
SESSION 2

Objectives:

- To experience once again the power of thoughts.
- To recognize what a goal is and to begin to be able to set and move toward goals.
- To recognize that movement toward goals is not always even and that a change in direction is sometimes called for.
- To recognize the range of feelings we all have and the importance of communicating those feelings.

Session Outline:

- Centering Activity
- Goal-setting
- Break downs

Split Session Option

- Feelings
- Exercises

Opening Exercise

Let's begin by reviewing everyone's name.

This time I want you to say your name and one word about your self, and then we'll go around. I'll start.

Example: "I am cheerful (*use own name*)"

When it comes to your turn, say your name, preceded by an adjective (a word that describes something about you), and repeat all the names as far as we've gone around the circle until everyone has had a turn.

Does anyone have anything they would like to share that happened since our last meeting?

Facilitator's responses should show interest without evaluation or analysis. This is an opportunity to begin to focus on "feelings" with questions like, "How did that feel?" The facilitator may want to express a personal feeling reaction, such as "I feel really happy (or whatever is appropriate) hearing you tell about that."

This session we will be talking about goals.

But first, we're going to do another activity to remind us how much we can use our imaginations to feel strong and in control.

Centering Exercise

Centering is when you let go of all the things outside of you and bring your focus to yourself.

We're going to do a centering exercise that will show you how your mind and body can work together to help you reach your goals.

►► When we feel balanced, we are less likely to fall down, to be pushed over or to feel nervous or uncertain. Who can help me?

Have the child stand casually in the center of the area. Gently push them off balance. This should be very easy.

Now try really hard not to let me push you off balance?

The rigidity of trying hard increases the loss of flexibility. The harder they try the easier they are to push over.

This is how most of us go through life, sort of off-balance, easily swayed or pushed around, or trying really hard to stay in control.

But we can use our internal voice and our imagination to help us feel more centered, more in control, more balanced.

To child say slowly:

"Close your eyes, stand with your feet as far apart as your shoulders, arms loosely at your side."

“Now, imagine that you are like an old, old tree. In your mind, see how strong the trunk of your body is.”

(Use your hands a few inches away from the child’s body to demonstrate the area you’re speaking about.)

“Your arms are big, strong branches that move easily and sway with the wind; and under you, you have a very large network of roots that hold you firmly and steadily.”

“Imagine the roots going from the bottoms of your legs and feet, deep into the ground, spreading out to the edges of a large circle, making a steady base for you.”

“Now, keeping that picture in your mind, see what happens when I push you gently.”

Very gently try to push the participant off balance again. S/he should be significantly more steady. If not, acknowledge that this kind of visualization can take some practice and ask the child if s/he feels more calm and steady.

“What did it feel like when you were centered and strong?”

Discuss.

Okay, now lets discuss our goals for this week.

Goals

Who can tell me what a “goal” is?

We can think of a goal as a destination we want to reach.

Imagine that we started out on a trip to Florida. We would first need to know where we are in relation to where we want to go. One way of doing that is to look at a map. Imagine opening up the map and there are only two things on it:

Flip chart 5

You are here.

Florida.

One way to solve the problem of getting from here to there is to draw a straight line from one dot to the other. Does anyone see any problem with that approach?

Allow the children to conclude that in real life there would be a highway to follow. Highways aren't straight lines. And there might be road blocks. This is also true if we fly (as all of us must know)!

Life is like going on a trip. We need to know where we are, where we want to go, how we're going to get there and then begin. We also need to understand that it probably won't be a straight trip without problems, delays and many choices to be made.

This activity may be repeated with all participants working in pairs and then switching so everyone has an opportunity to experience the exercise. The group leader should lead the participants through the visualization. Once again, do not do this in pairs if the group has poor impulse control or if there are behavioral or control problems in the group or if the group is too young.

Flip chart: 6

Reaching a goal is a combination of:

- ✓ knowing where you are;
 - ✓ discovering where you want to go;
 - ✓ figuring out the best way to get started; and
 - ✓ dealing with various roadblocks and impediments along the way.
-

Goals are like destinations in the trip of life. They give us direction.

For example, the goals for this session are:

Flip chart: 7

Goals:

- ✓ learn about goals;
 - ✓ learn about setting goals;
 - ✓ learn to recognize our feelings; and
 - ✓ learn more about relaxation.
-

Goals are not loose ideas. They are specific and measurable.

Let's use something from your life as an example and we'll go through the steps of goal-setting together.

Work through the following steps with a volunteer's example so group members clearly see how the steps apply to goal setting.

