

T.L.C. Facilitator's Manual

Staying Healthy Module

Session #4: Coping with Stigma (2 hrs)

OBJECTIVES:

1. Participants will reduce any shame they have about having an HIV positive status.
2. Participants will increase their skills in dealing with situations in which they are stigmatized.
3. Participants will increase their ability to relax in tense situations.

RATIONALE:

Stigma has been included in the health care agenda for several reasons. First, experiencing stigma can produce significant stress which weakens the immune system. Second, incorporating stigmatized ideas into one's self system can generate barriers to assertively accessing the health system and becoming an equal partner in health care decisions. It can create low self worth and beliefs about lack of self-efficacy which are converted into attitudes of neither being worth taking care one's health nor able to meet the demands of staying healthy. Stigma can result also in limiting opportunities to work, education, residences, recreation, and social supports.

In dealing with stigma this session addresses feelings of shame, problem solving situations in which stigma occurs, practicing healthy self-talk, and learning how to relax.

SUMMARY:

1. Welcome the participants. Review between session goals. Do a lottery. (20 minutes)
2. Introduce the topic of stigma with scripts and relate personal feelings to being stigmatized. (15 minutes)
3. Reduce feelings of shame through responding to shame statements. (10 minutes)
4. Identify ways to cope with stigma and problem solve a situation. (15 minutes)
5. Practice using self-talk in discriminatory situations. (10 minutes)
6. Practice confronting a stigmatizing scene. (25 minutes)

7. Lead the group through a relaxation protocol. (5 minutes)
8. End with goal setting and appreciation. (20 minutes)

MATERIALS:

Module 1 Attendance Sheet
Lottery tickets
Lottery prize
Lottery Envelope
Thanks
Goal Summary Sheet
Goal cards
Goal Setting Display Chart
Problem Solving Chart
Feeling Thermometer Chart
Newsprint and marking pens
Pencils
Scripts: The Job Interview and Have You Got It?
Copies of Feeling Thermometer on Stigma Rating Form
Stigma Cards

Note to the Facilitator: **Bold** letters tell you what each exercise is to accomplish. CAPITAL letters tell you what to do. Small case letters give you an example of what to say. Feel free to put what you say into your own words.

Exercise 1: What Happened Between Sessions?
(20 minutes)

[The purposes of this exercise are to build self-esteem through the introduction and labelling of positive qualities, to reinforce applications in the community of what has been learned through review and reward, and to build group cohesion. A lottery is also used.]

■THE FACILITATOR SAYS

Welcome back.

I want to find out what you did to make your life and better and what steps you took between sessions.

First, you need your "Thanks" so that you can show other people you like what they did.

Here are your "Thanks" for this today.

■GIVE OUT 20 "THANKS" TO EACH PERSON.

Remember to give out as many as you can.

Catch somebody doing something you like.

First, you had set some goals you were going to reach between sessions.

You had agree to try something related to the last session.

Please tell us what was your goal or target and how it went.

■REFER TO THE TLC GOAL SUMMARY SHEET FROM THE PREVIOUS SESSION

■ASK YOUTHS WHAT THEIR GOALS WERE AND ENCOURAGE SHARING. IF THERE ARE A COUPLE OF GOOD EXAMPLES OF BARRIERS, TAKE A MINUTE TO BRAINSTORM SOLUTIONS. IF THERE ARE GOOD EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSES, POINT THEM OUT. GIVE OUT

"THANKS."

That was very good.

Let's do a lottery.

It's our way of saying we are glad you are here.

■PASS OUT LOTTERY CARDS. MIX THEM, DRAW A WINNER,
AND GIVE OUT THE PRIZE. MAKE SURE THE SAME FEW
YOUTHS DO NOT WIN ALL THE TIME.

Exercise 2: How Do I Feel About Stigma?
(15 minutes)

[The goals of this exercise are to introduce the topic of stigma and to make youths aware of their feelings about stigma and what it means to be stigmatized. A script, using the Feeling Thermometer and exploring meaning are used to achieve that end.]

I want to show you what today's topic is about by doing two quick scenes from the soaps.

