



Session 7

Self-Talk

7:1	Introductions	<i>15 min</i>
7:2	How to Handle Put-Downs	<i>20 min</i>
7:3	Switching from Harmful to Helpful Thoughts	<i>30 min</i>
7:4	Giving Myself Some Pats On the Back	<i>15 min</i>
7:5	Using Self-Talk in Tough Situations	<i>15 min</i>

street smart

Session 7: Self-Talk

Objectives:

1. Participants will improve their capacity to be more self-rewarding.
2. Participants will practice identifying the causes of positive and negative events in ways that facilitate functional thinking.
3. Participants will learn how to employ self-talk in difficult situations.
4. Participants will practice combating negative self-talk.

Rationale:

Cognitive skills are essential in maintaining safer sex practices and in dealing with risky situations. If one's self-talk is basically negative, then depression, helplessness, fatalism, and self-loathing are the result. These characteristics do not lead to the sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy needed to practice safer sex. Furthermore, without self-rewarding statements, opportunities to reinforce behaviours that enhance health are missed.

How the youth assigns responsibility for positive and negative events is also important. Blaming oneself for events over which one has no control reduces thoughts of self-competence. Likewise, attributing positive events to chance and negative events to stable aspects of oneself or the world reduces self-efficacy and hopefulness. Certain kinds of attributions will lead the youth to not try to practice safer sex, or to give up.

Knowing how to prepare oneself for a difficult situation and then to use self-talk to guide one through it has been demonstrated to be a very effective coping mechanism. Youth can learn self-talk for the preparation, confrontation, overwhelming, and evaluation phases of a conflict.

The main point of this session is for participants to learn how to use their thoughts and self-talk to help them make safer decisions.

Procedures:

1. Have participants introduce themselves and say what they tell themselves to make them feel good. Also look for successes in staying safer.
2. Introduce the topic for the day. Explain about thoughts that help us and thoughts that get in the way of practicing safer sex.
3. Have them play a game that teaches them to discriminate between harmful and helpful thoughts in HIV risk situations.
4. Have group members practice switching from harmful to helpful thoughts through being given a scene and a negative thought as a starting point.
5. Give examples of self-talk.

Materials:

Goals for Street Smart

Tokens

Feeling Thermometer poster

Ground Rules newsprint

Thoughts cards

Newsprint and marking pens

Examples of Self-talk handout

Exercise 1: Introductions (15 minutes)

Welcome! It's good to see you in "Street Smart."

As you may already know, we are trying to become more skilled in keeping ourselves from getting HIV, and leading the kind of life that we want for ourselves.

Let's go around and introduce ourselves.

Tell your name and tell us what you say to yourself to make yourself feel good.

Like "I'm OK" or "It's a great day" or "Somebody up there loves me."

You could say, "I'm Janet, and I'm the greatest!"

I'll start. I'm _____ and to make myself feel good I say _____.

Have everyone give their name and what they say to make them feel good.

That was great!



Hand out tokens of appreciation to everyone.

These are tokens of appreciation.

We use them a lot to show group members how much we appreciate their contributions to the group.

So, if you appreciate someone else's comment or action, please give them a token.

You must say something to the other person when giving a token. It is important to hand the token directly to the other person.

The idea is to share positive feelings with others by distributing your pile of tokens by the end of the session.

Review last session's homework from the workbook. If someone is new and doesn't have a workbook, give him/her one.

For all of you, what did you do in the last 24 hours to keep safer from HIV and STDs?

We are interested in even the smallest thing that you did because we want to see you stay healthy.

Your comments may also help someone else in the group.

Who would like to be the first person to tell us about a success you had in the last week (or since the last session) in keeping safer?

Encourage discussion.

Great.



Hand out tokens for any positive behaviours.

Who has a condom?

Ask them to hold up their condoms.

Great.



Hand out a special prize to those people carrying a condom 500 US\$). Let them know that expired condoms have a chance of breaking during sex.

And for everyone who was on time today, you get a chance to win today's lottery.

Have the lottery drawing. Each participant draws from a box and 2-3 of them will win a prize (e.g., a food coupon).



Put up "GOALS OF STREET SMART." (Also see end of session.)

During these sessions, we will focus on the feelings and thoughts that lead to actions that are unsafe.

For example:

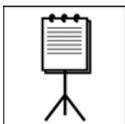
You are drunk and meet this really sexy guy.
You want to have a partner.
You go ahead and have unprotected sex.

