

T.L.C. Facilitator's Manual

Being Together Module

Session #2: How Can I Reduce Negative Feelings? (2 Hours)

OBJECTIVES:

1. Youths will understand that much of their negative reactions to life is related to wanting actual events and living circumstances to be different from the real situation.
2. Youths will experience more positive feelings in daily activities.
3. Youths will increase their ability to experience the present moment, reducing self-destructive motivations.
4. Youths will begin studying the set of cognitive perceptions that make up their daily evaluations of events as positive or negative and rationalizations for self destructive acts.

RATIONALE:

The first session began the process of studying the daily pattern of perceptions and activities and being aware of the current moment. In this session both processes are carried further. Youths are encouraged to become aware of everything they are doing in their daily routines and to enter into the experience with intense attention. The greater the attention, the less "I" that is involved. Observer and subject melt into one. Increased involvement leaves no room for the "I" that desires things and wants life to be different than it is. Youths practice doing one thing at a time with concentration and intensity. Increased awareness is also created by making every daily task an opportunity for expressing hope and reverence.

A central part of the underlying ground for this session is related to the conditions of worry, pain, loss and discontent. Youths are encouraged to see that a good deal of personal misery stems from wanting life to be different than it is. To reduce wanting (i.e., unrealistic desires and expectations) becomes an important theme. Wanting often is a manifestation of perceiving oneself as deficient--incomplete. While the self is taken up more fully in the next session, recognition of the self's role in being miserable is begun here.

Meditation is used as a way to explore the self that each person has constructed from what others have told them or from their interpretation of what has happened to them. In this session

youths also become aware of the fabric of their daily experiences, practice doing a routine activity with a high level of attention, and increase their abilities to concentrate.

SUMMARY OF EXERCISES:

1. Review the experiences that the youths agreed to have. Introduce the day's session with a script. (20 minutes)
2. Do a word storm on "suffering" and connect suffering to wanting. Have the youth make "wanting" lists. (20 minutes)
3. Explain how not to want through studying the self and being aware. Practice sitting. Confront lacking. (20 minutes)
4. Do a word storm on "aware." Use a script on the wise person to illustrate awareness. Tell a story. Practice awareness through eating a tangerine. (20 minutes)
5. Have the youths identify daily activities and write sayings to accompany daily tasks. (20 minutes)
6. Have the youths agree to new experiences they will undertake between sessions. Give appreciation to each other. Close with a ritual. (20 minutes)

MATERIALS:

Newsprint and marking pens
Sitting cushions
Paper and pencils
Tangerines
Napkins
Scripts: "All I Want Is...." and "The Wise Person Pays Attention"
Paper and pencils

Exercise 1: What Happened?
(20 minutes)

[The purposes of this exercise are to create a calm atmosphere, to reinforce learning that took place in daily life, and to introduce the session. Brief sitting, a review of experiences between sessions, and a script are the approaches used.]

Hello! I'm glad to see you here.

When you come into the session from outside, the chances are good that you brought a lot of unwanted baggage with you.

All kinds of thoughts and feelings are going through you.

So, before we start anything, take your shoes off and sit on your cushion for two minutes counting your breath.

Here is the right posture again.

■ DEMONSTRATE THE CORRECT SITTING POSTURE.

And please don't worry about thoughts creeping in and destroying your count.

One minute of a beginner's sitting is worth twenty minutes of an experienced person's.

■ YOU AND THE GROUP SIT FOR TWO MINUTES.

Now I want to go around the room and hear what your experiences were like when you tried sitting at home or whatever you agreed to try.

■ HAVE EACH YOUTH DESCRIBE HIS OR HER

September 1995
Module 3
Session 2

EXPERIENCE. BE SUPPORTIVE AND VALIDATE THEIR EXPERIENCE. IF SOMEONE IS DISCOURAGED, TELL THEM THAT SITTING IS HARD AT FIRST, BUT EVERY MOMENT THAT THEY DO IT BUILDS UP. SUGGEST THAT THEY NOT TRY TOO HARD. IT IS BETTER TO DO LITTLE BITS AT A TIME. IF SOMEONE DID NOT DO WHAT THEY AGREED TO, TELL THEM THAT THEY ARE RIGHT. NO ONE CAN DO IT FOR THEM, AND THEY MUST PROCEED AT THEIR OWN PACE.

