

SUGGESTED OUTLINE FOR ELDER ABUSE PROGRAM

1. Part One

What is elder abuse?

Understanding the different forms of elder abuse

Developing an understanding of the legal obligations/requirements regarding elder care.

2. Part Two

What is the process of aging? Dealing with the changes of aging- looking at this from the perspective of the elder and from the perspective of the caregiver.

Understanding Alzheimer's

Understanding Dementia

"The changing of the guard" understanding the role reversal that occurs with aging and how it impacts each-the elder and the caregiver.

3. Part Three

Anger Management/Stress Management/Self Responsibility/Feelings

Understanding drug/substance abuse-from the perspective of both elder and caregiver

The importance of support systems-the need for one for both and the understanding of the loss of the support system of the elder and the increasing dependence on the caregiver.

How to do an effective time out-for both elders and care-givers

4. Part Four

Developing new strategies for coping-from both perspectives-the caretaker has to learn to help the elder form and utilize new coping strategies.

Testing: Learning how to ask for help/learning how to be asked for help/setting and implementing boundaries/dealing with expectations and unmet expectations.

5. Part Five

Empathy: Understanding aging-the loss of self, the time running out, and the lack of time to “fix” relationships. Learning to accept what is and deal with “what is”.

Understanding loss and accepting what is-working on the quality of life as is now exists.

6. Part Six

Control Plan-putting these lessons together and developing a plan for dealing with oneself and the needs of the caregiver. Knowing when there is a conflict and developing strategies for dealing with these conflicts. Knowing when to make a change-for oneself and for those who are being taken care of.

ELDER ABUSE TREATMENT PROGRAM

PART ONE

WHAT IS ELDER ABUSE

- Elder abuse is an umbrella term used to describe one or more of the following:
- Physical abuse-willful infliction of physical pain or injury
- Sexual abuse-infliction of non-consensual sexual contact of any kind
- Emotional or psychological abuse infliction of mental or emotional anguish
- Financial or material exploitation-the improper act or process of an individual, using the resources of an older person, without his/her consent, for someone else's benefit.
- Neglect- the failure of a caretaker to provide goods or services necessary to avoid physical harm, mental anguish or mental illness, e.g., abandonment, denial of food or health related services.
- Self-neglect is characterized as the behavior of an elderly person that threatens his/her own health or safety.
- It is violence or the threat of violence
- It is the willful or unlawful use of physical force
- Elder abuse does not have to include an injury
- It is placing another person in apprehension of imminent and serious danger
- Usually the abuse is subtle and the distinction between normal interpersonal stress and abuse is not always easy to discern

In California, the purpose of the Elder Abuse act is:

- ❖ The legislature recognized that elders and dependent adults may be subjected to abuse, neglect, or abandonment and that this State has a responsibility to protect these individuals.
- ❖ These elderly people deserve additional protections by the state.
- ❖ Many elders and dependent adults are more vulnerable because of their disabilities.
- ❖ The legislature found that infirm elderly persons and dependent adults are a disadvantaged class.
- ❖ The legislature intended to make it easier to sue for elder abuse and to allow more protection of elders and dependent adults. (W&I Code 15600and 15601)

What is Elder Abuse in California?

Generally, abuse of an elder or dependent adult is defined as:

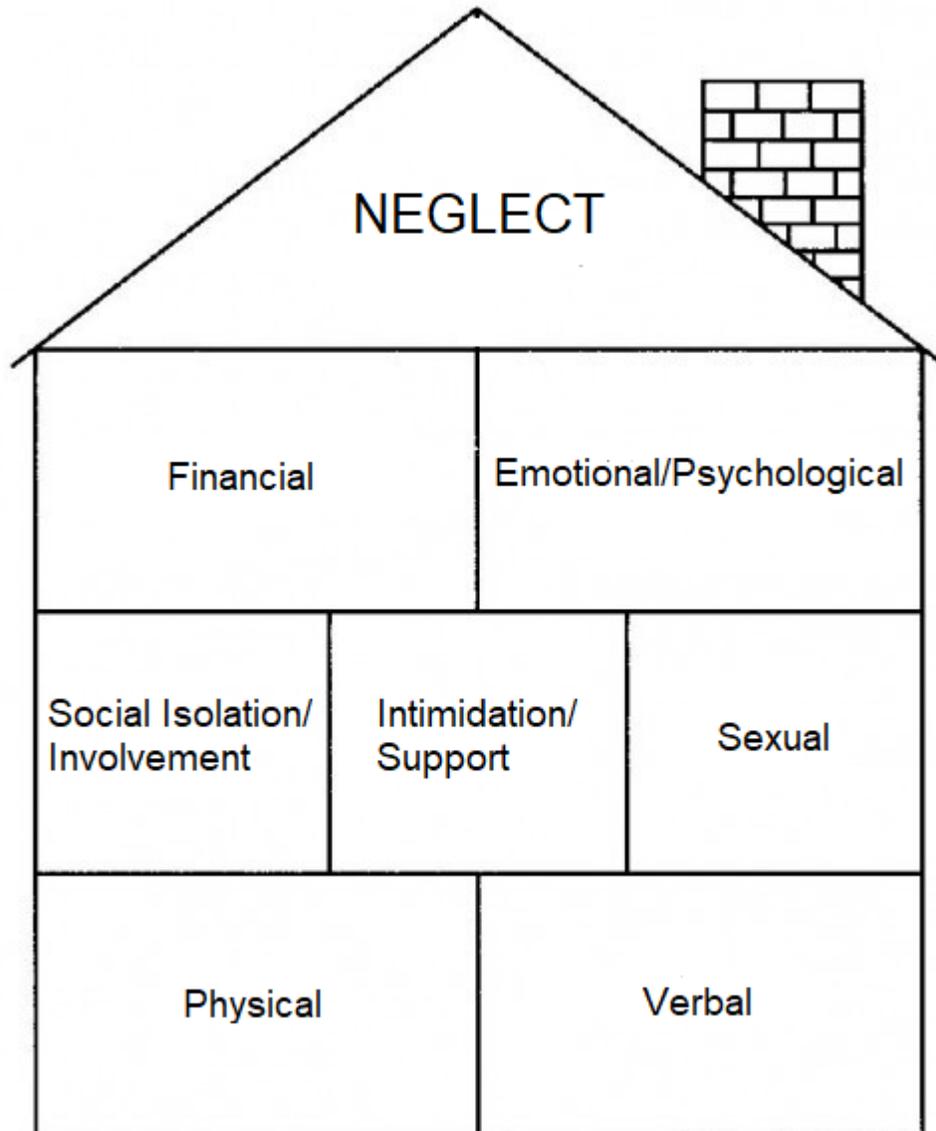
- (a) Physical abuse, neglect, financial abuse, abandonment, isolation, abduction, or other treatment with resulting physical harm or pain or mental suffering.
- (b) The deprivation by a care custodian of goods or services that are necessary to avoid physical harm or mental suffering. (W & I. Code § 15610.07)

Recent research says elders who have been abused tend to die earlier than those who not abused, even in the absence of chronic conditions or life-threatening disease.

Most acts of elder abuse occur within families and occurs at home. Perpetrators of elder abuse are family members in 90% of cases. 2/3 of the perpetrators are adult children or spouses

Please watch this video: <http://bit.ly/2zk8Tyl>

KOONIN/WILLIAMS HOUSE OF ELDER ABUSE



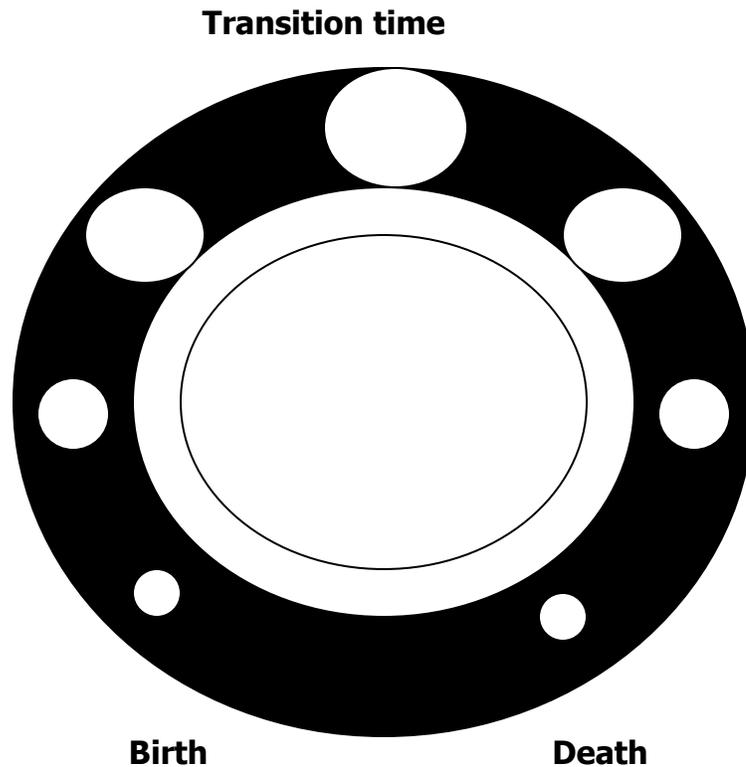
Please watch these videos: <http://bit.ly/2zpBmlR>
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<http://bit.ly/2hgNUW5>
<http://bit.ly/2zoSEiU>
<http://bit.ly/2zjpGBm>

**KOONIN WILLIAMS HOUSE OF ELDER ABUSE RESPONSIBILITY
CHECKLIST-things to think about**

1. What have my abusive behaviors been in this relationship?
2. What are the behaviors you need to change?
- 3.
4. What are four specific actions you take right now to help yourself are:
- 5.
6. What are triggers you can identify that leads to your abusive behaviors?

**PART TWO: THE PROCESS OF AGING, THE CHANGING OF THE GUARD,
AND THE IMPACT OF CHEMICAL ABUSE
THE PROCESS OF AGING**

As people age, changes occur in their bodies, their minds, their response time, their ability to handle stress, their ability to process information. Life tends to happen in a process much like the below.



If we think of life as a process, we can look at the circles above as the time between life and death. In the beginning of life, the job of the child is to make his/her circle bigger as they develop skills, increase independence, and move away from caregivers-both emotionally and physically. As life progresses, we all experience a transition time-where our circle of life starts to decrease instead of increase. The job of life then becomes adjusting to the circle getting smaller and loss of independence. Often, seniors seem like children-and this circle of life can show how that happens. The important thing to remember is that we have to be aware of where anyone is in the life cycle and make demands/requests that are appropriate to that stage of life.

In addition to the natural process of aging, there are also other dynamics that come into play. Because caregivers of the aging are often family members, there are usually a lot of issues going on in the relationship. There may be unresolved conflicts, unsaid or undone deeds, past or present resentments,

issues of loyalty, of loss, of unmet needs or other things. All of these play an ongoing part in the relationship.

Based on the information above, think about the following:

1. What losses, physical, mental, emotional, supportive, stimulating has the elder gone through?
2. How is the elder dealing with those losses? How am I dealing with how they are dealing with those losses?
3. What are my expectations for/from this elder? How do I make those expectations known?
4. What do I do when those expectations are not met?

Please watch these videos: <http://bit.ly/2hPfwOT>
<http://bit.ly/2zpGuXh>

What is Dementia?

Dementia is defined as a decline in intellectual ability to a point that it interferes with social or occupational functioning.

You can explain the disease using a department store analogy: Eaton's is one type, Sears in another, Wal-Mart is another, but they're all department stores. With dementias, there's Alzheimer disease, vascular dementia (stroke), alcoholic dementia, and others. They're all dementias, but all different. Some are reversible (drug or alcohol-induced), some aren't (Alzheimer's).

- The big 3 (most common) are Alzheimer Disease (6 of 10 people with dementia have AD), vascular dementia and frontal lobe dementia.
- Overall, 1 in 10 cases of dementia is curable

The disease of Alzheimer's is sometimes a slow and progressive disease. The affects of the disease destroys portions of the brain that show up in the patient as lapses in memory at first, forgetting details direction. The cause of Alzheimer's is not known. Alzheimer's disease is characterized by loss of abilities involving memory, judgment and abstract thinking.

- Dementia is defined as a decline in intellectual ability to a point that it interferes with social or occupational functioning.

Alzheimer's is a physical illness that changes the brain. Alzheimer's is just one of the forms of dementia (dementia is a decline of an individual's mental health) affecting Americans today. It is natural for people to lose the ability to remember memories and or general information as they grow older. However, Alzheimer's is more than becoming more and more forgetful. Alzheimer's disease leads to the following conditions as well:

- Changes in behavior
- Changes in personality
- Changes in ability or skills

These changes are not only difficult and frustrating for the person with the disease, but they are also very challenging to loved ones. The changes are a direct result of the disease and are not fault of anyone. There are no known causes of the disease at present. However, much research is being done to discover the cause and hopefully the prevention of this disease. Some of the identified risk factors that lead to the disease are:

- Genetics (a history of the disease in the immediate family members)
- Age (simply growing older)
- Serious head injuries
- Females (women have are in a higher risk category than men)

THE CHANGING OF THE GUARD-it happens to most of us

The process of the aging is difficult and watching a parent age with the added disease of dementia can create an almost unbearable situation for the family to endure.

In the normal process of aging, the elder diminishes in abilities and develops an increasing dependence on the younger members of the family for care and even for decision making. Because we are living longer, this process can go on for a long time and can create stresses on both sides of the relationship.

For the elder, there is a loss of independence and an awareness of needing to be taken care of. Often, they can no longer drive-this is perhaps the ultimate loss of independence. Their life becomes an open book-at least in their eyes and the loss of privacy can be profound. They may be dependent financially, or their finances may be what is supporting who is taking care of them. The loss of

being able to make decisions or spend money as they please can be very uncomfortable. In addition, there is loss of mobility, decreased energy, chronic illness and/or pain, and often loss of productivity-at least in their eyes.

For the caretaker, there is an increase in responsibility and in demands on their time. There is the loss of the "leader" and often this leads to a sense of isolation and aloneness. Watching a parent or loved elder lose their strength and abilities can be devastating-and often is a constant reminder of their own mortality. There can be guilt at "using" the elder's money, or resentment at having to use one's own money to take care of the elder. At any rate, this "switch" of positions takes a lot of energy and understanding to navigate.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Is dementia or Alzheimer's a part of the elder you are dealing with? If so, how do the symptoms present themselves?
2. What are difficult situations to handle, difficult times, or even difficult people for your elder?
3. What are the "hot spots" in this relationship?
4. What are the difficult behaviors of the elder for you to handle? Do you know why they are difficult?
5. What are your triggers? What are your unhealthy responses to the above?

Please watch this video for some examples of elder abuse

<https://youtu.be/0COGoiC9VHU>

CHEMICAL ABUSE AND VIOLENCE

There often is a connection between abuse/mistreatment and the use of substances. Some of the reasons for this are: a person is less inhibited when under the influence of drugs or alcohol, therefore they may be less inhibited to do things that would not be done if sober; feelings and behaviors are acted out more quickly when under the influence of alcohol/drugs. However, it must be clearly recognized that **ALCOHOL OR DRUGS DO NOT CAUSE VIOLENCE, AND CANNOT BE USED AS AN EXCUSE FOR VIOLENCE.**

Some of the consequences of using drugs or alcohol for a long period of time are:

- Becoming addicted, either physically or psychologically

- Causing physical damage to one's mind and/or body
- Compromising of one's values
- Covering up feelings
- Running away from feelings
- Creating family and/or work problems
- Creating problems with the law
- Death

Alcohol is a depressant and as such, a person under the influence of alcohol is less in control of their behavior. In addition, many people are less aware of their emotional state when they are under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

COMMON REASONS FOR USING CHEMICALS-be honest about which ones apply to you

- To relax
- To fit in with the crowd
- Peer pressure
- To better relate to friends or family
- To avoid friends or family
- To avoid feeling depressed
- To avoid an argument
- To escape problems at home
- To feel better about yourself
- To feel better about others
- To avoid feeling lonely
- To feel like you belong in a group
- To have fun
- To get high
- To get drunk
- To go to sleep

- To feel more relaxed about having sex
- To stuff feelings
- Other

Things to think about:

Have substances been involved in the abusive aspects of your relationship

Do you feel that you have a problem with substance abuse? If so, what are you now doing or are going to do about it? What do you need to start getting help with dealing with the problems?

Do you feel that the elder you are dealing with has a problem with substance abuse? If so, how?

CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY EXERCISE

1. Do you occasionally use heavily after a disappointment, a quarrel, or when your superiors give you a hard time?
2. When you have trouble or feel under pressure, do you use more than usual?
3. Have you noticed that you are able to handle more alcohol or drugs than you did when you were first using?
4. Do you ever wake up on the "morning after" and discover that you could not remember part of the evening before, even though your friends tell you that you did not "pass out"?
5. When using with other people, do you try to have a little more when others will not know it?
6. Are there certain occasions when you feel uncomfortable if alcohol or drugs are not available?
7. Have you recently noticed that when you being using, you are in more of a hurry to get the first hit than you used to be?
8. Do you sometimes feel guilty about your use?
9. Are you secretly irritated when you family or friends discuss your use of alcohol/drugs?
10. Have you recently noticed an increase in the frequency of your memory "blackouts"?
11. Do you often find that you wish to continue using after your friends say they have had enough?
12. Do you usually have a reason for the occasions when you use heavily?
13. When you are sober, do you often regret things you have said or done?
14. Have you tried switching drugs or following different plans for controlling or cutting down on your use?
15. Have you often failed to keep the promises you have made to yourself about controlling or cutting down on your use?
16. Have you ever tried to control your use by making a change in your jobs, or moving to a new location?
17. Do you try to avoid family or close friends when you are using?
18. Are you having an increasing number of financial and/or work problems?

19. Do more people seem to be treating you unfairly without good reason?
20. Do you eat very little or irregularly when you are using?
21. Do you sometimes have the "shakes" in the morning and find that it helps to have a drink or a hit?
22. Have you recently noticed that you cannot use as much as you once did?
23. Do you sometimes stay drunk or high for several days at a time?
24. Do you sometimes feel very depressed and wonder whether life is worth living?
25. Sometimes after periods of using, do you see or hear things that aren't there?
26. Do you get terribly frightened after you have been using heavily?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you have some of the symptoms that may indicate alcohol or drug abuse. You may want to consider getting help for this. Please remember that substance abuse/addiction can occur in the elder also. This addiction can create problems and could lead to abuse. Please watch this video:

<https://youtu.be/6iZvybppF5I>

Part Three-Anger Management, Stress Management, Self Responsibility

Let's look at anger. Anger, used ineffectively or too long, causes severe damage to all kinds of relationships. What can be done about unhealthy anger?

1. Realize that anger is a normal response to something happening in your life. On-going anger may be a response to unresolved frustration and/or emotional distress.
2. Anger is not wrong-it is what one does with or about their anger that creates healthy or unhealthy situations.
3. Repressed anger can cause problems in all areas of life-health, personal, professional, and legal. Rather than repress anger, learn to admit anger.
4. Learn to use the energy of anger in a responsible and effective manner.
5. Instead of running away from anger, stay and confront it.
6. Use anger to improve rather than destroy relationships.
7. Let go of the need for revenge.
8. Work on owning your own feelings instead of projecting them onto others.
9. Take time to look at all the perspectives of a situation-this may help you let go of anger.

Our anger belongs to us!! No one else can "make" us angry. Anger, like any other emotion, is a choice. The only person who decides if you are angry or not is you! Only you can decide to stuff it, escalate it, or direct it.

What are your body signals to anger? Think of at least four changes you notice when you are becoming angry.

What are your angry behaviors? List four positive ones and four negative ones.

Positive	Negative

Please identify at least four situations that seem to set your anger off.

Look at the SPECTRUM FOR THE EXPRESSION OF ANGER

ANNOYANCE	IRRITATION	ANGER	RAGE	FURY
A	B	C	D	E

Annoyance is felt when the distress is slight. It is short lasting and relatively to work through.

Irritation indicates that the excitation is building up in the muscles, not yet to the point of exploding in aggressive action. With irritation, the time to resolve and calm down is longer than annoyance.

Anger is a response to pain. Pain denotes that the excitation in the muscular system has reached a boiling point. In these situations, control is decided on a conscious level- an individual is still in control of their actions and makes the decision of what level of response is needed.

Rage is a reaction to severe pain. Self-control is lessening. Rage has the potential to be destructive.

Fury is a level of feeling where there is no self-control and no ability to be reasoned with by others.

It is important to know where we "live" on an everyday basis on the above spectrum. It is much easier to get to rage or fury if you are at anger than if you are at annoyance. When we hold on to anger from previous situations, we "live" at higher levels of anger arousal and it is easier to become more aroused by even relatively simple situations.

Think about the following questions.

1. Where are you most of the time on the spectrum scale?
2. Identify three situations for each of the levels on the spectrum.
3. How do you know when you are angry? (what happens in your body, what are you thinking, what other emotions are you feeling?)
4. What do you do when you are angry?
5. What are the negative and positive consequences of your anger?
6. Are you afraid of your anger? If yes, why?
7. Do you use anger as a tool for controlling people or situations? If yes, how?
8. Where did you learn your anger responses? How are they similar to the elder's?
9. What was a time when your anger caused harm or pain to someone you love.

DEFENSES

Defenses are mechanisms we use to avoid uncomfortable feelings. To avoid painful feelings. To avoid looking at the parts of ourselves that we need to change, and sometimes to avoid looking at our relationships with others in a clear way. Many of us are afraid of change and we avoid facing the need for change by using our defenses. Unfortunately, the end result is often more chaos and problems.

Look at the list of defenses below and identify the ones you use.

	Anger		Can't remember
	Dismissing		Depression
	Distancing		Rationalizing
	Sarcasm		Intellectualizing
	Defiance		Passive/aggressive behavior
	Detachment		Compliance
	Denial		Resentment/rage
	Avoidance		Fantasy
	Blame		Suppression
	Judge		Disassociation
	Victim		Insulation
	Martyr		Grandiosity
	Pretend		Shame
	Weeping		Silence
	Laughing		Compensation
	Smiling		Rage
	Fainting		Talkative
	Projection		Sad
	Shutdown		Pain

1. What feelings do you avoid by using these defenses?
2. What situations are most difficult for you and you find that you are using these defenses more often?
3. What defenses does the elder use?
4. What problems have been caused by you being defensive?
5. What are your fears about what will happen (how others will think of you, if you will look or feel vulnerable, experience loss of prestige, power, relationships, etc.) if you let your defenses down?
6. How do you think your relationship would change if you let your defenses down?

Support systems are important all the time. In care-taking situations, they take on an even bigger importance. The elders are losing their support systems-often at an alarming rate. Death is all around them. Their friends may be dying and there may be no replacements. Sometimes they feel that all they have in life is memories. Imagine feeling that your future is "all behind you". For the caretaker, a support system is very important because the more the caring can be shared, the better quality of caretaking there will be. Sometimes there is not a big or strong support system and the stress on the relationship is high. It is imperative to focus on developing and maintaining a support system for both elder and caretaker.

Questions to consider

1. Who and what is your support system?
Who and what is the support system of the elder?
2. How effectively or ineffectively do both of you use your support systems?
3. What steps can you take to enhance both support systems?

Stress and Stress Management

Stress is cumulative. We carry the effects of events in our lives for about one year. It is a very good idea to assess yourself about every six months for your stress level. The following test is a good tool for assessing how much stress you may be carrying around at any given time. Source: Holmes Rahe Stress Inventory

The Holmes-Rahe Life Stress Inventory

The Social Readjustment Rating Scale

INSTRUCTIONS: Mark down the point value of each of these life events that has happened to you during the previous year. Total these associated points.

Life Event	Mean Value
1. Death of spouse	100
2. Divorce	73
3. Marital Separation from mate	65
4. Detention in jail or other institution	63
5. Death of a close family member	63
6. Major personal injury or illness	53
7. Marriage	50
8. Being fired at work	47
9. Marital reconciliation with mate	45
10. Retirement from work	45
11. Major change in the health or behavior of a family member	44
12. Pregnancy	40
13. Sexual Difficulties	39
14. Gaining a new family member (i.e.. birth, adoption, older adult moving in, etc)	39
15. Major business readjustment	39
16. Major change in financial state (i.e.. a lot worse or better off than usual)	38
17. Death of a close friend	37
18. Changing to a different line of work	36
19. Major change in the number of arguments w/spouse (i.e.. either a lot more or a lot less than usual regarding child rearing, personal habits, etc.)	35
20. Taking on a mortgage (for home, business, etc..)	31
21. Foreclosure on a mortgage or loan	30
22. Major change in responsibilities at work (i.e. promotion, demotion, etc.)	29
23. Son or daughter leaving home (marriage, attending college, joined mil.)	29
24. In-law troubles	29
25. Outstanding personal achievement	28
26. Spouse beginning or ceasing work outside the home	26
27. Beginning or ceasing formal schooling	26
28. Major change in living condition (new home, remodeling, deterioration of neighborhood or home etc.)	25
29. Revision of personal habits (dress manners, associations, quitting smoking)	24
30. Troubles with the boss	23
31. Major changes in working hours or conditions	20
32. Changes in residence	20
33. Changing to a new school	20
34. Major change in usual type and/or amount of recreation	19
35. Major change in church activity (i.e.. a lot more or less than usual)	19
36. Major change in social activities (clubs, movies,visiting, etc.)	18
37. Taking on a loan (car, tv,freezer,etc)	17
38. Major change in sleeping habits (a lot more or a lot less than usual)	16
39. Major change in number of family get-togethers ("")	15
40. Major change in eating habits (a lot more or less food intake, or very different meal hours or surroundings)	15
41. Vacation	13
42. Major holidays	12
43. Minor violations of the law (traffic tickets, jaywalking, disturbing the peace, etc)	11

Now, add up all the points you have to find your score.

150pts or less means a relatively low amount of life change and a low susceptibility to stress-induced health breakdown.

150 to 300 pts implies about a 50% chance of a major health breakdown in the next 2 years.

300pts or more raises the odds to about 80%, according to the Holmes-Rahe statistical prediction model.

Change in life creates stress. The more change, the more stress. The more stress, the more prone to illness, injury, or accidents. For those individuals with a score over 300, approximately 80% of them will become ill, have a serious accident or injury in the near future, for individuals with a score between 150-299, approximately 50% of them will become ill, have a serious accident or injury in the near future. For individuals with scores below 150, approximately 30% of them will become ill, have a serious accident or injury.

The higher the score, the more cumulative stress you are carrying. The more stress you are carrying, the stronger the need to take positive care of yourself.

STRESS MODEL

If we look at a dynamic mode of stress, we will see the following components: **Stressors, Initial Reaction**, and the **Individualized Stress Response**. It is very important to remember that the stress response can be modified by the reaction. The reaction to the stressor is what we have to deal with and work to change. The model looks like this:



Depending on outcomes from the appraisal and reaction there is a positive or a negative outcome from the stress situation.

Stress outcomes:

Negative-----creating wear and tear

This can be manifested by: emotional upheaval, physical strain and tension.

Positive-----creating changes and growth

This can be manifested by: satisfaction, relief and tiredness.

Stressors do not change much. Different changes in life will create new and different stressors, however we all have things in our lives that will create stress-and this differs from person to person. What stresses one will not necessarily stress another. So, we need to identify our individual stress patterns. The changes occur in how an individual perceives the stress, and how they handle the stress. It all comes down to developing insight and control of oneself and using that insight and control to manage reactions more effectively.

Step 1-What stresses me?

Step 2-What are my unhealthy ways of dealing with these stressors?

Step 3-What do I need to do differently to deal with my stresses?

It is important to recognize that the amount of stress that an individual is able to handle varies from time to time. This is because we are constantly under stress from

sources that we are not conscious of-such as the physical environment, the condition of our body, unresolved or pending emotional issues, etc. This is where the value of the Life Experiences Assessment becomes apparent. When we know about where we are in terms of life stresses, we can monitor ourselves for negative responses, take appropriate care of ourself, and lessen/monitor our exposure to more stress.

It is also important to remember that there is a difference between stress and stressor. Stress is the effect of stressors. Stressors are the things that have the impact on us that creates the stressful effect. Generally speaking, stressors come from three sources-internal, cognitive, and external.

Internal	Cognitive	External
Changing body states	Thinking	Through sensory organs
Hunger	Threats-real or imagined	Heat/cold
Thirst	Worry/fear	Sun
Changing biorhythms due to hormone cycles (yes PMS can be very stressful)	Incongruity/Ambiguity (things are not rational or logical	Light
Physical activity/pain	Emotional excitement-	Noise
Drugs/Chemicals	positive or negative	Smell/Taste
		Touch/closeness
		Vibes from others

All of these are working on each of us all the time. You simply cannot escape stress!

It isn't the stress that we have to worry about; it is the reaction we have to the stress that we have to deal with and potentially to change.

Another way of looking at stressors is to put them into categories. Here is one method of doing this:

Type One	Type Two	Type Three
Stressors that can be changed with a minimum of effort. These are classified as “easy to change”	Stressors that can be changed, but which require a great deal of effort. These are classified as “hard to change”	Stressors that are impossible to change
Examples of this might be: ill-fitting clothing, bright, dim, or flashing light, loud noise, other people, thirst, hunger, worry, thinking...	Examples of this might be: being in the wrong job, the wrong relationship, living in the wrong part of the country, ill health-sometimes, other people, money responsibilities, retirement, job pressure...	Examples of this might be: death, loss of spouse, incurable illness, birth order, family, deformity or physical limitation and social/cultural factors...
Techniques to use are: deep breathing, tensing and relaxing muscle groups, removing the source of the stress, physical activity, shifting attention, relaxation, and use of humor	Techniques to use are: decision/choice making, trusting one’s intuition, alone time to quiet and assess, talking to trusted person, walks, meditation.	Techniques to use are: acceptance/grieving. Using religion/ humor to find meaning. Allowing time for adaptation and healing to occur
It is nice to know that most of the stressors people face today are really this type	This is the most draining stressor type as the conflict involved really burns up both emotional and physical energy	When a stressor cannot be changed, we have to change the way we react to it

Note: Typing stressors is a subjective process. What one person might consider a Type 1 stressor may be a Type 2 or 3 stressor on another day or occasion. Different people will have different definitions of Types 1,2, and 3 stressors.

Too much stress causes “distress”. This is when we become dysfunctional and less able to handle things. Our creativity level diminishes, and our ability to find new and more appropriate solutions to problems is limited. Under “distress”, we revert to old and perhaps maladaptive patterns of coping.

We all have individual signs of distress. Use the table below to identify some of your "Signs of Distress".

Mood and Disposition	Musculoskeletal	Visceral
I become overexcited	My fingers and hands shake	My stomach gets upset
I worry	I can't sit or stand still	I feel my heart pounding
I feel insecure	I develop twitches	I sweat profusely
I have difficulty sleeping	My head begins to ache	My hands become moist
I become easily confused and forgetful/ill at ease	I feel my muscles become tense/stiff	I feel light-headed or faint
Other	I stutter and stammer	My face becomes "hot"
Other	My neck becomes stiff	I experience cold chills
	My back tightens up	I experience ringing in my ears
	Other	I get a shrinking feeling in my stomach

Our internal "conversation" is called "self-talk" and it goes on inside of us on a constant basis. It happens on a more or less "automatic" basis-similar to driving a car- and we tend to be unaware of it most of the time.

With some practice and self-awareness, we can tune in to our self-talk

What we want to do now is to begin to help you look at the way that you conceptualize events and how that way helps or hinders you in managing stress.

This is a new way of thinking and of conceptualizing events. What we hope to accomplish is to open the parameters of how you view events and offer you some new ways of perceiving, understanding, and responding to the things that happen in your life. With this new way of perceiving things, we anticipate that your ability to deal with stress will dramatically improve.

Some of the things that we will be looking at are "how do we enable ourselves to succeed/fail?" "How do we use up our energy in unhealthy ways?" "What are the things that we can change in our life to make it better?"

Thoughts and feelings are very closely connected to each other. The emotional reactions that we have are almost always the result of our general outlook, or our interpretation of specific situations. The way that we do this is by carrying on an internal conversation with ourselves. This and become aware of the messages that we send ourselves. Then we can change the messages so we can delete the negative things and increase the positive things.

The reason that this works is as follows: once a change is made, the benefits are seen, and as time passes, the new self-talk becomes a natural and spontaneous way of being and thinking. This is learning by doing, and learning by allowing.

So, how does self-talk work? The concept is as follows: an event, for example, someone cuts you off on the freeway, happens. You then have reaction-which might be honking your horn, yelling at the person, or simply ignoring the whole thing. Something determines that reaction. What is it? Most of us think that the event itself triggered the reaction. However, that isn't true. The reaction was triggered by what is called your "self-talk". Self-talk is an automatic reaction that we say to ourselves which then triggers our response to any event. This self-talk is so quick and so automatic that we are generally totally unaware of it. Basically, the format looks like this:

Event-----interpretation- (self-talk)-----reaction
A-----B-----C

This concept may take some thinking about before it makes sense. Most of us are so used to the idea that our reactions are based on external situations that it is difficult to accept that we are the ones in **total** command of our reaction.

