



**Y. E. S. II--
4-H YOUTH
EXPERIENCING
SUCCESS:
A PROGRAM TO
DEVELOP SELF-ESTEEM
Facilitator's Handbook**

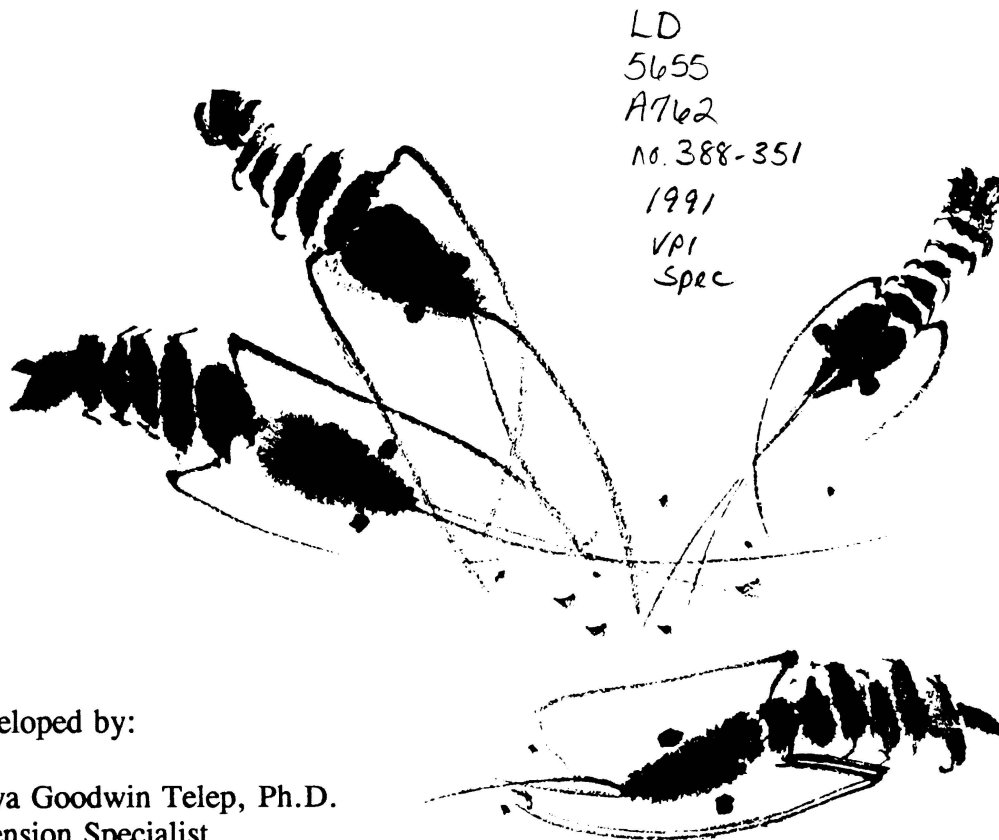


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Developed by:

Valya Goodwin Telep, Ph.D.
Extension Specialist
Child Development
Virginia Cooperative Extension Service
Virginia State University

Denita Wickham
Intensive Family Services Program Coordinator
Catholic Childrens Charities
Richmond, Virginia

Nancy Breeding
4-H Technician
Russell County Extension Service
Lebanon, Virginia

Layout and graphic design by Tina M. Coles-Jones

Artwork by Kathryn Goodwin Telep

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Youth Experiencing Success II (Y.E.S. II)

A Program To Develop Self-Esteem

OBJECTIVES

- A) To involve youth ages 14-19 in a special interest program designed to enable a positive transition into adulthood through exploration of the following life-skill areas:
1. Recognizing and understanding the impact of today's choices on tomorrow's quality of life;
 2. Exploring the relationship between risk-taking behavior and the attainment of personal goals;
 3. Developing positive methods of dealing with peer pressure;
 4. Understanding and clarifying personal values as they relate to meaningful relationships;
 5. Developing a greater understanding of how individual expectations can shape attitudes and actions; and
 6. Facilitating personal definitions of accountability and maturity.
- B) To motivate youth to become Y.E.S. Teen Leaders.