That was very good.

Now I need two of you to help me introduce today's session.

This is a conversation between two friends--Terry and Joe.

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

ALL I WANT IS.....

TERRY: Life really sucks.

JEAN/JOE: What's the matter?

TERRY: Everything.

J: Like what?

TERRY: I'm broke. I saw about eight sneakers I'd like to buy--really cool--but I can't. Also, I studied and studied for this English test, and all I got was a B.

J: You always get B's.

TERRY: Yeah, but I studied for this one.

J: A B is better than a C.

TERRY: Let me ask you something.

J: What?

TERRY: Do I look weird to you?

J: No.

TERRY: Are you sure?

J: Of course I'm sure.

TERRY: It's so obvious. You don't get it. How am I different from you?

J: You're lighter than me.

TERRY: What else?

J: You're shorter than me.

TERRY: That's it! How come I'm so short? I can't believe I'm stopping here. Everybody is so much taller than me.

J: Other people are as short as you.

TERRY: They're freaks! See what I mean? Life sucks.

THE END

Thanks. That was great!

Poor Old Terry is really suffering.

What's his problem?

September 1995
Module 3
Session 2

■ENCOURAGE EXPLORATION OF TERRY'S CONCERNS. THE THEME IS THAT TERRY SUFFERS BECAUSE HE/SHE DOESN'T HAVE WHAT HE WANTS. DON'T PUSH THE THEME. IF THE YOUTHS IDENTIFY IT, FINE. IF THEY DON'T, LEAVE IT AMBIGUOUS. FOR EXAMPLE, "IN TODAY'S SESSION WE'LL FIND OUT MORE ABOUT WHERE TERRY IS COMING FROM."

You can probably guess that today we are going to take a look at suffering.

Last session it was happiness and peace of mind, and today it is suffering and being aware.

Exercise 2: What Is Suffering?
(20 minutes)

[The purposes of this exercise are to engage the youths in an exploration of suffering, to determine if suffering is what's to be expected, and to connect suffering to wanting. Doing a word storm of suffering, identifying suffering that exists, and making a "wanting" list are the methods used here.]

Life won't be very good if you are in misery all the time.

Let's do a word storm to get us thinking about this.

Remember when we do a word storm, I write the word up here on newsprint and then you call out what the word means to you and other words that it reminds you of.

Then I write down what you say.

Have you got it?

Just let the words fly; don't judge what you say.

■WRITE "SUFFERING" ON THE TOP OF A PAGE OF
NEWSPRINT.

What are your words?

What do you think of when you hear the word suffering?

■WRITE DOWN WORDS AS THEY ARE CALLED OUT.

That's a good list.

September 1995
Module 3
Session 2

How would you group the words?

■ENCOURAGE THE YOUTHS TO GROUP THE WORDS.

What are examples of suffering?

■MAKE A LIST OF EXAMPLES OF SUFFERING. WRITE THEM ON NEWSPRINT.

We all know that there are lots of unpleasant things in the world--murder, wiping out whole groups of people, poverty, hunger, homelessness, sex abuse, hatred, racism, homophobia, disease, and so on.

But do most people suffer?

Did you chose the looks you were born with, the intelligence that you have, getting sick, having an accident, growing old, dying?

Can you avoid other people cheating you, lying to you, not liking you, and not acting as you want them to?

So, what do you think?

Is suffering part of life?

■ENCOURAGE A DISCUSSION OF SUFFERING AND ITS PLACE IN LIFE. LET THE YOUTHS DRAW THEIR OWN CONCLUSIONS.

Is it fair to say that a lot of people don't want many of the things that happen to them?

■ENCOURAGE A RESPONSE.

Is it fair to say that a lot of people want many things they don't get?

■ENCOURAGE A RESPONSE.

How does it feel when things happen that we don't want, and when we don't get what we do want?

■ENCOURAGE A RESPONSE.

It sounds to me like a lot of pain and suffering are tied up in these wants.

I am going to hand you a piece of paper and pencil.

Please make a list of what you want.

■HAND OUT PAPER AND PENCILS. WAIT A FEW MINUTES FOR YOUTHS TO DEVELOP THEIR LISTS.

