

SUCCESS LADDER

CAREER

EDUCATION



My Career Goal →

← Entry Level Job

LIFE SKILLS SUPPORT GROUP
CURRICULUM

CalWORKs

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Mental Health**

**Adopted by: Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
Alcohol and Drug Program Administration**

LIFE SKILLS SUPPORT GROUP CURRICULUM

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LIFE SKILLS SUPPORT GROUP

CURRICULUM

PURPOSE:

CalWORKs Life Skills Support Groups combine the objectives of removing substance abuse barriers to employment with exercises that promote practical outcomes. Participants will learn coping strategies to deal with their emotional concerns, and gain knowledge about the culture of the work environment. Personal strengths will be identified in dealing with stress-related issues. Participants can expect to become empowered to pursue educational/employment goals while improving in the area of general life skills.

This will be an open-entry and open-exit group, which will meet two hours every week for six weeks.

The target population is CalWORKs participants who are identified by their treatment provider as not being fully ready for the mainstream Welfare-to-Work (WtW) program activities, but are ready to work on life skills that may better prepare them for employment.

The Right Frame of Mind

MODULE 1A

LIFE SKILLS SUPPORT GROUP

THE RIGHT FRAME OF MIND

ATTITUDE

GOAL: This module is designed to help participants overcome barriers in thinking that prevent them from moving forward. Participants will learn to identify and correct negative views that lead to unproductive behavior.

OBJECTIVES: Participants will be able to:

- recognize negative thinking patterns
- understand how thinking is related to behavior
- have more control over negative behavior

MATERIALS: Handouts: Attitude is Key, Examples of Negative Thoughts

*This module selection (attitude) requires an LPHA Staff to conduct group

**ATTITUDE IS KEY!
AS A MAN THINKETH SO IS HE**

In order to gain more control over our emotions and behavior, we can become more aware of the negative destructive thoughts that enter our minds almost habitually. These negative thoughts have the power to control how we feel and how we process information in deciding how to behave.

The good news is that while we typically cannot control the way we feel about a person or a matter, we can control our thoughts! This becomes significant when we need to change the way we respond to certain situations.

The behaviors and feelings that we most often want to change are the ones that have negative consequences tied to them. High intensity feelings like rage, envy, sadness, and guilt can be debilitating, particularly if experienced often.

Let's look at an example where our feelings can change in response to a change in our thinking pattern.

EXAMPLE: A neighborhood fire breaks out and three family homes are burned down. There was no loss of life, but one woman who lost her home grieved so much she ended up in the hospital for stress-related illness.

What happened to the other homeowners? How did they manage to survive the fire without needing medical care?

In this narration, the other fire victims were relieved that there was no loss of life and that everyone in their family was safe. While they had normal feelings of grief and loss they managed to look toward building their lives again.

EXAMPLES OF NEGATIVE THOUGHTS AND HOW THEY MAKE YOU FEEL AND ACT

Please add examples of negative thoughts and their consequences:

Negative thoughts/attitude	Feelings	Behavior
1. I am stupid	Sadness	Avoid learning
2. I can't do anything right	Overwhelmed	Won't try
3. I must be perfect	Tense/No Joy	Limiting
4. I can't trust people	Suspicious	Avoid others
5. I am afraid	Fear	Won't live life
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

MODULE 1B

LIFE SKILLS SUPPORT GROUP

THE RIGHT FRAME OF MIND

MOTIVATION

GOALS: This module helps participants get started toward taking positive actions in their life. They will be able to set career related goals and reward themselves for making small steps.

OBJECTIVES: Participants will be able to:

- identify barriers and concerns that prevent taking action
- discover meaning in their life—what drives them to want to improve
- set self-reward system for each accomplishment

MATERIALS: Handouts: Motivation, Things That Interfere, My Life Has Meaning, Things I Really Enjoy

MOTIVATION

There are just some things that are hard to get motivated for; things like house cleaning, shopping, paying bills etc. Yet motivation is the wood that sets our lives aflame with meaning and focus. It keeps us going when the going gets tough. It “turns us on!” Have you thought about the things, people, places, situations that motivate you? Motivation is best when it comes from inside you, and you don’t have to have someone else motivating you. You do it because you want to. There may be only a few things that motivate you, but what ever they are they are powerful igniters. If you can find out what motivates a child for example, you can get that child to perform duties that otherwise would be difficult. If you are no longer motivated to act or accomplish something in your life, you may be discouraged, tired, or depressed. Be encouraged, it only takes a small fire to kindle a dream or pursuit! Once you tap into that thing that stirs your interests, and desires, you will find that it stayed there waiting on you. Just pick it up and start off where you left off.

THINGS THAT INTERFERE WITH MY GOALS

1. I have trouble taking the first step.
2. I need childcare.
3. I did not finish high school.
4. I am too old to go back to school.
5. I don't know where to start.
6. I don't have support.
7. I need clothes.
8. I don't know salary to ask for.
9. I don't have transportation.
10. I lack basic work skills.
11. I had a bad experience with my last job.
12. I am not physically able to work.
13. I want to wait until my kids are in school.
14. Other.....