FORMAT

Each session is roughly based on a 1 1/2-hour format, and organized according to:

- * "Purpose" and "Materials"-gives planning information
- * "Warm-Up"-provides group focus
- * "Lead-In"-provides introduction and content information
- * "Activities"-describes how to conduct the learning activities
- * "Wrap-Up"-provides closure for each session

Job Description

- JOB TITLE:** Youth Experiencing Success (Y.E.S.) Facilitator
- PURPOSE:** Arranging learning experiences for youth through specific group activities.
- RESPONSIBILITIES:**
1. Become familiar with and develop a working knowledge of the Y.E.S. II components.
 2. Facilitate an open learning environment characterized by information sharing, respect for others, and self-discovery.
 3. Maintain an open, self-disclosing, honest, and accepting attitude.
- QUALIFICATIONS:**
1. Belief in youth
 2. Ability to communicate diplomatically and enthusiastically.
 3. Ability to commit sufficient time to fulfill responsibilities.
 4. Willingness and time to take necessary training.
 5. Interest and/or skill in specific group activities.
- RESPONSIBLE TO:** Y.E.S. Coordinator
- TIME REQUIREMENTS:**
- 2 1/2-hours at planning meeting (approximate)
 - 13 1/2-hours of group facilitation (approximate)
 - 2 1/2-hours at evaluation meeting (approximate)



EVALUATION

The Y.E.S. evaluation is designed to answer the following questions: (1) Were the educational objectives met; and (2) Can the program be improved?

- (A) Administer the Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) to assess attitudes toward self in a Pre-test (prior to starting the first Y.E.S. II session) and Post-test (after the Y.E.S. II series is completed). Comparison of group averages on the Pre-test to group averages on the Post-test will provide a measure of self-esteem change.
- (B) Administer the Y.E.S.II member evaluation to assess impact of the program on participants. To maximize your response rate, have participants fill out the evaluations during the last session.
- (C) The Y.E.S.II Facilitator Evaluation is designed to provide feedback on orientation, subject matter, and delivery system.

In addition to the formal evaluation methods, the value of informal feedback cannot be emphasized enough. A suggestion for facilitators is to keep a diary of group feedback - what worked, what didn't - in order to simplify the final evaluation process and to share with other facilitators if there are several Y.E.S. II groups.

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Y.E.S.II Scale

Please place number 1, 2, 3, or 4 in the blank next to the following statements.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly Disagree

- _____ 1. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.
- _____ 2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
- _____ 3. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.
- _____ 4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.
- _____ 5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.
- _____ 6. I take a positive attitude toward myself.
- _____ 7. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
- _____ 8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.
- _____ 9. I certainly feel useless at times.
- _____ 10. At times I think I am no good at all.



heart

Y.E.S.II Scale

Facilitator's Guide

Please place number 1, 2, 3, or 4 in the blank next to the following statements.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly Disagree

- _____ 1. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others. (1,2)
- _____ 2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities. (1,2)
- _____ 3. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure. (3,4)
- _____ 4. I am able to do things as well as most other people. (1,2)
- _____ 5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of. (3,4)
- _____ 6. I take a positive attitude toward myself. (1,2)
- _____ 7. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself. (1,2)
- _____ 8. I wish I could have more respect for myself. (3,4)
- _____ 9. I certainly feel useless at times. (3,4)
- _____ 10. At times I think I am no good at all. (3,4)

Number in parentheses refer to high self-esteem responses.



hands

Y.E.S. II MEMBER EVALUATION

1. What is the most significant thing you have learned about yourself?
2. What did you learn that might help you improve relationships with others?
3. What did you like the most? Why?
4. What did you like the least? Why?
5. What would you change about the group?
6. Would you recommend this group to others? Why or why not?
7. Would you consider being a group leader at one or more future Y.E.S. sessions?
8. What other topics would you like to see in future Y.E.S. sessions?

Y.E.S. II FACILITATOR EVALUATION

1. In what ways would you modify the orientation session for Y.E.S. II Facilitators?
2. What Y.E.S. II activities worked especially well with your group?
3. What Y.E.S. II activities would you change?
4. What evidence of changes in behavior or skills have you seen in the participants? (Attach additional sheets if necessary.)
5. What was your most rewarding experience?
6. What was your biggest concern or problem? Was it resolved?
7. Please evaluate the time commitments that were projected. Were they realistic?
8. Other comments? Suggestions?

Y.E.S.II Teacher Evaluation

1. Briefly relate your experience with and opinion of the Y.E.S.II program.
2. Was delivery of the Y.E.S.II program appropriate for this particular age group?
3. What evidence of changes in behavior or skills have you seen in the participants? (Attach additional sheets if necessary)
4. Would you recommend the Y.E.S.II program to others? Why or why not?
5. As an educator, do you feel there is a need for programs such a Y.E.S.II in the educational system?
6. What problems, if any, do you see in incorporating programs such as Y.E.S.II into your curriculum?
7. What additional topics would you recommend be included in the Y.E.S.II program?
8. Would you be willing to serve as a Y.E.S.II facilitator in your classroom?