The goals of Street Smart are to help you stay safer. We will give you the tools, information, and practice to help you keep yourself safe. Our goals are to help you:

1. Practice safer sex.
2. Get in touch with your feelings.

3. Get rid of thoughts that are self-defeating.
4. Take control of your life.
5. Feel confident about your ability to act safe.
6. Know where to go when you are in trouble and need help.
7. Know your own patterns of risk.
8. Make friends who can help you to stay safer.
9. Have fun while changing behaviours.

We are committed to making sure that this is a safe place to share feelings and thoughts, try out new behaviours, give feedback to each other, and to work together.



Put up “FEELING THERMOMETER POSTER.” (Also see end of session.)

Here is a Feeling Thermometer.

You can see that being the most uncomfortable is 100 and being very, very comfortable is 0. Where do you think you are?

What is your temperature on the Feeling Thermometer right now?



Have participants look at the poster of the Feeling Thermometer and have them indicate where they are on the thermometer.

Thank you.

It is quite natural for people to feel uncomfortable at the beginning of something new.

It is important to stay in touch with how much comfort or discomfort you are feeling, and what those feelings mean.

Our role as facilitators is to help you learn how to stay safer.

That means we will present you with many opportunities to practice.

Over the course of these sessions, we will be talking about many different situations that can put people at risk for HIV, STDs, and unwanted pregnancy.

We will be dealing with situations that put you at risk that you may have encountered, and some situations that you may have never encountered.

The idea is to incorporate many different experiences that can put you at risk, such as sex with persons of the opposite sex, sex with persons of the

same sex, using and abusing alcohol and drugs, trading sex for food, money, or accommodations, and many others.

We don't expect that everyone will have the same experiences. We are all here to learn and help to keep each other safer.

One thing we will do to make it a safe place is to have ground rules.



Put up "GROUND RULES" newsprint. (Also see end of session.)

From our last session, the ground rules for Street Smart are:

1. Keep confidentiality. What you say is yours - what you hear is theirs.
2. Ask questions - there are no stupid questions.
3. If you are going to be in the group, be involved.
4. Don't judge others - accept group members as you would want to be accepted.
5. Agree to come "one more time" if you think you want to quit, give it a second chance
6. Don't come when you are high from drugs or alcohol.

What other rules would you like to add?



Encourage sharing and give out tokens. Catch someone doing something good.

Great! Let's do the next exercise now.

Exercise 2: How to Handle Put-Downs (20 minutes)

As I said earlier, today we are going to work on thoughts.

When you are faced with any difficult situation, there are two kinds of thoughts that you have. Thoughts that help and thoughts that get in the way - thoughts that get us to our goals and thoughts that don't.

The same is true when it comes to practicing safer sex.

Some thoughts will help us practice safer sex, and some thoughts will get in the way of us practicing safer sex.

We think first, and then we do.

Our thoughts direct what we do.

The point is that the way you think can either push you toward unsafe sex, or help you practice safer sex.

Obviously we want you to be healthy, so we want your thoughts to be self-supporting.

We are going to play a game that will help us figure out which thoughts help us and which ones prevent us from practicing safer sex.

There will be two teams.

The goal is to get your whole team to the front of the room.

So, the goal line is at the front of the room: practicing safer sex.

The middle of the room is halfway there.

The back of the room is where you start.

I am going to hand out a bunch of cards.

If you get a card with a helpful thought on it, you move to the middle of the room - that's halfway there.

If you get a second card with a helpful thought on it, you move to the goal line of safer sex.

If you get a card with a harmful thought on it, you stay where you are.

The objective is to get your whole team at the front of the room practicing safer sex.

Tell me if there is anything unclear about this game.

Answer questions. Then divide the group into two teams. Give out the "THOUGHT CARDS" (also see end of session) one at a time, alternating between the teams. After the group decides which type of thought is on the card - helpful or harmful - have that person move forwards or stay still, depending on the type of thought.

Some ideas to help the group decide if the card is a helpful or harmful thought are as follows:

- ***Does this make sense?***
- ***Is this an exaggerated statement?***
- ***What proof is there that the statement is true?***
- ***How much chance is there that the outcome will happen?***
- ***How good have past predictions been?***
- ***Does the statement imply the person feels stronger or weaker?***

I'll give out the cards one at a time - first to one team and then to the other.

After you get your card, read it out loud. Then we'll decide if it is a helpful or a harmful thought.

Make sure the cards are well shuffled. About forty cards are harmful and thirty cards are helpful.

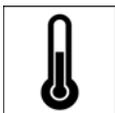
Play the game until all the cards are used or until one team has everyone in the safer sex goal area - whichever comes first.

That was really good.



Encourage the sharing of tokens.

So, where are your Feeling Thermometer levels now and what did you learn from the game?