■ FACILITATORS MODEL THE FIRST SCENE.

THE JOB INTERVIEW

EMPLOYER: It sounds to me like you have the kind of skills we are looking for.

APPLICANT: I'm glad.

EMPLOYER: Could you start next Monday?

APPLICANT: Sure.

EMPLOYER: All you have to do now is pass the physical.

APPLICANT: The physical?

EMPLOYER: Yes. Everyone has to pass the physical. It's pretty simple. Just a routine physical exam and some blood work and a test or two.

APPLICANT: What's the blood work and tests for?

EMPLOYER: Nothing special.

APPLICANT: Like what?

EMPLOYER: Well, we want to see if you have TB, if you're on drugs, and if you have the AIDS virus.

APPLICANT: What happens if you have any of those things?

EMPLOYER: You have nothing to worry about.

APPLICANT: But what happens?

EMPLOYER: Well, obviously we can't hire anyone with TB or who takes drugs. And what can I tell you about the AIDS virus.

APPLICANT: I thought you couldn't discriminate. It's against the law.

EMPLOYER: Don't make me laugh.

THE END

Here is the second scene.

Can we have someone to play Chris and Pat?

■SELECT THE VOLUNTEERS. DECIDE WHO WILL PLAY EACH PART. GIVE OUT SCRIPTS AND HAVE THEM READ THE SCENE ALOUD.

HAVE YOU GOT IT?
(BOYS'/GIRLS' GROUP)

CHRIS:I know this is going to sound funny coming from me.

PAT: What is?

C: Well, since my friend died from AIDS, I've been getting scared. I don't want to get it. You know what I mean?

P: I don't want you to get it either.

C: Good. So, tell me. Do you have HIV?

P: If I did, you'd be safe by using a condom.

C: You know I like making love to you.

P: I like it too.

C: But do you have the virus?

P: What difference would it make.

C: If you got the virus, no sex. Period! That's all there is to it.

P: I thought we had something going. I trusted you. This was serious. I really like you.

C: Forget it. We can be good friends.

P: I'm not poison. I have a right to making love.

C: Sorry.

THE END

That was really good.

■GIVE OUT "THANKS" TO THE PLAYERS.

You can see from the soap scenes that today's session is about prejudice, stigma, discrimination.

Stigma means to be rejected and devalued because of a label that people put on you.

How would you feel if people reacted with prejudice against you because you were HIV positive?

To find out about your feelings I want you to rate the situations I will tell you about on the Feeling Thermometer.

Remember, 100 is very uncomfortable and 0 is completely comfortable.

■HAND OUT THE FEELING THERMOMETER RATING FORM ON STIGMA AND READ THE SITUATIONS, ALLOWING TIME FOR YOUTHS TO WRITE DOWN THEIR TEMPERATURE. THE SITUATIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. At work you are asked not to drink out of the same water cooler.
2. Several teenagers you know keep referring to you as "sick."

3. People who used to be your friends walk away when you approach them.
4. You visit your family, and they want you to eat after them on paper plates.

What were your Feeling Thermometer readings?

■ENCOURAGE SHARING OF TEMPERATURE READINGS.

Are there other situations that you can think of and how would you feel about them?

Exercise 3: Sometimes I Am Ashamed
(10 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to reduce shame. Youth are asked to argue against shaming statements.]

Let me take a minute and make a few points about stigma, so that you can see how it works.

Stigma means being rejected and devalued because of a label.

If you are that person, you lose status.

Some people will carry multiple labels: gay, black, HIV positive, poor, junkie.

There are two tasks for today: dealing with the shame that stigma produces and handling situations where labelling and discrimination are present.

Each person gets a "Stigma Card" and passes it as instructed on the card.

The person who received the card reads the statement on it, and the person who passed the card must demonstrate how she/he would argue against this "Stigma" thought if it had popped into his/her head.

For example, if my card said, "I am ashamed because I may have given the virus to other people," what could I say to argue against that?

Well, I might say, "If I did, it wasn't intentional. I didn't even know I had it at the time. I'm not the kind of person who intentionally hurt someone else."