So, what determines this self-talk you may ask. Our self-talk is based on our past experiences, our current stress level, what is going on in our lives at the current moment, our personalities, and our physiological state. Many of us have self-talk that we learned at a very early age and which has persisted with us all through our lives. Our self-talk depends on our self-esteem and our self-esteem is often determined by our self-talk.

This self-talk-concept works as follows:

A-first there is an event that happens. For example, let's say that your boss came up to you and hit you on the shoulder.

B-now comes the self-talk or the way that you interpret what just happened. You may think, "what is he doing?", "what is going on here?", Or "damn, I don't have to take that." Etc. There are endless interpretations that you may have to the event-again the interpretation depends on a variety of things such as history, current situation, personalities, etc.

C-this is the feelings, emotion, and action stage. This is where you react. Again, the reaction could take a number of forms, from violence to disbelief, from hitting back to running and more. The reaction is totally dependent on what your self-talk has been.

An easy way to prove this to yourself is to imagine the same event happening to you from different people. To make this more dramatic, let's imagine that the different people have very different positions and status in your life. For example, your best friend comes up and slaps you on the back. Now imagine what your response might be.

Think back from the response to determine what your self-talk would be that would determine that particular response. Again, imagine the same situation, only now the person slapping you on the back is someone you don't particularly like. Again, what might be your response? Think back again to determine the self-talk that would lead to this response.

D-this is the stage of the program where you learn to switch the interpretation of the event. Your new interpretation leads to...

E-new feelings, new emotions, and new behavior.

The premise of this program is that we can change our behavior, and change our feelings by changing our self-talk.

This is how the change would happen:

Event- (A)-this would stay the same

Use an event from your life.

Interpretation- (B)-your self-talk

Reaction-(C)-your feelings and behaviors are:

Now we change or switch the self-talk-this results in:

New and different interpretation- (D)-your new self-talk

New and different reaction- (E)-your different reaction is: (new feelings and behavior)

Our self-talk is the main determinant of how we look at the world. Do we see it as a positive place or do we see it as hostile and threatening? How do we set ourselves up for success or failure, happiness, or unhappiness?

Are we open to opportunities that come our way or are we convinced that nothing will go right anyway? Our self-talk has a strong impact on how much stress we can take at any given time, and also on how we handle that stress.

As you start this change process remember that it will take time and that it will only happen by actively doing it, and staying with it until we begin to see the results.

Once we start monitoring our self-talk and actively work on changing it, we begin to see patterns in our lives that have hurt us and which may have kept us from succeeding in what we want. As time progresses and we are actively working to change the self-talk, we see signs of change and progress. These changes will reinforce the new self-talk and a new pattern toward a healthier and happier us is begun.

Let's look at how this concept works with stress. When we experience stress and other unpleasant emotions, we usually view these reactions as being directly triggered by disturbing situations. But, if we look more closely at the process, we will see that when the disturbing event happens, we tell ourselves something about it ("this is awful!"; "they're screwing things up for me" etc), and it is this self-statement which triggers the emotion. Hence the model:

Situation- (a)-----self-statement- (b)-----emotion/behaviors-(c)

In looking at this concept, we can begin to understand why two different persons can respond to the same situation with far different emotional reactions. It also shows that by changing our internal self-statements at (b) we can change our emotional responses at (c). The way we do this is to discover what we are telling ourselves at (b), challenging those self-defeating statements and replacing them with adaptive self-statements that decrease or prevent the emotional response.

Thus, once we have learned what we are saying internally to make ourselves upset, we can develop a new set of specific self-statements to use with disturbing events.

The goal of this program is to provide you with a specific set of physical (relaxation) and mental (adaptive self-statements) tools to cope with stress.

Distressing ourselves

What kinds of self-statements are involved when we experience stress, anger and other negative emotions? One way to find out is to stop whenever you find yourself getting upset and ask yourself what you are internally saying to yourself that is causing the distress. You will find that in most instances the sentences take forms such as, "isn't it awful that..." Or "wouldn't it be terrible if..." Or "what an (awful) (lousy) (rotten) thing for (me) (him) (her) (them) to do."

In most cases, you are either telling yourself that it is awful that things are not the way you are demanding that they be, or you are condemning yourself or someone else because your demands are not being met. (Often you will find that you are catastrophizing about something over which you have no direct control.)

We use the term "catastrophizing" to describe the kind of thinking that leads to much stress and emotional disturbance. By this we mean that relatively minor frustrations, inconveniences, and concerns are emotionally blown up so that they become, for the moment, catastrophes which are emotionally reacted to as such (for it is appropriate to become very upset over true catastrophes). Much of our distress-producing thinking takes the form, "I don't like this situation! This is terrible! I can't stand it! It's driving me crazy! It shouldn't be this way! It must change, or I can't possibly be happy". If we stop and ask ourselves "how is it terrible that...?" Or "why would it actually be awful if...?" Or "who am I to demand that things be exactly the way I'd like them to be?"

We will often find that we will quickly get over being upset because we can readily see the irrational aspects of what we are telling ourselves. By systematically tuning in to

your own internal statements about troublesome situations, you will find that you can quickly pin down the thoughts that are producing your distress.

Intense emotion can often have a disruptive effect on performance. We can become so upset or angry that it is hard to function effectively. For example, some students become so anxious and fearful during tests that they cannot answer questions. One reason why intense emotion can disrupt performance is that we become so bound up in self-defeating thoughts about how terrible the situation is or will be that we cannot devote full attention to what we should be doing to cope with the situation.

A key to mentally coping with stress is an awareness of the role that your own thoughts play in generating distress. Whenever you feel yourself becoming upset, the first thing you need to tell yourself is: "I am creating this feeling by the way I am thinking. How can I stop myself from becoming upset?"

This statement, or one like it, will not only serve to place things in proper perspective, but will also cause you to focus on your own stress-producing thoughts and how you can substitute stress-reducing thoughts. It immediately alerts you that it is time to use the physical relaxation and mental coping techniques that you will learn here to minimize the stress.

As noted above, we often catastrophize when things are not the way we want them to be and we thereby create our own stress. Indeed, we can go even further and suggest that any time we experience unpleasant emotions (stress, anger, fear) it is because things or people (including ourselves) are not the way we want them to be. Thus, the idea that things should or must be the way we like them is an area that can be focused on to effect changes on in developing stress-reducing thoughts. Following are some examples that can be used to stop these irrational ideas from triggering stress: (Think about the ones you use in your everyday life.)

1. "I don't like this situation, but I certainly can live with it. No sense in getting strung out."
2. "There's no reason why the world should revolve around my needs."
3. "Unfortunately, people don't always behave like want them to. That's the way it goes- no use getting upset."
4. "Other people's needs are as important to them as mine are to me."
5. "I don't have to be perfect. I can make mistakes too. I don't have to please everyone."
6. "O.K., so I don't like this. It's not the end of the world."
7. "Don't catastrophize now. Put this in perspective."
8. "It would be nice if everything always went perfectly, but that's not the way life is."
9. "If I catastrophize about this, I deserve to be upset!"
10. "If I can change this situation, I need to do so. Thinking about what I can do about this situation is better than getting upset. I may not like it, but I can stand it."
11. "Keep cool. It's not that big a thing. Relax."
12. "Life is too short to let things like this make me miserable."

Use these examples to help you develop your own set of self-statements for coping with difficult situations. You will find that you can almost always short-circuit unpleasant emotions by placing things in a non-catastrophizing perspective.

Look at the following statements and think about how they could possibly help motivate you to finding solutions to problems.

1. "What is it that I have to do?"
2. "Don't think about being upset, just do what you have to do."
3. "Don't get all bent all out of shape. Just do what has to be done."
4. "Relax. You're in control. Take a deep breath."
5. "This upset is a cue for you to use your coping skills. Relax and think rationally."
6. Focus on the present. What is you have to do?"

We all know that behaviors that lead to positive outcomes become stronger and more efficient. One important source of reward for saying adaptive things to yourself is that they work, and they help you control your response, they give you powerful weapons against negative emotions. You can help this strengthening process along with internally rewarding yourself immediately after you use them effectively. When you feel yourself handling stress effectively, reward yourself; you're winning out over your deadliest enemy. Here are some examples of self-rewarding self-statements:

1. "Way to go! You're in control."
2. "Good-you're handling things."
3. "Beautiful-you did it!"

There appear to be several categories of negative self-talk that most people use. Following is a list of them with descriptions of how they work. Study the list to see which ones you tend to use in your everyday life.

1. **Filtering.** Taking the negative details and magnifying them while filtering out all positive aspects of the situation.
2. **Polarized thinking.** All or nothing. Things are black or white, good or bad. You must be perfect, or you are a failure. There is no middle ground.
3. **Oversgeneralization.** You come to a general conclusion based on a single incident or piece of information. If something bad happens once, you expect it to happen over and over again.
4. **Mind reading.** Without them saying so, you know what people are feeling and why they act the way they do. In particular, you are able to divine how others are feeling toward you.
5. **Catastrophizing.** You expect disaster. You notice or hear about a problem and start with "what ifs". What if tragedy strikes? What if it happens to you?
6. **Personalization.** Thinking that everything people do or say is some kind of reaction to you. You also compare yourself to others, trying to determine who is smarter, better looking, etc.
7. **Control fallacies.** If you feel externally controlled, you see yourself as helpless, a victim of fate. The fallacy of internal control has you responsible for the pain and happiness of everyone around you.

8. **The myth of fairness.** You feel resentful because you think you know what is fair, but others won't agree with you.
9. **Errors in blaming.** You hold others responsible for your pain or take the other tack and blame yourself for every problem and event.
10. **Shoulds.** You have a list of ironclad rules about how you and others should act. People who break the rules anger you and you feel guilty if you violate the "rules". "should", "must", "ought", and "have to" all fall into this category.
11. **Emotional reasoning.** You believe that what you feel must be true-automatically. If you feel stupid and boring, then you must be boring and stupid.
12. **The myth of change.** You expect that others will change to suit you if you just pressure or cajole them enough. You need to change others because your hopes of happiness seem to depend entirely on others.
13. **Awfulizing.** The tendency to predict that things will turn out awful for you, no matter how hard you try.
14. **Being right.** You are continually on trial to prove that your opinions and actions are right. Being wrong isn't allowable and you will go to any lengths to demonstrate your rightness.
15. **The myth of heavens' reward.** You expect that all your sacrifices and self-denial will pay off, as if someone were keeping score, you feel bitter when the reward doesn't come.
16. **Minimizing or discounting the positives.** You insist that your accomplishments or positive qualities don't count or happened because you were "lucky" or "in the right place at the right time". This would also include not being able to take credit for ones' accomplishments.
17. **Labeling.** You identify with your shortcomings. Instead of saying "I made a mistake", you tell yourself, "I am a jerk", or "I'm a fool", or a "loser".
18. **Down-putting.** The tendency to put yourself down for having one problem or making one mistake.

Recognize yourself in any of these? Most of us use many of them most of the time and we aren't even aware of it! Can you see how self-defeating these can be? Think of how nice it will be when these are no longer part of your thoughts and actions!

YOUR PERSONAL STRESS MAP

What are your personal risk factors?

Use the table below to think about the patterns that are presently causing difficulty in your life. Also think about the areas that you think may cause problems in the near future. What patterns, that you are using, could diminish the quality of your life in the future?

Physical	Mental	Emotional	Social	Spiritual	Lifestyle

YOUR DRAINERS

Activities/conditions
places/people/
things that...

At Home

At Work

At Play

	At Home	At Work	At Play
Annoy you			
Anger you			
Distract you			
Depress you			
Worry you			
Wear you out			
Bore you			
Frustrate you			
Plague you			

Types of stressors

Stress

The different kinds of stress



Stress management can be complicated and confusing because there are different types of [stress](#) — acute stress, episodic acute stress, and chronic stress — each with its own characteristics, symptoms, duration and treatment approaches. Let's look at each one.

Acute stress-type 1

Acute stress is the most common form of stress. It comes from demands and pressures of the recent past and anticipated demands and pressures of the near future. Acute stress is thrilling and exciting in small doses, but too much is exhausting. A fast run down a challenging ski slope, for example, is exhilarating early in the day. That same ski run late in the day is taxing and wearing. Skiing beyond your limits can lead to falls and broken bones. By the same token, overdoing on short-term stress can lead to psychological distress, tension headaches, upset stomach and other symptoms. Fortunately, acute stress symptoms are recognized by most people. It's a laundry list of what has gone awry in their lives: the auto accident that crumpled the car fender, the loss of an important contract, a deadline they're rushing to meet, their child's occasional problems at school and so on.

Because it is short term, acute stress doesn't have enough time to do the extensive damage associated with long-term stress. The most common symptoms are:

- Emotional distress — some combination of [anger or irritability](#), [anxiety](#) and [depression](#), the three stress emotions.
- Muscular problems including tension headache, back pain, jaw pain and the muscular tensions that lead to pulled muscles and tendon and ligament problems.
- Stomach, gut and bowel problems such as heartburn, acid stomach, flatulence, diarrhea, constipation and irritable bowel syndrome.

- Transient overarousal leads to elevation in blood pressure, rapid heartbeat, sweaty palms, heart palpitations, dizziness, migraine headaches, cold hands or feet, shortness of breath and chest pain.
Acute stress can crop up in anyone's life, and it is highly treatable and manageable.

Episodic acute stress-type 2

There are those, however, who suffer acute stress frequently, whose lives are so disordered that they are studies in chaos and crisis. They're always in a rush, but always late. If something can go wrong, it does. They take on too much, have too many irons in the fire, and can't organize the slew of self-inflicted demands and pressures clamoring for their attention. They seem perpetually in the clutches of acute stress.

It is common for people with acute stress reactions to be over aroused, short-tempered, irritable, anxious and tense. Often, they describe themselves as having "a lot of nervous energy." Always in a hurry, they tend to be abrupt, and sometimes their irritability comes across as hostility. Interpersonal relationships deteriorate rapidly when others respond with real hostility. The workplace becomes a very stressful place for them.

The cardiac prone, "Type A" personality described by cardiologists, Meter Friedman and Ray Rosenman, is similar to an extreme case of episodic acute stress. Type A's have an "excessive competitive drive, aggressiveness, impatience, and a harrying sense of time urgency." In addition there is a "free-floating, but well-rationalized form of hostility, and almost always a deep-seated insecurity." Such personality characteristics would seem to create frequent episodes of acute stress for the Type A individual. Friedman and Rosenman found Type A's to be much more likely to develop coronary heart disease than Type B's, who show an opposite pattern of behavior.

Another form of episodic acute stress comes from ceaseless worry. "Worry warts" see disaster around every corner and pessimistically forecast catastrophe in every situation. The world is a dangerous, unrewarding, punitive place where something awful is always about to happen. These "awfulizers" also tend to be over aroused and tense, but are more anxious and depressed than angry and hostile.

The symptoms of episodic acute stress are the symptoms of extended over arousal: persistent tension headaches, migraines, hypertension, chest pain and heart disease. Treating episodic acute stress requires intervention on a number of levels, generally requiring professional help, which may take many months.

Often, lifestyle and personality issues are so ingrained and habitual with these individuals that they see nothing wrong with the way they conduct their lives. They blame their woes on other people and external events. Frequently, they see their lifestyle, their patterns of interacting with others, and their ways of perceiving the world as part and parcel of who and what they are.

Sufferers can be fiercely resistant to change. Only the promise of relief from pain and discomfort of their symptoms can keep them in treatment and on track in their recovery program.

Chronic stress-type 3

While acute stress can be thrilling and exciting, chronic stress is not. This is the grinding stress that wears people away day after day, year after year. Chronic stress destroys bodies, minds and lives. It wreaks havoc through long-term attrition. It's the [stress of poverty](#), of dysfunctional families, of being trapped in an unhappy marriage or in a despised job or career. It's the stress that the never-ending "troubles" have brought to the people of Northern Ireland, the tensions of the Middle East have brought to the Arab and Jew, and the endless ethnic rivalries that have been brought to the people of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

[Chronic stress](#)

comes when a person never sees a way out of a miserable situation. It's the stress of unrelenting demands and pressures for seemingly interminable periods of time. With no hope, the individual gives up searching for solutions.

Some chronic stresses stem from traumatic, early childhood experiences that become internalized and remain forever painful and present. Some experiences profoundly affect personality. A view of the world, or a belief system, is created that causes unending stress for the individual (e.g., the world is a threatening place, people will find out you are a pretender, you must be perfect at all times). When personality or deep-seated convictions and beliefs must be reformulated, recovery requires active self-examination, often with professional help.

The worst aspect of chronic stress is that people get used to it. They forget it's there. People are immediately aware of acute stress because it is new; they ignore chronic stress because it is old, familiar, and sometimes, almost comfortable.