Obtain Feeling Thermometer readings and discuss what was learned or experienced in the game.

Exercise 3: Switching from Harmful to Helpful Thoughts (30 minutes)

How do you change what you are thinking?

First, you have to catch yourself thinking a harmful thought.

Like you keep thinking about the guy who broke up with you, over and over again, and how you should have been nicer and let him have sex even if he wouldn't use a condom. You might think that you'll never be with anyone again if you tell him to use a condom.

Second, you have to stop the harmful thought.

Third, you have to challenge it.

Yell out "stop" and startle everyone.

"STOP! That is not a helpful way to think. I am only thinking about getting him back and not about how bad he really is."

Then lastly, you substitute a helpful thought, a thought that makes you feel good about yourself.

Like, "I deserve someone who will respect that I want to use a condom and protect myself."

Here is another example:

I am with a new lover, and I want to have sex.

I'd like to ask her (him) if she (he) has been sleeping around and practicing unsafe sex.

I think, "What a stupid question! She'll (he'll) never tell you the truth."

Then I shout to myself,

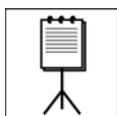
Yell out "stop" and startle everyone.

"STOP! That's not a helpful way to think. It is not a stupid question. You don't know if she (he) will tell you the truth."

Now I say to myself, "I will be careful about having sex with her (him) until I know more. I have to try and find out what she (he) has been doing. I know how to ask her (him) about her (his) past."

That's an example of catching the harmful thought, stopping it, challenging it, and substituting something more helpful.

I'll put up those steps so that you can see them.



Write on newsprint: CATCH, STOP, CHALLENGE, SUBSTITUTE.

Let's have you try switching from self-defeating to substituting something self-supporting.

Who will be James?



Select a volunteer, but switch genders so that "James" is a female participant.

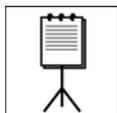
James, you are just about to have sex with a girl for the first time. She has asked you to use a condom.

I'm going to write up here what you think - a harmful thought.

Then you say it out loud and practice switching to a helpful thought.

After James is finished, we'll get a couple of others to try.

The rest of us will observe and then give feedback.



Write on newsprint: "If I use a condom, it will feel terrible. There is no sense doing it if I have to put on a condom."

Go ahead.



When the first person is finished, give them a token and ask for another volunteer.

When the second person is finished, give them a token and seek a third volunteer.

Encourage the sharing of tokens.

So we had three brave people practice switching from harmful to helpful thoughts.

Ask the group for feedback.

Let's give them some feedback.

Start with what you liked about their efforts and then say what you would do differently.

Remember don't say, "What you did wrong was"

Obtain feedback and discuss.

Now we'll try a different one.

Who will be Annette?

**Select a volunteer, but switch genders so that "Annette" is a male participant.**

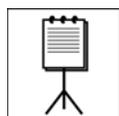
We'll do this one the same way.

Annette, you are with a guy you like and are about to have sex.

You want him to wear a condom.

I'll write up here what you think - a harmful thought.

Read it out loud and show us how you would switch to a better thought.

**Write up on the newsprint: "I'm afraid that if I ask him to wear a condom, he'll leave me and play sex with some other girl."**

After you are finished, we'll get a couple of others to try and then the rest of us will give you feedback.

**When the first person is finished, give them a token and ask for another volunteer.****When the second person is finished, give them a token and seek a third volunteer.****Encourage the sharing of tokens.**

So we had another group of courageous people practice switching thoughts.

Let's give them some feedback.

Start with what you liked about their efforts and then say what you would do differently.

Remember don't say, "What you did wrong was"

Obtain feedback and discuss.

Let's look at some other harmful thoughts and take turns challenging them and substituting with helpful ones.



Write on the newsprint:

"She will think I'm bad if I pull out a condom."

"He'll think I'm moving out with other guys if I ask him to use a condom."

"If I don't take the bhangi, she won't like me anymore."

As a group, come up with challenges and substitutes for these harmful thoughts. Ask the participants for more examples of harmful thoughts.

Good job!

Remember, the main point is that you can use your thoughts to help you make safer decisions.

What are people's Feeling Thermometer levels at this point?



Obtain Feeling Thermometer levels and discuss.

Exercise 4: Giving Myself Some Pats on the Back (15 minutes)

You would be surprised how many people put themselves down in their thoughts.

Also, many people do not give themselves pats on the back when they do something positive. Giving yourself a pat on the back means recognizing that you are a good person, or that you have done something good.

What we say to ourselves counts.

It helps us continue to act in a positive way.

