP CHECK-IN

REVIEW EXERCISES FROM SESSION 2

- **Positive Experiences** - Think back over the week and describe something that you did, or something that happened to you, that made you feel good and that was meaningful to you and helped you get through a day. Explore with participants the ways in which the event was meaningful, significant, or important - i.e., what meaning did it hold for the participant?
- **Communication Skills: Listening & Acknowledging** - One time during the week consciously practice the listening skills given above in this chapter with a friend, relative, significant other, or someone else outside of the group. Were there any steps that were hard to do?
- **General Conditions vs. Specific Situations** - Sort the list provided into general conditions and specific stressful situations.

CHANGEABLE AND UNCHANGEABLE SITUATIONS

The coping strategy we are teaching is one that calls for different kinds of coping in different kinds of situations - situations that can be changed and situations that cannot be changed. Probably in the real world most often some aspects of a situation can be changed and others can not be changed. For example, if I get a flat tire, I can repair the tire. If getting the flat delays me and makes me late for work, I'm still going to be late for work.

Ask the group for examples.

Leader's Note: Draw the changeable and unchangeable schematic on the board.

- Can you tell me about a time in which there was **nothing you could do** to change the situation (unchangeable)?
- Now, can you tell me about a time in which there was **something you could do** to change the situation (changeable)?

Many situations are complex. Can you give me an example of a situation in which some aspects can be changed but others cannot?

- What in this situation could you change?
- What in this situation could you not change?

When individuals assess a situation to determine what is and is not changeable they often disagree. What one person sees as unchangeable, another person may consider to be changeable. One is not right and the other wrong. The final evaluation of what can or can't be changed is up to the individual in the particular situation. No value judgment is attached to changeable or unchangeable. It is not intrinsically better to appraise a situation as changeable or as unchangeable. Also, at any time you think you made a mistake in how you assessed a situation, you can change your mind and continue from that point.

TWO MAJOR TYPES OF COPING

The two different kinds of situations - i.e., changeable and unchangeable - call for two different types of coping. There is no single best coping strategy — no one thing you can always do that will always make you feel better. But there is an approach to coping you can develop that will help you figure out what is likely to help you deal effectively with stressful situations.

The idea is to fit the coping strategy to the stressful situation:

- **Changeable situations** call for more **problem-focused coping**.
- **Unchangeable situations** call for more **emotion-focused coping**.

Leader's Note: Refer to the schematic you have drawn on the board. Add the emotion-focused and problem-focused coping portions to it.

Briefly,

- **Problem-focused coping** is thoughts and actions directed toward changing the distress-causing problem, and
- **Emotion-focused coping** is thoughts and actions directed toward reducing distressing emotions or feelings themselves (e.g., feelings of anxiety, fear, worry, anger, or sadness).

EMOTION-FOCUSED COPING

We are going to focus first on emotion-focused coping.

Emotion-focused coping is especially helpful in unchangeable situations.

Provide an example of an unchangeable stressful situation. (Use the one provided earlier by the participants if it will adequately illustrate the points you will be making, and the participant who provided the example is comfortable with you using it.) Elicit emotion-focused coping strategies from group members.

One possible example: (Keep your examples up to date.)

A couple of your HIV-positive friends are on one of the new drug combinations including indinavir. Their CD4 counts are rising and their viral loads have decreased significantly. You have been taking a drug combination including a protease inhibitor. Your viral level and your CD4 count remain unchanged. You trust your doctor. You and your doctor have tried all appropriate measures.

How would you feel in this situation?

Elicit a list of reactions: anger, frustration, sadness, relief, fear, devastation, guilt, confusion, etc.

The first cue or signal that something is stressful is often an emotion or a feeling in your body. Remember your personal signs and symptoms of stress? (From previous session and exercises.) When you notice your personal signs and symptoms of stress, you can look back and ask yourself, "What's going on that's stressing me out?" You can identify the stressful situation, and ask yourself, "Can I do anything to change the situation itself?" If your answer is,

"No," what can you do to cope? What can you do to deal with your emotional distress?

How would you deal with the emotions you would feel in this situation (i.e., the example)? Include anything you might do - not just the ones you think would be considered "good" to do.

When group members run out of ideas, explain **brainstorming** and use the brainstorming technique here to generate additional ideas.

Leader's Note: Write the participants' strategies for emotion-focused coping on the board.

Some examples of the wide variety of possible emotion-focused strategies include:

- Having your feelings.
- Confiding in someone close.
- Talking.
- Getting perspective on the importance of the situation.
- Diverting attention by working on another task.
- Physical techniques to reduce distress: exercising, jogging, meditating.
- Looking for the positives in the situation.
- Accepting the situation.
- Looking for something you learned.
- Using humor (films, cartoons, laughing exercises, as well as using humor to gain perspective on the situation).
- Using prescribed medications.
- Using other chemicals — e.g., recreational drugs, alcohol, cigarettes.
- Having sex.
- Dancing.
- Retail therapy.

- Spending time with pets.

Leader's Note: Make a copy of the group generated list to distribute at the next session.

It's important to have your feelings. Having them means feeling them, knowing they are there, experiencing them, being aware of them. Feelings are part of the richness and texture of life. Feelings are not right or wrong. And feelings aren't actions. Feeling an emotion doesn't mean acting on it in any particular way. You have choices about expressing or acting on the basis of what you feel. You don't have to act on or express every feeling you have.

Sometimes emotions can feel overwhelming. At those times it can be very helpful to take a break from the feeling so that you can return to it with a new perspective or renewed strength. Some of the strategies we have been talking about are ones that can help you take a break or provide perspective. Some can help you find comfort or renewed strength.

THE THREE O'S

All of the coping techniques we have just identified are not going to be equally effective in all situations, so we need a way to sort out what is likely to be most effective in a given situation. We use what we call the Three O's - three steps to developing a coping strategy.

1. **Options:** What emotion-focused coping options are available? (Note that the group has just completed this step.)
2. **Outcomes:** What are the probable outcomes (useful/helpful and not useful/helpful) of each option? (Have participants give probable outcomes for the list on the board.)
3. **Order:** What are likely to be the most effective (1st, 2nd and 3rd) options for coping in this situation? (Have participants rank order the strategies for probable effectiveness. Remind individuals to keep in mind what is important to each of them, their values, and their priorities in weighing their own decision. Note that there is no "right" order.)

Apply the Three O's to the present example.

As the group uses the Three O's for the present example, point out that sometimes one needs more **information** or more **skills** in order to support one's options.

EXERCISES

Help participants plan when they will do the exercises.

- **Changeable and Unchangeable Stressful Situations** - what is changeable and unchangeable about each situation given?
- **Your MO for Dealing with Stress** - What is your personal modus operandi (MO) - constructive or not - for dealing with stress?
- **Your Emotion-focused Coping Style** - Do you use this coping strategy? Yes/No to items on list.
- **Using Emotion-Focused Coping** - Workbook example: your boyfriend and your best friend slept together last night.

CLOSING EXERCISE

Get as comfortable as you can here in the room. You can lie down on the floor or sit in your chair if you prefer. Let yourself become calm and quiet inside of yourself. It may help to focus just on your breathing. Let yourself go to a place within yourself that feels safe. Turn your attention to your feelings and bodily sensations. When you notice that your mind has drifted into planning, daydreaming or remembering, gently bring your attention back to your feelings and body sensations and let yourself just be where you are.

**S E S S I O N I V
E M O T I O N - F O C U S E D L I S T E N I N G
&
P R O B L E M F O C U S E D - C O P I N G**

O V E R V I E W

- 1) Group Check-in
- 2) Review Exercises from Session 3
- 3) Communication Skills - Focus on Emotion
- 4) Emotion-Focused Listening: Dyad
- 5) Problem-Focused Coping
- 6) The Three O's Reprise
- 7) Problem-Focused Coping Dyads
- 8) The Little Things Matter
- 9) Problem-Focused & Emotion-Focused Coping Are Intertwined
- 10) Exercises
- 11) Closing Exercise

G O A L S

- A) Use additional communication skills.
- B) Apply problem-focused coping skills to specific stressful situations.
- C) Further integrate use of the Three O's.
- D) Understand interrelationship of problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping.

GROUP CHECK-IN

REVIEW EXERCISES FROM SESSION 3

- **Changeable and Unchangeable Stressful Situations** - what is changeable and unchangeable about each situation given?
- **Your MO for Dealing with Stress** - What is your personal modus operandi (MO) - constructive or not - for dealing with stress?
- **Your Emotion-focused Coping Style** - Do you use this coping strategy? Yes/No to items on list.
- **Using Emotion-focused Coping** - Workbook example: your boyfriend and your best friend slept together last night.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS: FOCUS ON EMOTION

Two weeks ago we began to talk about communication skills and, in particular, about what makes a good listener. Let's expand on that. We talked about the importance of:

- Allowing the person to finish his/her thoughts,
- Allowing the person to tell his/her story,
- Listening without giving advice,
- Listening carefully to the content of what the person says,
- Briefly repeating what was said, and asking if you heard it correctly,
- Listening carefully to any corrections, and
- Briefly repeating what you have heard including the corrections.

We focused on content. This week let's add listening for and acknowledging emotions.

- 1) Restate the feelings the speaker communicated in his story.
- 2) Verify with the speaker that you heard his/her feelings accurately.

- 3) Repeat corrected version if there are any clarifications or corrections.

EMOTION-FOCUSED LISTENING - DYAD

Ask each participant to share with his dyad partner an unchangeable stressful situation that calls for **emotion-focused coping**. Have the listener encourage the speaker to concentrate on his (the speaker's) feelings and on the emotion-focused coping strategies used.

Questions for the listener to ask:

- What were you feeling?
- How have you been dealing with (each feeling)?
- What has been helpful?
- What has been less helpful?

Ask the listeners to apply these communication skills. Dyad members will take turns so that each member of the dyad occupies each role in the dyad. Give the dyads 10-15 minutes to talk with each other. Invite dyads to brainstorm additional **emotion-focused strategies**.

Leader's Note: Visit each dyad twice in order to listen to each of the partners.

Re-form the larger group. Ask members what kinds of emotions were identified and how they dealt with the feelings including ways that were helpful as well as ways that were not so helpful. If possible, begin to identify commonalities among helpful strategies as well as among less helpful strategies.

Leader's Note: Transition to problem-focused coping.

PROBLEM-FOCUSED COPING

Problem-focused coping is used when the situation or an aspect of the situation can be changed.

Leaders provide an example of a **changeable stressful situation**.

One possible example:

Jim quit work and went on disability a couple of years ago. Since then he has maxed out his credit cards and spent his savings. He got into clinical trial of a protease inhibitor. He carefully adhered to the treatment regimen. The drug proved to be very effective for him. His viral load is down and his CD4 count is rising. He's generally feeling better and functioning better. He knows that drug trial will end and that in time he will not be able to get protease inhibitors through this trial. He wants to keep using the drug and get onto combination therapy. He feels overwhelmed at times, and he doesn't know what to do. He finds himself ruminating on his need for money.

How would you feel in this situation? Elicit a list of reactions: anxious? angry? discouraged, relieved?

What would make you feel that way?

Is there anything Jim can do to change this situation? What might he do, that is, what are his options?

Leader's Note: Write the participants' strategies for problem-focused coping on the board. Might include declaring bankruptcy, payment schedule, going back to work, consulting with AIDS Benefits Counselors, looking for a combination drug therapy trial that will keep him on his current protease inhibitor and add other drugs, finding out what friends have done/thought of doing. Encourage participants to brainstorm.

THE THREE O'S REPRISE

You just applied the first of the Three O's (generating options) to this example. The next two steps are outcomes and order. (Remind participants what these refer to.) We are not going to apply them to this example, but we will use them in the dyad we are going to do.

Outcomes: What are the probable outcomes (more helpful/useful & less helpful/useful) of each option? (Have participants give probable outcomes for the list on the board.)

Order: How would you rank the strategies (1st, 2nd and 3rd)? (Remind individuals to keep in mind what is important to each)

of them in weighing their own decision.)

