
EXERCISE 3.7

Understanding How Other People Feel

Objective

The student will depict an example of each of the following emotions: jealousy, sadness, fear, excitement, happiness, and fatigue.

Rationale

Not everyone is either happy or sad. There are lots of emotions or “ways of feeling” that affect how we operate on any given day in different circumstances. In this lesson, students can show how someone might experience a certain feeling by depicting a situation or event.

Thinking Questions

1. Have you ever been really, really happy? Tell about it. (Anecdotes about parties, gifts, events, etc.)
2. Have you ever been extremely frightened or afraid? When? (Anecdotes.)
3. What are some situations in which someone might feel impatient or short-tempered? (Waiting for someone who is always late, being in a hurry to get to a game, etc.)
4. Does everyone feel the same way about the same events? Why would some people react differently? (Some people may love parties, others be shy in a crowd; a roller coaster may terrify one person, but cause great excitement in another.)
5. Do you think people can control their moods or do you think what happens to people has a lot to do with how they feel? (A debate topic.)

Activity

Directions: Students are to draw pictures of people involved in situations that might affect their moods. They are to draw pictures that depict given moods in others.

ANSWERS (EXAMPLES)

1. Two friends playing together with a toy; one left out
2. A sick puppy
3. Seeing a robber
4. A great big present under the Christmas tree
5. Swimming
6. Shoveling snow

Follow-up

Share students' pictures and ideas with the class. Search for common threads as well as situations that depict very different emotions from different students.

Understanding How Other People Feel

Draw a picture of a situation that might make someone feel one of the following moods.

1. Jealous

2. Sad

3. Frightened

4. Excited

5. Happy

6. Tired

EXERCISE 6.6

Positive Coping Statements

Goals

1. To introduce students to the stress inoculation technique of using positive coping statements
2. To give students practice in making positive coping statements inside and outside of the group

Materials

Positive Coping Statements Worksheet; index cards

Process

WORKING TIME

1. Briefly describe the goals of the session.
2. Ask whether any students have gone to the doctor to get an inoculation (shot) to prevent mumps, chicken pox, measles, or any other disease. (Groans and head shakes.) Why do they think they get these shots? Do they always work? What about flu shots? Do they work most of the time?
3. Explain that stress inoculation is a technique that helps people face stressful situations that can't be avoided, like taking a big test or going to the dentist. Point out that, like being vaccinated against a disease, using stress inoculation techniques can prevent you from having stress or keep you from suffering as much as you might. Part of stress inoculation involves making positive coping statements before, during, and after a stressful situation.
4. Discuss the fact that when we know a situation is going to be unpleasant, we often tell ourselves how awful or terrible it is

going to be. As a result, we may actually cause the situation to be just as bad as we think it will be. Invite students to name some stressful and unavoidable situations they have experienced. From those generated, choose one situation to illustrate the use of positive coping statements. For example: giving a 5-minute report in class next Friday.

POSITIVE COPING STATEMENTS BEFORE THE SITUATION

- I've read a lot about the topic—I can share my knowledge with the class.
- It's only a 5-minute report, not 30 minutes.
- I don't have to go first, so I can model my report after the good ones that come before it.
- I did this OK last year.
- I'm not going to say negative things to myself.
- I'm going to be OK.
- I can deal with this!
- It's OK to be nervous.

POSITIVE COPING STATEMENTS DURING THE SITUATION

- I'm doing my best—that's all anyone can ask.
- I can handle this.
- Take three deep breaths and try to relax.
- It will be over in a minute.
- Just relax.
- One step at a time.
- I can always look at my notes.
- I really want to share this idea with my classmates.

POSITIVE COPING STATEMENTS AFTER THE SITUATION

- I did it!
- I did a good job.
- I can relax now—it's over.
- I handled the situation pretty well.
- I'm proud of myself!
- I can deal with tough situations.
- I can hardly wait to tell _____ about how I did.
- I can do this again in the future and succeed.