Session I

If You Don't Know Where You're Going You May End Up There

Purpose To develop a better understanding of how today's choices impact upon tomorrow's quality of life

To move toward a greater understanding of being "proactive" rather than "reactive" in one's life

Materials Paper, pencils

Warm-Up Ask participants to think about where they were and what they were doing in elementary school. (What grade they were in; who their friends were; what they did for fun.) Next, ask them to pick out three special things that were in their bedroom when they were in elementary school and share with the group what these items say about who they were. After everyone has had an opportunity to share, ask the group to think about their bedroom today. What three items would they pick out to share with the group about what's important to them now?

Discussion might include: How have your interests changed? How have your values changed? Alternate warm-up: "What would you do if I gave you one million dollars?" Discussion might include: What do our choices tell us about ourselves? Where do our values come from?

Lead-in What does the title of today's session mean to you? Our values are reflected in the things that we feel are important. They define who we are. As we go through life and meet new people, sometimes our values get challenged. These experiences push us to re-affirm what is important to us. In the next activity we will be taking a closer look at what's important to us.



Activity

Planning Board. Have participants make two columns on a sheet of paper, numbering down 1-4 in the left column and 5-8 in the right, so that you have made 8 squares.

1	5
2	6
3	7
4	8

Square #1 is their #1 priority, followed by 2,3, etc., until they get to their lowest priority, square #8.

On another sheet of paper have participants cut out 8 squares to fit the squares they have drawn. Here's how the planning board works: "You have been given one extra week of vacation and there are eight possible vacation packages to choose from. As I read each option, write it down on one of the cut-out squares and place it on the Planning Board according to how important it is to you. You are free to move the squares around on your Planning Board as we go down the list of vacation options:"

White water raft trip -- down the Colorado River
Disneyworld with your family
Creative and performing arts camp-- leatherwork, pottery, painting, design and make your own clothes, drama, voice lessons
Sports camp taught by the athlete of your choice
Hotel room with 3 VCR's and unlimited video games and movie rentals
Go on tour with a musical group or performer supporting their no alcohol no drugs campaign
Meeting with world leaders about World peace (security insured and translators available)
Bike trip along the California coast.

There will probably be a lot of comments as the participants shift around their vacations priorities. Some discussion questions might include:

- What choices were especially hard?
- What values were in conflict?
- What did you learn about yourself?

An important question as we explore our values is, "Am I really getting what I want out of life?" The decisions we make each day reflect our values at that specific time. What is important for one person may not be as important for another. Settling for whatever comes our way, rather than taking charge of our life, is like acting out a role in someone else's play.

Five things you love to do. Have participants list 5 things they love to do or would love to do. They can be big things in life or little things. Participants may want to think in terms of seasons.

Next, ask participants to code their items according to the following list. Items may be coded more than once.

- \$ Does it cost over \$10.00?
- A Is it something you prefer to do alone?
- P Is it something you prefer to do with other people?
- A/P Is it something that can be done equally well alone or with others?
- Pl Is it something that requires planning?
- R Does it involve risk?
- E Is it something that you would enjoy more if you had more experience or practice?
- F Is it something that you want to spend more time doing in the future?
- C Is it something that you hope your children will have on their lists?
- X Which items will **not** be on your list five years from now?

Next to each item write the name of the person you want to talk to the most about that item.

Allow time for participants to share their lists.

Follow-up discussion might focus on:

- What do we gain by knowing what our values are?
- Why is it important to know what our values are?
- How clear are you about what your values are?

Wrap-up

As we go through life our priorities change. In the last hour your priorities were challenged and some even changed as you did your Planning Boards.

Our values are reflected in our priorities and in the choices we make. Without a clear sense of what we value we are like a ship floating in the middle of the ocean: without a rudder; a course to follow; or a port to provide shelter.

When we know what we stand for, we can face difficult choices with confidence.



health

Session II

My Circle of Friends

Purpose	<p>To help participants cope with changing peer relationships</p> <p>To help participants develop positive methods of dealing with peer pressure</p>
Materials	Flip chart, markers, paper, pencil
Warm-Up	Lead participants in a brief discussion about what's "in" and what's "out" in styles today (hair, clothing, music). If possible, share photographs from your adolescence. Who or what influences what they wear? The music they listen to? How they spend their free time?
Lead-In	<p>We are all influenced to some degree by others, ... friends, TV, movies, or magazines. Who and/or what influences your choice of clothing, hair style, etc?</p> <p>Everyone wants to be accepted, however, what we do to be "in" can sometimes have far reaching consequences. Have the group discuss the consequences that can result from peer pressure--both positive and negative.</p> <p>Friends usually have a positive influence on us--encouraging us to participate in school activities, achieve our goals, keep our bodies healthy. On the other hand, friends can also have a negative influence on us--encouraging us to use alcohol or other drugs, skip school, have sex, shoplift, disobey our parents. The degree to which we "give into" peer pressure directly affects the consequences we experience.</p>
Activities	<p>Discuss with the group qualities they look for in a friend. Record their responses on a flip chart. How did they get to know their friends? Is there a difference in what they look for in same sex vs. opposite sex friends?</p> <p>Discuss what can happen when friends change or when we change.</p> <p>Ask participants to think about someone they know and admire.</p> <p>What qualities does that person have? Record responses on flip chart.</p>