Do you need more skills or more information to implement your options?

PROBLEM-FOCUSED COPING DYADS

Break into dyads

Ask each participant to share with his partner a changeable stressful situation that calls for problem-focused coping. Encourage people to focus on key, everyday stressors. Give participants permission to talk about HIV as a stressor. Instruct the dyads to brainstorm together and to generate two or three options (including very creative and perhaps unrealistic options) for solving each problem. Have them use all three steps of the Three Os.

THE LITTLE THINGS MATTER

In some situations, it is true that there is nothing a person can do to change the situation. Yet, we'd like to pass on to you the experience of the men in a previous study. They were all caring for their partners who were dying. They found that even when most aspects of this extremely difficult situation could not be changed, they still could find seemingly small instrumental acts they could perform which helped them continue to realize their own efficacy and mastery in their lives. They helped us realize the importance to them of doing seemingly small things in the context of such a big picture.

For example, Jose was Mike's partner and caregiver. Mike's health was declining seriously. In Jose's words, "There is no resolve to these problems. I can't help him feel any better. I can't make his pain go away. But I've found there are things I can do and that helps. I can fix his favorite meal for him, I can give him a massage, I can change the bed sheets. All of those things make him more comfortable and being able to do those things that make him more comfort-

able help me to see that there are things I can do, that I am not completely helpless.”

Ask the participants about their similar experiences - perhaps of feeling helpless or like there is nothing they can do, and finding small things they can do that help them to cope.

PROBLEM-FOCUSED AND EMOTION-FOCUSED COPING ARE INTERTWINED

As you can see in what we have just been talking about, problem-focused and emotion-focused coping are intimately related. When you engage in problem-focused coping it affects how you feel. Not only do you solve the problem but you also feel better.

For Example: If I am feeling overly anxious about having too much to do, and I am able to break it down into manageable chunks that I can do, not only can I do the tasks (chunks), I also feel emotionally calmer.

Similarly, emotion-focused coping can have a problem-focused outcome.

For Example: If I am feeling anxious and scared, and I turn to someone and receive emotional support, my anxiety will go down and I will also be able to see different solutions to my problems because my anxiety will not get in the way so much.

Sometimes it may feel artificial to try to separate the two ways of coping. (Let the group engage in discussion about this.)

EXERCISES

Check in with participants about what their plans are for doing the exercises.

- **Emotion-Focused Listening** - One time during the week consciously practice emotion-focused listening skills with a friend, relative, significant other, or someone else. Notice whether any steps are hard to do.

- **Using Problem-Focused Coping (part 1)** - use 3 O's with an example situation
- **Using Problem-Focused Coping (part 2)** - a second example situation
- **Using Problem-Focused Coping in Your Life**
- **Sorting Problem- and Emotion-Focused Coping Strategies**

CLOSING EXERCISE

We're going to take about 5 minutes. Get as comfortable as you can. Feel free to lie down on the floor if you like or get comfortable in your chair if you prefer. Close your eyes. Let go of your thoughts. Let go of the thoughts and the things that are distracting you. Focus inward. Focus on your breathing. When you find that you have gone off into thoughts and distractions again, gently bring yourself back to focus on your breathing. Notice the tenseness or relaxedness of your muscles. Notice how you feel. And just let yourself relax and breath.

Start to come back to the room again now. Hear the other people around you breathing. Be aware again of the light. And when you are ready open your eyes and be back in the room, relaxed and present.

R E T R E A T D A Y

OVERVIEW

- 1) Purpose of the Day
- 2) Stressful Situations Related to HIV
- 3) Break
- 4) Aerobic Exercise
- 5) Relaxation Exercise
- 6) Lunch and After-Lunch Walk
- 7) Return to HIV Stressors List
- 8) Affirmations
- 9) Re-Entry

GOALS

- A) Provide intensive practice in CET coping skills.
- B) Facilitate integration of coping skills into the daily lives of participants.

R E T R E A T D A Y

Saturday or Sunday, 6 hours plus lunch.

To be held at a restful place after Session 4. Participants will be asked to wear comfortable clothes.

Time constraints listed below are suggestions only — use your judgment and be flexible.

PURPOSE OF THE DAY

(20 minutes)

Allow more time to focus on stressors that participants have in common, (i.e., the HIV epidemic).

Explore **range** of problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies.

Reiterate that each group members is encouraged to participate at his own comfort level and remind group members to respect each person's chosen level of participation.

Remind the participants that some people take more time to incorporate mild relaxation, relaxation exercises, quiet time, and so forth into their lives.

STRESSFUL SITUATIONS RELATED TO HIV

(60 minutes)

Group generates a list of stressful situations related to HIV status. Record the list on the flip-chart.

Allow people to ventilate.

This can be a very important first step in a successful retreat.

BREAK

Leader's Note: Suggest that participants remove contact lenses if wearing them will interfere with participating in relaxation exercise.

AEROBIC EXERCISE

(30 minutes)

- Tell participants to participate in these exercises at their own pace.
- Breath. Stand. Stretch. Loosen up. Bring in light and fresh air.
- Stretching with partner — shoulders.
- Climbing aerobic — legs and arms.
- Continue aerobic exercise for a total of about 30 minutes.
- Gradually reduce intensity. End with participants lying on floor.

RELAXATION EXERCISE

(30 minutes)

Leader's voice should be slow and soft until last paragraph. Then voice gets louder and brighter.

“O.K. Stretch out and make yourself as comfortable as you can. Close your eyes. Take a deep sigh. That's right. Pay attention to how you feel in your body. Are you aware of any areas which feel comfortable? If so, enjoy the sensations. Are you aware of any areas which feel tight, tense? If you are, just be aware of the tension.

“Now I want you to focus your attention on your right hand and arm. Tense the muscle in your right hand and arm by making a fist and bending your elbow to tighten up the forearm and biceps. Bend the arm at about a 45° angle, and tense to about 3/4 of your potential. Feel the tension in your hand, knuckles, lower arm and biceps. Feel the tension, hold it, and ... now quickly let your arm drop. Throw the tension up. That's right. Feel the warm, relaxing sensations in your right hand, forearm, and biceps. Note the difference between TENSION and relaxation. Now take a breath. Imagine the breath going all the way down your

body into your right arm, through the biceps, the elbow, the forearm, and into your hand. That's right. Relax. And again, I want you to tense the muscles in your right hand and arm by making a fist and bending your elbow. Feel the tension. Hold it. And let go. Feel the warmth of the relaxation, as your arm becomes heavier and heavier. Yes. Yes. Take a breath, and let the breath relax you more deeply, as your breath enters your right upper arm, biceps, elbow, forearm, knuckles and fingers. Let the breath out, and let all the tension flow out from your fingertips.

"Now focus your attention on your left hand and arm. Tense your muscles in your left hand and arm by making a fist and bending your elbow to tighten up the forearm and biceps. Bend the arm at about a 45 degree angle, and again tense to about 3/4 of your potential. Feel the tension in your hand, knuckles, lower arm and biceps. Feel the tension, hold it, hold, it and ... now quickly let your arm drop. Throw the tension out. That's right. Feel the warm, tingling sensations in your arm and hand. Feel the relaxation in your upper arm, your biceps, elbow, forearm, hand, knuckle, and fingers. And again. Tense your hand and arm. Feel the tension. Hold it, hold it ... and let go. Feel the difference between TENSION and relaxation. That's right. Take a deep breath. As you exhale, let the breath deepen your relaxation in your left biceps, your left elbow, down into your forearm, your hand and out your fingertips. And take another breath. That's right. Let the breath relax you further and further, as your arm becomes heavier and heavier.

"Now I want you to focus your attention on your face. Pay attention to the sensations in your face and your head. Tense your face muscles by lifting up your eyebrows. Feel the tension in your forehead and into your scalp. Squint your eyes tightly and wrinkle up your nose. Bite your teeth together, as you pull back the corners of your mouth. That's it. Feel the tension. Hold it. And release. That's right. Let the warm, melting sensations relax your face, your eyes, your forehead, your jaw. That's right.

"And again. Tense your face muscles. Lift your eyebrows, squint your eyes, wrinkle up your nose, bite your teeth together, and pull the corners of your mouth back. Feel the tension. Feel it. Hold it, and let go. Feel the difference between TENSION and relaxation. And take a deep breath. Imagine the breath radiating around your face muscles to release all of the tension. Imagine the healing breath letting go, letting go of all of the worries of the day and the all the tensions in your body.

"Now focus your attention on your neck. Press your head back into the floor so you can feel tension in the back of your neck. Feel that tension. Hold it. Hold it. And let go.

That's right. Feel the difference between TENSION and relaxation. And again. Press your head back. Feel the tightness, the tension. Hold it, and release. Let the warmth of relaxation fill your neck. Feel the relaxation radiating down into your upper back. Take a deep breath. Let the breath sink you deeper into the floor, as you relax even more deeply, and you feel more and more comfortable.

"Now I want you to bring your head forward and touch your chin to your chest so you can feel the tensions in the front and back of your neck. Feel the tension leading from your neck into your back. Hold that tension. Feel it. And let go. Feel the difference between TENSION and relaxation. Take a breath. As you exhale let the breath deepen your feelings of relaxation. That's right. You've got it. Relax. And again. Bring your head forward and touch your chin to your chest. Feel that tension. Feel it. Hold it. And release. Feel the warmth of the relaxation letting go, letting go of the tensions and the worries of the day. Breathe into the muscles of your neck, and imagine the breath carrying the tensions down your spine, down your back, all the way down your legs and out the bottom of your feet. Letting go, letting go.

"Now tense your shoulders by raising your shoulders up to your ears. Arch your back, raising your chest. Pull your stomach in tightly and hold your breath. That's it. Feel the tension in your shoulders, your back, through your chest and into your stomach. Hold it. Hold it. And let go. That's right. Feel the difference between TENSION and relaxation. Make a sigh. Oooo. That's it. Release the tension. Relax. And again. Raise your shoulders up to your ears, arch your back, raise your chest, pull in your stomach and hold your breath. Feel those tensions. Hold it. Hold it. And let go. Feel the relaxation entering your shoulders, your back, your chest and your abdomen. Now take a deep breath. Feel the breath loosening all the areas in your shoulders, your back, your chest and your stomach. Take another breath, and feel the breath all the way down into your abdomen. Relax. Letting go. That's it.

"Focus your attention on your right leg, your right thigh, calf, ankle and foot. Stretch your leg out straight. Lift your right leg slightly off of the floor. Feel the tension in your thigh muscles. Tense your calf muscles by pointing your toes toward your head so you can feel the pulling in your calf. That's right. Point your toes away from your face. Feel the tension in your feel and calf. And release. Feel the difference between TENSION and relaxation ... And again.

Lift your leg slightly off the floor. Point your toes toward your head and away from your face. Feel the tension. Hold it. And let go. That's right. Feel the comfortable, relaxing feelings entering your right thigh, your right calf, ankle and foot. Take a deep

breath. Imagine the breath carrying healing energy all the way down your body, into your leg, down through your thigh, knee, calf, ankle, and foot. Let the breath carry all tensions out from your foot. And let go.

“Now focus your attention on your left leg, your left thigh, calf, ankle and foot. Stretch your leg out straight. Lift your left leg slightly off of the floor. Feel the tension in your thigh muscles. Tense your calf muscles by pointing your toes toward your head so you can feel the pulling in your calf. That’s right. Point your toes away from your face. Feel that tension in your foot and calf. And release. Feel the difference between TENSION and relaxation. And again. Lift your leg slightly off of the floor. Point your toes toward your head and away from your face. Feel the tension. Hold it. Hold it. And let go. That’s right. Feel the comfortable, relaxing feelings entering your left thigh, your left calf, ankle and foot. Take a deep breath. Imagine the breath carrying healing energy all the way down your body, down your thigh, your calf, your foot and out into the universe. And take another breath. Release all the tensions remaining in your body. And a sigh. Ahhh. That’s it. Feel the deep relaxation throughout your body. Feel the comfortable, warm sensations, as you lie quietly and let yourself relax deeply.