MODULE 1B

MY LIFE HAS MEANING WHEN

I CAN.....

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

I HAVE.....

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

I WOULD BE MORE SATISFIED WITH MY LIFE IF

I COULD.....

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

THINGS I REALLY ENJOY DOING

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

IF I HAD TO REWARD MYSELF FOR DOING SOMETHING WELL

I WOULD.....

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

MODULE 1C

LIFE SKILLS SUPPORT GROUP

THE RIGHT FRAME OF MIND

RESPONSIBILITY

GOALS: This module helps participants gain a sense of control over life outcomes by making informed choices. They will learn the value of admitting past mistakes. The consequences of decision-making will be highlighted.

OBJECTIVES: Participants will be able to:

- identify barriers to achieving past goals and come up with new remedies
- become more comfortable in making decisions
- accept credit and rewards for what is done well while admitting mistakes

MATERIALS: Handouts: Responsibility, Barriers in My Past/Present, Making Better Choices

RESPONSIBILITY

Have you noticed that few people want to take responsibility these days? There is trash on the front side walk. Who picks it up? You often hear, it's not my job! No, it's not your job, but you live there and it may reflect poorly on you. Not taking responsibility for what goes undone is one thing, but if you don't take responsibility for your life decisions you will pay. Just the thought of taking on one more responsibility is perhaps tiring to most people who are already over stressed with family and work duties. But, there is one positive way to think about it: being more responsible can also mean taking more control over what happens to you. The more you can determine the positive things in your life the more you will have them. If you leave control in the hands of someone else, or in the hands of the "system," you will no doubt find the outcome may not be what you want. So one way of getting more of what you want from life is to make sure that the outcome turns out in your favor. Take the responsibility!

BARRIERS IN MY PAST

List some of the things, situations, or people that have hindered you in the past from achieving your goals.

1.

2.

3.

4.

BARRIERS IN MY PRESENT

There are things, situations or people that are currently interfering with you reaching your goals.

1.

2.

3.

4.

MAKING BETTER CHOICES

Most mistakes in the past can be attributed to making poor choices. The good thing about past failures is the opportunity to learn from them. We learn what not to do, who to trust and why. We also learn that more help or information may be needed next time.

SOME THINGS I HAVE LEARNED FROM PAST MISTAKES

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

WHEN I SUCCEED AT A GOAL I PLAN TO REWARD MYSELF BY

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How to Handle the Tough Stuff

MODULE 2A

LIFESKILLS SUPPORT GROUP

HOW TO HANDLE THE TOUGH STUFF

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

GOAL: This module is designed to help participants reduce conflict in relationships. They will learn techniques to help negotiate what they want.

OBJECTIVES: Participants will be able to:

- recognize how words and behavior can impact others
- learn at least one effective technique for managing negative behaviors
- develop strategies for dealing with difficult people and situations

MATERIALS: Handouts: Techniques For Managing Negative Behavior, Making “I” statements,” My Personal Strategy for Dealing With Difficult...”

TECHNIQUES FOR MANAGING NEGATIVE BEHAVIOR

We can best manage our behavior in conflicts by exercising some of the following techniques:

1. Try to focus on the facts and figure out what the other person actually said or did.
2. Don't talk before you are prepared to respond in a reasonable way.
3. Demonstrate continued good will by saying that you want to work things out.
4. Make sure that you have given your side and opinion accurately.
5. If necessary ask a mutually respected person to mediate.
6. Stay flexible; be open to change your mind after you hear more from the other side.
7. Don't fight the small stuff; figure out if the issue is important enough to pursue resolution.
8. Set another time to continue the talks if you feel you are not being understood.
9. Don't involve others who have nothing to do with the conflict.
10. Try not to over rehearse your anger before addressing the issue.

MAKING “I” STATEMENTS

The use of “I” statements (owning your own thoughts) helps to avoid criticizing or placing blame on others. Taking responsibility for what we understand, even if we are wrong, reduces defensiveness in those we are interacting with. Below are examples of “I” statements. The first statement is less inflammatory than the second statement. Practice making more “I” statements in your interactions.

Examples:

1. I would like to talk more.
You don’t let me talk!
2. I am bothered by your being late.
You come in here late all of the time!
3. I am concerned about your drinking habits.
You drink too much!
4. I worry that something may happen to you when you stay out late.
You could care less how I feel when you stay out late!
5. I am angry when I feel that you don’t care.
You don’t care about me!
6. I am disappointed over not receiving that last promotion.
You did not give me the promotion I wanted!
7. I am afraid that I won’t be able to please you.
No one will ever be able to please you!

MY PERSONAL STRATEGY FOR DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE AND DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

Think of a situation or person that you are dealing with or have dealt with that has been problematic. How would you deal with the issue based upon what you have learned from this module?