Chronic stress kills through suicide, violence, [heart attack, stroke and, perhaps, even cancer](#). People wear down to a final, fatal breakdown. Because physical and mental resources are depleted through long-term attrition, the symptoms of chronic stress are difficult to treat and may require extended medical as well as behavioral treatment and stress management

YOUR PERSONAL STRESSORS

In the space below think about and perhaps write down your current personal life stressors. For the next step, organize the stressors into Type 1, Type 2, and Type 3 stresses.

Stressor	Type One	Type Two	Type Three

Now do the same for your current occupational stressors

Stressor	Type One	Type Two	Type Three

1. Are there similarities in the personal and professional stressors? Do you see any patterns of things that stress you in your life-types of occasions, time frames, certain personalities, feeling taken advantage of, types of demands?
2. What is your contribution to the stress? Self-talk patterns, taking on too much, becoming defensive, etc.?
3. What can you do to handle the stresses? Change self-talk, relaxation response, move away from situation, etc.? Choose a situation and develop a plan.

As part of knowing yourself and what your strengths are in dealing with stress, take the following relaxation test to see where you stand in the ability to relax

Use the following scale:

3=Always

2=Sometimes

1=Seldom

- 1. Are you able to shut out your worries when you go to bed?
- 2. Are you able to take a nap during the day and awaken refreshed?
- 3. Is your clothing well fitting and comfortable?
- 4. Are you able to concentrate on one problem at a time?
- 5. Do you plan your day's activities?
- 6. Do you find time to relax and stretch during the day?
- 7. Do you take time to prevent tension by relieving sustained positions required in your work?
- 8. Do you know how to relax by doing simple movements when you feel yourself becoming tense because of sustained positions?
- 9. Do you check yourself frequently for habitual tension habits, such as scowling, clenched fists, tight jaws, hunched shoulders, or pursed lips?
- 10. Do you relax these signs of tension as you become aware of them?
- 11. Do you find it easy to relax so that you sleep easily and deeply?
- 12. Do you know how to release tensions through simple movements so that you sleep well?
- 13. Do you play with such interest that you become completely absorbed in what you are doing?
- 14. Do you plan your life so that you can have a change of people, scenery, and thoughts?

Total your score and enter here _____

Score of 33=42 indicates a high ability to relax

Score of 24-32 indicates an average ability to relax

Score of 15-23 indicates a low ability to relax

The point of these surveys is to give you a picture of who you are and where you are in terms of stress. The more aware you are, the more knowledge you have about yourself and your reactions to different situations, the more competent you will be in handling the stresses of your life.

HINTS

You can control your stress level, both before it gets too high and when it is too high.

There are four very important factors in gaining control over the stresses in life. They are:

1. **Having a sense of being in control of your own life.** Do others rule you by virtue of money, emotion, position, responsibility etc.? What areas do you have control over and what areas do you not have control over? Who has control over these areas?
2. **Having a network of friends or family to provide social and emotional support.** Can you lean on the people in your life? Do you have someone you can confide in without fear of reprisal or judgment? Who/what is your support system and how do you use it?
3. **The ability to be flexible.** How easily do you adapt to change? Do you try alternate solutions very often? Do you always have to be right? What is the fear of not being right, and what happens when you are wrong? What lessons have you learned from being wrong?
4. **The ability to be hopeful.** Do you believe that every cloud has a silver lining? Can you feel and say to yourself that things will get better? What lessons have you learned from the stressful times in your life? How can those lessons be used to enhance your life now?

Following are some hints that have worked for many. Use the ones that seem to fit you. Even try some that may not.

*Take a walk in a new place. It is amazing how different things are when we are walking. It is also very interesting to see new places and new people when we check out different places.

*Smile and say hello to people that you pass-you will be surprised at how many smiles and hellos you will get back.

*Hug someone/something you love when you are feeling stressed. You can even put your arms around you and give yourself a hug. Hugs are remarkable stress reducers.

*Anticipate stress as much as possible. Anticipation helps prepare and can lessen the impact of the stress. Use the tests, and charts in this package to help hone your anticipation skills.

*Work on developing a reserve account. Put some money, energy, time, energy aside to have when you need the extra.

*Watch a funny movie, buy a joke book. Do something that makes you laugh.

*Do something physical-run, jump, clean out a closet, swim, anything to get the blood moving and to dislodge some of the stress. It won't necessarily feel good at first, but if you keep it up, you will notice a definite improvement in your mood and stress level.

*Make a list of the things that bother you right now. Cross off all of those that you can't do anything about. Then cross off all of those that will end in a short amount of time. See what you feel you can do about the ones that are left.

*Learn to give yourself "atta-boy or atta-girl" on a constant basis. We tend to be our own harshest critic and we also need to learn to become our biggest supporter. Give yourself praise for the things that you accomplish and do. Pat yourself on the back when you reach a goal, master something, change a bad habit into a good one etc.

*Hug a friendly animal. Beside the fact that research has shown that animals have a relaxing effect on us and can dramatically lower high blood pressure, animals have a lot of love to give and do it without expecting much back. Holding and cuddling a loving animal in times of stress can have a powerful calming effect.

*Feeling stressed often comes from a sense of powerlessness, helplessness. Figure out what you have control of and what you can actively do something about to change. This will most likely have a dramatic effect on the level of stress that you feel. It is amazing how stress diminishes once we feel we have command of all or part of a situation.

*Spend some time doing something that you are good at and that you enjoy.

*Do something physical-to get rid of the tenseness inside of you.

*Vary your routine-take a different route home, do a different set of exercise, take a walk to the store instead of driving there, change the furniture around, do something that breaks the monotony-you will be surprised at the new energy this gives you.

*Relax creatively-take time to do something you really enjoying, or learn the art of loafing. If you set aside time to relax, don't let anything interfere-even worrying about what you are not doing.

*Talk about troubles-at times, confiding worries to a special friend or trained professional may relieve your stress. Often another person can help you to see your problem in a new light or help you find a possible solution. Worry constructively.

*Define tasks at hand-by determining what you want to accomplish and how you will proceed realistically. Work on one task at a time. Where anxiety creeps in, think about what else you may be trying to do and recheck your expectations-are they too high?

*Learn to accept what you cannot change-some circumstances are beyond our control. Accept realistic expectations and go about achieving them-with assistance if needed. Recognize your own limitations and also the limitations of others.

*Like yourself-you are a unique individual. Respect your abilities, recognize your needs, and forgive your errors.

*Face the problem-take one problem at a time. Give it a name, an identity. Vague feelings are hard to handle. Decide if you need to take action or if you need to give in this time.

*Shift gears/change pace-try a diversion. Work off your tension. If you have had too much activity, slow the tempo and vary your patterns. If you feel left out, then get involved. Volunteer, help, seek out others! You can also enjoy your aloneness-escape for awhile and schedule a time for you.

*Strengthen your resistance-get enough sleep; eat well-balanced meals; exercise every day; do something pleasurable every day-don't let anything interfere; talk to a friend regularly; think positive thoughts; be optimistic; love yourself.

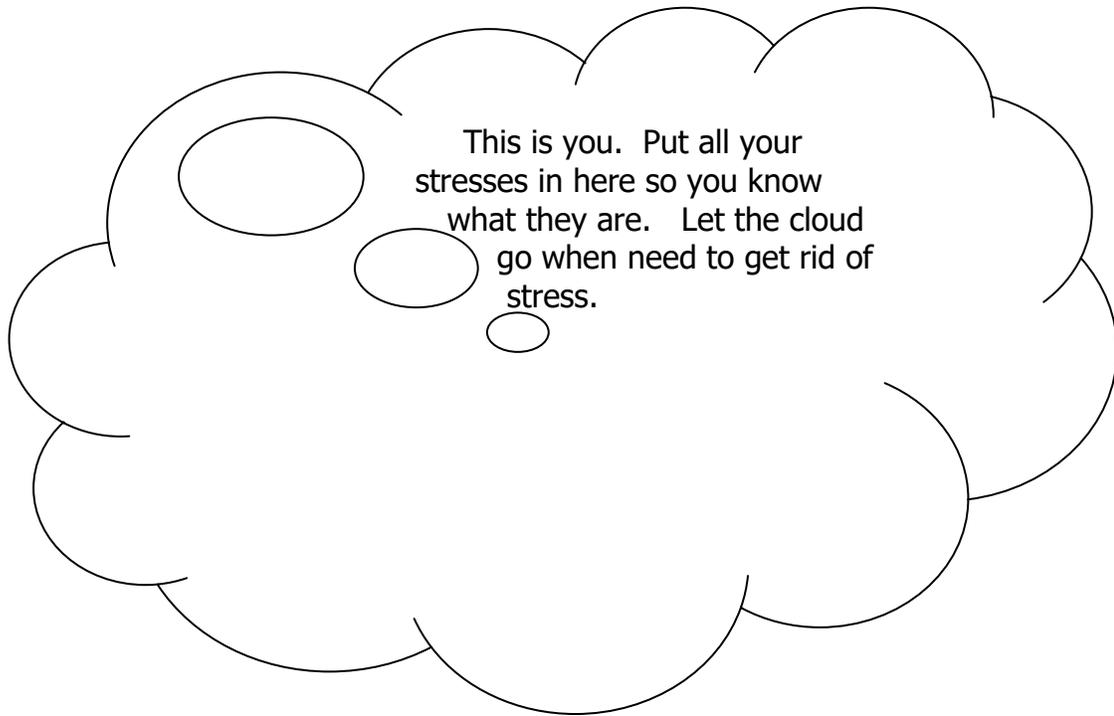
*Relieve the feelings of stress-identify the ways that you feel stress; tighten and relax tense muscles; imagine a serene, stress-free setting; remember something that feels/felt good; listen to music; express your feelings (laugh, cry, scream, yell).

*Deal with the stressor-identify the cause of the stress; find out what others think and have done in similar situations-if possible; break the problem down into manageable pieces; imagine yourself solving the problem; get necessary information; learn new skills needed to solve the problem; get others to help; be assertive; change aspects of your plan which are not working; know when to stop.

*Avoid the stressor-identify the cause of the stress; avoid the stressful situation; keep yourself physically involved with other activities; keep yourself mentally involved with other activities; think pleasurable thoughts; count to 10 before responding.

- *Think of the stressful situation as a chance to learn and to GROW!
- *Have a purpose to what you are doing. Know where you want to go and check yourself regularly to see if you are headed in the right direction.
- *Watch your pace-don't go too slow so that you will never achieve what you want, nor too fast that you will burn out before you reach your desired destination.
- *Enjoy the trip of life-the ultimate destination is death, so enjoy the stops along the way.
- *Be in the now-enjoy where you are, who you are with, and what you are doing.
- *Find something positive in everything you do. It's there; you may have to search it out.
- *Be aware of, pay heed to, signs and information that is coming to you from outside sources all the time.
- *Take care of your physical self. Eat well (healthy), rest enough, play, and challenge yourself.
- *Break up challenges into do-able pieces. Work on a piece at a time. Delegate what you can.
- *Celebrate successes-loudly and publicly.
- *Use mistakes and "failures" as lessons on the road to success.
- *Give support, help and encouragement to others-take it from others.
- *Change your routine and tasks when you can.
- *Take a different way home, eat at a different place, sleep on a different side of the bed.
- *Plan something special-on the average about every six weeks.
- *Learn to recognize the difference between complaining that relieves and complaining that reinforces negative stress.
- *Schedule "withdraw" periods during the week-limit interruptions as much as possible.
- *Learn to say "NO". If you never say no, what is your "yes" worth?
- *Admit when you "can't".

- *Play and have fun-a lot.
- *Criticize yourself less and praise yourself more.
- *Smile-you will be amazed at how much this lessens tension and stress.
- *Look for the humor.
- *Embrace all of you. Make a list of your strong and weak points. Build on the strong points, work on the weak ones, and recognize that you will always have some weak points-we all do-learn how to protect them.
- *Learn the art of compromise
- *Take small "vacations" Five minutes 10 times a day, a weekend away, a mental health day, a two-week vacation. Don't put all your hopes for fun and enjoyment on a vacation-the stress of the demand will ruin the vacation.
- *Choose friends wisely. Surround yourself with people who love you, with people you want to be like, and with people who share your beliefs and values. Remember: we become like the people with whom we associate.
- *Admit your fears-don't run away from them, they can run faster than you can.
- *Do something for someone else. It is difficult to worry about yourself when you are helping someone else. Besides this might show you how much you really have and how rich you really are.
- *Define "SUCCESS" for yourself. Does it include love, companionship, calm, family and friends? If not, work on a new definition.
- *Avoid procrastination and denial. Things we put off or don't look at in our lives don't go away-they just stay there and get bigger and bigger.
- *Slow down, practice moving, speaking, thinking more slowly. When you move slowly, you feel less pressured.
- *Avoid excuses and blame. Take responsibility for what is yours and work towards a solution.
- *Find a safe place to talk over your fears, hopes, plans. Know who to go to for help and use the help when you need it.
- *Always do what is right. You have to live with you 24/7. You will always know what you have done right and what you have done wrong.



MY PERSONAL STRESS REDUCTION PLAN-something to use to help deal with stress

1. This is the problem. (Having too many demands on myself)

2. This is what I can do about it. (Delegate, get help,...)

3. I am currently dealing with the problem by: This does/does not work because:

4. What I could do differently:

5. This is what I will do differently: (choose from the questions above the things that you can do comfortably, effectively, and soon)

6. This is my goal:

7. I will know I am working towards my goal by: (indicators such as having more time, feeling less pressure, etc.)

8. My plan of action towards my goal is: (be as specific as possible with actions that can help you reach your goal-for example no phone calls after a certain time, no work calls on weekends, no mixing fun time with "getting some work done")

9. The results I expect are: (More time for myself, less pressure for multiple deadlines-be realistic)

10. I will assess my progress on a (weekly, monthly, 3-month basis-don't let too much or too little time pass until making an evaluation)

Questions to consider

1. What is your stress level right now? ____
2. What are your stress management coping skills-good and not so good?
3. What are the stresses in the elder's life right now? How are they coping with them?
4. How are your coping skills similar/different than the elders? What positive can you learn from them? What do both of you need to change?
5. How can you help the elder deal with stress better? How will that benefit you?
One effective and immediate way of dealing with stress is to take a time out.

Time-Outs

Learning to take time-outs is an important lesson of this program. It is a skill that should be used and respected by both members of a relationship in order for it to work best. However, one person can still use TIME OUTS effectively even if the other does not follow along. Time-outs provide time to calm down, to focus on what one wants from the situation at hand, and to decide how to best and most effectively make that happen.

Time-outs are difficult to do. Why? Because most of us want to resolve an issue when it arises. Many of us were taught to believe that only a coward/weakling backs down from a confrontation. In conflicts, our first impulse is often to get things resolved as soon as possible.

The problem with this method is that the temptation to “win” the argument often overrides the threat of harming the relationship. The original problem is often left unresolved while each person may be left with hurt feelings. The other danger (which may be the reason you are here in this program) is that angry words often lead to violent actions when you are unwilling to control your words, feelings, and body. The problem that was so important at the beginning of the argument probably seems miniscule after being arrested or having your partner walk out on you for verbally abusing her. If you truly value your relationship, you must act accordingly. By taking the time to collect yourself and your thoughts, you are, demonstrating your respect for your partner, your relationship, and yourself. If your fear is that your partner will not be there when you get back, then the trust level of your relationship should be addressed at an appropriate time. When trust is low, it is difficult to believe that your partner will stick it through to get issues resolved. However, lashing out in anger is not a way to build this trust.

As time-outs are practiced and each person puts his/her share of effort into working through issues, trust levels will build naturally and both members of the relationship will feel safer and more secure. However, it is important to remember that even if one partner does not follow through, time-outs can still be beneficial because the acting partner is learning self-control while also getting information about the relationship that will help determine if it is worth staying in.

One frequent problem with taking time-outs is the tendency to use alcohol/drugs during the time-out as a way of dealing with the pain and loneliness, and to numb the uncomfortable feelings. Remember, taking time-outs may be difficult at the beginning, but it gets easier with time and works better and more effectively the more often it is used.

It is suggested that you practice time-outs before you use them in earnest. Think about what you will do and where you will go when you take one. Learn to monitor yourself so that you will be aware of when you need to take one. This self-practice gives you confidence in implementing them effectively. Even if you can't practice with a partner, practice by yourself so you will know what you need to do.

Make sure that you don't use time-outs as a way of putting off or avoiding dealing with uncomfortable situations in your relationship. Unresolved problems don't go away -- they simply simmer and get bigger if they are not dealt with.

Taking a Time-Out

Step 1.