Flip chart 8

GOAL SETTING

1. Set a reachable goal.
 2. Write out steps for reaching that goal.
 3. Keep going until you reach your goal.
 4. Give yourself a reasonable time limit.
 5. Evaluate — check your progress.
 6. Compliment yourself.
-

The first step just asks you to pick a goal that is possible for you. If you picked the goal to be the richest person in the world, would it be likely that you could reach that goal?

If a child insists that it is, move to the concept of "chunking down," that is, setting interim goals such as saving \$20 by next Friday.

The second step is to write out the steps needed to reach that goal.

Another way to talk about this is as "chunking down," breaking the goal up into smaller, more manageable parts. If you try to learn hundreds of facts at one time, you would become discouraged by

the magnitude of the job. But if you learn one fact at a time, you will reach your goal.

The third step is to keep going until you reach your goal.

This is part of the importance of setting smaller goals along the way, so you can be successful again and again and feel that you are really moving toward your goal.

The fourth step is to give yourself a reasonable time limit.

It's not fair to tell yourself you have only one day, when 2 weeks would be more realistic. At the same time, you don't want to set next week as a time limit when you could take the first step today.

The fifth step is to check your progress. This can be pretty hard sometimes, because it means you have to be really honest with yourself.

Sometimes you even have to look at the things you're doing that get in the way of reaching your goals, like watching too much TV.

The final step is to acknowledge yourself as you go. Give yourself credit for all the things you're doing right, for all that you accomplish.

Breakdowns

It's important to recognize that we don't always reach our goals. There are many reasons why this happens,

including the fact that we may have changed our priorities.

If you aren't reaching your goals, then something is breaking down.

Ask yourself:

Flip Chart 9

Breakdowns

- ✓ Do I really want to reach this goal or do I just think I should?
- ✓ Do I need to "chunk down" again?
- ✓ Do I need to get support from other people (tell others, ask for help)?
- ✓ Am I sabotaging my own efforts, or ruining my own chances of reaching this goal? If so, how?

After you ask yourself these questions, rethink and restate your goal.

Then compliment yourself for recognizing that things weren't working and looking at what needed to happen next. Even this is a step toward reaching your goals!

Depending on the time and whether you will be doing a split session, use other children's examples of goal setting and go through the steps.

With older groups, each participant might do the steps in his/her notebook as you go. This will give

each of them an opportunity to use the process with you there to facilitate.

This week and every week, use your notebook to help you keep track of what your goals are and whether you're moving toward them, whether you need to rethink them and perhaps, change them.

Split Session Option

Go to Feelings if you are not splitting the session.

Have group members complete Selfwork exercises 1 and 2.

Updating For Split Session

Did anyone set any new goals?

How are you working toward those goals?

Are you feeling successful or do you need to rethink your goals or "chunk down?"

Feelings

What are feelings?

Why are they important?

How do you express what you feel?

Are some feelings easier to express than others?

Feelings aren't good or bad. They are just your feelings. What is important is knowing what you feel. This sounds easy, but often isn't, especially when you are afraid that you won't be able to handle feelings or that no one cares about your feelings.

What are some feelings you have?

Make a list on the flip chart beforehand in case the group doesn't come up with more than one or two. Don't present the flip chart list until the group has their own list going.

Flip chart 10

Feelings list:

sad	glad
angry	depressed
calm	excited
nervous	tired
confused	bored
shy	happy
weak	strong
eager	reluctant
frustrated	antsy
guilty	ashamed
numb	afraid
loving	hateful

As you go over the list, be aware of any value judgments assigned to feelings "negative" or "positive."

Many people aren't very good at having the feelings they have.

Have any of you ever felt guilty or embarrassed or angry with your feelings?

This is very common but also a bit silly when you think about it.

If your arm itches, do you get mad at it?

If you get something in your eye and it begins to get all teary, do you get mad at your eyes or your tears.

Feelings are like that too. They are always with us and being upset with them doesn't make very much difference.

On the other hand, if you learn to recognize, understand and accept the feelings you have, you can be more like the tree, you can feel more in control of what comes and goes around you.

Flip chart: 11

Feelings can let you know:

- ✓ what is important to you,
 - ✓ what you need or want, and
 - ✓ when you need to take care of yourself.
-

Optional Exercise:

Put each feeling from Flip chart 10 on a card. Have group members draw cards and talk about the last time they felt this feeling. Have them also demonstrate the facial expressions, body language and other physical elements that may be associated with that feeling.

Adapted from: "Pick A Feeling Card" Susan Dennison, *Twelve Counseling Programs for Children At Risk* (pg 352).

Expressing Feelings:

Now think of a strong feeling you had this week. Jot down a word or two that reminds you of another time you had that feeling.

Did you share that feeling with anyone?

What happened?

Are there any rules you made with yourself as a result of what happened?

An example might be: "What if you loaned an important or valued possession to a friend and that person never returned it. You might feel hurt and distrustful of your friend, but you also might make a rule to never loan anything again."