The problem	What not to do	Ways to resolve

MODULE 2B

LIFESKILLS SUPPORT GROUP

HOW TO HANDLE THE TOUGH STUFF

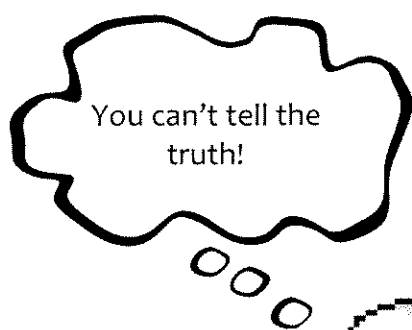
DEALING WITH ANGER

GOAL: This module is designed to deal with anger before it gets out of control. Participants should be prepared to identify areas of sensitivity that tend to trigger an angry response.

OBJECTIVES: Participants will be able to:

- identify the physical effects of anger on the body
- see things from the view of others
- know when to remove oneself from the scene
- reframe from over-personalizing

MATERIALS: Handouts: Anger, Make a list of Times When Anger Got You in Trouble, What Makes You Angry, Things I Can Do to Cope Better



ANGER

Anger is an emotion that helps to preserve the species. In years past, when humans had to live beside wild animals and learn to survive in a more hostile physical environment, the arousal of certain emotions like anger and fear was critical to survival. When strong emotions are aroused, the sympathetic nervous system is activated. It is also known as the “fight or flight” response. In the case of fear, our human biology was programmed to run from harm, and in the case of anger, we were programmed to fight.

Although we no longer have to exist in hostile physical environments, these intense arousal signals may still dominate our being. The problem is, a response of “fight or flight,” may not be the appropriate one in the civilized world, and indeed, in the case of “fight,” may get you in big trouble! So how do we manage these intense emotional responses that our old biology is programmed for?

Managing anger is an important and necessary skill in coping with life events. We can no longer just run away or fight our way through a threatening situation. For some, anger is a learned response in dealing with stress. When anger becomes a habitual response, it is very difficult to change this pattern of behavior. Some times it requires outside help from professionals in the mental health field. The good news is that this behavior pattern can change by learning better coping skills. Below are some tips and general guidelines for dealing with anger:

- Deliberately choose to remain calm by thinking rather than responding.
- Don't hold in frustrations until they build up. Speak up in an assertive manner to get your point across.
- If you feel overwhelmed, remove yourself from the scene and return to the matter when you feel more in control.
- Try to build up reserves by sleeping and eating well and doing things that you enjoy.

Module 2B

MAKE A LIST OF TIMES WHEN ANGER GOT YOU IN TROUBLE

WHEN YOU SAID OR DID THINGS THAT YOU NOW REGRET

In pairs discuss the situation:

Include who the person was. Describe the situation and what you said or did. What was the reaction or consequence from your anger? Why do you regret what happened

PERSON	SITUATION	OUTCOME	REGRET
--------	-----------	---------	--------

1.

2

3.

4.

WHAT MAKES YOU ANGRY?

List Your Triggers:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

THINGS I CAN DO OR CHANGE TO COPE BETTER WITH MY ANGER

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

MODULE 2C

LIFESKILLS SUPPORT GROUP

HOW TO HANDLE THE TOUGH STUFF

STRESS REDUCTION

GOAL: This module is designed to help participants deal with stress in their daily living. They will learn stress reduction techniques that meet their personal style and comfort.

OBJECTIVES: Participants will be able to:

- list potential areas of stress in their lives
- learn how to use relaxation techniques
- develop a healthy eating and exercise plan
- identify possible supports in their environment

MATERIAL: Handouts: Stress Reduction, Relaxation, Exercise, Eating Right, Eating Right Reduces Stress, Things To Put In My Stress-Quake Bag

STRESS REDUCTION

In today's world who has been able to escape the effects of stress? Perhaps there are some good things to say about stress, but one has to really think hard to come up with it. One thing we know that when we are under stress, it sure feels good when the stress is relieved! The problem is, it goes away to return again another day. Life on the planet inevitably means we have to deal with stress. What matters then, is how we chose to deal with it. Yes, we have some choice. We can let it grow bigger, by not attending to it, and end up with more stress, or we can tackle it before it escalates.

There are a number of things we can do to prepare for stress and navigate through it once it is upon us. Preparing for stressful times may be as simple as having an earthquake bag prepared. Instead of an earthquake, we are preparing for a stress quake. What do we put in the bag? Perhaps we should start with things that have a calming effect upon you. How about a nice luxury bath with everything arranged and ready to be pulled out when needed? You could have your favorite magazines ready for that time when you don't want to think about the problems anymore and you just want to fade into a good book or magazine. Put that in the bag. Another suggestion would be to find your favorite photos and have them ready to pull out and enjoy in the quiet of an evening. These can bring fond memories of a time perhaps less stressful. There may be friends that are soothing and able to offer a good word, or sound advice; put a reminder of that person's telephone number in your bag. There must be more things you can think of that helps to settle your nerves, during stressful times. Jot it down and place in your stress-quake bag for times of emergencies. Mark "open with care."

Traditionally, we know that there are relaxation and breathing exercises that also help with stress reduction. Don't forget the part that exercise plays in the form of a walk. Lastly, eating right can us build reserves when our bodies are tired or weary. There are things to do to combat stress, and just knowing that somehow feels good. To not do anything, is a poor choice.

