

T.L.C. Facilitator's Manual

Being Together Module

Session #3: Who Am I? (2 Hours)

OBJECTIVES:

1. Youths will understand that the "self" is a concept--not something real.
2. Youths will understand how this conceptualization of the "self" leads to feelings of worry, pain, loss, and discontent that are associated with self-destructive acts.
3. Youths will experience forgetting their typical notions of themselves and examine the feelings associated with discarding self concepts that are not useful for maintaining health adherence and abstinence from substance use.
4. Youths will explore "who am I?" Positive trajectories will be identified and intense attachments diminished.
5. Youths will express some aspect of a desire to lead a life reflective of positive values, integrity and intimacy with the elements in their lives.

RATIONALE:

In this session the study of the self proceeds further. Both meditation and attention to the concepts which define the self are employed to study the self. On the one hand it is assumed that the self is a concept--an idea--which does not exist. On the other hand to forget the self one must first have a self; therefore it is necessary to explore the self and make attempts at answering the question, "Who am I?"

While we can describe the thinking self, the feeling self, and the doing self, we cannot describe the observing self. Thus, attention is paid to the observing self. Practice forgetting the self is important and applied here also. Furthermore, one's true nature is often expressed in the spontaneous expression of art. So, the youths gain experience in revealing aspects of their nature

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in creating their own art work. Last, youth are encouraged to recognize that "All I can be is who I am right now."

SUMMARY OF EXERCISES:

1. Review the experiences that youths agreed to engage in between sessions. Do an opening ritual. (20 minutes)
2. Word storm "the self" and explore what the self is and its relationship to suffering and wanting. Practice sitting. Tell the story of the ugly duckling. (20 minutes)
3. Have each youth list on cards desirable and undesirable characteristics of themselves. Then have them throw the cards away--one by one. (10 minutes)
4. Have youths describe their thinking, feeling, and doing selves. Practice being the observing self. (15 minutes)
5. Have pairs assist each other in determining "Who am I?" (15 minutes.)
6. Have youths make a drawing. (20 minutes)
7. Select experiences to do between sessions and give appreciation to each other. (20 minutes)

MATERIALS:

Sitting cushions
Newsprint and marking pens
Index cards and pencils
Thinking, Feeling, Acting, and Observing Self Form
Colored marking pens
Small drawing pads
Ugly duckling story

Exercise 1: What Happened?
(20 minutes)

[The purposes of this exercise are to provide support for the youths' new experiences, to increase group cohesion, and to increase the youths' sense of completeness. Review of experiences and engaging in an opening ritual are the approaches employed.]

Welcome back.

We have been working on improving the quality of your lives by increasing your own peace of mind.

The approaches taken are studying the self through sitting and becoming aware of every moment in your life.

Let's open today's session with a saying.

Please take a deep breath, let it out slowly and gently close your eyes.

■PAUSE FOR A MOMENT.

Now think this thought:

"I am perfect and complete, lacking nothing."

■PAUSE FOR A MOMENT.

Now please sit for two minutes.

Make sure you have three parts of you making contact: your rear on the front of the cushion and your knees touching the floor.

■HAVE THE YOUTHS GET SEATED.

Get your posture straight.

Imagine a wire from your head pulling it toward the ceiling.

Sway a little bit to settle in to a good position.

**■ASSIST ANY YOUTH WHO NEEDS HELP IN SITTING
CORRECTLY.**

Simply count your breath--1 to 10.

If thoughts come into your head, note them, and let them float away.

Just watch them--don't get wrapped up in them.

If your counting gets off, go back to 1 and start again.

I'll keep the time for three minutes.

Go ahead and start.

■HAVE THE YOUTHS SIT FOR THREE MINUTES.

Time is up.

At the end of the last session you agreed to try some new experiences.

You were going to concentrate on a simple, brief activity that you do daily, and you were going to practice sitting.

Some of you agreed to become more aware of being engaged in other things such as eating a meal.

Let's hear how you made out.

■GO AROUND AND HAVE EACH YOUTH REPORT ON WHAT HAPPENED. BE SUPPORTIVE. COACH AS NEEDED. IF A YOUTH DID NOT DO WHAT HE OR SHE AGREED TO, INDICATE THAT PROCEEDING AT ONE'S OWN PACE IS IMPORTANT AND RESPECTED.

That was very good.

Now let me ask you a question or two?

Do you want to be different than you are?

Do you dream of being somebody else?

■HAVE A FEW YOUTHS SHARE RESPONSES.

As we go through today's session, here is what I want you to keep in mind.

"All I can be is who I am right now."

In that statement is both awareness--which we worked on last time--and studying the self.

Today we are going to get more deeply into your self.

Who are you?