Have you got the idea?

■GIVE OUT THE CARDS TO ONE PERSON AT A TIME. DO AS MANY CARDS AS POSSIBLE IN THE TIME ALLOTTED, ALLOWING SOME TIME AT THE END FOR DISCUSSION. THE CARDS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

"I stopped going to church a long time ago. I guess getting the virus is God's way of punishing me."

"If I hadn't decided to become gay, I wouldn't be HIV positive."

"I'm so ashamed that I'm HIV positive. I can't face anybody."

"I've been shooting up for years and stealing to pay for it. Now that I got the virus, I guess my sins are catching up with me."

"I used to have sex with anyone. It's my fault that I am HIV positive."

"Having HIV, the best thing for me to do is to crawl into a hole and disappear."

"I did a lot of terrible things. I'm not a good person. So, I deserve getting the infection."

■DISCUSS THE EXERCISE JUST COMPLETED.

Exercise 4: How Should I Handle Stigma?
(15 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to improve the youth's skills in applying problem solving to stigma situations. Analyzing a stigma situation from a problem-solving perspective is used.]

When a person is faced with a stigma situation what do they typically do?

They usually try secrecy, or withdrawal, or trying to educate the other person.

It is important to realize that what works in one situation might not work in another situation.

For example, if someone is chasing you with an axe, you would want to run away, but in another case facing the difficulty and trying to problem solve it would be best.

Let's take a few minutes and work on a stigma situation.

Does someone have a situation you would like the group to work on?

■ENCOURAGE COMING UP WITH SEVERAL SITUATIONS.
SELECT ONE. IF NO SITUATION IS IDENTIFIED, USE THE
FOLLOWING:

YOUR UNCLE PROMISED YOU A SUMMER JOB. EVER SINCE HE FOUND OUT YOU
WERE INFECTED WITH HIV, HE HASN'T MENTIONED IT. YOU HAVE CALLED HIM,
BUT HE HAS NOT CALLED BACK. YOU NEED A SUMMER JOB.

How can we problem solve this situation?

Let's go over problem-solving steps.

■WRITE THEM ON NEWSPRINT:

DEFINE THE PROBLEM
FIGURE OUT THE GOAL
LIST ACTIONS YOU MIGHT TAKE
DECIDE ON A COURSE OF ACTION
DO IT
REVIEW IT

■LEAD THE GROUP THROUGH A PROBLEM-SOLVING ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION. COACH THEM THROUGH IT. GIVE OUT STROKES. EXAMPLE:

Define the problem: I need a summer job, and my uncle has one, but he is ignoring me.

Figure out the goal: To find a summer job.

List actions you might take:

- 1) Wait for my uncle to act;
- 2) Go to his house and confront him;
- 3) Forget him and look elsewhere;
- 4) Write him a letter;
- 5) Have another relative that my uncle respects talk to him for me.

Decide on a course of action:

In deciding on a course of action, we need to discuss our strategies a little.

■IF NO DISCUSSION COMES FROM THE GROUP, HERE ARE REVIEWS OF EACH STRATEGY:

Nothing may happen, and I won't have a job. But he won't be upset with me.

He might get angry at me. He might listen also.

Jobs are hard to find. I might not end up with one.

He might throw the letter away. But it might be easier for him to respond to a letter.

Uncle likes my other aunt and might listen to her. Maybe she won't do it for me. He might think I can't do things on my own.

Do it:

Review it:

So, you can see that one way to deal with stigma is to apply problem solving to it.

Now let's practice a specific technique for dealing with a rough situation about stigma.

Exercise 5: How Can I Use Self-talk?
(10 minutes)

[The purpose of the exercise is show how self-talk can be used to deal with situations in which stigma is present. Youths are asked to respond with self talk to brief parts of situations.]

We all talk to ourselves much of the time.

That same self-talk can also help in guiding us through a difficult situation.

You can use self-talk as you are getting ready for a difficult situation, during the situation, if you start to feel like you are losing it during the rough times in the situation, and afterwards - to look at how you did.

Let me show you a brief scene of how self-talk might work as the two people start talking to each other.