If someone says to me, "I've got some bhanghi. Let's go smoke it," and I tell them, "No thanks," then it's up to me whether I say something positive, neutral, or negative to myself afterwards.

I can say to myself, "That was pretty good. I refused without any problem."

Because I rewarded myself, I am likely to act positively again.

If one of your friends says to you, "I like being with you. I feel really comfortable," what could you say to yourself to give yourself some pats on the back?

Encourage answers. A desirable answer might be, "That's great. I'm glad I made my friend feel good."

I want us to practice giving ourselves pats on the back.

What 3 good things did each of you do, in today's session?

Ask for volunteers. You might prompt them by giving your observations. Say something like "You might say: I spoke up when I wasn't sure, I gave positive feedback, and I complimented people on their comments."



Encourage as many participants as possible to contribute. Pass out lots of tokens and encourage participants to do the same.

Exercise 5: Using Self-Talk in Tough Situations (15 minutes)

If you could slow down your thoughts, you would see that you talk to yourself all the time.

For example, you might say to yourself, "Man, look who's coming down the hall. He looks mean. Very angry. My stomach is jumping. I better get out of here. Come on feet, move."

We want to take advantage of that self-talk and make it help us.

When you face a tough situation, it can be broken down into three or four parts.

First, is "Plan by Getting Ready" - that's preparing yourself.

Second, is "Act Face to Face" - that's dealing with the situation, taking on the tough time, being in the middle of it.

Third, can be "Cope Before It's Too Much!" - that's when you feel overwhelmed, like maybe your feelings are out getting out of control.

This phase of the tough time doesn't always happen.

You may be able to handle the situation without feeling that you are losing control.

Last, is "Evaluate Afterwards" - analyzing the situation and what you did, and giving yourself some strokes.

There are different kinds of self-talk for each of the four parts.

Self-talk can make you feel better and help you fix the situation.

I am going to hand out some examples of self-talk in each of the four parts of the situation: "Plan by Getting Ready," "Act Face to Face," "Cope Before It's Too Much," and "Evaluate Afterwards."

Pass out "EXAMPLES OF SELF-TALK." Read it to the group, or have volunteers read it out loud.

Those are just examples of what a person can say to herself or himself.

Is there anything unclear about self-talk?

Answer any questions.

What kinds of self-talk would you use in addition to what we came up with here?

Encourage discussion.

The main point is that you can use self-talk to help you make safer decisions.

Point out the homework for Session 7 in the workbook.

Between now and the next session, do the homework for Session 8.



Now go around and tell the person on your right something you liked that they said or did today. Let's go around and give some tokens to each other.

Our next meeting will be held on _____ at _____.

Remember, one of our ground rules is to agree to come one more time.

We hope to see you then!

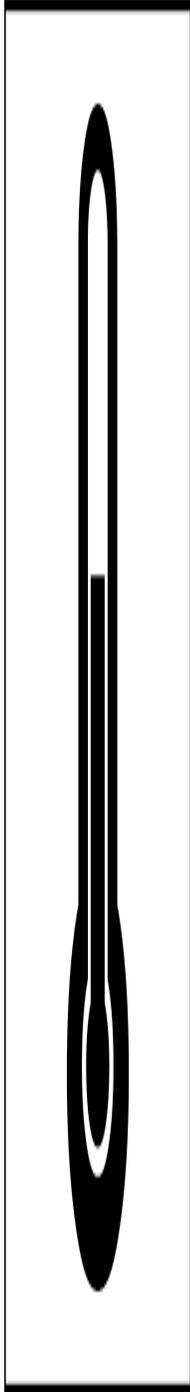
END OF SESSION 7

Goals of Street Smart

1. Practice safer sex.
2. Get in touch with your feelings.
3. Get rid of thoughts that are self-defeating.
4. Take control of your life.
5. Feel confident about your ability to act safe.
6. Know where to go when you are in trouble and need help.
7. Know your own patterns of risk.
8. Make friends who can help you to stay safer.
9. Have fun while changing behaviours.

Feeling Thermometer

<u>Level</u>	<u>Triggers (Situations, People, Places, Feelings, Things)</u>
Very uncomfortable 100	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Uncomfortable 75	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Mildly Comfortable 25	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Very comfortable 0	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>



Thought Cards

(One thought to a card)