Now, are you going to be disappointed if don't get what's on your list?

■ENCOURAGE RESPONSES.

Some people think that most of the unhappiness in this world happens because we don't often get what we think we want.

You would probably say that it's impossible to stop wanting.

September 1995
Module 3
Session 2

I would agree that few people in this world could totally stop wanting to be liked, or to be successful, or to live a long time.

But I also think that people who want less, hurt a lot less.

Today we are going to work on reducing wants.

We will use the same two approaches we touched on last time: 1) finding your original nature and 2) being completely aware in every moment of your life.

Exercise 3: How Does Finding My True Self and Being Aware Help?
(20 minutes)

[The purposes of this exercise are to increase understanding of how finding the true self and being aware helps reduce wants and suffering and to take a step toward the true self. Explanations, sitting and confrontation are used.]

Do you agree with this statement?

"Most people desire things because they think that they lack some personal quality."

■ENCOURAGE RESPONSES.

Don't our ideas about who we are come from other people's reactions to us, and how we think and feel about their reactions?

Other people's reactions may have nothing to do with who we are, but sometimes we believe them anyway.

All of those ideas about ourselves are what I call the false self.

What was your self like on the day before you were born? Did you have an original self?

■HAVE EACH YOUTH ANSWER THE QUESTION ABOUT HIS SELF WHEN HE/SHE WAS BORN. ENCOURAGE DISCUSSION AFTER EVERYONE HAS GIVEN AN OPINION.

I like to think that the original self in all of us is perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

Let's take a moment to think about that possibility.

Take a deep breath and let it out, close your eyes, and imagine for a moment that there is an original self, a part of you that has always been there and never changes. And that your original self is perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

■PAUSE FOR A MOMENT OR REFLECTION.

You can find your original nature and get rid of the false self that is always thinking and thinking, by sitting on your cushions and counting your breath.

When a thought comes up, observe it.

Thoughts with emotions in them--"I don't like her" or "I get real nervous when he yells at me"--tell you a lot about yourself.

But don't try to stop those thoughts or analyze them or talk to yourself about them.

Just label them--"thinking about not liking Jane"--and go back to counting your breath.

Accept yourself as you are right now.

The more you sit the more you will experience your true self and the less you will have a false self.

Let's try to get more in touch with your original nature by sitting for three minutes.

Sit on your cushions.

PAUSE

Get your legs crossed in front of you with your knees on the ground.

September 1995
Module 3
Session 2

PAUSE

Straighten your back--feel the top of your head pulled up toward the ceiling.

PAUSE

Slowly sway from side to side until you feel you are in the right position for you.

PAUSE

Now start counting your breath.

When you get to ten, go back and start again.

If a thought comes in, label it, observe it, and go back to one.

I'll let you know when three minutes are up.

**■HAVE THE GROUP SIT, COUNTING THEIR BREATH.
STOP AFTER THREE MINUTES.**

Very good!

As was said before, three minutes of sitting by a beginner is worth twenty minutes by someone who has been sitting for a long time.

Sitting in a private place creates your own space and time.

September 1995
Module 3
Session 2

But after you get the hang of it, you can count your breath lots of places during your day.

Now I want you to think of something that you feel you lack as a person or something about yourself that you want to change.

■ALLOW A MINUTE FOR THE YOUTHS TO THINK OF SOMETHING. WHILE THEY ARE THINKING, PLACE A CUSHION ABOUT THREE FEET IN FRONT OF WHERE YOU ARE SITTING.

I want each of you to come here and sit in front of me.

Then tell me what you thought of.

■HAVE EACH YOUTH SIT IN FRONT OF YOU AND TELL YOU WHAT THEY LACK OR WANT TO CHANGE. THEN ASK THEM A "NOW" QUESTION. "NOW" QUESTIONS FOCUS THEIR ATTENTION ON HOW THEY ARE RIGHT NOW. HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES:

YOUTH: "I WISH I WAS SMARTER." "NOW" QUESTION: "WHERE IS YOUR LACK OF SMARTNESS RIGHT NOW?"

YOUTH: "I GET ANGRY TOO MUCH." "NOW" QUESTION: "CAN YOU POINT TO WHERE YOUR ANGER IS RIGHT NOW?"