RELAXATION

We know that it is good for us to take time to relax, but we often don't know how to go about it if we have only a few precious minutes during the day. When we feel stressed, it is good to know some ways of relaxing. A good relaxation exercise is designed to help our bodies relax and reduce stress. Below, is an exercise of relaxation that can be done at work or when you can catch a few minutes in your day.

Breathing: It is important to breathe fully, from your stomach and not from your chest. In order to make sure you are breathing from your stomach, place one hand on your stomach and the other on your chest. Notice where your breathing originates; begin deep breathing exercises from the stomach.

Loosen Muscles: We may not be aware of muscle tightness in various parts of our bodies. In order to increase awareness and to know how to loosen tight muscles, it is recommended that we first tighten each muscle and then release the muscle.

Relax The Mind: It is helpful to take your mind off the stressors that you may be facing by relaxing your thoughts. It is typically recommended that you concentrate on a pleasant scene, one that is soothing and relaxing. Take a few minutes to concentrate on this positive image.

EXERCISE

Questions to answer before you begin:

(1): Think of different ways you would like to exercise if you could find the time; would it be biking, walking, jogging, swimming, or athletic games?

(A): Would you prefer to have a partner or go solo?

(B): What time of the day fits best with your schedule?

(C): Do you have any medical considerations?

(D): How long would you exercise (minutes/hours)?

Where would you exercise?

Lastly, in viewing your calendar and considering your health when do you think you could begin?

Remember, walking has been generally a safe way to begin an exercise program, if you have not had an established routine.

(2): Exercise not only helps our bodies to be stronger and function better, it is also a good stress reducer. Science has pointed out that we have opiate receptors in the brain that when released by exercise, makes us feel good; these hormones are called endorphins. These natural opiates are released in response to pain and vigorous exercise. They are jokingly called a “natural high.” Some people keep exercising in order to feel good from this endorphin release. This explains the “runners high,” and the indifference to pain some injured athlete’s have.

EATING RIGHT

Like relaxation and exercise, eating right is important for overall health and stress reduction. Our bodies are energized by the right kind of food, and we can often ward off some ailments with good eating choices. There are some differences in food preference that may be determined by ethnicity and culture. It is therefore important to design a good nutritional plan around foods that are not only healthy but also tailored to individual taste buds.

Food has many meanings that we learn as early as childhood, and some of these traditions have not served us well in our adulthood. For example, we are told “Eat everything on your plate, kids are starving in other countries.” While this advice meant well, it very well could contribute to overeating.

As a nation, Americans are experiencing a rise in the rate of obesity, and related health concerns such as type 2 diabetes. Conversely, we are a culture that promotes standards of beauty based upon youthfulness and slim figures. More pressure is placed on females to conform to this standard at younger ages. At the same time we have exploded in our offerings of junk food. Fast food eating establishments can be found on almost every corner of some neighborhoods. We are indeed in a conflict with our messages and reality when it comes to food.

In relation to stress levels, a proper diet can be an important key to feeling better. Sleeping better and eating properly will help our bodies to function better.

EATING RIGHT REDUCES STRESS

Below are general guidelines for eating right. Consult your physician if you have dietary restrictions.

1. Eat foods from each of the basic food groups: fruits and vegetables, dairy products, cereal and grains, and proteins.
2. Limit your salt intake. Too much sodium can cause you to retain fluids that may interfere with breathing.
3. Limit your intake of caffeinated drinks. Caffeine may interfere with some of your medications and may also make you feel nervous.
4. Avoid foods that produce gas or make you feel bloated. The best process to use in eliminating foods from your diet is trial and error.
5. Try to eat your main meal early. This way, you will have lots of energy to carry you through the day.
6. Choose foods that are easy to prepare. You will be more apt to cook.
7. Avoid foods that supply little or no nutritional value.
8. Try eating six small meals a day instead of three large ones. This will keep you from filling up your stomach and causing shortness of breath.
9. Try to eat in a relaxed atmosphere, and make your meals attractive and enjoyable.
10. In many states there are agencies that will provide meals for a small fee or at no charge. Check with local church organizations or government agencies to see what is available in your area.

THINGS TO PUT INTO MY STRESS-QUAKE BAG

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

How to Put Your Best Foot Forward

MODULE 3A

LIFESKILLS SUPPORT GROUP

HOW TO PUT YOUR BEST FOOT FOWARD

COMMUNICATION **NON-VERBAL**

GOAL: This module teaches how to make good impressions; a valuable skill in the workplace. Participants will discover the impact of first impressions and how not to stumble into giving false impressions.

OBJECTIVES: Participants will be able to:

- understand the power of image
- learn to read body language
- identify the impression they would like to make

MATERIALS: Handouts: Non-verbal's: You Are Seen Before Heard, A Non-Verbal Sizing Up! Role Play Exercises with Body Language Speaks

NON-VERBALS

YOU ARE SEEN BEFORE HEARD

Some people do not stop to think how they appear to others. They sort of go along their merry way and handle different social situations the same, without much thought. However, there are times when we need to be more thoughtful in how we are projecting ourselves. Often people make snap judgments about others and their first impressions are not easily changed. There are circumstances when it is to our advantage to make the best impression that we possibly can. In instances where we are competing for a special outcome, like employment; we need to be cognizant of how we want others to view us. Your success may make the difference between obtaining housing or paying some important debt. In such instances, it is important for you to put your best foot forward.