“And as you are lying quietly you may drift back in your imagination to a time when you were completely relaxed. You may drift back to the place where you are very comfortable and at ease. The place where you feel completely at home. [This is your safe place.] That’s right. That’s it. Enjoy the sensations in your body in this place of relaxation ... Take a deep breath. Inhale through your nose and release the air through your mouth. Whoosh. Again. Inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth. Whoosh. That is a signal breath. When you leave this room, you make take all the warm feelings of relaxation with you. At any time you may close your eyes, and take a deep [signal] breath, you may bring yourself back to this place of deep relaxation, to a place of feeling at home, at ease, totally relaxed and comfortable.

“Now I am going to count backwards from 10 to 1. When I reach one, you will open your eyes and feel relaxed and alert. Ten. Feel the relaxation. Nine. Eight. Wiggle your fingers and toes. Seven. Take a deep breath. Six. Five. Move your arms and legs. Four. Three. Stretch. Two. Awake, and alert. One. Open your eyes.”

Elicit feedback from group about their relaxation experience.

LUNCH AND AFTER-LUNCH WALK

(60 - 75 minutes)

Have lunch in as scenic a spot as the setting and the weather permit.

After lunch, take a walk.

This is a time for participants to relax and to chat with each other in a more casual, but still intimate, setting.

RETURN TO HIV STRESSORS LIST

(60 minutes)

Identify which stressors trigger **Anger, Sadness, Fear**.

Draw up a list for each emotion. Ask the group for the top 10 stressors which elicit each feeling and write them on the flip chart.

Explain the importance of acknowledging the feeling to oneself.

Explain that people differ in their emotional responses to similar stressors.

Introduce concept of personal regulation of mood, and options for regulation.

Have a group discussion and brainstorm of coping strategies.

Leader's Note: List the group's strategies on the flip chart. Bring in the use of the coping model.

Look for the following strategies (or illustrations of the following strategies) in the group list. If they are missing, add them.

1. Reframing

Describe and model reframing. What is another way of looking at the situation? Include the idea of looking for positives or what was or can be learned.

2. Thought-stopping and distraction

Describe thought-stopping using an example from the group.

For example: identify depressive self-statements and say to oneself, "STOP!" Then shift attention to another topic.

3. Diversion

Divert oneself temporarily from painful affect by activities such as taking a walk, reading, engaging in conversation, observing one's environment, mall therapy, or doing something new or unusual.

4. Experiencing the emotion

Depression can be viewed as a defense, like a fog bank or blanket that covers an emotion, such as anger or sadness. If a person is feeling depressed, asking "What is my hurt?" or, "What is my need?" can help identify the emotion, and ways one might deal with it.

If anxiety is a problem, scheduling worry time can be helpful.

5. Becoming proactive in response to the emotions

What does the emotion suggest as a means of response?

Can some aspect of the situation be changed, that is, is there a problem that can be solved?

6. Using relaxation and visualization techniques

7. Setting limits

Say no to dissatisfying activity.

8. Challenging the tendency to withdraw or isolate

Be with others who understand you or have had a similar experience.

9. Seeking out support

Talk to friends, seek out organizations that can help.

10. Engaging in physical activity

Needn't be intense and continuous. Moderate activity is fine.

11. Using humor

See a funny movie. Look for humor or irony in the situation. Humor can help us to gain perspective on ourselves and the world.

12. Helping someone else

Help yourself by helping others. Avoid over-helping.

13. Refocusing

Acknowledge your feelings. Do one of the above. Refocus on the task at hand.

BREAK

Anything Good, Life Enhancing, or Learned?

(60 minutes)

Acknowledge that we have talked a lot about the ways in which living with AIDS and HIV have been stressful. Ask the group if there has been anything good or life enhancing, or anything they have learned that has come out of their experience of living with HIV/AIDS.

Record their responses on the flip chart. Take time to talk about their responses. This discussion is likely to provide a forum for talking about meaning in the context of living with HIV, and about the ways in which participants' priorities have been affected.

AFFIRMATIONS

(30 minutes)

Group leaders and members share positive statements with the group. For example, statements may include:

- Positive aspects of what has been learned. What have you learned? What will you take with you?
- Aspects of the individual's own coping style. What are your strengths?
- Positive aspects of other group members' coping styles. What do you see as the strengths of other group members?

RE-ENTRY

Warn participants that they may experience some re-entry depression. The closeness and bonding among participants during the day and being in a calm and beautiful place for the retreat may contrast with their every-day interactions and being in the city. Have them suggest potential coping options. (Usually preparing people for re-entry immunizes them against the potential depression).

Hugs and good-byes.

**S E S S I O N V
R E T R E A T R E V I E W**

O V E R V I E W

- 1) Group Check-In
- 2) Review Retreat
- 3) Affirmations
- 4) Gaining Power and Mobilizing
- 5) Exercise
- 6) Relaxation or Visualization Exercise

G O A L S

- A) Review the skills learned in Sessions 1-4 that were used in the retreat.
- B) Label personal strong points and areas of difficulty using the coping model.
- C) Identify the coping resources within the group.

GROUP CHECK-IN

REVIEW RETREAT

- If anyone missed the retreat, ask those who attended to tell those who were absent about the retreat.
- What part of the retreat did you like the best?
- What part of the retreat did you like the least?
- Anything you might change?

AFFIRMATIONS

- **Self-affirmation:** Each participant affirms something he has learned about coping. For example, he knows more about his own strengths and the resources of the group.
- **Other-affirmation (group):** Each participant affirms what he has learned from the group about coping strategies that work well.
- **Other-affirmation (individuals):** Each person identifies what he perceives as strengths of the other group members. (This exercise is done anonymously.) Each person writes down on a sticky label a positive coping resource he sees in each other person in the group and affixes that label to a page with the person's name on it to be given to that person.

GAINING POWER AND MOBILIZING

Discussion of how each participant's new knowledge can potentially be applied in day-to-day life. Incorporate a review of the coping model into this discussion. Actively help each participant develop an exercise for himself that gives him an opportunity to practice applying his new knowledge during the week. Be sure each person has his exercise before he leaves the meeting.

For example: You might ask participants to think back to what they learned, what they took with them from the retreat.

Suggest that they think about what they identified as their coping strengths. Ask them to think about what they see as areas in which their coping skills need practice or improvement. Have each person identify to the group, (or only to himself if he is not comfortable identifying it to the group), a way he can practice one of those particular skills during the week.

Leader's Note: If a participant wants to work on more than one skill, suggest that he limit himself to only two skills to practice. More than that is a set up for failure. Remind such a participant that additional skills can be practiced in future weeks if desired.

EXERCISE

- The exercise for next week is the one you just designed with participants in **“Gaining Power and Mobilizing”** above.

RELAXATION OR VISUALIZATION EXERCISE

Lead group in short relaxation or visualization exercise.

**S E S S I O N V I
N E G O T I A T I O N S K I L L S**

O V E R V I E W

- 1) Group Check-in
- 2) Review Exercises from Sessions 4 & 5
- 3) Introduce Negotiation
- 4) Phases of Negotiation
- 5) Model Phases of Negotiation
- 6) Role Play - Negotiation
- 7) Exercise
- 8) Relaxation or Visualization Exercise

G O A L S

- A) Learn phases of negotiation.
- B) Apply negotiation skills in role plays.

GROUP CHECK-IN

REVIEW EXERCISES - SESSIONS 4 & 5

From Session 4:

- **Emotion-Focused Listening** - One time during the week consciously practice emotion-focused listening skills with a friend, relative, significant other, or someone else. Notice whether any steps are hard to do.
- **Using Problem-Focused Coping (part 1)** - use 3 O's with an example situation.
- **Using Problem-Focused Coping (part 2)** - a second example.
- **Using Problem-Focused Coping in Your Life**
- **Sorting Problem- and Emotion-Focused Coping Strategies**

From Session 5:

- **Gaining Power and Mobilizing** - Have each participant develop an exercise for himself that gives him an opportunity to practice applying his new knowledge during the week.

INTRODUCE NEGOTIATION

Interpersonal Stress

A lot of stress evolves out of interpersonal situations. Negotiation is a skill you can learn or improve that can be helpful in dealing with interpersonal situations.

What kinds of situations are you involved in that call for negotiating something with another person?

Examples:

- Type or dosage of medication
- Vacation destinations
- Sexual practices

- Change of job duties
- Pay raise

Negotiation can be thought of as joint problem solving in which the

Goals of Negotiation are to:

- 1) Reach a satisfying agreement, and
- 2) End amicably.

PHASES OF NEGOTIATION

Phase 1: Entry

This is a place to use your listening skills. Hear the other person out. Be soft on him or her. Define the problem. You know what you want, and you need to know what the other person wants too.

Phase 2: Exploration

Explore interests, options, standards. Find out what is important to the other person. What are his or her priorities in this situation? Paraphrase the other person's goals to be sure you accurately understand them. You are still gathering information.

Phase 3: Give and Take

Identify areas of agreement. Then identify areas of disagreement. Ask if the other person has any ideas or thoughts on the areas of disagreement or on how to close the gap. Then make an offer. Continue to trade offers.

Phase 4: Closing

Be sure that you agree on the end result. Affirm the other person.

When The Other Person Will Not Negotiate

- Focus on the problem, not the person.
- Look for what is behind their position, do not attack it.
- When the other person takes a position, ask why.
- Ask questions. Get more information. Pause.

Getting More Information

Getting more information from another person is sometimes straightforward and sometimes harder than it looks.

Taking the direct approach can often provide more information. Statements or requests such as, “I don’t understand. Will you tell me more about it?” or “Please explain some more about that,” or “I really don’t get it yet and I would like to know, can you try saying it in another way?” are likely to help you get the information you need.

In order to be sure that you understood what the other person meant, paraphrasing is very useful. It is probably best to paraphrase in the form of a question rather than as a statement. A statement can be interpreted more easily as telling the other person what he or she meant rather than as attempting to clarify what the person was trying to convey. People generally don’t like to be told what they meant. All in all, the emotional tone of what you say is probably more crucial than whether you use questions or statements. The central task is to keep communication open.

MODEL PHASES OF NEGOTIATION

Group leaders role play a mutually satisfactory outcome to a situation requiring negotiation.

For example:

Doctor: Ron, I’m concerned. You’ve lost weight. I want you to go on a high-protein diet - the equivalent of 14 ounces of hamburger a day.

Ron: Oh, don’t worry. It’s just that the toxins are being cleansed from my body. My diet has never been

better. I've started a strict macrobiotic diet. I'm not eating any animal products and I'm eating only natural foods.

Doctor: Hold on a minute Ron. Brown rice and fasting won't cut it! You need to get enough protein and other adequate nutrition.

Ron: Macrobiotics includes much more than brown rice! And I'm not fasting. All the foods are energetically balanced in yin and yang. I have friends who are on this diet and it's working for them. Besides it's also a spiritual practice for me.

Doctor: I have to admit I don't know much about macrobiotics. I do know I'm concerned about your health and this recent weight loss.

Ron: You really think I'm losing too much weight?

Doctor: Yes, Ron I do. What about going to the nutrition clinic? I want to be sure that you are getting the balanced nutrition you need. I'm concerned about whether you are getting enough protein.

Ron: Well, like I said, I have friends on this diet and they seem healthy. And I want to get into a better spiritual practice and this really fits well for me.

Doctor: I can respect your need for spiritual practice, but I don't want you just to be jumping into the "cure of the week" and I wondered if that is what this is for you. Your dietary needs change when your immune system is severely stressed and that needs to be addressed.

Ron: I know what you mean about the cure of the week and I appreciate your concern, but that's not what this is for me. Tell me about the nutrition clinic.

Doctor: The nutrition clinic that I want to refer you to is pretty respectful of various approaches to health care, so I think they will work with you around your concerns. Would you be willing to go talk with them - just to give yourself additional information on which to base your final decision about your diet?

Ron: Well, okay, I'll take the referral and give them a call.