1. I should have had sex by now.
2. I'm not that attractive or else I could have been with somebody.
3. Everybody does it, so I have to do it too.
4. If I can't stick it in, I'm not having sex.
5. She will think I'm not manly if I don't have sex.
6. He will think I'm afraid of sex.
7. People will think I must have something physical to hide if I don't have sex.
8. I will not be able to feel my partner as well if I use a condom.
9. Wearing a condom puts a barrier between me and the one I love.
10. Wearing a condom will make it hurt and be dry.
11. Wearing a condom takes all the spontaneity (freedom or fun) out of sex.
12. Sex becomes too planned with a condom.
13. Condoms cost too much.
14. Carrying a condom with me means that I admit I will have sex.
15. Having the guy pull out early is as good as using a condom.
16. Condoms don't work that well anyway.
17. I can't get condoms. I don't know how.
18. My partner won't like using a condom, and even if he agrees, sex will be ruined.
19. If I carry a condom around, my parents or friends or teachers or priest or minister might find out.
20. My partner will think I don't trust her or him.
21. He will go with someone who does not ask him to use a condom.
22. She will tell everyone else that I am a scared little boy if I use a condom.
23. If I ask him to use a condom, he will think I am having sex with others.
24. If I use a condom, she will think I have HIV.
25. If I make him use a condom, he will not be sexually excited anymore.

26. She doesn't ask me about what I did before with sex and drugs; so it's not fair to ask her.
27. He won't tell me the truth about what he has done with sex and drugs, so why ask?
28. She is too young to have gotten AIDS.
29. He is more experienced than I am, so it is up to him to talk about past sex with others.
30. She'll tell others what I tell her about my past sex life.
31. He will think I'm not serious about our love if I try to find out about his past sex life.
32. She looks healthy; so she couldn't have HIV.
33. By the time I would get symptoms, there will be a cure.
34. I am basically a good person. God would not let me get HIV.
35. I never get sick.
36. I'll be old by the time I'd get AIDS. I don't have to worry about it now.
37. If I get AIDS, it is God's will. I cannot do anything about that.
38. If I get AIDS, that's fate.
39. Life is Russian roulette. I could get killed by a car five minutes from now. So why worry about AIDS?
40. Girls say "no" when they really mean "yes." So it is OK to push them to have unsafe sex.
41. When I meet a girl, I try to have sex with her. That's what girls are made for.
42. AIDS is a health threat that I take very seriously.
43. AIDS is the scariest disease I know.
44. Anyone can get AIDS if they aren't careful.
45. I could get AIDS if I didn't take care of myself.
46. People can protect themselves from getting AIDS.
47. Using a latex condom when having sex reduces the risk of getting HIV.
48. Asking people about their past behaviour is a smart thing to do.
49. Asking people about their past sexual behaviour is not always easy for me, but I can handle it and it is worth the trouble.
50. I can wait until I'm older to start having sex.

51. I know how to say "no" to drugs.
52. If people put me down for wanting to have safer sex, I can stand up for myself.
53. I can control my sexual impulses.
54. I know how to use a condom.
55. When I'm safe, I'm sexy.
56. I know how to have fun sexually without getting semen, vaginal fluids, or blood in me.
57. I know how to make wearing a condom sexy.
58. In the future I will always be able to practice safer sex.
59. Carrying condoms with me every day is a habit I can keep.
60. I know how to ask good questions to check out people about sex and drugs.
61. I know how to say "no" to unsafe sex.
62. I can figure out which situations are risky for me.
63. Being attractive has nothing to do with how many times I have sex.
64. There are plenty of people my age who don't have sex.
65. So what if people think I'm afraid of sex. They won't be laughing when they get HIV.
66. The best sex I ever had was a lot of touching and tenderness - no intercourse.
67. If my partner doesn't care enough about me to practice safer sex, I don't want that person.
68. I have a right to take care of my own body.
69. Practicing unsafe sex is dumb, and I don't want to be dumb.

Examples of Self-Talk

Plan by Getting Ready

This is going to be tough, but I can handle it.

I'll take a few deep breaths before hand.

What is it I have to do?

Here's my plan for how to deal with this.

Don't take it personally.

Don't jump to conclusions.

No matter what other people say or do to me, I am still a good person.

Act Face to Face

Stay cool, and I'll be in control.

Stick to the issues.

Don't let him confuse me.

I don't need to prove myself.

I can handle it.

I have a right to my point of view.

Cope Before It's Too much!

I'm getting tight, so I better breathe out deeply.

He wants me to get angry.

Don't let him confuse me.

Let him make a fool of himself.

There's no shame in leaving and coming back later.

It isn't worth getting all stressed out.

It won't last much longer.

I'm not giving the control over to him.

Evaluate Afterwards

If resolved

It worked out pretty well.

I'll do better next time.

It wasn't as bad as I expected.

I did it!

If unresolved

I can do it differently next time.

Forget about it.

Thinking about it only keeps it alive.

These are tough situations, and they take time to figure out.

Put the self-talk in your own words