After the discussion, ask participants to turn to the person next to them, give them a big smile, point their finger at them, and say with a twinkle in their eye, "It takes one to know one!"

Discuss what it means when we say "You don't look up to someone, you look up through someone."

Role Plays. Ask for volunteers to role play the following situations or come up with some of their own. It's fun to put the roles into a "hat" and have the participants draw out their role.

1. You are offered a \$500 bike for \$100 and you know it's HOT. You must decide what to do.

You are selling a \$500 bike for \$100 because the police have been asking questions about the bike. You have to get rid of it!

Your job is to get your friends to buy the bike.

Your job is to talk your friend out of buying the bike.

2. You have been asked to buy some drugs for your friends. They have the money, they just need you to go pick up the stuff.

Your job is to talk your friend into picking up the drugs.

Your job is to talk your friend into picking up the drugs.

Your brother just got arrested by an undercover cop.

3. You have two friends who want you to go to the mall with them and shoplift some tapes. You must decide what to do.

You don't want to shoplift and try to talk your friends out of shoplifting.

Your job is to talk your friends into shoplifting.

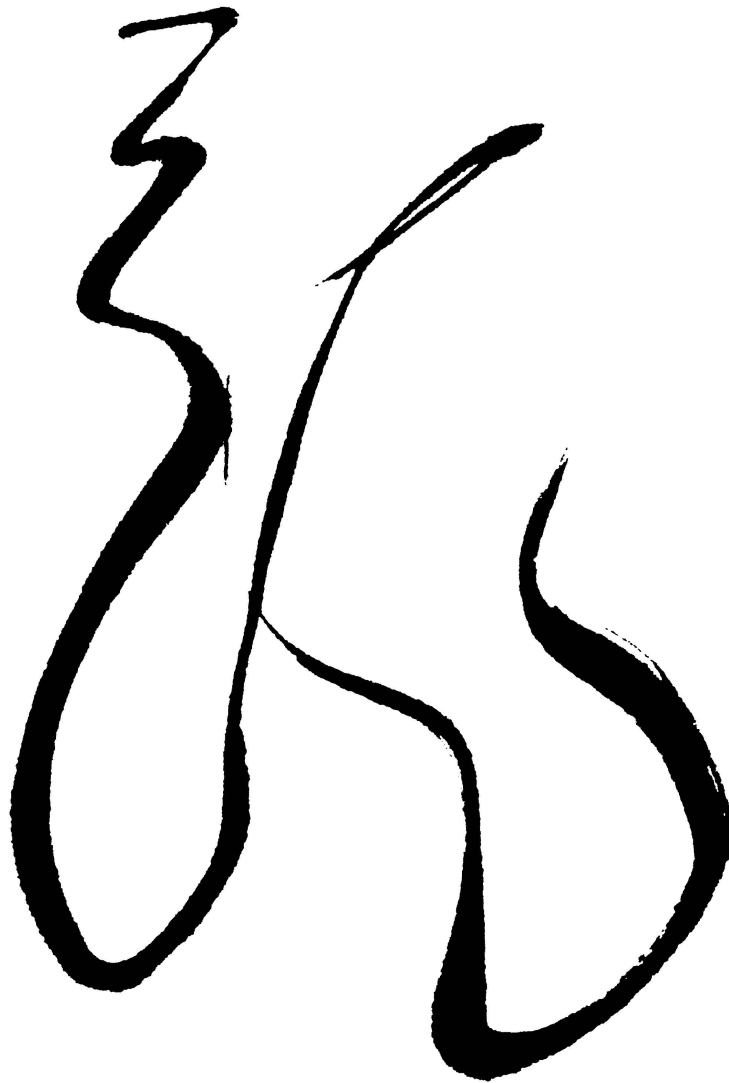
Your job is to talk your friends into shoplifting.

You work at the record store. You have known these kids and their families for many years.

Wrap-up

There are two kinds of people in this world: Thermometers and Thermostats. Thermometers are controlled by outside forces. If it's cold, they register cold. If it's hot, they're hot. Thermostats, on the other hand, remain steady no matter what the outside forces are doing.