Doctor: Maybe you could also talk to your spiritual advisor - is that the term I should use? - about how you can address your spiritual concerns and needs at the same time as you eat a diet that helps maintain your body weight.

Ron: Well, I'll agree to hear what the nutrition clinic has to say and I'll talk to my spiritual teacher. Then I'll make a decision about how I think my needs will be best

met. Thanks for your concern.

Doctor: You're welcome. I know you need to figure out what you think makes the most sense for you, and I'm glad you are agreeable to talking with the nutritionists.

ROLE PLAY — NEGOTIATION

Provide participants with an example requiring them to negotiate in order to get what they need.

Example Situation: Jim and Larry have planned their vacation together for months. Jim is HIV infected and his energy level has become depleted within the last couple of weeks. The plane tickets and hotel reservations are made and paid for. Both have arranged for time off from work. They don't want to break their long term plans, but don't see any alternative. Larry has called their travel agent to cancel and ask for a refund.

Ask for two volunteers. Have them role play a scene in which the travel agent says "no" to a refund and will not budge.

Ask for two more volunteers, and have them play out a scene in which the travel agent says "yes" to a partial refund only — not what is requested.

In each case, tell the travel agent what his response will be without the other group members hearing.

Leader's Note: One possible negotiation tactic is breaking the reservations now and trying to go some other time in the future. Always remember to debrief participants after a role play.

EXERCISE

- **Using Negotiation Skills** - Set up a minor negotiation. With a friend or lover who you know will have her or his own ideas, negotiate what restaurant to go to or what activity to do sometime this week. Follow the guidelines to see how they work.

RELAXATION OR VISUALIZATION EXERCISE

Lead group in short relaxation or visualization exercise.

**S E S S I O N V I I
G I V I N G A N D R E C E I V I N G
S O C I A L S U P P O R T
(P A R T I)**

OVERVIEW

- 1) Group Check-in
- 2) Review Exercises from Session 6
- 3) Types of Support
- 4) The Concentric Circles of Social Support
- 5) The Impact of the HIV Epidemic on Social Support Networks
- 6) Giving Support
- 7) Exercises
- 8) Brief Relaxation or Visualization Exercise

GOALS

- A) Define social support.
- B) Introduce concept of social support networks.
- C) Discuss impact of HIV epidemic on support networks.
- D) Identify strengths as a support provider.
- E) Demonstrate the usefulness of relaxation exercise during a short time frame.

GROUP CHECK-IN

REVIEW EXERCISES FROM SESSION 6

- **Using Negotiation Skills** - Set up a minor negotiation. With a friend or lover who you know will have her or his own ideas, negotiate what restaurant to go to or what activity to do sometime this week. Follow the guidelines to see how they work.

TYPES OF SUPPORT

Social support is one aspect of coping. Sometimes, whether we need to solve problems or deal with feelings, we need other people to help us. Also, having other people we know we can turn to often makes a problem seem less of a problem from the outset. In addition, other people may need to turn to us for support in similar ways.

Both this week and next, we are going to focus on social support. We will be talking about what social support is, what our strengths are as support providers, how to identify what kind of support we may need from others, from whom to seek it, how to ask for support, and how to maintain supportive relationships.

Defining Social Support: Group Discussion

When you say that you want support or that you want to be supportive to someone else, what do you mean? What are you asking for? What do you want to do for that other person to be supportive to him or her?

Summarize the responses of participants into the following three general categories:

- **Emotional Support:** Words or actions that make a person feel cared about, understood, and affirmed. For example, emotional support may include empathy, caring, love and trust.
- **Informational Support:** Information, advice, suggestion.
- **Tangible Support:** Money, labor, assistance, aid in kind.

All three types of support have emotional components.

We are going to talk tonight about support in our lives - both receiving support from others as well as providing support to others.

THE CONCENTRIC CIRCLES OF SOCIAL SUPPORT

Leader's Note: Draw the diagram from the next page on the board.

Each circle represents varying levels of emotional closeness. In this diagram, start by picturing yourself in the center of the network.

Self at Center

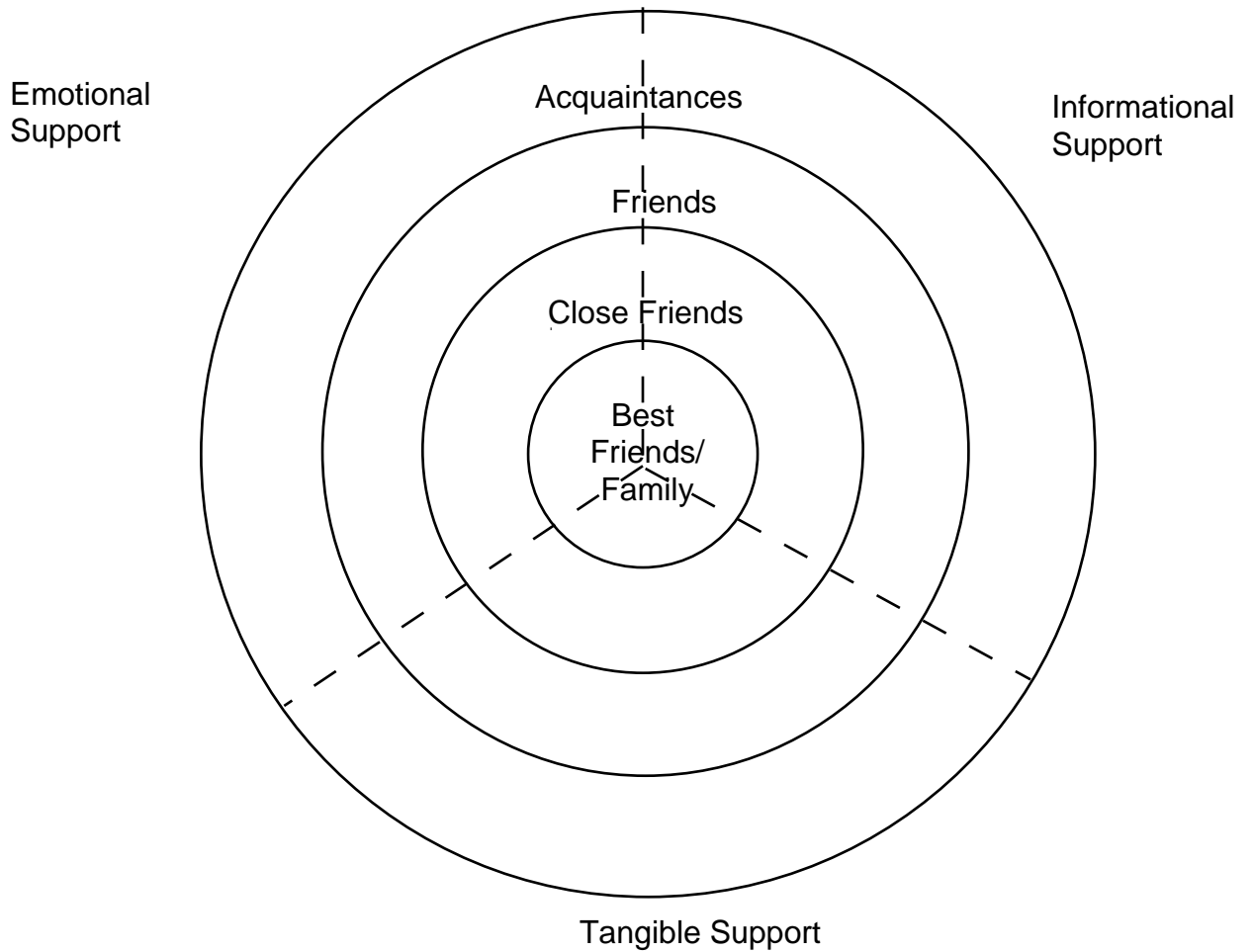
Discuss the diagrammatic representation from the perspective of the participant at the center of the network.

Leader's Note: Leaders, use yourselves as an example. Ask where participants would place people. Would they do it differently than you?

Self as Part of Another's Network

Now imagine yourself as part of someone else's network. Where do you place yourself? (This may lead to a discussion of occupying different places in the networks of different friends.)

Leader's Note: Leaders, use yourselves as an example. Ask participants where they would place themselves in the networks of others.



**THE IMPACT OF THE HIV EPIDEMIC ON
SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORKS: GROUP
DISCUSSION**

Many people have felt gaps in their social support networks because of the AIDS epidemic. Has the epidemic affected your support networks? In what ways?

Leader's Note: Erase sections of the circles to represent loved ones, friends and acquaintances lost through the epidemic. Be particularly sensitive to your participants during this exercise. Modify the exercise to reduce its impact if your participants appear to become upset by the exercise itself. The diagram may help the participants visually understand what has been happening to their social support networks. However, the erasures can have a strong emotional impact.

Lead a group discussion on how support networks have been affected by the epidemic. Some people are likely to have suffered tremendous losses. Some participants will report being able to make new connections easily, however, some will not. Work on issues of loss and grief. Assist participants to identify how new networks of support can be formed. Allow plenty of time for this discussion.

Leader's Note: Remain aware that medical developments (i.e., protease inhibitors and beyond) will have an impact on this discussion.

GIVING SUPPORT: GROUP DISCUSSION

Often we and those in our social support networks are better at providing one type of support than another. For example, some may be great at emotional support but not as good with informational or tangible support. Others may excel at informational support but be uncomfortable with emotional support. Some people may be good at all three.

Your Support Forte

What kinds of support are you good at providing to others - your support forte, so to speak? If you are not sure, think about the kinds of things for which others come to you. Does that give you any clues? (This may lead to a discussion of providing different types of support to different people or to people based on the level of intimacy of the relationship - refer back to diagram if necessary to clarify discussion.)

Impact on You of Providing Support

How does providing support to others affect you?

Be sure to address emotional impact of providing support. Acknowledge that it may be multifaceted. E.g., may feel valued, supported in your own identity because of having something important to offer, drained at times, etc.

Requests for Support

How do you feel when someone asks you for help? How do you tend to respond to requests for support?

How do you handle it when the request is unclear?

Sometimes it is helpful to get more information before deciding how to respond. Feel free to ask the person to be specific about his or her request. Or you might paraphrase what you think the request is to be sure you heard it correctly. Sometimes the person making the request may not know exactly what he/she wants. Your request for more information may help clarify it for both of you.

Saying No

How can you respond when the request doesn't feel like something you can or something you want to meet?

In the discussion highlight the following points:

- Saying no is hard for some of us.
- To the person who is requesting something of you, you can;
- Acknowledge that the request is important to the person.
 - Decline the request without rejecting the person.
 - Be specific about the terms of your refusal. Is your refusal always? Only this time? To the entire request? Are there parts of the request you want to say yes to?

EXERCISES

- **Identifying Your Support Forte** - What kinds of support are you good at providing to others? If you are not sure, think about the kinds of things for which others come to you. That may give you some clues.
- **You as a Support Provider** - In what ways did you provide support to others this week? It doesn't have to be anything major. (In fact, the things that seem minor can have a major impact.) Does it correspond with what you listed as your forte? How did you feel as the support provider?
- **Saying No** - Think about times you have said no to a request from someone. How did you feel? Write down all the ways you felt even if they seem contradictory or not what you were "supposed to" feel. Is there anything you want to handle differently when saying no?

BRIEF RELAXATION OR VISUALIZATION EXERCISE

Take the group through a short relaxation or visualization exercise.

**S E S S I O N V I I I
G I V I N G A N D R E C E I V I N G
S O C I A L S U P P O R T
(P A R T I I)**

O V E R V I E W

- 1) Group Check-in
- 2) Review Exercises from Session 7
- 3) Receiving Support
- 4) Social Support Skills
- 5) Role Play and Discussion
- 6) Exercises
- 7) Relaxation or Visualization Exercise

G O A L S

- A) Develop effective social support skills.
- B) Practice techniques in role plays.
- C) Discuss why matching what one needs with the type of support received matters.

GROUP CHECK-IN

If session 7 was heavy or difficult for folks, check in specifically as to how they are doing in regard to last week and the things it may have stirred up.