First of all, you want to project a good overall appearance, which includes your dress, your walk, your manner of greeting, your make-up, your accessories and your hair. Remember, before you are heard you are seen. Impressions are quickly formed. If you need to work on any of these visuals, try them out with a trusted friend who will give you honest feedback. Your mirror can also help here if you have an objective eye.

Secondly, become aware of your “typical” facial expression. This is the expression you carry when you are not thinking about it. Does it convey boredom? Do you look distracted? Is your expression angry, sullen or confused? See yourself as others see you. Once you know your typical style, you decide if you need to change. It may determine whether you are successful or not. Remember, during an interview you don’t want to overdo facial expressions by smiling too much, or looking too stern.

Thirdly, look at any mannerisms that you may have. Many are bad habits and are practiced without your awareness. Distracting mannerisms may be things like too many hand gestures, licking your lips, sucking your teeth, or gum chewing, head scratching, toe tapping, and leg shaking.

Establishing eye contact is also important and you may want to practice making good eye contact. It is usually a good idea to maintain eye contact without staring at the person you are talking to. A lack of eye contact may convey timidity or lack of interest.

Lastly, check out the personal space that is usually put between you and the person you are talking to. Different cultures may have different spatial distances where they are comfortable communicating. Most typical Americans stand between 30 and 36 inches apart. Remember not to invade someone's personal space. If you do, they will tend to step back. If they step back, don't close in further, or you may find yourselves waltzing around the room! In summary, keep your eyes open for the non-verbals!

A NON-VERBAL SIZING UP!

(1): Think of times when you correctly sized someone up without them talking to you directly.

SITUATION

PERSON OBSERVED

(2): Think of times when you incorrectly sized someone up, and had to change your mind.

SITUATION

PERSON OBSERVED

CHANGED

BODY LANGUAGE SPEAKS

Have the participants role play pre-selected scenarios (such as role playing a bored person, an angry person, a lazy person etc.), without informing the group, and the group will guess what the non-verbal message conveyed.

Suggestions:

Role-plays a scared communicator

Role-play a bored communicator

Role-plays an angry communicator

Role-plays a naïve communicator

Role-plays a suspicious communicator

Role-plays a nervous communicator

MODULE 3B

LIFESKILLS SUPPORT GROUP

HOW TO PUT YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD

COMMUNICATION **VERBAL**

GOAL: This module emphasizes the value of good verbal communication. Participants will sharpen their listening skills and learn to make appropriate “I” statements. As a result of this training, there should be an increase in understanding in normal dialogs.

OBJECTIVES: Participants will be able to:

- practice skills that increase their ability to be understood and to understand what others are saying
- take responsibility for conveying messages more accurately
- ask for clarification when needed

MATERIALS: Handouts: Verbal Communication, Making “I” statements, Communication Skills

VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Basic Rules of Engagement:

- Good speakers do not have to be great orators. They do need to listen. They do not cut others off. They answer questions appropriately.
- Good verbal skills begin with good manners: We say excuse me, thank you, good morning, I'm sorry, see you later, may I, please and thank you.
- Having eye contact, showing interest in what the other person is saying, asking for clarification, and speaking honestly, enhances good verbal skills.
- Good verbal skills are nice to listen to. The voice is not too loud or too low. The words are not spoken too fast. There is no bad attitude in the speech of the speaker.
- Good verbal skills do not require a big vocabulary. Simply getting one's point across in a manner that is easily understood is all it takes.

MAKING “I” STATEMENTS

The use of “I” statements (owning your own thoughts) helps to avoid criticizing or placing blame on others. Taking responsibility for what we understand, even if we are wrong, reduces defensiveness in those we are interacting with. Below are examples of “I” statements. The first statement is less inflammatory than the second statement. Practice making more “I” statements.

Examples:

1. I would like to talk more.
You don't let me talk!
8. I am bothered by your frequent lateness.
You come in here late all of the time!
9. I am concerned about your drinking habits.
You drink too much!
10. I worry that something may happen to you when you stay out late.
You could care less how I feel when you stay out late!
11. I am angry when I feel that you don't care.
You don't care about me!
12. I am disappointed over not receiving that last promotion.
You did not give me the promotion I wanted!
13. I am afraid that I won't be able to please you.
No one will ever be able to please you!

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Possible Topics for Discussion

- Conversation starters
- How to listen attentively
- How to let someone know in a nice way that you're not interested in talking to them.
- How to speak in a calm tone of voice
- How to initiate a conversation with a stranger
- How to ask for help/directions/assistance
- How to keep the conversation going
- How to end a conversation
- How to give constructive criticism or feedback
- How to respond to criticism or negative feedback
- How to disagree respectfully
- How to assert your point of view
- How to voice dissatisfaction
- How to ask the boss for a raise
- How to ask your supervisor for help
- How to discuss dissatisfaction with the job
- How to ask for a change of assignment
- How to politely state that you don't discuss your personal life at work
- How to ask the boss for a vacation
- How to give and receive praise/compliments
- How to invite someone out for coffee, lunch, etc.
- How to say "no"
- How to talk to doctors and other authority figures
- How to talk with your kids
- How to tell someone "thanks," but I am not interested.
- How to ask someone to stop yelling at you
- How to ask for clarification
- How to decline an unwanted offer
- How to discuss uncomfortable topics with others.