When it comes to what we value, we have a choice. We can be like a thermometer: controlled by what's happening around us; or we can be like a thermostat: taking control of how we respond, regardless of how people and situations are presenting themselves to us.



Session III

Exploring Meaningful Relationships

- Purpose** To clarify one's own values about relationships.
- To become aware of the values of others.
- To increase awareness of the many components of meaningful relationships.
- Materials** Newsprint, markers or chalkboard paper, pencils
- Warm-Up** **Unfinished sentences.** Ask participants to finish any or all of the following variations:
"The best (worst) thing about dating (falling in love, breaking up, going steady) is . . ."
- Lead-In** We've touched on some of the "best" and "worst" things about relationships, and during the past week you've had the opportunity to think about what qualities are important to you in a relationship.
- Activities** Ask the group to brainstorm positive and negative qualities or values inherent in a love relationship. Write these on newsprint or chalkboard, for example, a positive quality might be "companionship." A negative one might be "tied down."
- Values Planning Board.** Have participants make two columns on a sheet of paper, numbering down 1-4 in the left column and 5-8 in the right, so that they have eight squares.

1	5
2	6
3	7
4	8

Square #1 is their #1 priority, followed by 2, 3, etc., until they get to their lowest priority, square #8. On another sheet of paper have participants cut out 8 squares to fit the squares they have drawn. Here's how the planning board works: I am going to read a list of eight values that are often associated with interpersonal relationships. As I read each item, write it down on one of the cut-out squares and place it on the planning board according to how important it is to you.

You are free to move the squares around on your planning board as we go down the list of interpersonal values:

- age
- attraction
- religion
- race
- trust
- communication
- love
- security

After participants have completed their planning boards, some discussion questions might include:

- What do your choices say about you?
- How difficult was it to prioritize the items?

Wrap-up

Our values play a major role in what we look for in interpersonal relationships. They also give us a vision of who we are. When we are clear about who we are and what we want, we can begin to make healthy relationship choices.



Session IV

Who's Accountable

Purpose	To explore the consequences of choices To better understand the concept of accountability.
Materials	Newsprint and markers paper and pencils
Warm-Up	Ask participants to share their views on the following: Which weighs more - a boulder or a heavy heart? Which is more powerful - a weed or a concrete wall?
Lead-In	Lead participants in a brief discussion on their definition of "accountability." Questions to get the group thinking might include: What does it mean to be accountable? Who are we accountable to? Can a society be held accountable? Should it be? Under what circumstances?
Activity	Who's Responsible? This exercise is designed to explore the dimensions of accountability. Participants may wish to role play or take turns reading the following scenario. The door to Allyson's hospital room opened. Her parents approached the bed wearing smiles of relief mixed with concern. The graduation celebration and all of the toasts to her future success seemed like a dream. Today's headline read, FAMILY KILLED IN CAR ACCIDENT.

Allyson's boyfriend, Mike, lay in another hospital bed, unconscious. His parents sat by his bedside. His mother's worst fear had come true. Both she and Mike knew what alcohol could do to a person, even though Mike's father claimed he could "stop at any time."

Everyone else at the party had been having a good time, even if Mike wasn't. She wasn't sure just how many drinks she had enjoyed, but she was sure that she could drive. She had given Mike a choice: either ride with her or get a ride with someone else. A fatal mistake.

The accident report showed her blood alcohol level had been .10. Legally drunk?! No way! Her lawyer explained that that fact alone would be enough to charge her with involuntary manslaughter. She might even be charged with second-degree murder.

Her lawyer's investigation of the skid marks indicated that perhaps the Smith car entered the curve on the wrong side of the road. There was also the question of the steering ability of Allyson's car. A tie-rod end had snapped in half. The previous owner of the car admitted that the "steering had been a little rough" before he sold it.

Across town, George, a top photography student, saw the headlines and recognized Allyson as one of the many high school students he made fake ID's for.

At the local ABC store, the clerk glanced at the headline and said to himself, "Kids never learn. It's not my business what happens after they leave here."

List the responsible parties on newsprint or chalkboard for the group to review:

- Allyson
- Allyson's parents
- Mike
- Mike's parents
- George, the photography student
- The other people at the party
- The ABC clerk
- The driver of the Smith car
- The previous owner of Allyson's car
- The manufacturer of Allyson's car

Ask participants to individually rank the parties in the order of their

responsibility for Allyson's accident, along with their reasons for doing so.

Focus discussion on arriving at a group consensus. Some questions to start the group thinking include: Does Mike's father have a drinking problem? How do you think Mike's experiences at home affected how he felt at the party. Why do you suppose he got in the car with Allyson? Could the ABC clerk have prevented Allyson from buying the alcohol? In what way?