The other facilitator is going to play the teacher.

I am the student.

This teacher is always singling me out and asking me about my health.

■BRIEFLY MODEL USING SELF-TALK. FOLLOW THE SCRIPT.

SAFE TALK MODEL: STUDENT AND TEACHER

TEACHER: Come over here!

STUDENT: (MAKE AN ASIDE TO THE GROUP) "Don't let this teacher annoy me. Just stay cool. Take a deep breath. **Smile. Get out of here as fast as possible.**"

What is it?

TEACHER: How is your health these days?

STUDENT: (MAKE AN ASIDE TO THE GROUP) "Stay focused on giving him quick and easy answers. Ignore his sarcasm. Don't let him get to me. Stay cool."

Fine.

TEACHER: Are you really fine?

STUDENT: (MAKE AN ASIDE TO THE GROUP) "Easy does it. I can handle this. Don't give him a smart answer."

Yes. I am doing fine.

TEACHER: Really? Your health is holding up?

STUDENT: (MAKE AN ASIDE TO THE GROUP) "Ignore the way he says that. Don't let him provoke me. Take another deep breath. Tell him I have to go. Stay cool."

Yes, my health is OK. I'm sorry, but I have to run. I'm late.

TEACHER: You can go. Take care of your health and don't pass anything around.

STUDENT: (MAKE AN ASIDE TO THE GROUP) "I did pretty good. I stayed cool and stuck to my plan. I didn't let him get to me."

Thank you. I will.

THE END

Let's talk about how we would handle different situations and what self-talk you would use.

Some situations are in preparation for a difficult situation, some in the middle of a confrontation, one is around panicking, and the others are after the scene is over.

All I want is a few lines of self-talk from each person.

■READ EACH AND GET GROUP FEEDBACK. HAVE GROUP IDENTIFY WHEN THIS IS PREPARATION, ETC., AND ONE OR TWO EXAMPLES OF SELF-TALK THEY WOULD USE. COACH AS NEEDED. GIVE OUT "THANKS." THE SITUATIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- a. You are going for a job interviewer, and you have heard that the employer may ask if you are HIV positive.
- b. You are meeting your partner tonight, and your guess is that your partner wants to break up because you are positive and your partner is not.
- c. Your mother learns that you are HIV positive and starts yelling at you and cursing you.
- d. Your friend tells you that he doesn't want to be seen with you now that you are HIV positive.
- e. Your boss tells you are fired because he can't afford the health insurance costs.
- f. You were to move into this new apartment. The landlord tells you someone else got there first. You are shaking so hard that your teeth ache.
- g. You caught someone writing "AIDS" on your door. You talked to the guy, and he apologized.
- h. The cook in the restaurant where you work wanted to switch you to scrubbing pots and pans because he didn't want you handling food. You explained that you couldn't contaminate the food, and he backed down.

That was very good.

I hope you have the idea of how to use self-talk to help you.

Exercise 6: How Can I Handle Discrimination?
(25 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to improve skills in handling a face to face situation in which discrimination is involved. Role playing is the technique used to improve performance.]

Now we want you to have a chance to use what you know in dealing with a situation in which discrimination comes up.

■DIVIDE THE GROUP IN HALF. A FACILITATOR GOES WITH EACH HALF. THE FACILITATOR GIVES INSTRUCTIONS TO THE TWO ROLE PLAYERS.

ROLE PLAY SITUATIONS

Situation 1

The youth is homeless and wants to live in an apartment program for runaway youth.

Program director turns the youth away because he/she is HIV+. The program director hides behind the "rules" and "I didn't make them." "The rules are to protect other youth in the program."

Situation 2

The youth works in an office and told the office manager that she/he is HIV+. The youth wants to keep working the same hours with the same people.

The office manager wants to isolate the youth and tells the youth not to tell anyone else that he/she is HIV+. The office manager wants the youth to work from 5 pm to 11 pm when no one else is around. The office manager implies (but does not state) that if the youth doesn't comply, he/she will be fired.

Situation 3

The youth belongs to the Art Club at school and enjoys the group of students.