Whenever you feel your anger or your partner's anger rising uncontrollably, you feel your body getting tense, or when you feel frustrated/out of control, say out loud to yourself and to your partner: (these are examples, find or create one that work for you)

"I'm beginning to feel angry/uncomfortable." I need to take a time-out."

"I truly value what you have to say, however I need some time to collect myself so that I can give you my full attention, which is what you deserve."

"Because I value our relationship and don't want to hurt the trust we have gained, I'd like to ask you to give me some time to digest what we've said and pick up the conversation later _____ (fill in when)"

"We have been working really hard on our communication and I really want to understand you, but right now I'm feeling overwhelmed and need _____ (fill in amount of time needed) to think over what we've said to one another."

"I'm starting to feel upset, which makes it hard for me to listen effectively. I need _____ (fill in amount of time needed) to refocus myself and listen attentively to you."

It is very important to focus on your feelings and not on your observations of your partner's feelings. This puts you in charge of yourself and gives you a sense of being able to work on a resolution to the situation. You are communicating how you feel clearly and directly. You are taking responsibility for your emotions and not making them the responsibility of your partner. Acknowledging an uncomfortable feeling may help you begin to develop control over it.

Step 2.

Leave the premises. If you have discussed this with your partner previously, you will have set a time length to allow yourself to calm down. Remember: It is imperative that you use this time to do something that will get rid of the tension in your body. Exercise can be very beneficial. Do not use this time as an opportunity to become angrier, to think about the bad things your partner has done to you, or how you can get even. You want to calm down, not agitate yourself more during this time.

Step 3:

If you have made a commitment to come back at an agreed upon time, do it. This shows caring for the well-being of your relationship and helps develop trust. In the event that you are still angry and do not trust yourself if you come back, contact your partner and explain this, giving another time when you will most likely be back. This behavior shows both you and your partner that you are not avoiding the issue and want to resolve the problem. When you return to the situation, check in with your partner. Find out if he is ready to discuss the problem. If not, don't push it, but ask him to let

you know when he is ready. If your angry feelings start to rise again, start over with another time-out.

Step 4:

This is when you and your partner address the issue. Talking about what your anger is about helps develop skills in discussing difficult situations.

Couples may find that some topics are too emotionally charged to discuss. If that happens, consider getting professional help to resolve the situation in a mutually acceptable way.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

What has happened when you have attempted to use time-outs in this relationship? How have time-outs worked in this relationship? Do you think they have helped or hurt this relationship? How?

What changes do you need to make in how you take time-outs?

How can you help the other person be more effective in taking time-outs?

What is the most difficult thing for you about time-outs?

SELF-CONTROL PLAN

The purpose of this exercise is to develop a plan for maintaining self-control so that violence will not occur in your relationship. The more we know about ourselves, the more able we are to control our responses to difficult situations. Use the following to develop your own plan for maintaining control and minimizing the potential for violence to occur.

Cues of escalation before violence:

Even though many of us think that our violent behavior happens immediately, the reality is that we all have many hints when things are going wrong. The earlier we can spot those hints, the more control we will have over our responses.

Situations:

List as many situations as possible where you will have an immediate, angry response. Don't worry if they seem rational or silly, that doesn't matter. What is important is for you to be aware of those situations where your control is easily or quickly lost. Be as specific as possible about these situations, times, places, persons, etc.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Red flag words/phrases: List words or phrases that you and the elder have a strong negative response to.

Mine	From others

Physical changes: List things that happen to your body when you are angry. The earlier the recognition of the change, the stronger the possibility of being able to manage the anger.

Negative self-talk: What kinds of things do you say to yourself when you are angry in order to keep the anger going? List as many of those as possible.

Mental imagery: Do you have any fantasies that come up when you are angry? If so, write them down here.

THE KEY TO ADAPTABILITY IS ONES' PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE. MAKE SURE YOURS IS POSITIVE.

Use the following questions as guides for assessing and developing your philosophy.

1. Do I weigh myself down with wanting more than I need or can afford?
2. Do I waste valuable time and energy on things that don't really matter?
3. Does the desire for "bigger", "better", "more" crowd out the values of intimacy, communication, and the giving of affection?
4. Do I feel good about my work, the persons in my life, myself?
5. If I had only three months to live, what would I let go of and what would I hold onto?

What is your Philosophy of Life?

How actively do you follow it on a daily basis? What are your strong areas? What are your weak areas?

The bigger the difference between who/what we think we are/do and who/what we really are has a huge impact on the stress level we carry and on how we are handling our stress. Ask someone you trust to give you feedback on how close they see your behavior is matching your philosophy of life. If there is a big difference you are in emotional danger and need to make some immediate changes.

The keys to handling stress are:

Adaptability-being able to make changes in ourselves to handle the stress in our life. Understanding our own personal style and abilities to deal with stress.

Awareness-knowing what the stresses are, where they come from, and what, if anything, can be done about them

Please Watch: <http://bit.ly/2zjc09y>
<http://bit.ly/2h96awG>
<http://bit.ly/2zo0b1i>
<http://bit.ly/2j6hI84>

THE PRINCIPLE OF SELF-RESPONSIBILITY

We are all 100% responsible for all of the actions in our lives.

This 100% responsibility rule means that we must learn to take responsibility for what happens in our lives. We are the **OWNERS** of our lives. Taking responsibility means that we can no longer blame anyone else for what is going on in our life, for anything that we have been doing, feeling, or for any situations that we are in.

This is perhaps one of the most difficult and important things that will come out of this program. Learning to take responsibility for our lives is both demanding and freeing. When we let others "make" us do something, we give them a tremendous amount of power and control in our life. They decide what we feel, who we are, and what we want in our life. Is that how you want to live?

You create what goes on in your head and in your life. You are responsible for the outcome of all interactions. If you don't like what is going on in your life, how people are treating you, or where you are financially, physically, or emotionally, you are the only one who can make the necessary changes. Don't wait until someone else "gets it", or "understands" or "feels better". Those things have absolutely nothing to do with you!!

IF YOU ARE DISSATISFIED WITH HOW PEOPLE ARE TREATING YOU, ONLY YOU CAN MAKE THE NECESSARY MODIFICATIONS IN YOUR BEHAVIOR FOR THE OUTCOME TO CHANGE. YOU ARE THE ONE WHO KNOWS WHAT YOU WANT. IF THINGS ARE NOT GOING WELL FOR YOU IN ANY RELATIONSHIP, IT IS IN YOUR INTEREST, NOT THE OTHER PERSON'S, THAT THINGS CHANGE, AND IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE THAT CHANGE.

Let's say you make the decision to take charge, you make changes, and then nothing happens. What do you do next? Do something different!! Remember: **IF ONE STRATEGY DOESN'T WORK TO MEET YOUR NEEDS OR SOLVE A PROBLEM, THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO POINT IN PLACING BLAME ON OTHERS.** It's your responsibility to keep using new strategies for change until something finally works. Don't give up – it may take some time to make changes, and it may be frustrating. That's OK. Remember, it took a long time to get you where you are now, and it will take some time to fully learn the skill of 100% self-responsibility.

The question to ask is not, "Who can I blame for how I feel and where I am in my life?" but rather, "What can I do to make the changes necessary to make my life better?"

You have to learn that you can't expect others to change or to be different. The only time others will be different is when *you* are different, and they have to respond to you in a different way if they want to stay in your life. It all comes from you.

Remember-others are doing the best they can, even if it doesn't work for you.
Concentrate on yourself and not on others.

THE OTHER PERSON WILL ONLY CHANGE WITH THE PERCEPTION THAT NEW BEHAVIOR IS IN HIS/HER BEST INTEREST.

When you follow this principle be prepared to lose some people in your life. There may be people in your life that don't want you to change and who will leave when you make changes. This may be difficult and painful to deal with, but remember; sometimes we have to clean out our lives in order to make room for new and healthier relationships and experiences.

All people in relationships inevitably come to two basic choices – they either adapt or let go. If your needs in any relationship don't get met or recognized or if the relationship is far more painful than it is satisfying, then you may need to look at why you are staying in the relationship. Decide on how long you are going to wait for changes to happen. If they don't happen in that time framework, then you need to look at making other choices. The alternative to this is to suffer chronic anger and/or depression, and you know where those emotions get you.

HELPFUL SELF-TALK TO MAINTAIN SELF-RESPONSIBILITY

The following statements may be helpful to you as you work on mastering self-responsibility.

1. I am responsible for what happens between us.
2. No point in blaming, use a new strategy.
3. What can I do about this?
4. The amount of help, support, and nourishment I am now getting is all I can get, given the strategies I am using.
5. People won't change unless I make it in their interest.
6. How can I reinforce him or her to change in this situation?
7. I may not like it, but he or she is using the best problem solving strategy available right now.
8. Everyone is responsible for taking care of his or her own needs.
9. What are my expectations in this particular relationship?
10. My choice is to adapt or let go.
11. Only children are victims, I always have a choice.

Wrap-up of Part Three

1. What has been the most important thing that you have learned about yourself in the parts of this section?
2. What have you learned or understood about your relationship as a result of this section?
3. Have you noticed any changes in your relationships –friends, job, children, or intimate relationship? If so what?
4. What was the most difficult part of this section for you? Why?
5. What area of change do you need to work most on right now? Why?
6. What goals have you developed for your self as a result of this section?
7. What changes do you need to make to be self-responsible in this situ

PART FOUR: FEELINGS, SELF-ESTEEM, BOUNDARIES, EXPECTATIONS, CONFLICT

WHAT ARE FEELINGS AND HOW DO I DEAL WITH THEM EFFECTIVELY?

Feelings

What are feelings? Feelings are the energies that move us in response to our thoughts and experiences. All feelings are neutral—we attach meanings to them based on our experiences, belief, and value systems. Our feelings about any event tell us about the *value* of that experience to us.

Many of the feelings that we have today are expressions that we learned early in life. We learned to attach meanings of happy, sad, safe, angry, and so on by the experiences we had as children. Events, places, things that we react to with anger, happiness, fear, shame, etc. are usually associated with experiences we have had in our early formative years. Something that one person may react to with feelings of excitement and joy may be something that another person will react to with fear and dread.

Feelings are expressions of what we perceive is going on in our world. We choose our feelings based on our prior experiences. Many of us have to unlearn some of our early associations when we become adults because those associations are unhealthy or unsafe.

Sometimes we get stuck in a feeling. This “stuckness” tends to be with the more unpleasant emotions, like anger and depression. When one is “stuck” in anger or depression, their whole experience of the world is seen through that emotion. If the

feeling is depression, the world may be seen as uninviting, not fun, and not friendly. If the feeling is anger, the world may be seen as unsafe, threatening, and hostile.

In addition, our feelings are tied to our value systems. When individuals in relationships have different value systems, they often have different and even conflicting emotions about the same experiences.

There are many words that are used to describe feelings: elated, sad, frustrated, frightened, angry, happy, depressed—these describe inner emotional responses. Some words describe degrees of feelings: for example, "irritated" may mean just a little angry and "outraged" may mean a lot angry. Often, words combine different feelings: for example, "upset" may mean angry and hurt. There may be times when we have a mixture of feelings and we may not know how to sort them out.

When we have an emotional response to something, we are evaluating its meaning to us. Some of us are trained from an early age to make these evaluations by using only rational means (i.e., thinking). Something happens and the pluses and minuses of that something are added up. Then a judgment is made of what that "something" means.

When this is happening, feelings are confused with thinking or observation. Feelings are an expression of what is going on inside of you, thinking and observing are expressions of how you think things fit together. Feelings are not always rational and do not always follow the expected. Many of our current feelings come from past experiences, are a result of good and bad times, and sometimes don't have anything to do with what is going on in the present.

An example of an "**I feel-thinking**" response would be:

"I feel it was unfair"

To change this to an "**I feel-emotion**" response:

"I feel hurt that you spent all of the money that way."

Remember, the purpose of expressing feelings is to communicate to ourselves and to others how we experience and are affected by the events in our lives.

There are four basic feelings: Sadness, happiness, fear, and anger. Each of these feelings has a wide array of expressions, from the least to the most profound. Think of some words that are used to describe that feeling.

Sad	Happy	Fearful	Anger

Now look at the list and see how many of the descriptions can fit more than one category. See how confusing it can be to figure out what emotion you are really feeling?

We often use feelings to manipulate others. What are some of the ways that you have manipulated others?

Some of us are uncomfortable with emotions. We have the mistaken belief that if we don't feel, we won't hurt. Fear and sadness can be difficult to experience for some. Most of us don't want to "feel bad". So, we avoid those "bad" feelings. What we tend to forget, or perhaps don't even know, is that feelings that we don't acknowledge don't go away-they just lie dormant (like being asleep) and wait until there is a weak moment and they can then reappear. In addition, these unaddressed feelings collect "interest"-like money in a bank and become bigger than they were when they first appeared. So, when they come back up again, they are often large and even often feel "uncontrollable".

Also, please remember: You may experience the same level of joy and happiness that you allow yourself to experience sadness. When you cut yourself off from one emotion, you also cut yourself off from the other emotions.

Do you experience a full range of emotions or do you cut yourself off? The decision is up to you. What does your emotional range look like?

Like this?

Happy_____Sad

Or like this?

Happy_____Sad

Many seniors pull in their spectrum as they age. They may find that they don't want to deal with intense feelings-of any kind; they may not want to face things from the past; and this closing in may impact their relationships. Is this happening with the

elder you are dealing with? When we live with a person who has a much different emotional range than we do, we may experience difficulties in attempting to share emotions with each other or to understand each other.

It is also important to understand that we will only feel as much happiness as we allow ourselves to feel sadness. When we avoid uncomfortable or painful emotions, we also cut ourselves off from pleasant emotions. When negative feelings are repressed, joyful feelings tend to not be available. Talking out feelings leads to an opportunity of being closer to one another.

Another thing that happens with these uncomfortable emotions is that we are spending a lot of time in keeping them "down" or controlled. To do this, we often have to be very aware of our surroundings and of everything that is going on all the time. We may start to "arrange" things to make sure that life goes on in a certain manner so that uncomfortable things don't happen. This usually results in our being called "controlling" or a "control freak." Sound familiar?

People who are controlling are usually those people who feel very unsafe. They often feel that their feelings are not valid and that their lives revolve around a person/persons/situation(s) that are out of control. They are often blamed for all that goes wrong and so they learn to "fix" this by arranging and managing what is happening around them. They are often afraid to even look at their own feelings and so they deny their feelings and pay attention to the feelings of others.

This makes it difficult, if not impossible to be spontaneous in anything, it makes closeness with others unlikely to happen, and it is emotionally exhausting. This controlling behavior blocks feeling, blocks facing reality, causes tenseness in relationships, and keeps the individual from freely giving and receiving love. Controlling is a sign of distress-that things are not okay in our life, and that the real feelings are not being addressed.

What are the most uncomfortable emotions for you to feel? What do you do with them? How do you avoid them? What are uncomfortable emotions for the elder?

Take some time and fill out the following log as honestly as possible:

Emotion	I do the following when I feel this way:	My body feels like:	Situations that lead to this emotion	What I would really like to do/feel:
Hurt				
Love				
Sadness				
Fear				
Rejection				
Joy				
Anger				
Loneliness				

REVIEW SHEET

1. List three things you learned about your emotions in this section.
2. What do you need to do to be more in touch with your emotions?
3. What are the healthy aspects of your anger and what are the unhealthy aspects of your anger?
4. How can you recognize when you are using your defenses? What are some trigger situations for you?
5. What are four actions you can take right now to make relationships in your life stronger and healthier.

SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem is the value we place on ourselves. It is the value we place on ourselves, not the value that is placed on us by others. Self-esteem is important in relationships because:

- ⇒ We tend to treat others based on how we feel about ourselves. If we feel bad about ourselves, we are more likely to treat our loved ones in unhealthy ways.
- ⇒ Good self-esteem allows us to move out of ourselves and to be able to understand and connect with other people.
- ⇒ We tend to perceive, judge, and act in ways that are consistent with our level of self-esteem.
- ⇒ For individuals of low self-esteem, it is difficult to have successes of any kind—nothing is ever good enough.

Self-esteem is important to us as individuals because:

- ⇒ It determines how we let others treat us/how we treat others
- ⇒ It affects decisions and choices—like education, partners, employment
- ⇒ It affects our level of motivation/how hard we try
- ⇒ It determines how we handle difficulties
- ⇒ It impacts our decisions

We all have **“inner self-esteem”** and **“outer self-esteem”**. Inner self-esteem comes from how we feel about ourselves, our value systems, our beliefs, and the “rules” of life that we have been given and have developed for ourselves. Inner self-esteem depends only on us. It is what guides our decisions when the only one who will know if we did good or bad is us.