If time permits, introduce the issue of accountability as it applies to:

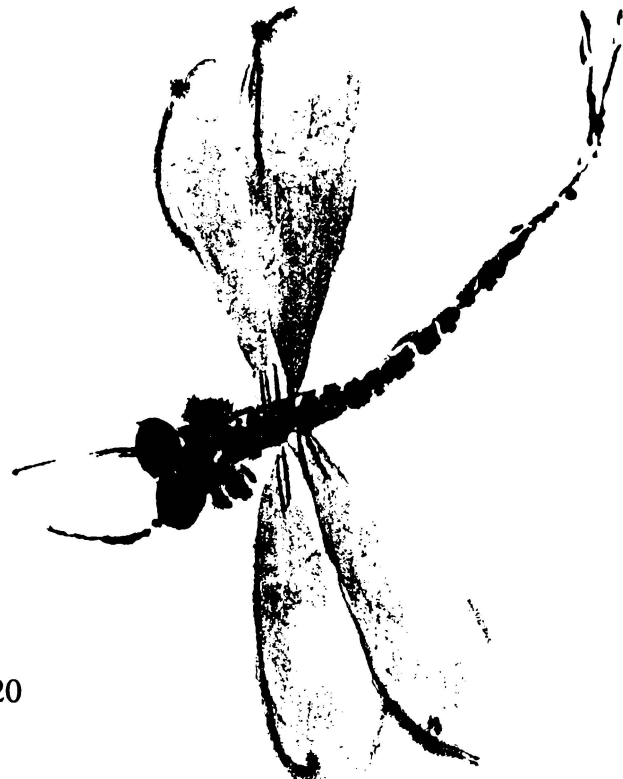
Advertisements and celebrity promotions of alcohol (for example, sports figures).

Laws on drinking and driving.

Social attitudes toward drinking and other drug use.

Wrap-Up

We have talked about the different degrees to which we are accountable to ourselves, to others, and to society. As we have listened and learned, it's not an easy area to define. There are no clear-cut rules to follow and no right or wrong answers to point the way. It can be said, however, that the first step toward building a responsible society is to instill the value of accountability in its members. From each individual act comes the power to lift up or tear down society.



Session V

Critical Thinking

Purpose	To begin to examine personal value structures. To practice critical thinking skills.
Materials	Paper, pencils Newsprint, marker
Warm-Up	Ask the participants their definition of "mature." Record the main points on newsprint.
Lead-In	Maturity is not easy to define. It is made up of many components, as seen in our warm-up exercise. Review main points, i.e., maturity means different things at different ages and varies from individual to individual, situation to situation.
Activities	Read and/or have participants role play "Dropping Out: A Manager's Story."

DROPPING OUT: A MANAGER'S STORY

It was the day before the manager's forty-second birthday, during his twentieth year with the firm. He arrived at the office at 8:35 exactly. At 8:37, his coat and hat had been hung, the customary round of "good mornings" had been chanted, and he was seated in his upholstered leather swivel chair.

At 8:38, a whiff of perfume announced the arrival of Mary, who was clutching a beige folder bulging with already-opened and date-stamped correspondence. Mary had sorted out all the irrelevant paperwork and only the meaty, difficult items remained.

The manager uttered an automatic "Thank you, Mary." Mary turned briskly, closed the door behind her, and left the manager with the bloated beige folder on his gleaming mahogany desk.

The manager opened the folder and thumbed through the correspondence. The papers hurled words at him: "please revise," "priority," "credit," "overdue," "legal action," "as soon as possible," "immediately," "expedite," "yours truly," "as soon as possible," "immediately"....

The telephone rang. The voice spat out words. At least half a dozen of the words that he had just read droned in his right ear. He replaced the receiver having said absolutely nothing. Mary came in with yet more correspondence. The manager rose, picked up his yet-unopened briefcase, and left the office. Mary spluttered, "But Sir!! _____." He was gone.

Facilitate discussion around the following questions:

1. What are your thoughts about the kind of person the manager is based on the information you are given.
2. Do you think the manager was mature?
3. Why do you think he left?
4. What do you suppose he was thinking?
5. What do you think he was feeling?

Then ask the participants how their opinions would change if they had the following additional information:

- a. The manager left only for the day
- b. The manager never returned
- c. The manager had been told by his doctor that if he didn't slow down he would have a heart attack
- d. The manager had just found out that he had less than six weeks to live
- e. The manager had accepted another job paying twice his salary
- f. The manager just found out that other executives were embezzling money from the company and they were threatening him.