YOUTH: "MY MIND IS CONFUSED." "NOW" QUESTION: "CAN YOU GIVE ME YOUR MIND RIGHT NOW?"

YOUTH: "I WISH I WAS BETTER LOOKING." "CAN YOU GIVE ME YOUR LACK OF LOOKS RIGHT NOW?"

■HAVE EACH YOUTH TRY TO RESPOND. THEN SAY "YOU ARE PERFECT AND COMPLETE, LACKING NOTHING." HAVE THE NEXT YOUTH COME FORWARD. CONTINUE UNTIL ALL THE YOUTHS HAVE MADE THEIR

PRESENTATION.

That was very good.

Let's try sitting for four minutes.

Count your breath just like you did awhile ago.

■HAVE THE GROUP SIT FOR FOUR MINUTES.

Every time you sit your original nature shows itself.

Being completely aware of every moment of your life also helps because when you are involved in what you are doing you forget your false self.

There is no room for it in your moment to moment experiences.

So, next we will work on being aware.

Exercise 4: What Does It Mean To Be Aware?
(20 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to increase the youths' awareness of daily life. A script, story, and practicing awareness through eating a tangerine are used.]

Let's start with a visit by the TV reporter to the wise person.

Who will read the parts?

■SELECT THE VOLUNTEERS. DECIDE WHO WILL READ THE PARTS. GIVE THEM THE SCRIPT AND HAVE THEM READ THE SCENE ALOUD TO THE GROUP.

THE WISE PERSON PAYS ATTENTION

TV REPORTER: Here we are at Lucy's Restaurant where I am having lunch with the wise person. Tell me, Old Great Wise Person, what is the secret of life?

WISE PERSON: Did you wash your hands before sitting down to eat?

TV REPORTER: What kind of answer is that? Of course, I washed my hands. Do you think I'm a slob?

WISE PERSON: How did it feel when the water splashed over your hands?

TV REPORTER: I have no idea.

WISE PERSON: What fragrance was the soap?

TV REPORTER: Can't remember.

WISE PERSON: Did a lot of dirt wash off?

TV REPORTER: How would I know?

WISE PERSON: Which finger was dirtiest?

TV REPORTER: I didn't pay any attention.

WISE PERSON: Was the towel soft when you dried your hands?

TV REPORTER: Wait a minute! I ask you about the secret to life, and you keep wanting to find out about washing my hands. I was thinking about the interview. I can't remember washing my hands.

WISE PERSON: Are you sure you washed them?

TV REPORTER: I guess so. I usually do.

WISE PERSON: Is there dirt under your nails?

TV REPORTER: It looks that way.

WISE PERSON: Now you know about the secret to life.

TV REPORTER: I do?

WISE PERSON: If you've been paying attention.

THE END

Thank you. That was very good.

As we go along, we'll see what the wise person was talking about.

Let's do a word storm.

■WRITE "AWARE" ON NEWSPRINT.

What words come to your mind when I write the word "aware" up here?

September 1995
Module 3
Session 2

■ENCOURAGE RESPONSES TO "AWARE." WRITE THE WORDS THAT ARE ASSOCIATED WITH IT ON NEWSPRINT.

Let's explore awareness.

One wise person has put it this way.

When you peel a tangerine, you can eat it with awareness or without awareness.

What does it mean to eat a tangerine with awareness?

First, you are fully aware that you are eating the tangerine.

You fully experience its lovely fragrance and sweet taste.

When you peel the tangerine, you know you are peeling a tangerine.

When you take a slice and put it in your mouth, you know that you are taking a slice and putting it in your mouth.

You experience its taste, its smell, the way it crushes in your mouth as you chew it.

You eat each section in awareness.

You do not forget the tangerine while you are eating it.

The tangerine becomes very real to you.

September 1995
Module 3
Session 2

As the tangerine becomes real to you, you will be more aware of your true self.

That's what it means to eat a tangerine in awareness.

When you eat a tangerine without awareness, you do not know all of its qualities and you cannot appreciate its precious and wonderful nature.

Eating a tangerine with awareness means that your mind is not chasing after thoughts of yesterday or tomorrow.