Exercise 2: What is the Self?
(20 minutes)

[The purposes of this exercise are to show that the self is a fiction that is connected to suffering and wanting, and to increase interest in finding the self that existed before birth. Word storming, discussion and a story are the methods employed.]

We keep talking about your self.

Let's word storm that idea.

■WRITE "THE SELF" ON NEWSPRINT.

What words come to your mind when you hear the term "the self?"

What does it remind you of?

■ENCOURAGE WORD STORMING. WRITE THE YOUTHS' ASSOCIATIONS ON NEWSPRINT AS THEY ARE CALLED OUT.

What words go together?

Are there groupings?

Are all the words associated with this skin bag we call ourselves?

Or do you ever feel the whole world is a part of you, and are a part of the whole world?

■ASSIST THE YOUTHS IN GROUPING WORDS. EXAMPLES OF GROUPINGS ARE 1) MIND.....BODY; 2) INNER

DIRECTED.....OUTER DIRECTED; 3) GOOD.....BAD; 4)
REAL.....FALSE; 5) WISE.....FOOLISH; 6)
SAFE.....DANGEROUS; 7) EASY.....DIFFICULT.

I am going to divide you into two groups, and each group will get a different statement.

I want you to decide if the statement is true or false and why you think that.

You have four minutes to come to a conclusion.

■DIVIDE THE GROUP IN TWO. GIVE EACH GROUP ONE
OF THE STATEMENTS LISTED BELOW.

1. THE SELF IS JUST AN IDEA. IT DOES NOT EXIST.
2. IF I HAVE A SELF, IT MEANS I WANT TO BE A CERTAIN KIND
OF PERSON. IF I WANT TO BE DIFFERENT, I WILL SUFFER AND
BE UNHAPPY.

■AFTER FOUR MINUTES, BRING THE GROUPS BACK
TOGETHER.

Tell us what you decided and why?

■HAVE THE GROUPS REPORT ON THEIR DISCUSSION.
ENCOURAGING THEIR EXPLORING THESE IDEAS. DO
NOT TAKE A POSITION.

Let me read you a story--even though some of you may have heard it before.

■READ THE UGLY DUCKLING STORY.

This ugly duckling lived on a big lake with a family of ducks.

Many other ducks came to this pond as well.

The ugly duckling was very unhappy.

And the other ducks didn't seem to like the ugly duckling either.

They often picked on it.

The ugly duckling always swam at the tail end of the line of ducklings.

The ugly duckling said, "Why am I so ugly?"

"I wish I was like the other ducks."

"They are small, and I am huge."

"They are colorful, and I am white."

"They quack, and I honk."

The ugly duckling tried every which way to change and become more like the other ducklings, but couldn't change a thing.

The ugly duckling was miserable.

It's long neck drooped.

It paddled slowly.

One day the ugly duckling heard this tremendous noise in the sky.

It was the beating of great wings and loud calling.

A flock of enormous birds with great wing spans swooped down and landed in the lake.

Soon the big birds swam toward the ugly duckling.

The ugly duckling was terrified.

"Here they come to get me," it said to itself.

But instead of picking on it, they welcomed and caressed the ugly duckling.

"How can this be?" it wondered.

Suddenly the ugly duckling noticed that these magnificent birds had a beak just like it had.

They had long graceful necks like it did.

They were all white like it was.

One of the big birds said, "What's a beautiful swan like you doing here with a family of ducks?"

"A swan?!"

"A swan!" said the ugly duckling.

"I'm a swan!"

"Why don't you come with us?" said the swans.

Off swam the happiest swan in the world.

What do you make of that story?

■ENCOURAGE A DISCUSSION OF THE UGLY DUCKLING.
HOW DOES IT RELATE TO THE SELF? WHAT DOES ONE'S
TRUE NATURE HAVE TO DO WITH THE SELF?

Bringing the story down to you, think about where your self was in your earliest memories.

What was your self like back then?

■SEE IF YOUTHS HAVE AN ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION
OR IF THEY HAVE THOUGHTS ABOUT IT.

Now let's take a moment to deal with your ideas about who you are.

Exercise 3: What Is It Like To Forget the Self?
(10 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to experience forgetting the self. Writing positive and negative self qualities on cards and then throwing them away is the method used.]

I am going to give you five cards.

■HAND OUT FIVE INDEX CARDS AND A PENCIL TO EACH YOUTH.

First, think of three qualities that you really like about yourself.

Write one on each card.

For example, you might write "Good looking."

Next, think of two qualities you don't like--write one on each of the two remaining cards.

For example, you might write "Use drugs."

Now number the three positive qualities in terms how important they are to you.

Put a 1 on the card with the quality you like best.

Then a 2 on the next one, and a 3 on the card with the quality that is the third most important to you.

■WAIT A MINUTE FOR THE YOUTHS TO WRITE AND PRIORITIZE THE QUALITIES.

Now I want you to throw away one of the negative qualities.