If time permits, have the group discuss the following critical-thinking scenarios:

A nineteen year old girl sells her baby for \$5,000. How would their feelings change if they knew:

- a. Her father had been sexually abusing her for years
- b. She needed money for drugs
- c. She wanted to go to college and knew a baby would make it difficult
- d. She contracted with a childless couple who had been wanting a baby for years.

A man in a car kills a small child. How would their feelings change if they knew:

- a. The man was drunk
- b. The child was three years old and ran out in front of his car
- c. The man was upset over an argument he had with his wife
- d. The man was speeding
- e. The man was driving slow and did not see the child run out from between the parked cars.

Wrap-Up Have participants re-read their original definition of maturity. Has it changed? If so, how?



Session VI

What You Expect Is What You Get

Purpose To better understand how expectations shape attitudes and how attitudes control actions.

Materials Paper, pencils
newsprint, marker
3x5 cards

Warm-up Ask participants to write down three people that they know personally who they feel have high self-esteem.

Discussion Questions:

What unique characteristics do they have? What sets them apart from others you know?

OPTIONAL: Next, have each participant turn to the person next to them...shake their hand.... and with a twinkle in their eye say, "It takes one to know one!"

Lead-In "Winners" expect to win. They understand that life is what they make of it, and that everyone has the power to create their own destiny. In this sense, life is a self-fulfilling prophecy - what we put into it is what we get out of it. In computer language: "garbage in, garbage out."

Activities How do our expectations shape our attitudes? Ask participants to share their thoughts and experiences. How do our attitudes then work to control our actions? It may be helpful to make three column headings on a piece of newsprint...EXPECTATIONS--ATTITUDES---ACTIONS.

Examples of expectations might include "Failing a test," "Losing weight," or "Being bored." What attitudes and actions follow from these expectations?

Old habits are hard to break, however, we can work to change negative expectations by first examining our "self-talk." What we tell ourselves is often what we believe. Negative self-talk produces negative feelings, which in turn

lead to negative behaviors (like withdrawing or lashing out at others.) These behaviors increase the chance of keeping people away. At the opposite end of the spectrum, affirmations reinforce positive feelings of self-confidence and capability.

Designing Your Own Affirmations. Have participants divide their sheet of paper into five columns.

- Step 1.** Ask participants to think about a situation or event that is stressful for them. Have them write down the basic facts of the situation in the first column.
- Step 2.** In the second column ask participants to write down the self-talk that accompanies the stressful situation: anticipating the event; during the event; and after the event. Encourage participants to be honest with themselves as they examine their worries, beliefs, judgments, and predictions.
- Step 3.** Ask participants, "How does your self-talk make you feel?" Examples might include: angry, depressed, worthlessness or helpless. In the third column record their responses.
- Step 4.** Help participants develop affirmations to replace for their negative self-talk. Keep affirmations in the here and now.

For example:

I am willing to grow and to change.

I am now very organized.

I welcome every opportunity to demonstrate my confidence.

I am my best friend. I love what I see in me.

I respect myself for ...

I delight in ...

Have participants list their affirmations in their fourth column.

Step 5. In the last column, ask participants to write down any new feelings they can expect to experience as a result of their affirmations.

Step 6. Have participants write their affirmations on 3X5 cards, with the instructions to read them several times a day.

Example:

<u>(1) Facts</u>	<u>(2) Self-Talk</u>	<u>(3) Feelings</u>	<u>(4) Affirmations</u>	<u>(5) New Feelings</u>
Studying for a test	I've got to concentrate	No hope	I move forward freely in my classwork	Accomplishment
	I'm going to pass	Depressed	I am open to learning new things	Greater personal power
	I should have paid more attention in class	Anxious		Greater self- worth
		Upset	I am on the right path	Confidence

Then, with the confidence that develops from your positive self-talk, take action with courage. When success comes, give yourself credit for a job well done. Reinforce your actions with even more positive self-talk, like "I knew I could do it!"

Wrap-up

It makes little difference whether our affirmations are true for us right now or not. What is important is that you are sure that they are what you want to come true. Our thoughts are powerful tools, therefore, pick them with care. They create the kind of life we wish to lead.

Session VII

Risking Growth

Purpose

To become aware of one's interpersonal risk level

To develop an awareness of the relationship between risk-taking behavior and the attainment of personal goals

To encourage positive risk taking

Materials

Newsprint
Chalkboard
Markers or chalk
Pens
Pencils

Ten descriptive labels
for each participant

Warm-up

Give each participant a sheet of 10 descriptive peel-off labels. Using the adjectives below or adding some of your own:

ambitious
adventurous
classy
crazy
energetic
understanding
helpful
friendly
outgoing
generous

After they have read down the list, ask participants to walk around the room and match the adjectives with the person who best fits that description; sticking the label on that person's back.