MODULE 3C

LIFESKILLS SUPPORT GROUP

HOW TO PUT YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD

COMMUNICATION INTERVIEWING

GOAL: This module allows each participant to role play an employer or potential employee who is being interviewed for a job. The wrong and right way to appear will be reviewed.

OBJECTIVES: Participants will be able to:

- identify appropriate interviewing skills
- express themselves with greater clarity
- prepare a list of questions for an interview
- be prepared to answer stock employer questions

MATERIALS: Handouts: The Job Interview, Interview Tips, The Mock Interview

Interview Room



Yes



No

THE JOB INTERVIEW

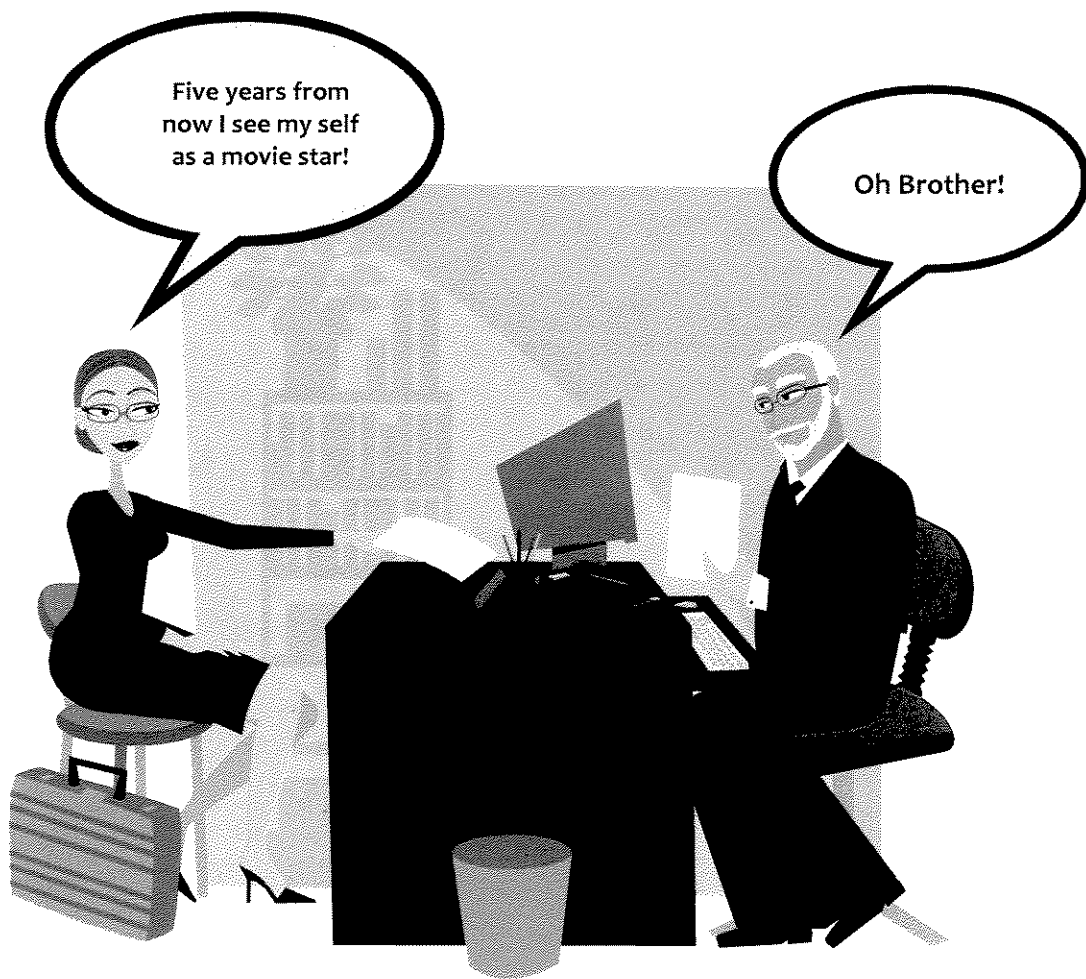
Few things are as frightening as public speaking and rock climbing, but going to a job interview has to rank pretty high. There is no escaping some anxiety around these activities. In fact some anxiety is good in that we are energized and ready for the challenge while experiencing some discomfort.

In terms of job interviewing, there is one main thing that we can do to help minimize the pressure of performance anxiety. Nothing is more reassuring than knowing something about the job or position that one is applying to. It is even better, if we know the duties and salary range for the position. It is therefore important to do some background checking and perhaps speak to others who may know something about the position. Being forearmed with as much information as possible will help in the competitive job market.