■GO AROUND THE ROOM WITH A WASTE BASKET AND HAVE THE YOUTHS THROW AWAY A NEGATIVE QUALITY.

Good.

Now throw away the other negative quality.

■GO AROUND THE ROOM WITH THE WASTE BASKET AND COLLECT THE NEGATIVE QUALITY CARDS.

Now I want you to get rid of the quality that has a 3 on it.

■GO AROUND THE ROOM AND HAVE THEM THROW AWAY THE THIRD MOST IMPORTANT POSITIVE QUALITY.

How did you feel when throwing away those descriptions of yourself?

How hard was it to throw away your positive qualities?

■ENCOURAGE SHARING OF FEELINGS.

It's not surprising that we might find it hard to throw our positive qualities away.

After all, those qualities help us to feel good about ourselves.

But we can become attached to our negative qualities also, because they are part of how we know

ourselves too.

So, some times it is just as hard to throw away negative qualities as it would be to get rid of positive ones.

How hard was it to throw away negative qualities?

**■ENCOURAGE A DISCUSSION OF THROWING AWAY
NEGATIVE QUALITIES THAT DEFINE OURSELVES.**

Let's take it one step further.

Exercise 4: What Self Is Left?
(15 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to increase one's observing self. Defining the thinking, feeling, acting and observing self and sitting is the approach taken.]

This piece of paper I'm going to give you has four headings on it: thinking self, feeling self, acting self, observing self.

I want you to describe yourself in those four categories.

What are your typical thoughts, feelings, and actions?

For example, you might say, "I think of myself as helpless."

"I feel scared a lot of the time."

"I take drugs to forget how much life sucks."

■HAND OUT THE "THINKING, FEELING, ACTING, AND
OBSERVING SELF" FORM.

THE THINKING, FEELING, ACTING, OBSERVING SELF FORM

THINKING SELF

Instructions: Write down your typical thoughts about yourself.

FEELING SELF

Instructions: Write down your typical feelings about yourself.

ACTING SELF

Instructions: Write down how you typically act.

OBSERVING SELF

Instructions: Write down a description of your observing self.

THE END

Take a few minutes to fill it out.

■ALLOW FIVE MINUTES TO FILL OUT THE FORM.

OK, now let's find out how this worked for you.

What are some examples of your thinking self?

■ENCOURAGE SHARING OF A FEW EXAMPLES.

What are some examples of your feeling self?

■ENCOURAGE SHARING OF A FEW EXAMPLES.

What are some examples of your acting self?

■ENCOURAGE SHARING OF A FEW EXAMPLES.

Finally, how did you describe your observing self?

■ENCOURAGE SHARING OF A FEW EXAMPLES.

Was it hard to describe the observing self? Why?

■ENCOURAGE RESPONSES. THE POINT IS THAT WHEN
PAYING CLOSE ATTENTION TO WHAT IS HAPPENING
AROUND YOU, YOU FEEL MORE CONNECTED TO
OTHERS AND LESS WORRIED ABOUT YOURSELF.

You can't be really observing what's going on around you, and be all caught up in thoughts like, "I ought to be taller" or "I want to get high" at the same time.

So, one way to get rid of the false self--all those ideas you have built up about your self--is to become much more of an observer.

Really pay attention to each task, to each moment, to each exchange with other people.

Just watch.

Let's get a feel for observing again by sitting for 4 minutes.

Get yourself in your sitting position.

■MODEL THE CORRECT SITTING POSTURE.

■WAIT WHILE YOUTHS GET ON THEIR CUSHIONS AND
IN THE RIGHT POSITION.

Now, observe your breath as you count it for 4 minutes.

Don't get discouraged if you get off count.

Start all over again, counting 1 to 10.

Every time you get back to 1 again you are building up your power.

Let the thoughts come in and travel out because they help you increase your ability to get back to 1.

Remember that two minutes of a beginner's sitting is worth much more than what an experienced person can do.

■HAVE THE YOUTHS SIT FOR 4 MINUTES. SIT WITH
THEM.

That was really good.

Four minutes is a lot when you are just starting.

I can tell how you were doing by the amount of movement in the room.

It gets more still as you improve.

Also when a group of people get sitting good you can feel a kind of group energy building up.

Could you sense it?

■OBTAIN RESPONSES TO THE SITTING.

Stretch your legs, but stay on your cushions.

Next we will take a closer look at who you are.

Exercise 5: Who Am I?
(15 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to increase the youths' awareness of who they think they are. Partners sitting and questioning each other is the approach used.]

First, I want everyone to have a partner.

■DIVIDE THE GROUP INTO PARTNERS. IF THERE IS ONE PERSON SHORT, THE FACILITATOR BECOMES THAT PERSON'S PARTNER.

Sit facing each other on your cushions.

You will take turns.