When everyone has used up all of their labels, ask them to remove the labels from their backs and stick them back on the empty sheets. After they have had a few minutes to read the adjectives that people used to describe them, ask:

What adjectives surprised you? Why?

Were any right on target? Why or why not?

What does this exercise say about how we see other people?

What did you learn about yourself?

Lead-in

Wheel of Fortune. Explain to the group that researchers have been trying to answer the question, "What enhances self-esteem?" One researcher in particular spent many months interviewing experts in the area of self-esteem and found that the answer to this question could be found in one four letter word. Using the Wheel of Fortune format, draw four boxes and ask participants to give you the four letters of the one word that best answers the question, "What enhances self-esteem?"

The correct answer is R - I - S - K.

Activities

The kind of risk-taking we'll be doing today is designed as one way of stretching ourselves. Risk-taking means different things to different people. Sometimes new behaviors can carry a sense of danger, especially if they require us to think and act in ways that are different from our usual ones.

There are four areas of risk-taking that have been identified as enhancing self-esteem. (Write the following four areas on newsprint or chalkboard.)

- Physical Risks
- Emotional Risks
- Spiritual Risks
- Intellectual Risks

Explain each area and ask the group to provide examples of each:

Physical Risks - these are the "edge" sports (like snow skiing, water skiing, spelunking, dirt bike riding, or even acrobatic skateboarding). Physical risks are taken only when you have adequate protection and instruction. Ask participants to name other "edge" sports.

- Emotional Risks - these are risks for intimacy, like letting someone know that you were wrong or that they hurt you. What other things do friends share?
- Spiritual Risks - these involve searching for answers to questions like, "Who am I?" and "Where do I fit in?" Spiritual risks might include meditation or exploring beyond your family religion. What are some other spiritual risks?
- Intellectual Risks- these challenge us to look at how we are living our life. Reading different kinds of books or taking a class that you wouldn't normally take, can challenge how you look at things. What are some other intellectual risks?

NOTE: It is critical that participants understand that it is not enough to jump into risk-taking behavior under the guise of "feeling better about yourself." Each area must be approached with WISDOM and SKILL. For example, attempting mountain climbing without the proper equipment and a skilled guide places one at high-risk for personal injury.

Ask the group to share their ideas on what WISDOM and SKILLS they would need before pursuing each risk area.

For each risk area ask participants to think about people who challenge them physically, emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually. For example, who can they always count on to know where the best dirt bike trails are? Who do they "open up" to? Who has a unique way of looking at the world and their place in it? And who can they count on to "stretch" their brain?

My Connectedness Network. As you think about the people who challenge you in the different risk areas, are there any gaps?

On a sheet of paper ask participants to make three columns and then divide them into four equal sections. In the first four sections of the first column write the following: Confidants; Intellectual Stretchers; Fun and Adventure Stretchers; and Chicken Soup People. For each section in the second column list the people who fit that description. In the third column write the names of the people who could fit into that category. They could be people you already know, or people you would like to know. They may be a group of people like "the ski club" or "hospital volunteers."

Feeling connected to others is an important part of feeling good about ourselves and our ability to take positive risks. Encourage participants to think about where the gaps are in their Connectedness Network and to take positive risks where they feel they need them.

Risks you feel good about. Ask participants to think about or write down three risks they took during the past year that they feel good about. Ask participants, if they feel comfortable doing so, to share one or more of those risks with the group. (If you have extra time, the group can be divided into couples for one on one sharing.)

Ask participants to find a partner either in front of them or on either side. Have them sit facing each other and decide who will go first. Tell partner #1 to point a finger at partner #2, give them a big smile, as repeat: "I knew you were a risk taker ... the minute I sat down next to you! ... I can tell you'll be a risk taker ... all of your life!"

Repeat this exercise with partner #2.

Next, ask participants to think about or list three personal risks that they know they need to take. Allow for group sharing if they feel comfortable doing so, or if time permits, break into couples for one on one sharing.

Ask participants to find their previous partner, sit facing them, and decide who will go first. Ask everyone to stand up next to their partner and have partner #1 raise the hand of partner #2. Ask partner #1 to repeat: "Look out world, ... here comes _____!"

Repeat this exercise with partner #2.

Wrap-up

Sometimes we get messages from our family members, friends, teachers, and society in general that say, "Don't take risks. You won't succeed. You're not that good." These messages may even come from ourselves.

When we hear these messages it's hard not to listen. But if we never take risks we never grow.

Risk growth!

References

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