INTERVIEW TIPS

Things to do and not to do:

- Know something about the company
- Know exactly how to get there
- Be prepared to ask some questions
- Be prepared to answer tough questions
- Arrive at the interview on time
- Give a good handshake and smile
- Listen to the question and answer it only
- Do not answer in monosyllables
- If you can't answer a question be truthful
- Don't talk negative about your last employer
- Don't ask about money, vacation, benefits etc



THE MOCK INTERVIEW

Select pairs of one interviewer and one interviewee and role play an actual job interview. Some pairs should display inappropriate attire and behavior with poor responses.

1. Have the group select the types of jobs they would most likely be interviewing for.
2. Have them volunteer for each role.
3. Give them time to come up with questions that pertain to the job duties, and some answers to typical questions.

Interviewer Suggestions:

1. "Tell me about your work background?"
2. "I see a big gap between your employment periods, can you explain?"
3. "What interests you about this position?"
4. "What would you say are your strengths and weaknesses?"
5. "How well do you get along with others like supervisors, and peers?"
6. "Why should I consider you for this position?"
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.

The Nuts and Bolts

MODULE 4A

LIFE SKILLS SUPPORT GROUP

THE NUTS AND BOLTS

MONEY MANAGEMENT

GOAL: This module is designed to deal with developing a financial budget. Participants can expect to gain a good perspective of their financial needs and resources. They will be able to determine if changes in spending patterns may help them.

OBJECTIVES: Participants will be able to:

- outline a monthly cash flow of income and expenses
- look at frequent/necessary expenses
- make decisions regarding savings/ purchases etc.
- develop a budget plan on a time frame
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MATERIALS: Handouts: Money Management, Cash Flow, Savings, Creative Ways To Increase Income



MONEY MANAGEMENT

There are certain topics that tend to make us feel uncomfortable and money management is such a topic. The subject of money; how we use it, and abuse it, is closely related to our style of functioning and has many ramifications.

There are those who look at money as a tool for enjoyment and pleasure and therefore spend little time planning for the future. There are others who fear running out of money to the extent that they become penny pinchers and don't allow any expenses for self enjoyment without feeling guilty.

Most of us however, can relate to the anxiety around how we are managing our money. No matter how small our income may be, the ability to know what our expenditures are and how much can be saved or trimmed is important to know. We need to take a serious look at our income and determine our spending habits. We will then be able to decide where we can cut back, save, or expand. In other words, we can learn to take better control of the way we manage money.

CASH FLOW

At times it seems that money just slips through your hands and you don't know where it went. If this happens regularly, it indicates that you are not keeping track of expenditures. This leads to overspending and missing important payments. The suggestions below will help to lower frustration around money management and increase the sense of control in this area:

- Know your monthly income
- Write a list of your regular monthly expenses including food, gas, and clothing
- Know when you have special bills for insurance and taxes
- Are you spending less than you bring in?
- Work out a plan of savings

Income

Expenses

Savings

SAVINGS

If you completed your cash flow chart and there is no money left for a savings, use this sheet to look at your expenditures to see what can be cut or reduced until the desired amount is obtained.

THINGS THAT CAN BE CUT

Please list the item(s) that can be cut for the purpose of saving the desired or needed amount:

Categories:	Amount of Cost	Amount Saved
1. Junk food		
2. Clothing		
3. Entertainment		
4. Eating Out		
5. Hair Appointments		
6. Nail Appointments		
7. Other		
8.		
9.		
10.		Total Saved _____

CREATIVE WAYS TO STRETCH INCOME

Examples:

- Barter (exchange) for services with your neighbors or at your child's school
- Child care or drop off children at school
- Tutoring parents and children in your area of strength
- House cleaning, grocery shopping or running errands
- Hair cuts, manicures / pedicures
- Collect and exchange manufacturer's coupons with friends and acquaintances
- Shop at supermarkets that offer double coupons
- Shop at stores that offer good discounts
- Purchase clothes at thrift shops/ exchange with a friend
- Save aluminum cans and glass bottles
- Plant flowers in a neighbor's yard
- Paint house numbers on curbs using stencils for a price
- Save pennies in a piggy bank
- Wash cars for your neighbors and friends
- Seamstress services like hemming, mending and buttons
- Plan your daily driving route before you leave your home to accomplish more than one thing to save gas
- Advertise the above services by giving out flyers in your neighborhood and at school. Make your own business cards and pass them out to anyone who may need your service.

MODULE 4B

LIFE SKILLS SUPPORT GROUP

THE NUTS AND BOLTS

TIME MANAGEMENT

GOALS: This module is designed to help participants design a plan for the daily use of their time taking into account the schedules of their families. Participants will be able to have a realistic view of what their parameters are and how they can reasonably achieve their goals within a given time frame.

OBJECTIVES: Participants will be able to:

- outline their daily schedule
- determine how much time is needed for educational/vocational goals
- plan ahead for future needs

MATERIALS: Handouts: Your Time Is Important, Daily Planner, Tools To Start, Time Management

YOUR TIME IS IMPORTANT!