What happens to feelings when you don't share them or communicate them?

Lots of people try to hold feelings in, to stuff them down inside themselves, to pretend they're not there.

It even seems like it works sometimes, but feelings are like toothpaste. If they can't come out one way, they'll come out another.

What are some things you think and feel about school?

Do they ever come out in the form of headaches, stomachaches, feeling tired all the time, feeling angry, out of control or crying.

Another thing that sometimes happens to people who refuse to experience their feelings for a very long time is that they seem to stop feeling anything.

It isn't really true that the feelings have disappeared, but these people begin to feel numb, like when you go to the dentist and get Novocain. It feels like your jaw goes to sleep; you can't feel anything because your jaw is numb.

That can happen to people who pretend that they don't have any feelings for a very long time.

But the worst part is that they feel numb not only about all the difficult and painful feelings, but all the joyous ones too, so they don't get to feel happy, or loved or joyful either.

The way to keep this from happening to you is to let yourself have the feelings you have. Learning to express

your feelings, to make friends with them, is really making friends with your self.

Saying you need to learn to express your feelings does not mean you are free to go around hurting others as an expression of how you feel.

But remember, just because you feel angry does not mean you get to hit the person who made you angry.

There are more appropriate ways to release anger.

About the nicest feeling is that of being yourself.

It comes and goes for everyone, but when you feel it, take time to notice how warm and confident and comfortable it feels just to be you.

This is where true happiness comes from. It isn't easy or simple to do, especially when you're young because everyone wants you to be a certain way, but keep reminding yourself that you are special and unique — there's only one of you — and give yourself permission as often as you can to be true to who you are.

Optional Exercise:

Working in pairs, have each participant make a body tracing. Have group members draw and/or write on the tracing the exact places where they experience body sensations associated with feelings and thoughts. Don't forget the face!

Optional Relaxation

Let's close our eyes, get comfortable in your chairs, take a deep breathe and let it out slowly and quietly.

Keep breathing now and think of a time when you were sad.

Pause about 15 seconds between each of these suggestions.

Now think of a time when you were having a really good time.

Now think of another time when you were really mad at someone.

Now think of a time when you felt really loved.

Now think of a time when you felt really special.

Now think of a time when you were really proud of yourself.

Pay attention now to the way it feels to know you are special.

Notice how your body feels. Notice if you are smiling.

You can take a minute or two to feel this way whenever you need to.

Now keeping that feeling and those good thoughts, begin to stretch and move about in your chair and, when you are ready, open your eyes.

Session 2 — Self-work Activities

1. Look at your answers to the seventeen questions from last session. What goals do you want to set for yourself? Write them down. What specific steps will you take this week toward reaching those goals. Write them down.

Or,

look at your answers to the Getting To Know Me Exercise. Are there any goals that come to mind that you would like to set? Write them down. What steps will you take this week toward reaching that goal? Write them down.

2. Continue to make notations of nice or special things that happen to you every day in your notebook.
3. Be aware of the range of feelings you have through the week and name them. Stop a few times each day and ask yourself "What am I feeling right now?" Notice, too, if you are upset with yourself for having that particular feeling and want to deny it or make it go away.

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4. If school or some other situation is particularly hard for you, begin a page in your notebook called "Things I Think and Feel About. . . ." Write down the things you think and feel about being in that setting. Pay attention to what your inner voice is saying to you about that situation.

Dear Parents,

Learning to set goals is an important part of getting what you want out of life. Goals are not loose ideas. They are specific and measurable.

Planning for goals includes the following specific steps:

1. set a reachable goal;
2. write out steps for reaching that goal;
3. keep going until you reach your goal;
4. give yourself a reasonable time limit;
5. evaluate — check your progress; and
6. compliment yourself.

One of our goals is recognizing and identifying feelings without attaching “good” and “bad” value judgments to them. Feelings are a part of who we are. They let us know:

- what is important to us;
- what we need or want; and
- when we need to take care of ourselves.

Though we are encouraging your child to identify, experience and communicate feelings, we do not encourage acting indiscriminately upon those feelings. (Just because children feel angry does not mean they get to hit as an expression of those angry feelings).

Recognizing the feelings we have and learning behaviors which are constructive and successful in dealing with other people are goals of the REACH Program.

Sincerely,

You are here.

Florida.

Reaching a goal is a combination of:

- ✓ knowing where you are;
- ✓ discovering where you want to go;
- ✓ figuring out the best way to get started;
and
- ✓ dealing with various roadblocks and impediments along the way.

Goals:

- ✓ learn about goals;
- ✓ learn about setting goals;
- ✓ learn to recognize our feelings; and
- ✓ learn more about relaxation.

GOAL SETTING

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