The art teacher suspects the youth is HIV+ and wants to get the youth out of the club.

Situation 4

The youth really likes his/her new partner. They have not yet had sex. The youth recently told the new partner about being HIV+. The youth wants to have protected sex.

The partner also likes the youth, but doesn't want anyone to know that he/she went out with someone who is HIV+. The partner wants to stop the relationship without hurting the youth.

■GIVE INSTRUCTIONS TO THE OBSERVERS. EACH OBSERVER HAS ONE TASK.

You pay attention to:

- eye contact
- facial expressions
- gestures
- posture
- breathing
- voice
- language

■AFTER EACH ROLE PLAY, GIVE THE YOUTH A "THANKS."

■WHEN THE PAIR IS FINISHED, OBTAIN FEEDBACK.

(TO THE VICTIM) - How did you feel? What was one thing you did that you liked or one thing you would have done differently?

(TO THE DISCRIMINATOR) - How did you feel? Tell us one thing the victim did that you liked or one thing you would have done differently if you had been the victim.

(TO THE OBSERVERS) - What one thing did the victim do that you liked and one thing you would have done differently?

■THEN THE NEXT TWO ARE GIVEN INSTRUCTIONS AND SO ON.

■ALLOW THE ROLE PLAYS TO GO FOR ABOUT 1 - 2 MINUTES. IF THERE IS LIMITED TIME, ONLY DO ONE ROLE PLAY PER PAIR.

Now let's all come back together. How did both groups do?

How do you feel?

■ENCOURAGE BRIEF SHARING ABOUT EXERCISE.

Exercise 7: How Can I Relax After All That?
(5 minutes)

**[The purpose of this exercise is bring the tension level down after doing all the exercises.
Leading the group through a relaxation sequence is the chosen approach.]**

Now it is time to relax.

I will take you through a relaxation sequence.

Dealing with stigma is hard and draining.

Being able to relax can make it easier on the person.

Relaxation Protocol

Get comfortable in your chairs.

Close your eyes if you wish.

Observe your breath. PAUSE

Let your breath flow in and out easily. PAUSE

Just let your breath come naturally. PAUSE

Take a deep breath in PAUSE

and it let it out slowly. PAUSE

Take another deep breath. PAUSE

And let it out slowly. PAUSE

Breathe in deeply PAUSE

And let it out very slowly. PAUSE

Now let your head fall forward and slowly rotate your neck around and around and around.

Now touch your shoulders to your ears and hold it. PAUSE

Let your shoulders droop down.

Straighten your legs out and point your toes back up toward your knees.

Hold them pointed there. PAUSE

And release.

In your mind's eye see a giant flower all closed up. PAUSE

Watch the flower begin to open slowly.

See the beautiful colors begin to unfold - your favorite colors.

See it open a little more PAUSE

And more colors appear. PAUSE

Feel the openness within your self. PAUSE

Opening more.

See the beauty within your self. PAUSE

Feel the colors spread within you.

The flower is fully open. PAUSE

Can you feel the warmth flowing throughout your body?

Can you feel the soft warm peace within you? PAUSE

Whenever you want a sense of peace, let that beautiful flower unfold within you.

Now yawn and stretch.

Yawn and stretch.

Open your eyes slowly.

Exercise 8: What Is Next?
(20 minutes)

[The purposes of this exercise are to build group cohesion, to establish goals for between the sessions, and to end on a positive note. Giving appreciation to each other and setting targets are used.]

We are near the end of the session.

You have worked very hard on dealing with stigma today.

You deserve a pat on the back.

One way to use what you have learned in the real world is to set a small target to do between sessions - a step to take which increases your ability to handle stigma.

Make it something related to today's session.

For example, you could:

1) make a list of situations which are difficult for you; 2) rehearse how you plan to handle a situation about stigma that is coming up; 3) use the Feeling Thermometer to measure how you feel about situations involving discrimination during the week; or 4) role play with a friend handling a situation.

What are you going to try?

■POST GOAL SETTING CARD

Remember to make the step realistic, clear, not too easy or too hard, and has a clear endpoint so you can recognize when it's been accomplished.