Outer self-esteem is the esteem that comes from outside of us. It is measured by such things as our looks, our possessions, our social standing, and what others think about us. This self-esteem is much more vulnerable than inner self-esteem because it is always determined by factors outside of us.

While all of us have both inner and outer self-esteem, it is more important to work on and develop our inner self-esteem. We need to be aware of our self-esteem level on a constant basis, and to do things to build up and maintain a good level of inner self-esteem.

How do you know if your self-esteem is low? Check off the list below and see how many apply to you.

- ⇒ Having a sensitivity to criticism
- ⇒ Having an inappropriate response to flattery
- ⇒ Tending to blame self and/or others
- ⇒ Being hypercritical
- ⇒ Feeling persecuted
- ⇒ Having negative feelings about competition—being afraid to compete, needing to always win, and having problems with losing
- ⇒ Tending to be shy, timid, overbold, isolated

Your self-esteem depends on your self-concept. Your self-concept comes from a variety of areas. Each area is important and each needs to be attended to on a constant basis. Look at the list below and assess where you are and where you need to be in each of these areas.

1. Your identity- "Who am I?", "What am I here for?"
2. Self-acceptance-knowing and understanding your strengths and weaknesses, feeling okay about yourself.
3. Self-satisfaction-liking who and what you are. A little dissatisfaction is okay because it motivates you to change and grow.
4. Your behavior. Being okay and comfortable with how you act and behave.
5. Moral, ethical self. Doing or not doing what you feel is right or wrong. This can also include religious beliefs.
6. Physical self. How you feel about and accept your body. How you take or do not take care of yourself.
7. Personal self. How you think you are perceived by others.
8. Family self. Having or not having a sense of connectedness with a "family". Being accepted and treasured or feeling judged/rejected by "family".
9. Peer self. How you connect with friends, co-workers, employers.

Think about where you are in these areas. Which ones do you feel positively about? Which ones are areas that you need to work on? How will you do that?

There are other factors that impact your level of self-esteem. They are:

- ⇒ Parents and family members
- ⇒ Social class, family
- ⇒ Intellectual ability
- ⇒ Physical appearance, facial and body build
- ⇒ Job, role
- ⇒ Education
- ⇒ Physical strength, stamina
- ⇒ Sexual prowess

Some of these areas are difficult, if not impossible to change. We have to learn to accept ourselves, and work to change the things that we can. We also need to learn to not compare ourselves with others, but rather with our own standards. When we compare ourselves with others on a constant basis, we can do damage to our self-esteem. We can always find others who will have more or less of all of the things we have-comparing with them helps us get "stuck" in our current level of self-esteem and stop working to improve ourselves.

It is important to work on your self-esteem each day. Be aware of your weak areas and work to improve them. Challenge yourself and be honest in your own self-appraisal. The stronger your self-esteem, the more resiliency you will have to stress,

difficulties, and challenges. Do something positive for yourself each day and make sure to give yourself credit for what you accomplish each and every day.

WHERE ARE YOU? Check the ones that apply to you

A person with high self-esteem will...	A person with low self-esteem will...
Take responsibility for their feelings and actions	Blame others for problems
Take compliments graciously-saying thank you	Not believe what others say-be suspicious
Listen to criticism without anger-you don't have to agree	Unable to accept criticism-become angry and defensive
Give praise and compliments frequently	View compliments as threats
Take good care of themselves	Not take good care of themselves
Make decisions based on their values-even when it goes against what others think or want	Base decisions on external input
Have a sense of humor that does not hurt others-being able to laugh at themselves	Be amused by what makes others look foolish
Accept mistakes as part of living and learning	Expect or demand perfection-mistakes are failures
Listen openly to others	Argue, preach, nag
Focus on the here and now/Learn from the past	Never let go of the past
Take risks and challenge themselves	No risk taking

YOUR SELF-ESTEEM DEPENDS ON YOU. TAKE CARE OF IT, BUILD IT, AND YOUR SELF-ESTEEM WILL PROTECT YOU IN TIMES OF CHALLENGE.

Self-Esteem Builder

1. Make a written list of the following about yourself.
 - ⇒ 10-character assets
 - ⇒ 10 physical assets
 - ⇒ 10 people who genuinely love you
 - ⇒ 10 things you are grateful for
2. Write down five things you would like to change about yourself-only those things that you can change.
3. Write your own eulogy-how you want to be remembered when you have died.

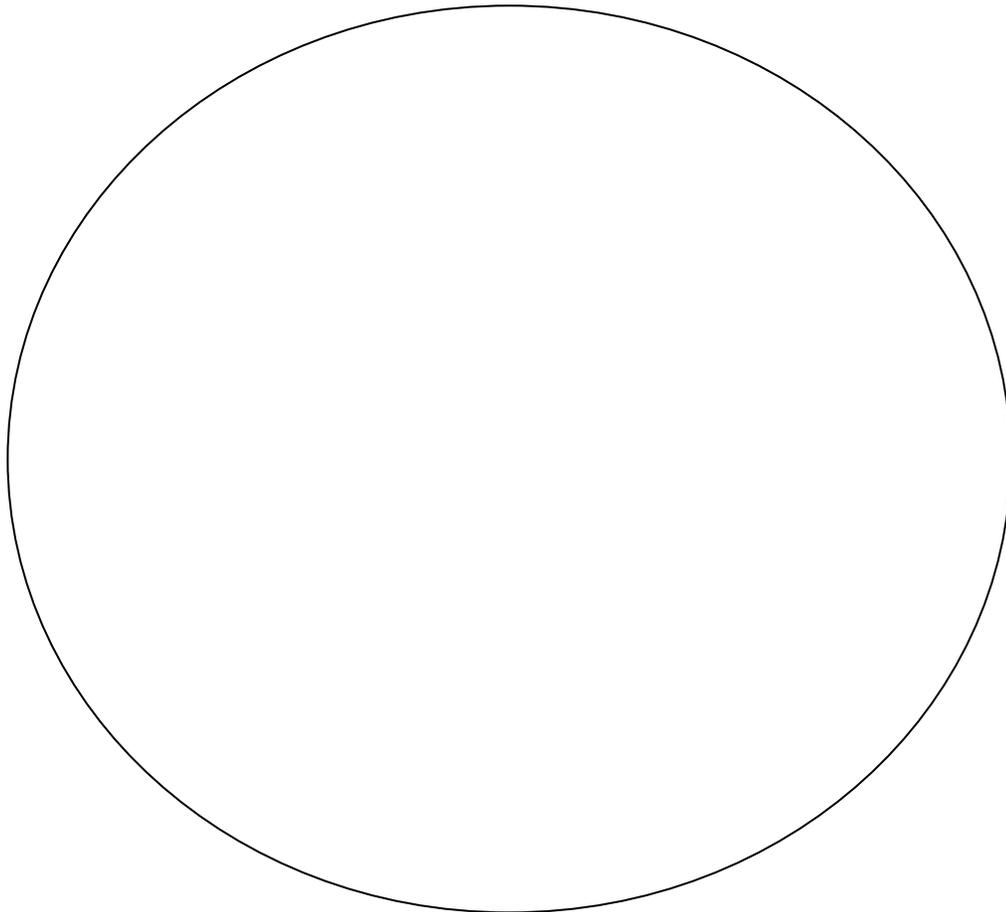
REMEMBER, PROGRESS, NOT PERFECTION. WORK ON POSITIVE THOUGHTS.

Your level of self-esteem will vary over time. That is to be expected. Make efforts to be aware of this and to monitor where you are on a daily or weekly basis. Use a scale of 1-10 with 1 being low and 10 being high. Ask yourself where you are and answer honestly. This will help keep you in touch with what is going on with you and what you might need to do to keep strong.

YOUR OWN SELF-ESTEEM

List the sources where you get your self-esteem. Things such as job, family, looks, accomplishments, possessions, etc. Then take the circle and divide it into how much of your self-esteem comes from each of those sources.

SELF-ESTEEM WHEEL



Please answer the following questions.

1. How well balanced in my self-esteem wheel? What do I need to do to make it more balanced?
2. How much of my self-esteem comes from inside, how much comes from outside. What needs to be changed about this?
3. Where in my life is my self-esteem enhanced and strong? Where is it attacked and weak?

4. How does this relationship with the elder help/hurt my self-esteem? What do I do on a regular basis to build and nurture their partner's self-esteem?
5. What is my immediate plan to improve my level of self-esteem? How can I help the elder improve their self-esteem?

REVIEW SHEET

1. What have you learned about your self-esteem in this session? How has your self-esteem impacted your relationship? How has your partner's self-esteem impacted your relationship?
2. What changes do you need to make in your self-talk?
3. How has your family of origin affected your relationship? List the positive and negative.
 1. What lessons about having a relationship are you passing on to your children? How do you want to change/modify those lessons?

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS: HOW TO MAKE AND KEEP ONE

Research that has been done has shown that the following qualities are seen as very important to enhancing continued growth and love in a relationship.

Communication

Affection

Compassion/forgiveness

Honesty

Acceptance

Dependability

Sense of humor

Patience

Freedom

The most mentioned qualities are communication-the desire to be open, to share, to relate, and to actively speak and listen to one another: affection-the traits of caring, understanding, respect, physical and psychological closeness, nurturing, and kindness: compassion/forgiveness-the ability to have empathy, to forgive, to be supportive, and selflessness: honesty-the quality of being able to reveal true feelings at the moment, to verbalize fears, angers, regrets, and expectations.

Qualities that damage relationships are:

Lack of communication
Selfishness/unforgiveness
Dishonesty
Jealousy
Lack of trust
Perfectionism
Lack of flexibility (not being open to change)
Lack of understanding
Lack of respect
Apathy

(Taken from LOVING EACH OTHER-THE CHALLENGE OF HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS- BY Leo Buscaglia, Ph.D.)

In healthy relationships the following characteristics are found:

1. The ability to resolve conflict-all relationships will have conflict and each member of the relationship needs to be willing and able to solve the conflict.
2. Flexibility and willingness to compromise.
3. Respect, consideration, and tolerance.
4. Commitment-the relationship is a first priority for each partner.
5. Fulfillment-each allows and supports the other in reaching their desired level of personal and interpersonal growth,
6. Time together and time alone-in a healthy relationship both partners recognize that each needs time alone as well as time spent only with each other.
7. Ability to deal with crises and stresses-these are the times when the true strength and commitment of a relationship are shown.
8. Ability to handle financial problems-another very strong test of any relationship.
9. Open and honest lines of communication.
10. Sense of humor-being able to laugh at themselves and often even at difficult situations.
11. Ability to play-playfulness can bridge the gap between too much distance and too much intimacy.
12. Mutual love and caring.
13. Expressions of appreciation-saying thank you; telling one another what is liked about each other is a very strong form of cement in a relationship.
14. Genuine liking for one another-having a friendship as well as a loveship is very important in a relationship.

(Taken from **The Dynamics of Relationships** by Patricia Kramer)

What is a Bottom Line?

Your "bottom line" is a point that, for you, is unacceptable to be exceeded. It is a limit after which you will not allow any more of whatever is happening to occur. For example, a bottom line that is often found in relationships concerns being faithful. Most of us want the person we are involved with to be sexually faithful to us. Many of us say that if our partner is not faithful, we will leave the relationship. The true test of that bottom line is whether or not we leave the relationship once we discover infidelity.

We all have bottom lines in our lives whether we think about them or not. We live in a society where we must conform to "bottom lines" all the time. When we are driving in a car and come to a red light, we usually stop. Why? Because we know what can happen if we don't. If we break the rules of society, we must pay the consequences. **That's a bottom line: Break the rules, pay the price.**

Sometimes we use bottom lines unfairly. We have them, but we don't tell our partners or friends what they are until they break them. Then we punish them for having broken them. This kind of bottom line can cause a lot of problems in a relationship. It can even destroy a relationship. **So, how do you use "bottom lines"?**

Step 1.

First, you must decide what is acceptable to you in your life and what is unacceptable. Remember that this is your life and your bottom line. Don't choose a bottom line because everyone else has it or because you might be embarrassed if others found out what your real bottom line was. Remember, you will have a lot of bottom lines in your life and they sometimes change as circumstances in your life change.

There are two parts to a bottom line. The first part is simply establishing what it is, and the second part is determining what the consequences will be if it is crossed. Remember, there are all kinds of possible consequences, and they don't necessarily have to be drastic. Naturally, the more important the situation, the more severe the consequences will be. **Very often, we don't figure out both parts of a bottom line and then when it is broken, we are not sure of what the consequences need to be. (And when that is the case, we usually go for drastic consequences instead of milder ones).**

Step 2.

The next step is letting the other people in your life know what your bottom lines are. This can be tricky. It is very important to be very specific and very clear in stating what you want. For example, you might tell your partner that you have a bottom line that you want your relationship to be loving. The problem that can occur is when you and your partner have different ideas of what a "loving" relationship is. He/she may be doing everything that they think/feel shows a loving relationship and you may want something entirely different.

Another benefit of stating your bottom lines concisely is that your partner will be able to tell you if he/she is able to give you what you want, and sometimes you will both end up compromising. Also, don't forget to convey to your partner what the consequences are if your bottom line is crossed. This way, they know what to expect if they decide to break or cross your bottom line.

Step 3.

This is the step that hopefully you won't have to use much. This is where the bottom line has been broken and the consequences must be imposed. This is also the step that most of us have the most problems with. We tend to find excuses/reasons for why the other person broke our bottom line, and then we don't end up imposing the consequences. We might say, "Well, he/she was drunk and didn't know what he/she was doing", or "It only happened one time, and I know it won't ever happen again". What this means is that we don't really have a bottom line and that there is no reason for anyone in our life to act as if we do.

Often, we don't follow through with the consequences because we have made them extreme. Either we can't impose them or we are afraid to. This is why it is very important to think our bottom lines through very carefully.

When we set bottom lines we show respect for ourselves and for others. We are also telling others that we demand respect from them. Every time we allow our bottom lines to be broken without consequences, we create a new and lesser bottom line, we lose self-respect, and we lower our self-esteem. We also allow anger to build up within ourselves.

Sadly, what often happens is that a person's bottom line gets broken over and over again until it can't possibly be pushed any further. The result of this is that the person who has allowed their bottom line to be broken becomes enraged and very often violent. This can be avoided if we are clear on what our bottom lines are and committed to sticking to them.

It is very important to remember that **a bottom line is not an ultimatum.** A bottom line is something you decide on for yourself. The people in your life have a *choice* if they want to accept it or not.

Bottom Line Exercise

Please give an example of three important bottom lines in your life. Be very clear, brief, and complete. Include the behaviors that you expect/want and the consequences if those bottom lines are broken. This sheet is provided for you to print out to use.

1. Bottom line

Consequence

2. Bottom line

Consequence

3. Bottom line

Consequence

What are some of the bottom lines of your elder? What are some things that they have had to give up as bottom lines because of aging?

How can you help them deal with these changes?

Forgiveness

The ability to forgive is important in a relationship. All relationships will have events from each partner that need to be forgiven for the relationship to proceed. The only person who can decide what you can and will forgive is you. This will vary from person to person and even from situation to situation.

Forgiveness is...

- A by-product to an on-going healing process
- An internal process-it has its' own pace and speed
- A sign of positive self-esteem
- Letting go of intense emotions attached to incidents from our past
- Recognizing that we no longer need our grudges and resentments
- No longer wanting to punish the people who hurt us
- Accepting that nothing we do to punish them will heal us
- Freeing up and putting to better use the energy once consumed by withholding grudges, harboring resentments, and nursing unhealed wounds.
- Moving on

Forgiveness is not...

- Forgetting
- Condoning
- Absolution
- A form of self-sacrifice
- A clear cut, one-time decision

What are the things you need to forgive in the elder person for the relationship to grow?

What are the things the elder person needs to forgive for the relationship to grow?

Simon and Simon, Forgiveness: [How to Make Peace With Your Past and Get On With Your Life](#)

Part Four: Communication

Communication is the link between parts of a relationship-one of the “glues” that holds a relationship together. When the parts of the relationship are “communicating” they are creating a “community”. Communication can do great damage or great enhancement to a relationship.

Good communication does not just happen, it is a skill that needs to be learned and practiced. With strong, effective communication skills, relationships of all kinds improve, conflicts can be resolved, and the members of the relationship may feel closer and more bonded.

Messages come to us in many forms. We are constantly bombarded by information/ communication coming to us from many sources (Jones & Shechter, 1992); most of our communication is non-verbal. It is important to understand which methods we use to communicate most often to others, and which we focus on when others try to communicate with us.

WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

1. Perception
2. Expectation
3. Involvement

Perception

It is the recipient - the person who gets/is given the message, who communicates. **"Unless there is someone who hears, there is no communication, only noise."** All meanings of any communications are put there by the person, who receives the message, not by the person who sends the message. The receiver decides what the giver of the communication means, wants or has.