REVIEW EXERCISES FROM SESSION 7

- **Identifying your support forte** - What kinds of support are you good at providing to others? If you are not sure, think about the kinds of things for which others come to you. That may give you some clues.
- **You as a Support Provider** - In what ways did you provide support to others this week? It doesn't have to be anything major. (In fact, the things that seem minor can have a major impact.) Does it correspond with what you listed as your forte? How did you feel as the support provider?
- **Saying No** - Think about times you have said no to a request from someone. How did you feel? Write down all the ways you felt even if they seem contradictory or not what you were "supposed to" feel. Is there anything you want to handle differently when saying no?

RECEIVING SUPPORT

Social support can be a part of either problem-focused coping or emotion-focused coping. Problem-focused coping usually requires tangible or informational support whereas emotion-focused coping requires emotional social support.

Just as we sometimes need different types of support, some people are better at providing one kind of support than another (although some people are good at more than one type). Being aware of the types of support we need, as well as the support strengths of the people to whom we are likely to turn, can help us match one with the other.

Sometimes one person is trying to give support, but the other person isn't feeling supported. Remember from last week that a major task for you as the provider is to find out what

will be supportive to the other person. Similarly, when you are the person receiving support, a major task is to let others know what you will find supportive - so that you're not getting apples when what you want is oranges. Social support is not a situation in which "one size fits all!"

**Who Can You Turn To When You Want Or Need Help?
Individual Exercise Done In Group**

On the pages we are passing out is an exercise to do here. It is just for you. You don't have to show it to anyone else if you don't want to. Take a look at it and answer the questions. You don't have to fill out something on every line. Consider a variety of resources including various individuals and community organizations - friends, neighbors, kin, therapists, Positive Resource, AIDS Benefits Counselors, Open Hand, PAWS, etc.

- Identify specific individuals in your life to whom you could go for each kind of support.

Discuss the exercise including how these may change. Participants may find gaps in their networks. Talk about what that is like for people.

S O C I A L S U P P O R T S K I L L S

F i n d i n g T h e S u p p o r t Y o u W a n t

Although sometimes people offer us support without our asking for it, other times we have to ask for support. We've broken the process of asking for support down into 3 main steps.

Who to Ask

Choosing the appropriate person to ask for support requires that you consider:

1. What kind of support you want or need;

“Will social support help me manage this situation?”

“If so, what kind of social support do I need?”

To test whether **problem-focused support** is needed:

“Do I want information or advice?” “Do I want help in solving the problem?”

To test whether **emotion-focused support** is needed:

“Do I just want someone to listen?”

“Do I need a sounding board?”

When you can't decide what kind of support you need:

Sometimes things can be confusing, and you may not know what you need. At these times, go to someone who can provide both problem-focused and emotion-focused support and talk about it. Usually, talking helps to clarify what you need.

2. What the strengths of the people in your network are;

Who are your potential support providers?

“Who are my best friends?”

“Who are my oldest friends?”

“Who am I closest to?”

What types of support are they best at or most comfortable with providing?

Bring in the idea that people may be able to provide help in some areas of one's life but not others. For example, a person who can provide good information or tangible assistance in job-related stressors may not be the person who can provide that type of support in relationship matters.

3. How you can match your needs and your providers' strengths.

Seek emotional support from an emotional support provider.

Seek problem-focused support from someone who can provide informational or tangible support, (i.e., problem-focused support), depending on your specific needs.

How to Ask

Once you have decided who seems to be the most appropriate potential provider, the task becomes how to actually get support.

Think of this in two steps.

1. Ask for support.

Group Discussion:

What gets in the way of acknowledging the need for support?

What makes it hard to ask for the support you need?

When it's hard to ask for help. Don't apologize to the person for what you are going to ask. It becomes awkward for both asker and askee and makes it harder to focus on the request for help.

Be as specific as you can about what you are asking. Let the support provider know what you need: emotional support, information, specific tangible assistance? Be specific. Misunderstanding is less likely.

"I'm really upset and I just need to vent my feelings."

"I need advice about how to solve this problem."

"I need to borrow a car this Friday."

Set boundaries to your request: try to indicate how much time you'll need.

"This will take about 20 minutes."

"Do you have an hour? I'm really upset."

"I can pay you back by the first of the month."

Give permission to say no.

"Is this a bad time for you?"

2. Monitor the response of the person you are asking.

Is the person comfortable? Watch for cues that he or she isn't. Is he or she looking at the clock? Rolling eyes? What does the person's body language tell you?

Are you comfortable? Are you getting what you need? Does something seem off?

Exit if necessary:

"It looks like this isn't a good time for you"

"This is probably not the right time for me to be talking to you about this."

"We can get back to this at another time"

"Let's table this."

"Let's take a raincheck."

Appreciating The People Who Help You

This is about taking care of the people who take care of you.

Social supports are a renewable resource. Like any resource, they can be depleted when not cared for properly.

How can you/do you let people know they are appreciated?

Add the following if not brought up by the group.

Acknowledge support:

- Tell the person how he or she has helped you.
- Tell the person how things turned out.

Return the favor. If you can provide support to the person who has helped you, let your provider know that.

Saying No To Help You Don't Want

Sometimes people are oversolicitous. They may be well meaning and genuinely want to help, but you may not want or need their help. In such cases, a clearly stated "No thank-you. I can take care of this myself" type message is often effective.

SOCIAL SUPPORT ROLE PLAY AND DISCUSSION

Role Play

Role plays take place in the context of the larger group. After each role play, ask participants for their reactions. Ask the group for feedback. Give each role player his part without the other player or the rest of the group hearing what the part will be.

These role plays should be short. The absurdity of some of these mismatches should help the participants clarify what works and what doesn't work, as well as jog their memories of their own past mismatches. It is great for a little humor as well.

Leader's Note: Leaders should have some situations prepared for use by participants.

1. Person A makes up a situation in which he needs informational support.
Person B provides emotional support.
2. Person A makes up a situation in which he needs emotional support.
Person B provides informational support.
3. Person A makes up a situation in which he needs tangible support (e.g., car ride, \$50).
Person B provides emotional support.
4. Person A makes a situation in which he needs informational support.
Person B provides informational support.
5. Person A makes up a situation in which he needs emotional support.
Person B provides emotional support.
6. Person A makes up a situation in which he offers support which he thinks is needed. He is insistent.
Person B declines the offer.

Discussion

Now that the group has seen hypothetical examples of mis-matched and matched support, have them think of situations in their own lives when they have needed support. Using their personal scenarios help them identify the different types of support that were needed as well as the types of support that were given. Focus on the following questions:

- How does it feel when there is a good fit between the support you need and the support you get?
- How does it feel when there is a poor fit?

- What would you do differently next time?

Choose a couple of situations involving mismatches from the experiences of the group, and role play the interactions. Have two people take the specific roles and the rest of the group coach them so as to play out the scenarios in an effective way.

EXERCISES

Provide any necessary assistance to participants for planning to do the exercises.

- **Seeking Support** - Choose a specific stressful situation this week for which you need support. First determine the exact nature of the support you need, then ask for support from the key person in your network responsible for that kind of support. Give him or her permission to say no and be specific about the amount of support you need. Write your reactions to the process below.
- **Appreciating The People Who Help You** - This week, find a means of giving small symbolic gifts to each member of your support network that you have listed above. These can be simple and inexpensive, but can express an affirmation or thanks for their being a support person on your list.

RELAXATION OR VISUALIZATION EXERCISE

YOUR SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORK

This exercise will help you determine the nature of your social support network. The number of people on your list is not as important as your perception of the quality of the support you receive.

Who in your network would you go to for support (solace, nurturance, understanding, affirmation) if you were feeling emotionally upset?

First name of the person:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Who would you go to for practical advice or information if you had a problem?

First name of the person:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Who would give you \$500 (or \$10) in a pinch if you asked for it?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

YOUR SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORK (CONT.)

Who would help you physically if you could not take care of yourself?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

The first group is your emotional support group; the second, your informational support group; and the third and fourth constitute your tangible support group. (Remember, however, that all three types of support have an emotional component.)

S E S S I O N I X

T H I N K I N G A B O U T P R I O R I T I E S

O V E R V I E W

- 1) Group Check-in
- 2) Review Exercises from Session 8
- 3) Introduction
- 4) Concept of Regoaling
- 5) Using CET Skills
- 6) Personal Values and Priorities
- 7) Exercises
- 8) Relaxation or Visualization Exercise

G O A L S

- A) Participants begin process of identifying their personal values and priorities, and how their values are currently expressed in their day-to-day lives.
- B) Participants begin to consider whether they want to make any changes in their priorities, or goals, or ways in which their values are now expressed.
- C) Participants learn how CET skills can be used to create plans for carrying out any desired changes.
- D) Participants design their own exercises to aid in process.

GROUP CHECK-IN

REVIEW EXERCISES FROM SESSION 8

- **Seeking Support** - Choose a specific stressful situation this week for which you need support. First determine the exact nature of the support you need, then ask for support from the key person in your network responsible for that kind of support. Give him or her permission to say no and be specific about the amount of support you need. Write your reactions to the process below.
- **Appreciating The People Who Help You** - This week, find a means of giving small symbolic gifts to each member of your support network that you have listed above. These can be simple and inexpensive, but can express an affirmation or thanks for their being a support person on your list.

INTRODUCTION

This week we are going to talk about a strategy for reevaluating priorities and regoaling. Living with HIV often causes guys to re-evaluate what's most important to them in their lives. Some feel motivated to make changes in the way they live their lives based on how they assess their priorities.

CONCEPT OF REGOALING

Regoaling is an abstract concept, so we'll talk about the ideas, and we'll also give you an example.

People tend to begin to reprioritize and regoal when they experience important changes in their lives such as testing positive, getting diagnosed, evaluating results to new meds, and so forth.

The process may at first be experienced as discomfort or as a question of, "What do I want to do with my time and my life?" Or there may be feelings of sadness and irritability. Things may just feel "off." Conversely, there may be feel-

ings of excitement and challenge.

We tend to **regoad** when:

- Our objective has been reached and we want or need a new goal.
- Our values or priorities have changed.
- Our interests or needs have shifted.
- The potential satisfaction of reaching a current goal is outweighed by the apparent difficulties of reaching it.
- Our current goals no longer seem to be attainable.
- New options become apparent.

It appears that there are **stages** or **phases** of regoaling which are as follows:

- Identify the need to shift or change a goal.
- Choose a new goal.
- Identify the value(s) underlying the goal, and focus on the values as the goal.

The idea that there are stages does not imply that there is a set way in which one *should* go through the process in order to do it *right*. Regoaling is a process. We move in and out of phases. Frequently, phases overlap. We move back and forth between phases. We don't complete the first thing, check it off the list and go on to the next item.

Regoaling is not often a clear and distinct process, although we may be able to identify particularly significant markers along the way.

Loss is part of change. Sometimes, even when we want to make a change and we are sure it is for the better, actually making the change is very hard because it requires us to give up something known, something familiar, and risk taking on something new that we do not know as well.

Group leaders give an **example** of regoaling to illustrate the abstract concepts.

USING CET SKILLS

You can use the coping skills we've been talking about in this group in the process of reprioritizing and regoaling.

Some aspects of the process will call for dealing with emotions. Others will be concrete problems to be solved. At each step along the way, general situations may need to be broken down into smaller parts and each part addressed. At times it may be helpful to seek out people for support. Sometimes you may need to pause and figure out what sort of support you need - e.g., whether you need a listening ear, advice, information, or something else.

Group leaders continue to illustrate this with their example situation.

PERSONAL VALUES AND PRIORITIES: GROUP DISCUSSION

- What do you consider to be the most important aspects of your life, i.e., those that are most important to you personally? These may be what are reflected in your goals, aims, expectations, hopes, or dreams?
- What underlying values do the above express or reflect for you?
- Are you satisfied with the way your values are made manifest or enacted in your life now?
- Do you want to make any changes or adjustments in the way those those important values are lived or expressed?