Time management is a carefully thought out plan of action aimed at engaging you in activities that are focused upon goal attainment. There are only so many hours in a day. But have you ever thought to consider that the same hours you are given in a day to accomplish things are the same hours it takes to be a doctor, writer, producer, or the president of a company? We are all CEO's over our lives. What are you doing with your given hours in a day? Do you find that time slips away from you? Are you wasting time with excessive TV viewing? Sleeping? Procrastinating? What are you accomplishing in your 24 hours? Are you following through on major projects, are you satisfied with your leisure time? If you are like a lot of people, you can make improvements in the area of time management.

One of the problems in this area may be a lack of knowledge about the tools of management and how to use them. If you compare yourself to people that seem to get an enormous amount of things done in a short amount of time, you will find that their activities are typically focused and goal centered. They typically have a plan that is flexible and workable. In short, they pursue goals until the job is completed or the situation is resolved.

DAILY PLANNER (A)

Use this calendar to record your regular activities for each day of the week. To simplify your calendar use 1 or 2 word descriptions. Use down- point arrows to illustrate the same action for extended periods of time.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
6:00 AM							
6:30 AM							
7:00 AM							
7:30 AM							
8:00 AM							
8:30 AM							
9:00 AM							
9:30 AM							
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2:30 PM							
3:00 PM							
3:30 PM							
4:00 PM							
4:30 PM							
5:00 PM							

TOOLS TO START

- Evaluate your use of time.
- Focus on your goal, what you want to accomplish.
- Write down your steps and realistic deadline dates.
- Put away distractions and focus upon the task.
- Build in rewards for yourself when you complete aspects of the project.
- Consult if necessary and seek advice.
- The more planning you put into it the better the outcome.
- Create more time for yourself and your project when possible.

TIME MANAGEMENT

Please discuss the following questions:

- Why is it important to manage time?
- How do you go about establishing goals?
- Why is it important to plan ahead? What can go wrong if you don't? Share a real life example.
- Why is it so important to write down what you need to do?
- Name three things that are your biggest "time wasters."
- Describe the last time you successfully organized something?
- What are the ingredients to a successful outcome?
- Why is it important to set a time frame and stick to it?
- Describe how you managed a baby, housework, if relevant—school and or work.

MODULE 4C:

LIFE SKILLS SUPPORT GROUP

THE NUTS AND BOLTS

DECISION MAKING

GOALS: This module is designed to make participants aware of the process of decision making, which takes place from moment to moment each day. They will learn helpful strategies in improving their ability to make better decisions. Participants will gain knowledge about how to prevent repeating past mistakes.

OBJECTIVES: Participants will be able to:

- increase decision-making awareness
- learn to use decision-making strategies
- evaluate decisions and examine outcomes
- reward themselves and learn from mistakes

MATERIALS: Handouts: Preparing for a Decision, After the Decision Has Been Made, and Decision Making Strategies, and Decision Exercise

PREPARING FOR A DECISION

The difference between you and someone who seems to succeed most of the time may just have a lot to do with preparation. People who habitually make bad decisions usually lack sufficient information, and make decisions based upon emotions. Other causes may have to do with making spur of the moment decisions. Lastly, some people feel by not making a decision, they are prolonging the inevitable, not knowing that things not addressed can often get worse.

THINGS TO DO

1. Obtain as much information about the issue as you can.
2. Analyze the available information—learn as much as you can
3. Decide if the risk is too high
4. Determine what the opportunities would be and their value
5. Seek counsel if needed. Discuss your ideas with someone who can be objective.

AFTER THE DECISION HAS BEEN MADE

Once you have followed the steps of preparation and you have made a carefully thought out decision, you must learn to live with the consequences of that decision. If there are things you can do to change it and you so desire, follow the steps of decision-making and decide how to proceed. Making good decisions up front brings good outcomes and the good outcomes are experienced as rewarding. The more you make sound decisions the more pleased you will be with the outcomes.

When we make hasty and bad decisions the outcome tends to be less than desirable. However, when life throws us a curve ball and we make a bad decision, we may have to live with it. It is to our advantage, if we learn to accept the things that we cannot change. While we try to learn from our poor decisions, sometimes it takes us longer to change. We must be patient and remember, we are after all, only human!

DECISION MAKING STRATEGIES

Things to consider when making that next big decision:

1. Decide whether or not you need to make a decision at this time.
2. Rule out illegal, dangerous, or unethical options that can lead to trouble.
3. Consider the advantages and the disadvantages of your decision.
4. Determine how your decision will affect others
5. Consider the advantages and the disadvantages of your decision.
6. View more than one solution to the dilemma, you may have overlooked some things.
7. Compare the costs and potential gains as a result of your decision.
8. Know that once a decision has been made there is often little that can be done to change it.
9. Remember, no decision is a decision!
10. Try to make decisions you can live with based upon your views and values.
11. Learn from your decisions: Know what went right and what went wrong, for the next time around.

DECISION EXERCISE

Using the directives for “Decision Making Strategies” and “Things to Do,” partner in small groups to discuss important decisions that you have made in the past. Think about those with good outcomes and those that had poor outcomes. Discuss in terms of the tools suggested in this module.