The person who sends the message may have an intended message, but unless the receiver has a set of "shared definitions" with the sender, the message received may not be the message sent. Since the receiver of the message is the one who acts on the message, they are also the ones who give/place the meaning to the message. This is a very important component to learn.

Relationships get into a lot of trouble because of the difference between people about "meanings." The receiver *assumes* that they know what the sender "means" and does not check it out. If the assumption is wrong, there could be a problem between the sender and the receiver.

This can be especially true when the communication is about something important, difficult, or touchy. The sender may "beat around the bush" and the receiver may not check things out enough. As a result, the true meaning of the sent communication is not received and problems can result.

The phrase "I love you" is a good example. This phrase can mean very different things to each member communicating it. Unless they agree on which meaning is being used, they will both assume that their definition is the agreed one and they will both react from their definition. If these definitions or "meanings" are very different, a big problem could result.

Perception then is not logic; it is experience and is only a part of the whole picture. For a communication to be understood, the communication must be in the recipients' language, and he/she must have some understanding of what is being "said".

Whenever anything is "communicated" to us, we see/pay attention to only the part of what is being communicated that matters to us. As an example, think about a child wanting something from a parent. The child asks and asks and when the parent says, "yes" with conditions attached, the child only hears the "yes". We are all like that. We hear the "I love you" and not the, "but..." And what we end up getting hurt by is the part that we didn't/couldn't/didn't want to hear.

Expectation

Expectation is the sense that something is going to happen. Very often, we have something in mind of what we think or want to happen. We tend to see or perceive what we expect to see or perceive and to filter out the unexpected or unwanted. We all get used to certain patterns in our lives. Then we "tune out"

because we know those patterns and we can fill in the spaces when we hear the beginning of the pattern.

This is all well and good-as long as the pattern holds. Where we get into trouble is when the pattern changes and we are on autopilot and not paying attention to the changes.

Involvement

Involvement is having or making demands on the receiver of the communication. Communication always makes demands. It demands that the recipient of the communication become somebody, does something, or believes something.

The closer the relationship, the more involvement there is. When people are closely involved, they start to feel demands simply from a sigh, or a tone of voice.

The problem occurs when the demand that is heard is not the demand that is being sent. We react to what we "**hear**" instead of what is being "**sent**". Most of us who have been in committed relationships can come up with one or two tales of being involved in this kind of situation. For example, many of us "know" from a certain sigh, word, or movement from our partner that they want to have sex with us. This is great if we also want to have sex. However, if we aren't in the mood, we may already be reacting to/avoiding what we "know" they want before they have even brought it up. And boy does this create a problem when they really didn't want sex, but something else.

Big disagreements can happen when one partner misunderstands what the other wanted before even being asked!!!

There are three basic premises of human communications.

1. **It is impossible to not communicate.** Communication is going on all of the time, with or without words.
2. **Human communication is a multi-level phenomenon.** There are two parts to human communication:
 - a. Content - informational value.
 - b. Feeling - what the information is about. This has to do with the relationship between the sender and the receiver. It is very different when your partner tells you "I love you" and your mother tells you "I love you".
3. **The message sent is not necessarily the message received.**

When we look at the communication in any relationship, that communication is easier to understand if we know something about that relationship. We all communicate differently in the many relationships we have. We speak in different ways, in different words, and we have varying expectations in different relationships.

These expectations are the “rules” of the various relationships in our lives. Different relationships have different rules. Many times, the people in the relationship are not aware of the “rules”. Spouses may communicate differently than do boss and subordinate or parent and child. The kind of relationship that exists has a strong impact on the communication patterns.

Feedback

Communication goes two ways—from us and to us. The communication that comes to us helps us learn about ourselves and how we are seen in the relationship we have with whoever is communicating with us. This is called feedback, and it comes in many forms. Sometimes others tell us how we affect them; sometimes they avoid or seek us out more this is also feedback but in a different form. The more trust and comfort we have in the relationship, the more we will believe the feedback.

Feedback is a way of helping another person to consider changing his/her behavior. It is communication to a person (or group) that gives that person information about how he or she affects others.

Feedback helps an individual keep his behavior “on target” and to thus better achieve his or her goals. When you give feedback, use the following guidelines in order to ensure that the feedback gives the best benefit.

If you want good communication in your relationships, you need to become a good communicator. The only person you will ever be able to improve in your lifetime is **YOU**. However, when we make changes in ourselves, those changes tend to impact and create the way for changes to happen in others.

One way of starting good communication is to begin to use “I” messages. “I” messages are statements that let others know how you feel—you are taking responsibility for your feelings—you do not attack the receiver, you give information about the behaviors that need attention, and you give information about what specific changes you would like to have happen.

“I” messages are your emotional truths and expressions of your feelings. “I” messages allow others to respond from their emotional truths and feelings. **“I” messages are always right because they are about you and not about others.**

“You” messages; on the other hand, tend to be controlling, aggressive, and judging of the recipient of the message. “You” messages tend to mean that there must be a winner and a loser in the communication.

“I” messages are especially helpful in giving feedback to another person. The following is a good guideline for giving feedback.

Giving feedback

Think about the amount of information that the person you want to give feedback to can use, rather than the amount that you may have, or feel that you have to give.

Following are the steps of an "I" message.

1. **Describe the situation.** Be specific and objective. Make behavioral observations, not inferences. Deal with the present, not the past behavior. Stay away from words like "always" and "never"
 - When _____ (describe the situation)
(When you come home four hours late without having called)
2. **Express your own feelings, and take responsibility for them.** Focus on sharing this to assist the recipient, rather than as a "release" for you. Describe the consequences to you as a result of the other person's behavior.
 - I feel _____ because _____
(I am frightened because I am afraid you have been hurt)
3. **Specify the changes you want.** Be realistic. Ask, don't demand. Express what you want-be realistic and don't make demands. Make sure you express the changes in behaviors you would like to see.
 - I would like/appreciate _____
(I would like you to call me if you are going to be late)
4. **Share your perceptions of the possible outcomes of the changes.**
 - This will result in _____
(This will help me feel more comfortable and not angry when you do come home)

"I" statements

"I" statements are direct, clear communication to another person that demonstrate:

1. Respect for ones' self and the other.
2. Willingness to take responsibility and initiative for ones' own needs.
3. Separating oneself from another and focusing on what is important to "me" instead of "you". Examples I feel.... I want... I believe... I need... I think...

Criteria for effective feedback

1. Feedback focuses on describing rather than judging behavior. It describes a reaction to a behavior and allows the other person to accept or not accept the feedback. By avoiding judging statements, the other person may be less likely to become defensive and then be able to hear the feedback.
2. Feedback is specific rather than general. To be told that one is "dominating" will probably not be as useful as to be told that "just now when we were deciding the issue you did not listen to what others said and I felt forced to accept your arguments or face attack from you."
3. Feedback takes into account the needs of both the receiver and giver of the feedback. Feedback can be destructive when it serves only our own needs and fails to consider the needs of the person on the receiving end.
4. Feedback is directed toward behavior that the receiver can do something about. Don't give feedback on things that a person has no control over-like height, age, gender, or ethnicity. Frustration is only increased when a person is reminded of some issue over which he/she has no control.
5. Feedback is solicited rather than imposed. Feedback is most useful when the receiver, on their own, has formulated the kind of question that those observing him or her can answer. If an opportunity for giving feedback is not presented, one can ask, "Would you like to know what I...feel...think...observe...need?"
6. Feedback is well timed. In general, feedback is most useful at the earliest opportunity after the given behavior (depending of course, on the persons' readiness to hear it, support available from others, etc.)
7. Feedback is checked to ensure clear communication. One way of doing this is to have the receiver tell you what they heard you say. Feedback may be misunderstood if it is potentially threatening or felt to be potentially threatening to the receiver.
8. Both the giver and the receiver need to check with others, if possible, the accuracy of the feedback. Is this one person's impression or an impression shared by others?
9. Feedback involves sharing of information rather than giving advice.

10. Feedback contains only the amount of information that the receiver can tolerate. If too much is offered, there can be an overload and all the feedback may be rejected.

11. Feedback concerns what is said or done, not why.

Feedback, then, is a way of giving help. It is a corrective mechanism for the individual who wants to learn how well his behavior matches his or her intentions and it is a means for establishing one's identity--for answering who am I?

The functions of feedback

1. It helps the person know how they stand in the eyes of the group, the individual, etc.
2. It helps us know how effective we have been in achieving our goals.
3. It reinforces, steers, and directs subsequent behavior.
4. It helps us know the effect of our behavior on others.
5. It allows us to check our self-concept against what others say.
6. It stimulates changes in feelings, attitudes, perceptions, and knowledge.
7. It helps us to learn to observe our own and others' behaviors carefully.
8. It helps develop more effective and harmonious relationships.
9. It corrects inappropriate behavior and helps the person to realize that their behavior may not be appropriate or may not have the intended impact.

The types of feedback

1. Conscious-nodding agreement.
2. Unconscious-falling asleep.
3. Spontaneous-a "thank you".
4. Solicited-"yes, it did help".
5. Verbal-"no".
6. Non-verbal-leaving the room.
7. Formal-an award/a pink slip.
8. Informal-applause.
9. Trusted-a small child saying, "Mommy, you're getting fat"

The processes of feedback:

1. Leveling-letting others know how I feel about myself. (I'm tired)
2. Confrontation-letting others know how I feel about them. (I feel hurt when you laugh at me)
3. Encounter-two people leveling with each other.

Why feedback is often avoided:

1. We may be afraid to hurt another's feelings.
2. We may be afraid to take the risk. Afraid that we will lose the relationship, or that we will be attacked in retaliation.
3. We withdraw, not saying anything-nothing happens.

Listening

⇒ Listening is one of the most important components of communication. It is often a lost art. Listening is the part of communication that gives us information about others, what they want, what they need, where we stand with them.

"It takes two to speak the truth: one to speak and one to listen" (Henry David Thoreau). This is one of the basis truths of human communication. Listening is one of the most important components of communication. If there is no listening and interpretation of the message, there is no message.

Please remember: When you are being a good listener, it does not always mean that whoever you are dealing with will be a good listener. The good news is that if you listen well to the other, you will be able to learn what defenses they are using, how they protect themselves from pain, and then develop ways to deal with them more effectively.

Hints on being a good listener.

- ❖ Have an open heart. Let go of the anger, resentment, and fear.
- ❖ Have an open mind-focus on the speaker only. Don't worry about a rebuttal or response. Listen to what the other is saying carefully.
- ❖ Open your body up and allow eye contact. Use gestures like nodding and smiling.
- ❖ Have a desire for a positive outcome.
- ❖ Express yourself clearly.
- ❖ Allow others to express themselves in their own way.

It is important to learn to listen without having our defenses up, to listen actively without simply waiting for our chance to talk. The best and most effective form of listening is called active listening.

Active listening

The art of listening involves the whole person. A good listener uses not only his ears, but also his eyes, his body, his mind, his past experiences, his intuition, his entire self. A good listener hears what is being said (content) and the feelings of the other person in the on-going process (mood).

A good listener will:

- *Concentrate and focus attention on the speaker.
- *Verbally indicate listening by paraphrasing the speaker's meaning
- *Non-verbally indicate listening with body language such as contact, nodding, and body position.
- * Have an open "I want to understand" attitude.
- * Encourage the speaker. (Tell us more)
- * Ask appropriate questions.

- * Express interest and empathy.
- * Use thinking time effectively.
- * Listen for ideas and central ideas and themes, not just facts.
- * Pay attention to content-don't get sidetracked by the delivery or mannerisms of the deliverer.
- * Ask themselves "How can I benefit from this conversation?"
- * Remember that thought is four times as fast as speech-use that extra time to work at responding to the message instead of working on other things in your life.
- * Don't jump to conclusions. Listen to the entire message and don't fill in parts-even if you think you know what is coming next.
- * Resist distractions.
- * Pay attention to how the message is being delivered-body language, tone of voice, facial expression, rate of speech, pitch of voice. These are all valuable pieces of information in the communication.
- * Maintain a "positive listening appearance"
- * Encourage the speaker to continue.

Think about ways that you shut others out when they are communicating with you.

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

When do you use these behaviors? Are there certain things that trigger you shutting others out? Think about the ones that you are aware of.

What can you do to change these behaviors?

Positive responses to use that indicate active listening:

Reflection-"it sounds like..."

Restatement "what you mean is..."

Question for clarification "are you saying...?"

Negative responses that may stop communication from going further:

1. Advice

2. Denial

3. Joke

Some aids for active listening with someone else and in a discussion group:

1. Look at the person who is talking.

2. Do not interrupt.

3. Be silent.

4. Let the other person keep an idea or feeling that is different from your own.

5. Ask, "Would you say more about...?" rather than "why."

6. Tell the person what you hear them saying so they know you understand.

Communication Roadblocks

We block communication by using these kinds of responses:
(As you read these, put a mark by the ones you use)

1. ___ **Ordering, directing, commanding - telling the other to do something.** "Don't talk to your mother like that," "Stop complaining"
2. ___ **Warning, threatening, promising - telling the other what consequences will occur if he does something.** "If you do that you'll be sorry" or, "If you're a good boy, Santa Claus will come."
3. ___ **Moralizing, preaching, shoulds, and oughts.** "You shouldn't act like that", "Children are supposed to respect their elders"; "Men should be able to do what they want."
4. ___ **Teaching, lecturing, giving logical answers.** Not hearing the other person through, but jumping in with your own opinions: "Stop crying, it's not a big deal".
5. ___ **Advising, giving solutions or suggestions.** Telling the other person how to solve their problems: "If you don't like it, you should just leave."
6. ___ **Judging, criticizing, name-calling, labeling.** Making a negative judgment or evaluation, making the other feel foolish, shaming them: "You are so stupid that you never get anything right!", "You will always be a loser."
7. ___ **Praising, agreeing.** Offering a positive evaluation or judgment: "Well, I think you can do it."
8. ___ **Reassuring, sympathizing, consoling.** Taking the other person out of their feelings: "You'll feel different tomorrow."
9. ___ **Interpreting, analyzing, diagnosing.** Telling the other what his motives are or why he is doing or saying something: "You always want to make me angry."
10. ___ **Probing, questioning.** Trying to find reasons, motives, causes, so you can solve the problem: "When did you start feeling this way?"
11. ___ **Withdrawing, distracting.** Trying to get the other away from the problem: "Just forget it, it's no big deal."
12. ___ **Sarcasm. Humoring.** Kidding the other person out of their feelings: "Now, now, let's not be a baby about this."

Take a minute to think about the ones you have checked off. Can you remember conversations that have stopped because of using one of these? Is it possible that the use of these has hindered your communication with someone important in your life?

Special Strategies

These techniques will help you avoid becoming sidetracked or manipulated when you make requests.

Broken record - Keep your listener from slipping away. Shift back to the issue and calmly repeat your point:

Comment - "No, let's go to the movie I want. Yours is no good."

Response - "I understand what you're saying, but what I want to do is ... Or, "yes, but I'm still not interested in going to *that* one... or, "you may be right, but the point is..."

Time out - Delaying responding until people have calmed down and can be more reasonable. For example, a situation might be handled like this:

Comment - "I hate you! I'm going to get you back for this!"

Response - "You're so angry at me right now that it's hard for us to talk..." Or "when you threaten me like this, we can't work things out very well. Let's set a time when we will both be cooled down."

State the importance - Clarify how important this is to you and that you don't want to be brushed aside. This technique is often effective when used together with the broken record technique.

Comment - "Oh yeah, we'll get to that later. It's no big deal."

Response - "This is really important to me..." or, "It's really important that we talk about this..."

Admitting past errors - Avoid getting sidetracked by the past. Admit that you may have made errors in the past, but this is now and you are trying to handle things better. For example:

Comment - "You're the one who acted like such a jerk at the last party!"

Response - "You may be right, I probably could have handled things better, now what I'd like to try is..." or, "yes, I'm working on that, but right now I'm concerned about..."

Playing detective - Ask sincerely about the other person's specific complaints so you can understand and problem solve.

Comment - "You never care about anybody but yourself!"

Response - "What specifically did I do that bothered you? Let me know so that I will have a better chance of not doing it in the future..." Or, "I understand that you think I don't care about you. Tell me what I can do differently to let you know that I really do care."

It is important to remember the impact that aging may have on communication. There may be generation gaps-things may have different meanings for each member of the communication couple; there may be physical limitations-loss of hearing-; there may be less energy for dealing with a conversation; there may be an unwillingness to deal with certain subjects or "problems"; and there may be a difference in the way things are processed in the brain. All of these have an impact on the quality of the communication and should be taken into account.

Questions

What are your biggest problems with communication? How does this impact your relationship with the elder?