EXERCISES

Help participants identify a relevant task and design their own exercises for this week. For example, an exercise might be to call one of the other group members to continue to sort out what their priorities are, or to gather information about going back to work, or to carry out a desired activity

(e.g., to go for a walk on the beach if spending more time in nature has been identified as a priority).

RELAXATION OR VISUALIZATION EXERCISE

Incorporate idea of going to your own safe space that is always there and to which you can always go.

**S E S S I O N X
C O P I N G S A B O T A G E**

OVERVIEW

- 1) Group Check-In
- 2) Review Exercises from Session 9
- 3) Introduction to Self-Sabotage
- 4) Clouds of Self-Sabotage
- 5) Exercises
- 6) Relaxation or Visualization Exercise

GOALS

- A) Understand concept of self-sabotaging statements.
- B) Become aware of own self-sabotaging statements.

GROUP CHECK-IN

REVIEW EXERCISES FROM SESSION 9

- Help participants identify a relevant task and design their own exercises for this week. For example, an exercise might be to call one of the other group members to continue to sort out what their priorities are, or to gather information about going back to work, or to carry out a desired activity (e.g., to go for a walk on the beach if spending more time in nature has been identified as a priority).

INTRODUCTION TO SELF-SABOTAGE

Some thoughts and self-statements can undermine coping.

Tonight we are going to start by focusing on how we get in the way of our own good coping. Then we will work on how to recover from sabotaging our own coping. First, however, the focus is on how we get in our own way.

Review the CET model and use a diagram to show the points in the process that are vulnerable to sabotage.

Vulnerable points:

- Moving from a global to a specific stressor.
- Appraising the situation as changeable or unchangeable.
- Applying coping.

Self-Sabotaging Statements

Our own self-sabotaging statements have generally become so automatic that we no longer notice them in ourselves (even though we may see them in others). Our own self-sabotaging statements can be thought of as background noise. We tune them out of our conscious awareness even though we are still affected by them.

Give an example. One possible example might be:

I'm standing at the bus stop and I see this guy I'd really like to meet. He's really hot, and I'm wondering who he is and just as I'm thinking, "How can I meet him?" the patter kicks in:

"He's really hot, and I'd really like to meet him — but I'm not very good looking, and my hair's a mess. I wish I was wearing something else. He wouldn't want to be seen with me looking like this. Anyway I don't know what to say. I'm not a good conversationalist. I never say anything very interesting. I'm really pretty boring and he wouldn't want to know me. And besides, what if he saw me naked? And before that there'd be the whole, "I'm HIV+ thing." And I never handle that very well. And I don't have a very good personality anyway and he wouldn't want to know me."

Well, then the bus comes and we both get on and he ends up at the back and I end up at the front of the bus. And, I never even say hello to the guy at the bus stop.

We get to be so good at telling ourselves these kinds of things that the statements can all go by in a split second, and we don't tend to notice what we are saying to ourselves. Or sometimes we notice and tell ourselves it's all true anyway. (After all, I didn't meet him did I?)

Check in with the group. Are any of them aware of doing similar things?

Common Forms of Self-Sabotage

Most self-sabotaging statements can be classified using this summary of 15 styles of distorted thinking taken from Thoughts and Feelings, by Aaron T. Beck (p. 26). Distribute the handout and have each group member read one aloud, and give an example. Encourage members to help each other come up with examples.

1. **Filtering:** You take the negative details and magnify them while filtering out all positive aspects of a situation.
2. **Polarized Thinking:** Things are black or white, good or bad. You have to be perfect or you're a failure. There is no middle ground.
3. **Overgeneralization:** You come to a general conclusion based on a single incident or piece of evidence. If something bad happens once, you expect it to happen over and over again.

4. **Mind Reading:** Without their saying so, you know what people are feeling and why they act the way they do. In particular, you are able to divine how people are feeling toward you.
5. **Catastrophizing:** You expect disaster. You notice or hear about a problem and start “what if’s:” What if tragedy strikes? What if it happens to you?
6. **Personalization:** Thinking that everything people do or say is some kind of reaction to you. You also compare yourself to others, trying to determine who’s smarter, better looking, etc.
7. **Control Fallacies:** If you feel externally controlled, you see yourself as helpless, a victim of fate. The fallacy of internal control has you responsible for the pain and happiness of everyone around you.
8. **Fallacy of Fairness:** You feel resentful because you think you know what’s fair but other people won’t agree with you.
9. **Blaming:** You hold other people responsible for your pain, or take the other tack and blame yourself for every problem or reversal.
10. **Shoulds:** You have a list of ironclad rules about how you and other people should act. People who break the rules anger you and you feel guilty if you violate the rules.
11. **Emotional Reasoning:** You believe that what you feel must be true — automatically. If you *feel* stupid and boring, then you must *be* stupid and boring.
12. **Fallacy of Change:** You expect that other people will change to suit you if you just pressure or cajole them enough. You need to change people because you hopes for happiness seem to depend entirely on them.
13. **Global Labeling:** You generalize one or two qualities into a negative global judgment.
14. **Being Right:** You are continually on trial to prove that you opinions and actions are correct. Being wrong is unthinkable and you will go to any length to demonstrate your rightness.
15. **Heaven’s Reward Fallacy:** You expect all your sacrifice and self-denial to pay off, as if there were someone keeping score. You feel bitter when the reward doesn’t come.

CLOUDS OF SELF-SABOTAGE

Leader's Note: Draw the cloud schematic on the board. Copy the clouds with the group's sabotaging statements. You will need to use these again in the Session 11.

The clouds are a visual model used to highlight the different steps in coping that can be sabotaged. This model corresponds to the coping schematic. Choose a stressful situation from the group. Have the group brainstorm as many self-sabotaging statements as possible. Give some examples for each level (cloud).

EXERCISES

- **How Do I Sabotage My Own Good Coping?** This exercise invites you to take a somewhat light-hearted look at the ways in which you sabotage your coping efforts.
- **Identifying Negative Self-Statements** - Next week we are going to talk about ways to recover from these sorts of negative self-statements which sabotage our effective coping. The first step toward recovering from these statements is to become aware of making them. These ways of talking to ourselves often become so habitual and second nature that we do not even notice what we are saying to ourselves. During this week try to be aware of the negative self-statements you tell yourself. What types of situations tend to elicit negative self-statements from you? The workbook provides a space for you to record the answers to this question.

RELAXATION OR VISUALIZATION EXERCISE

S E S S I O N X I

**R E C O V E R I N G F R O M
C O P I N G S A B O T A G E**

O V E R V I E W

- 1) Group Check-In
- 2) Review Exercises from Session 10
- 3) Self-Sabotage Recovery
- 4) Exercises
- 5) Announcements
- 6) Relaxation or Visualization Exercise

G O A L S

- A) Begin to formulate coping strategies to overcome self-sabotaging statements.
- B) Understand and practice using recovery statements.
- C) Immunize against failure.

GROUP CHECK-IN

REVIEW EXERCISES FROM SESSION 10

- **How Do I Sabotage My Own Good Coping?** This exercise invites you to take a somewhat light-hearted look at the ways in which you sabotage your coping efforts.
- **Identifying Negative Self-Statements** - Next week we are going to talk about ways to recover from these sorts of negative self-statements which sabotage our effective coping. The first step toward recovering from these statements is to become aware of making them. These ways of talking to ourselves often become so habitual and second nature that we do not even notice what we are saying to ourselves. During this week try to be aware of the negative self-statements you tell yourself. What types of situations tend to elicit negative self-statements from you? The workbook provides a space for you to record the answers to this question.

SELF-SABOTAGE RECOVERY

Clouds of Recovery

Leader's note: Draw the cloud schematic with last session's sabotaging statements on the board. Using the cloud schematic, have participants think of recovery statements for each sabotaging statement. Explain the idea of talking back to yourself to neutralize your self-sabotaging statements.

Now that you have looked at these self-sabotaging statements, brainstorm as a group about what you could tell yourself when a negative self-statement comes into your mind. Negative self-statements are usually the first mental reaction you have to a stressor, and, since these are often automatic, it will be important for you to test new ways of thinking about situations. What can you do when a negative self-statement comes up?

Self-Enhancing and Self-Defeating Thoughts

Ask the group what often makes it easier to say negative things than positive things to oneself. Explain self-enhancing and self-defeating thoughts.

Immunize Against Failure

Predict that participants sometimes will “fail” in the use of recovery statements. Practice recovery from “failure.” Give them some example statements if they do not come up with their own. For example, one recovery statement might be, “Hey, I can cut myself some slack. I just learned this. How might I handle something like this next time?”

Encourage participants to think of the times they continue to sabotage themselves as feedback and information rather than as failure. One can learn from feedback, or one can beat oneself up with it.

EXERCISES

- **Recovering From the Clouds Of Self-Sabotage** - Fill in the empty clouds in the diagram with positive self-statements you could make to counter the sorts of negative self-statements made in the cloud diagram in our last session.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Remind group that next week is the last weekly meeting. Get participants to start thinking about how that will change things for them.

RELAXATION OR VISUALIZATION EXERCISE

Do a brief relaxation or visualization exercise. Include the instruction to think of "recovery from sabotage" statement that can be made to oneself during the coming week.

S E S S I O N X I I C H A N G E S

O V E R V I E W

- 1) Group Check-In
- 2) Review Exercises from Session 11
- 3) Discuss Transition from Weekly to Less Frequent Meetings
- 4) Participant Feedback (Written)
- 5) Participant Feedback (Oral)
- 6) Concluding the 12th Group

G O A L S

- A) Process thoughts and feelings about the transition from weekly meetings to the schedule applicable to the group [CET-S meets once a month for the next 3 months and then every other month for 6 months for a total of 6 more meetings. CET-E meets approximately every other week for the next 9 months for a total of 20 more meetings.]
- B) Clearly tell participants what to expect in the upcoming meetings.
- C) Ask participants for feedback.

GROUP CHECK-IN

REVIEW EXERCISES FROM SESSION 11

- **Recovering From the Clouds Of Self-Sabotage** - Fill in the empty clouds in the diagram with positive self-statements you could make to counter the sorts of negative self-statements made in the cloud diagram in our last session.

DISCUSS TRANSITION FROM WEEKLY TO LESS FREQUENT MEETINGS

Engage group members in discussion of their thoughts and feelings about the transition from weekly to less frequent meetings on the appropriate schedule for CET-S or CET-E. Explore the meaning of the change in meeting frequency to the participants. Be aware of the many changes and losses that the gay community has experienced as well as of other phenomena which may affect the members experience of this change. For example, medical developments are rapidly influencing many, perhaps most, areas of life. These developments are more likely to occur in between sessions now that the meetings are spaced farther apart.

Use the coping model to frame the discussion about the transition from weekly to less frequent meetings.

Bring into the discussion questions of how participants will cope with the transition (a situation over which they have no control). What feelings will come up? How will they manage the feelings that arise? Are there parts of the situation over which they have control (e.g., get together for dinner next week)? Include attention to social support - caretaking, asking for and giving help and support. Are there both positive and negative aspects to the change in meeting frequency? Can they build in the opportunity for some positive experiences that can be soothing or provide a respite during rough times - maybe time to savor a good cup of coffee with a friend or to tend the herb garden (whatever it

might be for these participants). Provide the opportunity for group members to use the skills they learned here to cope with the change.

Incorporate the following questions: What meaning has this experience had for you? What has it been like to get to know the other people here? How has/does this group and the people here fit into your life? How will you use what you have learned to help yourself cope between sessions? What do you hope for in the up-coming meetings? What do you hope to accomplish personally in our upcoming meetings together?

Clearly tell participants what you envision for the meetings. Describe the general schedule. Set specific dates for the upcoming meetings.

Discuss with both groups, but especially with CET-S, any barriers that may arise. As you did with barriers to doing the exercises, brainstorm about any barriers to attending the next meeting which may come up.

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

(WRITTEN)

Ask participants to fill out written feedback forms.

- What have they liked so far?
- What would they like to see changed?
- What do they hope to see in the upcoming groups?
- How has the group been for them so far?

Thank the participants for their continuing participation in the project.