■GO AROUND THE ROOM AND ASK YOUTHS FOR STEPS THEY WILL TAKE BETWEEN SESSIONS.

■RECORD GOAL ON GOAL SUMMARY SHEET. YOUTH SHOULD RECORD THEIR GOALS ON THEIR GOAL CARD.

Those were some good steps.

We'll see how it worked out next time.

To end the session please give appreciation to each other.

Tell others in the group what you liked about their participation today, their style, their presence.

**■GIVE APPRECIATION TO GROUP MEMBERS. ENCOURAGE
THEIR GIVING APPRECIATION TO EACH OTHER. MAKE SURE
THAT NO ONE IS LEFT OUT.**

I really enjoyed working with you today.

I'll see you next time at (place) on (time and date).

THE END OF THE SESSION ON STIGMA

The Job Interview

EMPLOYER: It sounds to me like you have the kind of skills we are looking for.

APPLICANT: I'm glad.

EMPLOYER: Could you start next Monday?

APPLICANT: Sure.

EMPLOYER: All you have to do now is pass the physical.

APPLICANT: The physical?

EMPLOYER: Yes. Everyone has to pass the physical. It's pretty simple. Just a routine physical exam and some blood work and a test or two.

APPLICANT: What's the blood work and tests for?

EMPLOYER: Nothing special.

APPLICANT: Like what?

EMPLOYER: Well, we want to see if you have TB, if you're on drugs, and if you have the AIDS virus.

APPLICANT: What happens if you have any of those things?

EMPLOYER: You have nothing to worry about.

APPLICANT: But what happens?

EMPLOYER: Well, obviously we can't hire anyone with TB or who takes drugs. And what can I tell you about the AIDS virus.

APPLICANT: I thought you couldn't discriminate. It's against the law.

EMPLOYER: Don't make me laugh.

THE END

HAVE YOU GOT IT?
(BOYS'/GIRLS' GROUP)

CHRIS:I know this is going to sound funny coming from me.

PAT: What is?

C: Well, since my friend George died from AIDS, I've been getting scared. I don't want to get it. You know what I mean?

P: I don't want you to get it either.

C: Good. So, tell me. Do you have HIV?

P: If I did, you'd be safe by using a condom.

C: You know I like making love to you.

P: I like it too.

C: But do you have the virus?

P: What difference would it make.

C: If you got the virus, no sex. Period! that's all there is to it.

P: I thought we had something going. I trusted you. This was serious. I really like you.

C: Forget it. We can be good friends.

P: I'm not poison. I have a right to making love.

C: Sorry.

THE END

FEELING THERMOMETER ON STIGMA

100 VERY UNCOMFORTABLE
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0 COMPLETELY COMFORTABLE

SITUATIONS

TEMPERATURE
READINGS

1. At work you are asked not to drink out of the same water cooler.
2. Several teenagers you know keep referring to you as "sick."
3. People who used to be your friends walk away when you approach them.
4. You visit your family, and they want you to eat after them on paper plates.

CARD 1: STIGMA

If this thought came into your mind, how would you argue against it?

"I stopped going to church a long time ago. I guess getting the virus is God's way of punishing me."

CARD 2: STIGMA

If this thought came into your mind, how would you argue against it?

"If I hadn't decided to become gay, I wouldn't be HIV positive."

CARD 3: STIGMA

If this thought came into your mind, how would you argue against it?

"I'm so ashamed that I'm HIV positive. I can't face anybody."

CARD 4: STIGMA

If this thought came into your mind, how would you argue against it?

"I've been shooting up for years and stealing to pay for it. Now that I got the virus, I guess my sins are catching up with me."

CARD 5: STIGMA

If this thought came into your mind, how would you argue against it?

"I used to have sex with anyone. It's my fault that I am HIV positive."

CARD 6: STIGMA

If this thought came into your mind, how would you argue against it?

"Having HIV, the best thing for me to do is crawl in a hole and disappear."

CARD 7: STIGMA

If this thought came into your mind, how would you argue against it?

"I did a lot of terrible things. I'm not a good person. So, I deserve this infection."