First one person will ask, "Who are you?".

Then wait for an answer, pause, and then say "Who are you?" again.

Answer what ever comes into your mind:

Who are you?

I am a facilitator.

Who are you?

I am a teacher.

Who are you?

I am a loner.

Who are you?

I am a wife.

Who are you?

I am a mirror.

Who are you?

I am a fool.

Who are you?

I am love.

Who are you?

I am green.

Have you got the idea?

I will signal when to switch roles.

The person who is asking the question looks at his or her partner in a relaxed way.

The person who is answering the question should let the answers arise naturally, saying whatever comes into his or her head.

Decide who will ask the questions.

**■WAIT WHILE THE MEMBERS OF THE PAIRS DECIDE
WHO WILL ASK THE QUESTION FIRST.**

Face each other.

Get comfortable on your cushions.

Let yourself enjoy this.

Go ahead and start.

■AFTER 3 MINUTES, STOP. HAVE PEOPLE STRETCH THEIR LEGS. THEN SWITCH ROLES SO THAT THE ONE WHO ASKED NOW ANSWERS. GO FOR ANOTHER 3 MINUTES.

What was that like for you?

■ENCOURAGE SHARING. ASK PROBING QUESTIONS.

Did you discover anything about your view of yourself?

Did it in any way change your thoughts about yourself?

Did you feel emotional when you were coming up with certain answers?

■ENCOURAGE DISCUSSION.

You can see the two basic themes that we have touched on each session coming up here again.

- (1) Study the self by sitting.
- (2) Pay close attention to your life--be aware.

These two ways to live can help you feel better about your life every day.

Now I want you to express your true self.

Exercise 6: How Can I Express My Original Nature?
(20 minutes)

[The purpose of this exercise is to encourage the no-self to come forth. Drawing a picture is the approach used.]

One way to express your true self or your original nature is through art.

Many artists are very good at paying attention, concentrating, being completely involved, and expressing themselves.

All of us can benefit from having some art project as a part of our lives.

We don't have to be good at art.

That isn't the point.

The point is to do it.

Here are some colored marking pens and drawing paper.

■PASS OUT FIVE PENS (DIFFERENT COLORS) TO EACH PERSON AND DRAWING PAPER BIG ENOUGH SO THAT THE YOUTH DOESN'T FEEL CRAMPED.

I want each of you to do a drawing--any topic, any style, and colors.

Don't worry about knowing how to do it.

If a bird was kept in a small cage all of its life and someone opened the cage door, it would know what to do.

It wouldn't dive into a lake and drown.

It would leap into the air and fly away, even though it had not flown before.

Put the paper in front of you.

Select a pen.

Study the paper for a minute or two.

Put your pen to the paper and just let it happen.

We have twelve minutes for drawing, so let's get started.

**■ALLOW 12 MINUTES FOR MAKING THE DRAWINGS.
TELL THE GROUP WHEN THE TIME IS UP.**

The time is up.

Let's tape the drawings on the wall so that we can wander around and see them.

**■GIVE OUT MASKING TAPE AND HAVE EVERYONE TAPE
THEIR ART WORK TO THE WALLS.**

It doesn't matter who did which one, just enjoy the art.

■ENCOURAGE EVERYONE TO WANDER AROUND THE

ROOM AND VIEW EACH OTHER'S ART WORK.

That was very good.

Maybe some where in your art you caught a glimpse of your original nature.

The more times you do this, the more of your true self you might see.

But now, it is getting time to agree on what you will do between the sessions.

Exercise 7: 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.]

At the end of each session I want you to agree to continue some of the activities we have begun in here.

See if you can keep practicing when you are not in the session.

The more sessions that we cover, the more experiences you have to choose from.

Here are some examples of what you might do.

1. increase how long and how often you sit.
2. pick a brief, daily routine like shaving or putting on make-up and concentrate on it.
3. eat dinner three times a week without talking and being completely aware of what you eat.
4. sit with a friend or look into a mirror and ask "who am I" and then give an answer. Repeat for four minutes.
5. do an art project.
6. go somewhere and just observe the people for 20 minutes on three different days.
7. make up a saying about a daily task.

Can you give the group some other suggestions to choose from?

■ENCOURAGE ADDING TO THE LIST.

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.

You can appreciate things they said or did, their style, their presence, their depth, their quietness--all kinds of things.

■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 and let it out slowly.

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■PAUSE.

Gently close your eyes and repeat this thought silently in your mind:

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

■PAUSE

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 3

THE THINKING, FEELING, ACTING, OBSERVING SELF FORM

THINKING SELF

Instructions: Write down your typical thoughts about yourself.

FEELING SELF

Instructions: Write down your typical feelings about yourself

ACTING SELF

Instructions: Write down how you typically act.

OBSERVING SELF

Instructions: Write down a description of your observing self.

THE END