You are fully in the present; in the here and now.

A person who is aware and lives in the present sees things others do not.

The aware person sees the sun, rain and earth--all of which nourished the tangerine tree.

He or she sees ten thousand things which made the tangerine possible.

A totally aware person lives twenty four hours each day, just like he or she experiences each slice of the tangerine.

That person is more able to understand him or herself and the world, more able to love and to not hurt others.

So, when you walk, walk.

When you sit, sit.

When you eat, eat.

September 1995
Module 3
Session 2

When you talk, talk.

I would like you to practice being aware.

Each person will get a tangerine.

Try to eat it with awareness.

Remember, the more real the tangerine is, the more you are in touch with your true self.

■PASS OUT A TANGERINE AND NAPKIN TO EACH PERSON. HAVE THEM EAT A TANGERINE WITH AWARENESS.

How did you experience eating a tangerine with awareness?

■ENCOURAGE RESPONSES AND DISCUSSION.

The wise person spoke of living all the hours in a day just like eating all the slices of the tangerine.

What are some ways we can begin to do that?

We'll look at that next.

Exercise 5: How Can I Be More Aware?
(20 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to become more aware of daily activities so that attention can be focused on them. Detailing daily activities and creating sayings and mini-poems about them is the approach used.]

What are some of the little things that you do every day?

For example, you might list wake up, get out of bed, go the bathroom.

Let's build a list of those activities.

Start with waking up and go through the day.

We will go around the room and get a couple of activities from each person.

Tell me one thing that you do, and I'll write it up here.

If someone has already mentioned it, think of another activity.

■ENCOURAGE YOUTHS TO IDENTIFY THEIR DAILY ACTIVITIES. HAVE EACH YOUTH GIVE ONE ACTIVITY. GO AROUND SEVERAL TIMES SO THAT EACH YOUTH HAS MADE SEVERAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE LIST. PART OF THAT LIST MIGHT LOOK LIKE THE FOLLOWING:

WAKING UP
GETTING OUT OF BED
USING THE TOILET
WASHING MY HANDS
STEPPING INTO THE SHOWER
SOAPING UP

RINSING OFF
STEPPING OUT OF THE SHOWER
DRYING MY BODY
BRUSHING MY TEETH
BRUSHING MY HAIR
PUTTING ON MY MAKE-UP
SHAVING
GETTING DRESSED
OPENING THE DOOR
PREPARING MY BREAKFAST
EATING MY BREAKFAST
CLEARING THE TABLE
WASHING THE DISHES
GETTING READY TO GO OUT
GOING OUTSIDE
WALKING TO SCHOOL
MEETING MY FRIENDS

One way to be aware of your daily lives is to make this a list for yourself.

Between each activity there is a space.

When you get to that space, take a deep breath in and let it out slowly.

For some of your regular activities making up a little saying or mini-poem can help increase your focus and awareness.

That saying will focus your attention on what you are going to do.

Use the saying either before or after the activity--not while you are doing it.

When you wash the dishes, just wash the dishes.

When you brush your teeth, just brush your teeth.

September 1995
Module 3
Session 2

Here are some examples of sayings:

When getting ready to wash your hands--"Water flows over these hands. May I use my hands to help others."

Before using the toilet--"No matter what I am doing, my true self is present."

Before brushing your teeth--"Let me speak the truth and appreciate others."

Before taking a shower--"Dirty or clean I am perfect and complete."

Before eating--"I eat this food to give me strength to be true to my self and to live a happy life."

Before meeting your friends--"My friends are like the colors of the rainbow. I appreciate them all."

Now I would like you to try your hand at making up a saying to go with one of the activities.

■PASS OUT PAPER AND PENCILS TO EACH YOUTH.

Pick out an activity and write a saying about it.

Then we will share the sayings.

■HAVE EACH YOUTH PICK OUT A DAILY ACTIVITY AND WRITE A SAYING ABOUT IT. ALLOW TIME FOR WRITING.

Now let's hear what you wrote.

■HAVE EACH YOUTH SHARE HER OR HIS SAYING.

That was very good.

We are at the time in the session when we agree to do something next week related to what we have been working on today.