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

(ORAL)

Ask participants for verbal feedback.

CONCLUDING THE 12TH GROUP

Some group members may minimize the importance of the transition to less frequent meetings. The group leaders may need to hold the knowledge of the significance of the change for the group or some of its members. Group leaders may need to take care not to join in the minimization which may occur. Acknowledge the importance of each member to the functioning of the group.

Close with a visualization or relaxation exercise. Include a reference to the next meeting of the group.

Transition to Maintenance

FACILITATOR'S MANUAL

CET-S

SESSION 13: HEALTH CARE ISSUES.....	93
SESSION 14: COPING MASTERY.....	99
SESSION 15: COPING MASTERY.....	103
SESSION 16: COPING MASTERY.....	107
SESSION 17: OVERALL REVIEW.....	111
SESSION 18: SAYING GOOD-BYE.....	115

CET-E

SESSION 13 - 16: AS ABOVE	
SESSION 17 - 26: COPING MASTERY.....	118
SESSION 27 & 28 OVERALL REVIEW	119
SESSION 29 & 30 SAYING GOOD-BYE	126

PARTICIPANT'S WORKBOOK

CET-S

ALL SESSIONS HAVE WORKBOOK CHAPTERS ASSOCIATED WITH THEM. THEY ARE DESIGNED TO SIMPLY PROVIDE A SPACE FOR PARTICIPANTS TO JOT DOWN THE EXERCISES THEY DEVELOP FOR THE WEEK AND TO WRITE ANY ADDITIONAL NOTES THEY MIGHT FIND HELPFUL.

CET-E

SESSIONS 13 - 17 HAVE WORKBOOK CHAPTERS ASSOCIATED WITH THEM - THE SAME AS FOR CET-S. FOR SESSIONS 18 - 29 FACILITATORS WILL MAKE BLANK PAPER AND PENS AVAILABLE TO PARTICIPANTS. SESSION 30 AGAIN HAS A WORKBOOK CHAPTER FOR PARTICIPANTS.

**S E S S I O N X I I I
H E A L T H C A R E I S S U E S**

OVERVIEW

- 1) Group Check-In
- 2) Process Transition from Weekly to Monthly Meetings
- 3) Introduce Topic of Health Care Issues
- 4) Discussion of Participants' Concerns
- 5) Leaders Help Participants Apply CET Coping Skills
- 6) Develop Exercises
- 7) Transition to Session XIV
- 8) Relaxation or Visualization Exercise

GOALS

- A) Process transition from weekly meetings to monthly meetings.
- B) Discuss health care concerns.
- C) Help group members integrate coping skills into their lives.
- D) Provide context of support.

GROUP CHECK-IN

Is anyone missing? Don't let anyone go unnoticed. If anyone is missing, plan to call during the break to find out what's up. Relay information back to the group and deal with it there as appropriate. (Attending to any absences reinforces the importance of each person and his unique contribution to the group.)

PROCESS TRANSITION FROM WEEKLY TO MONTHLY MEETINGS

Were there any barriers that came up about coming tonight? What were they? How did you overcome the barriers in order to come?

Engage group members in discussion of their thoughts and feelings about the transition from weekly to monthly meetings. How has it been for them? What feelings came up? What was stressful about it? How did they manage the feelings that arose? Did they do anything to help themselves or each other? Were there both positive and negative aspects to the change in meeting frequency? How can they use what they learned to cope with any anticipated stresses in the coming month?

With the change from weekly to monthly meetings, was it difficult to do the exercises from session 12?

Leader's Note: It is likely that a number of participants will not have done the exercises in the month since the last weekly meeting. Explore what the difficulties were. Reinforce anything that approaches doing the exercises (e.g., if a participant thought about doing the exercises, reinforce that and be curious about what would help them go farther with doing them.) Support anyone who has done one or more of the exercises. Bring into the conversation the idea that integrating the skills into their daily lives helps to consolidate what they have learned.

Review Exercises from Session 12

Leader's Note: If some participants have done the exercises, go over them. If no one has done the exercises, ask members to think about a stressful situation in the past month, including what was stressful, how they coped with it, and what they would like to have done differently? If no one has done a visualization, you may also ask participants to take a moment and jot down a couple of things they would like to include in a visualization when they do one.

- **Stressful Situations** - In between meetings make some notes for yourself about stressful situations you encounter. As unforgettable as some events may feel in the moment, they can fade over the course of a month. Jot down a few reminders about the situation. Include, for example: What was stressful? How did you cope with it? What would you like to have done differently?
- **Visualization Exercise** - Do one visualization exercise between now and the next meeting 1 month from tonight. Use this space to make some notes to yourself about what you want to include in your visualization. How did it go? Do you want to change anything for the next time you do a visualization?
- **Relaxation Exercise** - Do one relaxation exercise between now and the next meeting 1 month from tonight.

INTRODUCE TOPIC OF HEALTH CARE ISSUES

During tonight's session we are going to focus specifically on health care issues and concerns. Of course, we have been talking about health concerns already in a variety of ways. The difference today is that the focus is more specific. One reason that we focus a session specifically on health care is because research suggests that when people take an active role in their care, they are more likely to benefit from treatment. It is also an opportunity to practice applying the skills you learned in the first 12 weeks to health care concerns.

Leader's Note: Remember, we are not making treatment recommendations. We do not subscribe to the notion that people are responsible for their disease progression. It's easy for folks to get into the mind set that if they experience disease progression, they are responsible for it or that they didn't do enough or that

they should have done something different. We don't subscribe to that belief. We think of being one's own health care advocate as doing what makes sense for oneself **as seen by that person** at a particular time and in a particular situation. With HIV, as with illnesses like cancer or MS, a person has to work within a context.

DISCUSSION OF PARTICIPANTS' CONCERNS

Facilitate discussion of health care concerns. Think back to what may have been brought up in the check-in. Use what has come up already in tonight's group as a jumping-off point for the discussion.

Record here the types of concerns that emerge (you may want to wait until after the group to jot these down):

APPLY CET COPING SKILLS

Group leaders help participants apply CET coping skills to areas of discussion. This may cover a wide range including, for example, identifying what participants are doing in the moment (providing support of one type or another, negotiating, sorting out options, etc.), applying the basic model of breaking things down, identifying changeable and unchangeable elements, and so forth.

Use the CET model as the basis from which to help participants cope with both current and anticipated health care related issues.

Record here the general skills used or reinforced (again, you may want to wait until after the group to do this):

DEVELOP EXERCISES

Facilitate the development of exercises for the group as a whole, or for its individual members - whichever seems most appropriate.

Record the exercises are here so that you can reference them at the next meeting:

If participants indicated that they did not do the exercises during the last month, plan with them how and when they will do the exercises for the next session. Discuss what they anticipate might derail the plans. (This may be an opportunity to refer back to coping sabotage and recovery.)

TRANSITION TO SESSION XIV

Set specific dates for the upcoming meetings.

Brainstorm about any barriers which may come up in regard to attending the next meeting.

Encourage participants to write down the exercises they develop for themselves, jot down the outcomes, and bring their notes to the next meeting.

RELAXATION OR VISUALIZATION EXERCISE

End the group with a short relaxation or visualization exercise, followed by a short processing of the experience. Invite group members to take on this function for each other. Ask if any of the group members would like to lead the relaxation or visualization for today. Provide any support or help needed by participants to do this. Tell participants that they do not have to already be experts to try doing this. If they would prefer that leaders facilitate the relaxation/visualization, leaders should do so. At the end of the exercise, leaders check in with participants: How was it for the person who led the relaxation/visualization? How was it for the rest of the group to have one of the participants lead the exercise?

**S E S S I O N X I V
C O P I N G M A S T E R Y**

OVERVIEW

- 1) Group Check-In
- 2) Review Exercises from Session XIII
- 3) Set Agenda
- 4) Discussion Based on Agenda Set by Group
- 5) Leaders Help Group Apply CET Coping Skills
- 6) Develop Exercises
- 7) Transition to Session XV
- 8) Relaxation or Visualization Exercise

GOALS

- A) Reinforce coping skills used in exercises for Session 13.
- B) Practice applying the CET model.
- C) Practice using relaxation/visualization.

GROUP CHECK-IN

REVIEW EXERCISES FROM SESSION XIII

Leader's Note: Before the session begins, note the exercises that were developed during the last session here:

SET AGENDA

Facilitate participants setting discussion agenda based on the group check-in.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Facilitate discussion of topics based on agenda set by group.

Record general areas of discussion here:

APPLY CET COPING SKILLS

Group leaders help participants apply CET coping skills to areas of discussion. This may cover a wide range including, for example, identifying what participants are doing in the moment (providing support of one type or another, negotiating, sorting out options, etc.), applying the basic model of breaking things down, identifying changeable and unchangeable elements, and so forth.

Record here the general skills used or reinforced:

DEVELOP EXERCISES

Facilitate the development of exercises for the group as a whole, or for its individual members - whichever seems most appropriate.

Record the exercises are here so that you can reference them at the next meeting:

TRANSITION TO SESSION XV

Remind participants that the next meeting will be one month from tonight. Elicit members' thoughts, feelings, reactions. Facilitate any needed discussion about this topic.

RELAXATION OR VISUALIZATION EXERCISE

Do relaxation or visualization exercise. As during the last session, invite group members to take on this function for each other. Ask if any of the group members would like to do this for today. Provide any support or help needed by participants to do this. Tell participants that they do not have to already be experts to try doing this. If they would prefer that leaders facilitate the relaxation/visualization, leaders should do so. At the end of the exercise, leaders check in with participants: How was it for the person who led the relaxation/visualization? How was it for the rest of the group to have one of the participants lead the exercise?

**S E S S I O N X V
C O P I N G M A S T E R Y**

OVERVIEW

- 1) Group Check-In
- 2) Review Exercises from Session XIV
- 3) Set Agenda
- 4) Discussion Based on Agenda Set by Group
- 5) Leaders Help Participants Apply CET Coping Skills
- 6) Develop Exercises
- 7) Transition to Session XVI
- 8) Relaxation or Visualization Exercise

GOALS

- A) Help group members integrate coping skills into their lives.
- B) Provide context of support.

GROUP CHECK-IN

REVIEW EXERCISES FROM SESSION XIV

Leader's Note: Before the session begins, note the exercises that were developed during the last session here:

SET AGENDA

Facilitate participants setting discussion agenda based on the group check-in.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Facilitate discussion of topics based on agenda set by group.

Record general areas of discussion here:

APPLY CET COPING SKILLS

Group leaders help participants apply CET coping skills to areas of discussion. This may cover a wide range including, for example, identifying what participants are doing in the moment (providing support of one type or another, negotiating, sorting out options, etc.), applying the basic model of breaking things down, identifying changeable and unchangeable elements, and so forth.

Record here the general skills used or reinforced:

DEVELOP EXERCISES

Facilitate the development of exercises for the group as a whole, or for its individual members - whichever seems most appropriate.

Record the exercises are here so that you can reference them at the next meeting:

TRANSITION TO SESSION XVI

Remind participants that the next meeting will be two months from tonight. Elicit members' thoughts, feelings, and reactions. Facilitate any needed discussion about this topic.

RELAXATION OR VISUALIZATION EXERCISE

Do relaxation or visualization exercise. Invite group members to lead the exercise. Leaders should facilitate the relaxation/visualization exercise if participants prefer this. Check in with participants afterward.

**S E S S I O N X V I
C O P I N G M A S T E R Y**

OVERVIEW

- 1) Group Check-In
- 2) Review Exercises from Session XV
- 3) Set Agenda
- 4) Discussion Based on Agenda Set by Group
- 5) Leaders Help Participants Apply CET Coping Skills
- 6) Develop Exercises
- 7) Transition to Session XVII
- 8) Relaxation or Visualization Exercise

GOALS

- A) Help group members integrate coping skills into their lives.
- B) Provide context of support.

GROUP CHECK-IN

REVIEW EXERCISES FROM SESSION XV

Leader's Note: Before the session begins, note the exercises that were developed during the last session here:

SET AGENDA

Facilitate participants setting discussion agenda based on the group check-in.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Facilitate discussion of topics based on agenda set by group.