In the relationship with the elder, what are the areas where you communicate well and what are the areas where communication is difficult?

What are you afraid of in communicating honestly with your elder?

How can you help the elder communicate more effectively with you?

Healthy Communication Hints

- Actions speak louder than words. Nonverbal communication is much more powerful than verbal communication.
- Define what is important and emphasize it. Define what is not important and ignore it.
- Be clear and specific in your communication.
- Discuss one problem at a time.
- Test all your assumptions verbally. Get your partner's okay before you make a decision that involves them.
- Realize that each event can be seen from a different point of view.
- Learn to disagree without destructive arguments.
- Be open and honest about your feelings
- Let the effect, not the intention, of your communication be your guide.
- Do not preach or lecture.
- Do not use excuses, fall for excuses, or give excuses.

- Learn when to use humor and when to be serious. Do not subject your partner to destructive teasing.
- Be aware of the kind of influence you are exerting on others around you.
- Work at monitoring yourself to be aware of how you are coming across when communicating.
- Work towards getting and giving support to others.

Use this model to think about the changes you want to make in your communication style.

Your elder says...	You respond by...	Your new positive response...

BECOMING ASSERTIVE

Understanding Assertiveness

WHEN YOU ARE	PASSIVE (Lose/Win)	PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE (Kind of win/lose)
You are:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emotionally dishonest Indirect inhibited, reactive Self-denying (silent martyr) Blaming, apologetic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emotionally dishonest Indirect, self-denying at first Self-enhancing at expense of others later on
Your feelings are:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I'm not okay, you're not okay I'm not okay, but you're okay Hurt and anxious Victimized Possibly angry later 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unconfident Manipulative Fearful Later angry and revengeful
Beliefs about yourself:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have to be perfect I'm worthless I don't count Others are more important than I am 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can't trust anyone I can outsmart anyone to get my needs met I am going to get what I want and by any means
WHEN YOU ARE	AGGRESSIVE (Win/lose)	ASSERTIVE (Win/win)
You are:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inappropriately honest and direct Overly expressive and attacking Blaming, controlling Self-enhancing at the expense of others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriately honest Direct and expressive while being empathic to the other person Self-confident Self-enhancing but not at the expense of others
Your feelings are:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I'm okay, you're not okay I'm not okay, you're not okay Righteous, superior Deprecatory at the time, guilty later 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respectful of self Respectful of others Respectful of commitments to relationships
Beliefs about yourself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am entitled I must have control I have to look out for myself The world revolves around me 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am happy because I can meet my own goals I can take of myself but can ask for help if I need it I can control myself and my attitudes about events

Following are examples of how each of the styles may respond to the provocative statement: "Your ideas are stupid and immature"

PASSIVE: "Uh, I guess you're right...I don't know too much"

PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE: You say nothing, but then stand the person up for a date, later saying you "just forgot"

AGGRESSIVE: "Go to hell! We all know your I.Q. is below normal because your mother was a dirty @#*"

ASSERTIVE: "I don't feel you know me well enough to make that judgment. Right or wrong I have a right to my own opinion"

As you learn to understand the emotions that are directing your actions, you have the ability to re-direct the path you walk. Take some time to write down some of your most extreme behaviors in a relationship. Evaluate whether you were aggressive, passive, passive aggressive or assertive.

Which of the previous labels best describes you in your relationship with the elder person? Which label best describes them?

Have you been different in other relationships? Do you want to change how you are in this particular relationship? If so, why-think about the history of the relationship and how it has played out. Different times and different ages may demand different responses and those responses may not be appropriate at this time. How does this apply to you and your relationship?

The most aggressive action I have done to this elder person is:

The most aggressive thing I have said to this elder person is:

The most passive behavior I have displayed to this elder person is:

The most passive-aggressive action I have done to this elder person is:

The most assertive action I have done to my elder is:

Areas/situations where I am: aggressive/passive/passive-aggressive/assertive:

REMEMBER: Realize that as you try these new positive behaviors, you will probably feel uncomfortable and awkward. Other people may also feel uncomfortable with your changes, but it is a necessary step for you to grow.

A time of day when I have most patience to listen to others: (include why):

A time of day when I have least amount of patience to listen to other (include why):

Any other times that make it difficult for me to really listen to another person (For example:

When I'm sick; when I've been up taking care of a sick child; when I have an important project due at work; when I am having pre-menstrual symptoms):

LOOKING AT MY RELATIONSHIP

All relationships have strong and weak parts. Use the table below to look at the relationship with your elder.

Think about what would be in the boxes below in terms of your relationship

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

How can you maximize the strengths and opportunities and minimize the weaknesses and threats?

Part 5: Dealing with Conflict and Learning How To Solve Problems Effectively

Dealing With Conflict and Learning How to Solve Problems Effectively

Conflicts happen in all relationships. They are supposed to—conflicts are/can be potential learning opportunities for the partners in the relationship. Many of us believe that a “good” relationship has no conflicts, and that a conflict means that the relationship is in trouble. In healthy relationships that is not the case at all.

We have choices in life. We can and we will have conflicts with others and with ourselves. When we avoid dealing with these conflicts, we run the risk of internalizing the problems and having the conflicts rage inside of us. This can cause both physical and emotional problems.

Take some time and think about what you were taught about solving conflicts. How did you see problems handled in your family while growing-up? Were conflicts dealt with effectively? Or did they mean a lot of stress for the entire family?

Now think about those same questions in terms of your elder? What are the similarities and what are the differences that you both brought into your relationship?

Conflicts happen when rules of relationships are challenged or broken. All relationships have rules. The rules come from and are formed by things we bring in from our earlier lives, our experiences up to now, and our value systems. In relationships, rules center around:

- Money
- Children
- Recreation
- Who is in charge of what
- Chores
- Sex
- How to spend free time
- Religion
- Who makes what decisions
- Friends

What kinds of conflicts do you have in your relationship in these areas? Can you define the rules both of you have about these areas?

What are the easiest conflicts for you and your elder to resolve? What are the most difficult conflicts for you and your elder to resolve?

Remember: The most easily resolved conflicts are about what rule to follow. The most difficult conflicts to resolve center on “whose” rule is the one to follow (Haley, 1991).

Finding Solutions

Good and effective conflict management means finding a solution where both sides can feel that they have won-and that the relationship is intact-hopefully even stronger.

The only possible downside of this can be that you won't get 100% of what you want. (But remember, in the old way of "win or lose" there was always a chance of getting 100% of nothing.) An effective way of dealing with conflicts in any relationship is to look for possible compromises. Compromise is an important aspect of relationships. The most successful relationships are those where the partners are willing and able to compromise with each other.

What does compromising mean to you?

A good compromise works at making all parties happy, a "win/win" situation. In a good compromise, the best of both situations are hopefully combined into a whole. When making a compromise it is important to ask yourself the following questions:

- What am I willing to give up?
- What do I feel that I can't give up?
- What do I want from my elder?
- Is there anything that I can put off in what I want?
- How important is this to me-to the others involved in this situation?
- What can I do that would make the others in this situation happy?
- What would I like my partner to do to make me happy?
- If I give in, am I going to make others pay for it later?
- Do I feel that I am always the one to give in?

Please remember!!! Many times, when there is a conflict going on in the relationship, what is being dealt with is not what is really the problem. Some conflicts are smokescreens for bigger problems. The more that a relationship has "stuffed"; the more likely it will be that the "apparent" conflict is not the "real" conflict. Go back to the description at the beginning of this chapter.

Whenever you are dealing with a conflict, take some time to look at what the real issue is. The more you focus on the real issues, the more chance of getting and keeping quality in the relationship. In making compromises, it is important to have as much information about all of the desired outcomes as possible. When we have this information, it becomes easier to make decisions about what to do.

- Each person needs to be able to let the other know what is very important about the situation.
- Each person also needs to let the other know what he or she would be willing to give up in order to come to an agreeable compromise.

It often helps to write the situations down and brainstorm different ways that each could get as much of what they want. Looking at how things can be done

differently, what can be done later, what can be combined, and what can be delegated are good ways of coming to decisions.

If one person gives up more than the other, what are the benefits going to be? (For example, will that person get more on the next compromise, or will the other person do something special for them). If you expect something back for giving up something, it is very important to let your partner know. When we make successful compromises, our relationships grow stronger, and deeper. Trust is enhanced because each partner feels that the other is willing to give something up for them and is concerned about what is important to them.

Compromises are important in relationships because they help stop power struggles. Power struggles-when one person wants or demands more power in a relationship than another-happen in all relationships. Power struggles can damage or even ruin relationships, so it is important to recognize them when they happen, deal with them immediately, and move on.

As you work on solving conflicts in this relationship, remember:

- Actions speak louder than words.
- Non-verbal communication (how you look, act, stand, tone of voice, expression on your face) is much more powerful than verbal communication.
- Be clear and specific in your communications.
- Decide what is important and focus on that. Decide what isn't important and ignore that.
- Test your assumptions before acting on them.
- Don't put a plan into action without the elder person's agreement.
- Don't make a decision for the elder person without them knowing about it.
- Don't attack when disagreeing.
- Understand that there are always 3 sides to an issue: your side, the elder person's side, & reality.
- Respect the elder person's side of an issue, even if you don't agree.
- Be honest about your feelings.
- Be aware of how your communication is perceived and make changes as needed.
- Let go of "being right".
- Don't preach, lecture, or nag.
- Don't gloat.
- Don't use or fall for excuses.
- Learn when to use humor and when not to; don't tease or make fun of the elder person.
- Don't use your superior abilities (in any area) to get an advantage.
- Be fair, be fair, be fair.

- Don't work hard to win the battle only to lose the war.

Compromise Worksheet

Use one of the identified difficult situations from the above discussion.

The problem situation is (be as detailed as possible: the more information you have, the easier to make a successful compromise):

What I want to happen is (be really honest):

What the elder person wants to happen is (be equally honest about this side):

Our "wants" clash by...

The ways that these two situations can work together are:

To make a good compromise, I will give up, or postpone/the elder person would like me to give up or postpone:

(How well do these match?)

I can't give up:

My elder person is willing to give up or postpone/I would like my partner to give up:

(How well do these match?)

My elder person can't give up:

Using the above information, the possible compromises we could have are:

Our agreed-upon compromise is (be very detailed here so each member knows what they are giving up, what they are giving, and what is expected from everyone involved in the situation.):

Feedback: The compromise worked/didn't work because (do this step only when there has been some time to test the compromise):

The strategies listed below can be used to help bring conflicts into focus and to help overcome them. The result will be the development of honest, forthright, and positive relationships with yourself and others.

- **Choose the time and place carefully.** Use your awareness of your elder person to know when is the best time to work on solving a problem. Avoid difficult times or public places.
- **Focus on changing behaviors not people.** You can choose two directions in facing a conflict: fix the problem or fix the blame.

- **Agree on something.** Even if the agreement is that you both disagree on this issue, state the agreement. This helps both partners remember that they are "in this together."
- **Use "I" language.** State your case in terms of your own feelings. Own what belongs to you and don't deny any feelings—even if they are embarrassing or seem silly. Keep the focus on the behaviors that need to be changed. This can reduce the number of conflicts, minimize the severity of the conflict, and lead to winning solutions.
- **Figure out where you went wrong and own it.** Owning up to one's mistakes is a very important component of conflict management. How is your behavior contributing to the problem and what can you do to change it? If you won't acknowledge it, you can't change it.
- **Criticize with precision.** Let the other person know exactly what you are unhappy about. Eliminate statements like "You are a lousy ____"; "You make my life miserable." Instead, let the other person know exactly what they are doing to displease you. Focus on the behaviors and not on the person.
- **When someone attacks...agree.** In dealing with someone who appears to want to attack and hurt you, a good counteroffensive is to simply agree. This tends to defuse the attack and lets the other person know that you are not going to participate in this interaction. If the person persists in making personal attacks, leaving the scene is a good maneuver.
- **Take a time out.** When it seems that the attempt at conflict management is not going anywhere and nothing is being resolved, it is often a good idea to stop for a while. The time out allows emotions to cool, and helps both sides to move away from the blaming phase and into the solution phase. Solutions are often difficult to find when anger is high.
- **Have more conflicts.** There are no conflict-free relationships. Many people believe that conflicts in a relationship are a sign of a major breakdown, so they avoid, or cover up the inevitable problems that occur. The result of this is that resentment builds up, the positive aspects of a relationship are undermined and usually there is an eventual blowup. It is much healthier and more productive for the relationship to bring up problems and annoyances—even when they are minor—when they do occur and to deal with them. The result of this is a relationship where honesty prevails and neither side is keeping an accounting of all of the wrongdoings of the other.
- **Find the third option.** In a conflict, there are two sides and two possible solutions—mine and yours. The key to conflict management is to find the third option that will make both of us happy. Remember, this is not a "win-lose" situation, but rather a "win-win" goal.
- **Agree on the future.** Focus the solution on the specific actions that will be taken to solve the problem. What are ways that you can measure the effects of the agreed-upon solution? This demonstrates commitment to the solution and helps minimize the chances of this conflict happening over and over again; it reinforces the commitment of the partners to one another.
- **Work it out on paper.** When a conflict is brewing, it is often helpful to sit down and work it out on paper before even approaching one's partner. This gives you

some time to think the problem through, come up with suggestions for solutions, and to focus on the positive benefits of various solutions. In addition, problems often get dealt with more effectively when a solution is offered along with the problem.

Hints for getting others to open up

1. Encourage others to open up. Ask questions that show you are interested in what the other person has to say. Pay attention when the other person talks; don't just wait for your turn to talk!
2. Try to discover attitudes. Use questions to elicit the opinion of the other person.
3. Keep to the topic at hand. Don't bring up long buried problems or resentments.
4. Direct the conversation. Others can be focused onto topics by the use of questions. Ask for the information that you want, in the forms of advice, opinions, or suggestions.
5. Handle insults. Resist the urge to fight back. Do not give insult for insult. When this happens, the opportunity to solve the problem is lost.
6. Verify questionable information. Always leave room for clearing up possible misunderstandings. Never presume guilt.
7. Clarify meanings. Don't accept implications, vague references, or hints. Use open-ended questions. Open-ended questions require more thought and give more information.
8. Get the pertinent facts. Don't jump to conclusions, rather, find out what is on the other person's mind.
9. Start with easy questions. Start slowly and build up trust.
10. Stay calm.
11. Preface your questions with the facts that you know. Be willing to be challenged.
12. Ask short questions and seal your lips after each question-give the other person a chance to respond.
13. Let your partner know that you have listened to them. This can be done by giving them eye contact, nodding as they speak, and paraphrasing what they have said when they are finished.

REVIEW

1. Something I understand about my relationship that I didn't know before is...
2. My definition of a "healthy" relationship has changed in the following ways...
3. I am responsible for the following areas of difficulty in my relationship...

EMPATHY

What is empathy? Empathy is the ability to feel or experience what another person is experiencing, and to understand the impact of the feeling on the person. Empathy is important in relationships because knowing and understanding how someone else is impacted by your behavior can have a powerful impact in how one acts toward others.

It is much more difficult to harm another person when we are aware of the how that harm will impact them. Violence and abuse depersonalize relationships-when we are abusive towards others, we are not concerned about how our behavior impacts or affects them, we are only concerned with getting our point across, getting our way, or hurting back because we feel that we have been hurt.

Remember the following ode as you work on empathy:

**How far you go
in life depends on your being
tender with the young,
Compassionate with the aged,
Sympathetic with the striving,
And tolerant of the
weak and the strong.
Because someday in life, you will
have been all of these**

George Washington Carver

Compassion: Please read this link and watch the video.

<http://bit.ly/2scTRFm>

Watch this video

<http://bit.ly/2CQW1QQ>

In conclusion, watch these videos to see what the generations can learn from each other.

<http://bit.ly/2iBSYko>

<http://bit.ly/2Agmcws>

<http://bit.ly/2ApnCFT>

Relapse Prevention Plan
Please print this out and fill it out

1. Describe your most serious acts of abuse/violence with the elder person. Be very specific. Tell the setting, the situation, include all persons involved, and build up to the time of the violence. Please include how you might feel differently about this action after having completed this course

2. What were you doing, thinking, and feeling? Please use the Koonin/Williams House of Abuse

3. How did your abuse/violence affect the elder person?

4. What was the outcome of your actions? Please list both the positive and the negative consequences.

5. If you were in this same situation now, what would you do to not be violent and to work towards a constructive non-violent resolution?

- a. What would you be doing, thinking, and feeling?

b. Which tools from the program would you be using? Why?

6. List three types of situations that you become angry at. How will you handle these situations differently since completing the program?

7. Please list your support system and how you will utilize it to no longer use violence, power, and control in your relationship.