5. Distribute copies of the Positive Coping Statements Worksheet and instruct students to write down a stressful situation they think they will face in the near future. (These situations don't necessarily have to be major ones—minor stressors will work just as well.)
6. After giving students a few minutes to write down a situation, ask them to take turns sharing their situations with the group. The group is to brainstorm coping statements that could be used before, during, and after each situation.
7. Have students copy their statements from the Positive Coping Statements Worksheet on index cards they can carry with them to help remind them of what they want to say to themselves.

CLOSING TIME

1. Invite students to practice making positive coping statements in stressful situations outside the group. Encourage them to talk about what they think might happen if they use positive coping statements and how they feel about trying this technique. Remind them that they can also use the skills they learned for progressive muscle relaxation and thematic imagery.
2. Ask whether there is anything anyone would like to say before the group ends. Remind students of the confidentiality rule.

Positive Coping Statements Worksheet

Instructions: Write down a stressful situation you think you may face in the near future. Then think of several coping statements you could use before, during, and after the situation.

Situation

Statements before the Situation

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Statements during the Situation

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Statements after the Situation

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

EXERCISE 11.10

The Gift of Happiness: Experiencing Positive Feedback

Goals

- I. To promote a climate of trust, self-worth, and positive reinforcement within a small group
- II. To experience giving and receiving positive feedback in a nonthreatening way

Group Size

Six to ten participants who have had some experience together as a group

Time Required

Approximately 5 minutes per participant and about 30 minutes for processing

Materials

Pencils and paper

Physical Setting

Tables or desk chairs (if not available, use lapboards or other solid writing surfaces). Participants should be located around the room so that a sense of privacy is preserved while writing.

Process

- I. The facilitator distributes pencils and paper. Each participant receives enough paper to write a message to each other member of the group.
- II. The facilitator makes a statement such as the following: "It is often possible to enjoy a small gift more than a large one. Yet, we sometimes become so concerned about not being able to do great things for each other that we neglect to do the little things that can also be very meaningful. In the following experience we will all be giving a small gift of happiness to each person in this group."
- III. The facilitator then invites each participant to write on a slip of paper a message to each other member of the group. The messages are intended to make that person feel positive about himself.
- IV. The facilitator recommends several possible approaches to giving positive feedback so that participants can find appropriate means of expression even for individuals whom they do not know well or do not feel close to. He may tell the participants to:
 1. Try to be specific: Say, "I like the way you smile at everyone when you arrive," rather than "I like your attitude."
 2. Write a special message to fit each person rather than a comment that could apply to several persons.
 3. Include every participant, even if you are not too well acquainted with them. Choose whatever it is about the person that you respond to most positively.
 4. Try telling each person what you have observed as his real strength or notable success in the group, why you would like to know him better, or why you are glad to be in the group with him.
 5. Make your message personal: Use the other person's name, state your message in the first person, and use such terms as "I like," or "I feel."
 6. Tell each person what it is about him that makes you a little happier.

(The facilitator may wish to distribute or post such guidelines.)

- V. Participants are encouraged to sign their messages, but they are given the option of leaving them unsigned.
- VI. After each message is finished, the facilitator asks the participants to fold it once and place the name of the recipient on the outside. He asks them to distribute their messages to a place designated by each participant as his "mailbox."
- VII. When all messages have been delivered, the facilitator invites participants to share the feedback that was most meaningful to them, to clarify any ambiguous messages, and to express the feelings they have experienced during the process.

Variations

- I. Participants may be permitted to send messages only to those persons toward whom they have significant positive feelings.
- II. The content can be changed to negative feedback. One alternative is to have two phases, one positive and the other negative. The order of the phases can be reversed.
- III. Participants can be focused on one at a time. The other members can write messages to an individual while he is predicting what feedback he will receive.
- IV. The process can be generalized to include almost any content. Examples: "What I can't say to you is . . .," "You are the (superlative adjective) person in this group," "I want you to . . .," "I rank you _____ in closeness to me in this group because . . ."
- V. Actual gifts may be exchanged as symbolic feedback. Participants can be instructed to bring to the session a personal gift that is significant to them. They may also be asked to leave the meeting to find symbolic gifts, such as flowers, stones, leaves, books, pictures, etc.