Record general areas of discussion here:

APPLY CET COPING SKILLS

Group leaders help participants apply CET coping skills to areas of discussion. This may cover a wide range including, for example, identifying what participants are doing in the moment (providing support of one type or another, negotiating, sorting out options, etc.), applying the basic model of breaking things down, identifying changeable and unchangeable elements, and so forth.

Record here the general skills used or reinforced:

DEVELOP EXERCISES

Facilitate the development of exercises for the group as a whole, or for its individual members - whichever seems most appropriate.

Record the exercises are here so that you can reference them at the next meeting:

TRANSITION TO SESSION XVII

Remind participants that the next meeting will be two months from tonight. Elicit members' thoughts, feelings, reactions. Facilitate any needed discussion about this topic.

RELAXATION OR VISUALIZATION EXERCISE

Do relaxation or visualization exercise. Invite group members to lead the exercise. Leaders should facilitate the relaxation/visualization exercise if participants prefer this. Check in with participants afterward.

**S E S S I O N X V I I - S
O V E R A L L R E V I E W**

O V E R V I E W

- 1) Group Check-In
- 2) Review Exercises from Session XVI
- 3) Set Agenda
- 4) Discussion Based on Agenda
- 5) Overall Review: CET as a Coping Tool
- 6) Review of the Participants' Year Together
- 7) Develop Exercises
- 8) Transition to Session XVIII
- 9) Relaxation or Visualization Exercise

G O A L S

- A) Help group members consolidate what they have learned.
- B) Support participants' skills and competence.
- C) Begin termination process.

GROUP CHECK-IN

REVIEW EXERCISES FROM SESSION XVI

Leader's Note: Before the session begins, note the exercises that were developed during the last session here:

SET AGENDA

Facilitate setting the agenda. When setting the agenda for this session, include your own agenda as a group leader. That is, let participants know that you plan to do an overall review of the coping model, and that you want to begin a discussion of how the past year here in the group has been for the participants.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Facilitate discussion. As a part of this discussion, you may carry out the overall review. For example, using the situation of a group member, facilitate the use of the coping model by participants.

Record general areas of discussion here:

OVERALL REVIEW: CET AS A COPING TOOL

Using a situation from the group, walk participants through the basic CET model, having them generate and apply as much of the model as possible for themselves. Demonstrate how listening skills, negotiation skills, and giving and receiving social support can enhance one's ability to use the model effectively.

REVIEW THE GROUP'S YEAR TOGETHER

Start the termination process by beginning a review of the past 11 months spent in the group together.

DEVELOP EXERCISES

Facilitate development of exercise(s) for the group as a whole or for its individual members - whichever seems most appropriate. Possible exercises might include: a participant formally applying the model to a stressful situation in his life; thinking about any areas in which a participant feels he needs further clarification about the coping model so that these questions can be brought up at the next session; working on a particular skill that a participant feels needs practice; writing down the strengths one sees developing in one's self; writing down what one appreciates about the other members of the group; or making a list of one's priorities. There are many possibilities. Encourage (and help) participants to come up with exercises that fit for each of them.

Record the exercise(s) here for reference at the next (and last) meeting:

TRANSITION TO SESSION XVIII

Remind participants that the next and last meeting will be in two months. Elicit members thoughts, feelings, reactions. Facilitate any needed discussion about this topic.

RELAXATION OR VISUALIZATION EXERCISE

Do relaxation or visualization exercise. Invite group members to lead the exercise. Leaders should facilitate the relaxation/visualization exercise if participants prefer this. Check in with participants afterward.

**S E S S I O N X V I I I - S
S A Y I N G G O O D - B Y E**

OVERVIEW

- 1) Group Check-In
- 2) Review Exercises from Session XVII
- 3) Discuss Termination
- 4) Written Feedback
- 5) Verbal Feedback
- 6) Thanks
- 7) Relaxation or Visualization Exercise
- 8) Good-Bye

GOALS

- A) Process feelings about termination.
- B) Help group members integrate coping skills into their lives.
- C) Provide context of support.
- D) Express our appreciation to participants.
- E) Say good-bye.

GROUP CHECK-IN

REVIEW EXERCISES FROM SESSION XVII

Leader's Note: Before the session begins, note the exercises that were developed during the last session here:

DISCUSS TERMINATION

Begin by acknowledging that this is the last meeting of the group. Engage group members in discussion of their thoughts and feelings about termination. Explore the meaning of the ending of the group for the participants. Be aware of the many changes and losses that the gay community has experienced, as well as of other phenomena which may affect the members' experience of this ending.

Use the coping model to frame the discussion termination. Do this by introducing questions of how participants will cope with the ending of the group meetings (a situation over which they have no control). What feelings will come up? How will they manage the feelings that arise? Are there parts of the situation over which they have control (e.g., get together for dinner next week)? Include attention to social support - caretaking, asking for and giving help and support. Are there both positive and negative aspects to the ending?

Incorporate the following questions also: What meaning has this experience had for you? What has it been like to get to know the other people here? How has/does this group and

the people here fit into your life? How will you use what you have learned to help yourself cope?

WRITTEN FEEDBACK

Ask participants to fill out written feedback forms.

- Please list the two aspects of the groups which have been the most helpful, useful, or valuable to you over the last 9 months?
- Please list the two aspects of the groups which have been the least helpful, useful, or valuable to you last 9 months?
- To what extent do you feel you have incorporated the coping skills into your life?
- any additional comments

VERBAL FEEDBACK

Invite group members for any verbal feedback they may wish to share.

THANKS

Express our deep appreciation to the group members for their dedication and participation in the CHANgES Project.

RELAXATION OR VISUALIZATION EXERCISE

Do relaxation or visualization exercise. Group leaders should facilitate this last relaxation/visualization exercise, which should be very supportive of the participants' strengths.

GOOD-BYES

Say final good-byes with the group.

Leader's Note: Participants will see interviewers again for last interview. Emphasize the importance of the final interview.

S E S S I O N S 17 - 26 E

C O P I N G M A S T E R Y

Sessions 17-E through 26-E follow the coping mastery format that has been used in previous coping mastery sessions.

Have blank 3 hole paper and some pencils and pens available in the meeting room for the optional use of participants.

Workbook chapters will not be provided again until Session 30.

**S E S S I O N X X V I I - E
O V E R A L L R E V I E W**

O V E R V I E W

- 1) Group Check-In
- 2) Review Exercises from Session 26
- 3) Set Agenda
- 4) Discussion Based on Agenda
- 5) Begin Overall Review: CET as a Coping Tool
- 6) Develop Exercises
- 7) Transition to Session 28
- 8) Relaxation or Visualization Exercise

G O A L S

- A) Help group members consolidate what they have learned.
- B) Support participants' skills and competence.
- C) Initiate awareness of upcoming termination.

GROUP CHECK-IN

REVIEW EXERCISES FROM SESSION 26

Leader's Note: Before the session begins, note the exercises that were developed during the last session here:

SET AGENDA

Facilitate setting the agenda. When setting the agenda for sessions 27 - 30, include your own agenda as a group leader. That is, for this session, let participants know that you plan to do an overall review of the coping model.

Leader's Note: Session 28 is a continuation of session 27. The review extends over the two session period.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Facilitate discussion. As a part of this discussion, you may carry out the overall review. For example, using the situation of a group member, facilitate the use of the coping model by participants.

Record general areas of discussion here:

OVERALL REVIEW: CET AS A COPING TOOL

If you have not already done so as part of the above discussion, use a situation from the group to walk participants through the basic CET model, having them generate and apply as much of the model as possible for themselves. Demonstrate how listening skills, negotiation skills, and giving and receiving social support can enhance one's ability to use the model effectively.

DEVELOP EXERCISES

Facilitate development of exercise(s) for the group as a whole or for its individual members - whichever seems most appropriate. Possible exercises might include: a participant formally applying the model to a stressful situation in his life; thinking about any areas in which a participant feels he needs further clarification about the coping model so that these questions can be brought up at the next session; working on a particular skill that a participant feels needs practice; writing down the strengths one sees developing in one's self; writing down what one appreciates about the other members of the group; or making a list of one's priorities. There are many possibilities. Encourage (and help) participants to come up with exercises that are relevant for each of them.

Record the exercise(s) here for reference at the next meeting:

TRANSITION TO SESSION 28

Tell participants that the next meeting will continue today's review process. Remind participants that they are nearing the end of the group meetings. Elicit members thoughts, feelings, reactions. Facilitate any needed discussion about this topic.

RELAXATION OR VISUALIZATION EXERCISE

Do relaxation or visualization exercise. Invite group members to lead the exercise. Leaders should facilitate the relaxation/visualization exercise if participants prefer this. Check in with participants afterward.

S E S S I O N X X V I I I - E

**OVERALL REVIEW
(CONTINUED)**

OVERVIEW

- 1) Group Check-In
- 2) Review Exercises from Session 27
- 3) Set Agenda
- 4) Discussion and Review
- 5) Develop Exercises
- 6) Transition to Session 29
- 7) Relaxation or Visualization Exercise

GOALS

- A) Help group members consolidate what they have learned.
- B) Support participants' skills and competence.
- C) Continue beginning termination process.

GROUP CHECK-IN

REVIEW EXERCISES FROM SESSION 27

Leader's Note: Before the session begins, note the exercises that were developed during the last session here:

SET AGENDA

Facilitate setting the agenda. Include your own agenda as a group leader. That is, for this session, let participants know that you plan to continue the overall review begun in the previous session. Ask group members whether there are any particular areas you have covered during the past year that they want clarified further so that you can be sure to address these areas specifically.

DISCUSSION & REVIEW

Continue review process and discussion that was begun last week.

Record any areas for which participants need further clarification here:

DEVELOP EXERCISES

Facilitate development of exercise(s).

Record the exercise(s) here for reference at the next meeting:

TRANSITION TO SESSION 28

Remind participants that they have two more group meetings. Elicit members thoughts, feelings, reactions. Facilitate any needed discussion about this topic.

RELAXATION OR VISUALIZATION EXERCISE

Do relaxation or visualization exercise. Invite group members to lead the exercise. Leaders should facilitate the relaxation/visualization exercise if participants prefer this. Check in with participants afterward.

**S E S S I O N X X X - E
S A Y I N G G O O D - B Y E
(C O N T I N U E D)**

O V E R V I E W

- 1) Group Check-In
- 2) Review Exercises from Session 29
- 3) Continue to Discuss Termination
- 4) Written Feedback
- 5) Verbal Feedback
- 6) Thanks
- 7) Relaxation or Visualization Exercise
- 8) Good-Bye

G O A L S

- A) Process feelings about termination.
- B) Help group members integrate coping skills into their lives.
- C) Provide context of support.
- D) Express our appreciation to participants.
- E) Say good-bye.

GROUP CHECK-IN

REVIEW EXERCISES FROM SESSION 29

Leader's Note: Before the session begins, note the exercises that were developed during the last session here:

DISCUSS TERMINATION

Summarize for participants the themes from session 29. Continue to discuss and process the meaning of termination with participants.

Ask participants what they will take with them from the group.

WRITTEN FEEDBACK

Ask participants to fill out written feedback forms.

- Please list the two aspects of the groups which have been the most helpful, useful, or valuable to you over the last 9 months?
- Please list the two aspects of the groups which have been the least helpful, useful, or valuable to you last 9 months?
- To what extent do you feel you have incorporated the coping skills into your life?
- any additional comments

VERBAL FEEDBACK

Invite group members for any verbal feedback they may wish to share.

THANKS

Express our deep appreciation to the group members for their dedication and participation in the CHANgES Project.

RELAXATION OR VISUALIZATION EXERCISE

Do relaxation or visualization exercise. Group leaders should facilitate this last relaxation/visualization exercise, which should be very supportive of the participants' strengths.

GOOD-BYES

Say final good-byes with the group.

Leader's Note: Participants will see interviewers again for last interview. Emphasize the importance of the final interview.