Exercise 6: What Will I Do Between Sessions?
(20 minutes)

[The purposes of this exercise are to carry into the real world what was learned in the session and to build a community of participants. Agreeing to have certain experiences and showing appreciation to each other are the approaches used.]

Next week I would like you to really concentrate on some daily activity that usually takes you about two to three minutes to complete.

Brushing your teeth is a good example.

Concentrate all your attention on that activity every time you do it.

If you start to think, observe the thought and let it go while still concentrating.

Tell me what you plan to pay attention to.

■GO AROUND THE ROOM AND HAVE EACH YOUTH
INDICATE WHAT ACTIVITY WILL RECEIVE HIS OR HER
STRONG ATTENTION.

That's great.

Now what else will you agree to do?

For example, you could

1. sit for four minutes five days per week.
2. count your breath while walking for three minutes.
3. make a list of all the things you want very badly.

4. eat a meal trying to taste every bite.
5. write a saying for three common activities in your daily life.

Think a moment and decide on what you agree to do.

■HAVE EACH YOUTH INDICATE WHAT HE OR SHE AGREES TO DO. NOTE THE AGREEMENT ON THE FACILITATOR'S EXPERIENCE SHEET.

Those are some good things to try.

I hope you have your experience cards with you.

Please write on the card I gave you what you plan to try during the next week.

Keep the cards with you.

Now it is time for you to show that you appreciate the other members of the group.

Go around and let people know that you are glad they are here and that you like the contributions they made to today's session.

■ENCOURAGE GIVING APPRECIATION TO EACH OTHER. MODEL REINFORCING CONTRIBUTIONS. MAKE SURE EVERYONE IS INCLUDED.

I would like to end with a thought.

Take a deep breath, let it out and close you eyes.

September 1995
Module 3
Session 2

■PAUSE.

Now repeat this thought silently in your mind:

"I will find my original nature, forget my false self, and be kind to others."

Thank you.

I look forward to seeing you at the next session.

We will meet again at _____ (time and place) on (day and date).

THE END OF SESSION 2

ALL I WANT IS.....

TERRY: Life really sucks.

JEAN/JOE: What's the matter?

TERRY: Everything.

J: Like what?

TERRY: I'm broke. I saw about eight sneakers I'd like to buy--really cool--but I can't. Also, I studied and studied for this English test, and all I got was a B.

J: You always get B's.

TERRY: Yeah, but I studied for this one.

J: A B is better than a C.

TERRY: Let me ask you something.

J: What?

TERRY: Do I look weird to you?

J: No.

TERRY: Are you sure?

J: Of course I'm sure.

TERRY: It's so obvious. You don't get it. How am I different from you?

J: You're lighter than me.

TERRY: What else?

J: You're shorter than me.

TERRY: That's it! How come I'm so short? I can't believe I'm stopping here. Everybody is so much taller than me.

J: Other people are as short as you.

TERRY: They're freaks! See what I mean? Life sucks.

THE END

THE WISE PERSON PAYS ATTENTION

- TV REPORTER: Here we are at Lucy's Restaurant where I am having lunch with the wise person. Tell me, Old Great Wise Person, what is the secret of life?
- WISE PERSON: Did you wash your hands before sitting down to eat?
- TV REPORTER: What kind of answer is that? Of course, I washed my hands. Do you think I'm a slob?
- WISE PERSON: How did it feel when the water splashed over your hands?
- TV REPORTER: I have no idea.
- WISE PERSON: What fragrance was the soap?
- TV REPORTER: Can't remember.
- WISE PERSON: Did a lot of dirt wash off?
- TV REPORTER: How would I know?
- WISE PERSON: Which finger was dirtiest?
- TV REPORTER: I didn't pay any attention.
- WISE PERSON: Was the towel soft when you dried your hands?
- TV REPORTER: Wait a minute! I ask you about the secret to life, and you keep wanting to find out about washing my hands. I was thinking about the interview. I can't remember washing my hands.
- WISE PERSON: Are you sure you washed them?
- TV REPORTER: I guess so. I usually do.
- WISE PERSON: Is there dirt under your nails?
- TV REPORTER: It looks that way.
- WISE PERSON: Now you know about the secret to life.

TV REPORTER: I do?

WISE PERSON: If you've been paying attention.

THE END