SESSION 1

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

- To familiarise programme participants to group context
- To facilitate and direct the clients’ motivation to change
- To provide general overview of therapeutic approach
- To provide a general course structure
**Session 1: General Group Introduction**

**Detailed Contents**

**Warm-up Exercises:**

- **Client Introduction:**
  The formation of this group may represent a new and possibly anxiety-provoking experience. To reduce the anxiety of participants in the first session, the first phase of group interaction, could involve an ‘ice breaker’. This warm-up exercise consists of two brief structured exercises, which assist in decreasing anticipatory anxiety and allow participants to engage in brief, light and non-threatening interactions. The second of these potential ice breakers is in the *Self Disclosure* section.

- **‘My Shoe Ice-Breaker’:**
  This involves asking everyone to look down at their shoes and think of how they would describe them (colour, fit, age, etc.), including a brief story which directly relates to them (e.g. where they were purchased, an unfortunate accident encountered whilst wearing them). The therapists begin this ice-breaker, first by stating their names and then commenting on their shoes. Subsequent participants then participate by following the therapists examples.

**Group Guidelines:**

- Participants could brainstorm ideas relevant to this discussion and responses recorded on the white board.

- An initial question could be: “What sort of group rules do each of you feel is important in the running of our group?”
  After recording responses from participants, it is often necessary to suggest ‘key points’ that are important in the successful running of a group.

- The following points may help guide the group interaction:
  - **Confidentiality**
    It is preferable for all participants to feel comfortable disclosing details about their lives without concern that this information will be repeated outside the group. Facilitators could reiterate the ethical and legal implications of client and therapist confidentiality. This could be extended to participants who could pledge not to divulge the identities of other group participants or provide ‘group information’ outside of the session.

**Equipment/Activity**

**Warm-up Exercises**

The following ‘icons’ are used in this manual:

- For ‘facilitator’ information
- Suggested manner for addressing session content
- Group activity
- Additional points subsumed
- within a ‘primary’ icon
- Refer to Programme Notes for more detail

H/O: Handout

**Note:** Text that is bold, underlined and italicised signifies a handout or worksheet.

**Group Guidelines**

**Suggested Group Rules:**
- Confidentiality
- Understandable language
- Respectful and helpful
- Commitment
- Breaks
- Arrive on time
- Phone if can’t attend
- Homework completion
- Buddy system
- Weekly therapist phone call
Use language everyone can understand
Sometimes professional jargon becomes second nature to mental health practitioners. In sessions it is important to describe concepts in everyday language. A possible manner of discussing this, is by providing the example of a highly accomplished academic who understands the concepts yet communicates them in an unhelpful way (e.g. excessive terminology). Inform participants that if a concept is explained in an unhelpful manner, the participants are within their rights to ask for clarification.

Sessions are tape recorded — optional
Taping sessions can be useful for both the therapist and the client. It can help with treatment integrity and provide the client with useful feedback about their interactions and performance on some of the activities. If sessions are to be taped, remember to obtain consent from participants.

All members are respectful and helpful to each other
In order that mutual respect is enhanced within the group setting, appropriate social interactions are encouraged and the use of unhelpful terms or labels is discouraged.

Commitment to therapy
This is a closed group and as such, it is not advisable to introduce new members after the second session. It can be explained to participants that the learning of skills and strategies is enhanced by building on information they have learned in previous sessions. Additionally, since the group does not work effectively with reduced group numbers, it is important they provide a commitment to attend all 12 sessions. One way of enhancing this, is to have participants verbally commit in front of all other participants.

Breaks within each session
Suggested guidelines have been provided for the length of the ‘break time’ within group sessions. Once again it is important for facilitators to make decisions regarding the length and number of break times, based on the composition of the group.
### Detailed Contents

- **Attend each session and arrive on time**
  It may be useful to explain to participants that they will benefit more from the sessions, if they arrive on time. Additionally, it is important that each session is attended so they don’t miss anything and build on skills already learnt.

- **Telephone if can’t attend**
  This is to ensure a participants lack of attendance is not unexpected to other participants or the facilitator.

- **Always do your best to complete the homework**
  A suggested manner of addressing this component is:
  
  “The week has 168 hours within it, and we meet once a week, so we spend a fraction of time together. In order that the benefits of the program are enhanced, it is necessary to attempt and complete the tasks that other participants have been provided.”

- **Buddy system**
  It is suggested that participants be introduced to the idea of being paired with another randomly selected participant with whom they will agree to be in phone contact each week. The purpose of the buddy system is four-fold, (1) it serves to remind the participant about previously discussed group rules, and that they are involved in a program of change that extends beyond the weekly group sessions, (2) it enhances a sense of belonging to the group and a concomitant sense of camaraderie with at least one other group member, (3) it gives them a source of support as well as additional information about the skills, procedures and assignments relating to the sessions, and (4) it provides in-vivo psychotherapy.

  Within the buddy system, alternate the person who initiates the weekly phone-call. This can be a powerful exercise, in that, the person with social anxiety practices a useful social skill in a natural setting. At the discretion of the facilitator there should be a periodical rotation of participants in the buddy system.

- **Weekly therapist phone call**
  To provide participants with a means of discussing difficulties with homework or group issues outside of the group, an advantageous...
**Detailed Contents**

A technique which can be used is the weekly phone call with a group therapist. Additionally, it helps to promote a sense of commitment to participants and also serves as a prompt to engage in activities which were assigned at the end of the session as homework.

- Provide: Better Living In Social Situations handout, which provides information concerning group times and a summary of previously discussed group rules.

**Motivation for Change:**

**Self-Disclosure:**

In order that participants become accustomed to the process of self-disclosure, it is important to ensure this is occurring in a safe environment. Although self disclosure is an important group goal, a primary therapeutic goal involves improving participants social skills. In order to combine these two elements, participants are provided with a handout and asked to complete the Why Change handout. Upon completion, they are asked to pair up with one of the other members of the group. At times the therapist may make the pair assignments. This may involve pairing participants who do not have a strong interpersonal relationship outside of the group. Each pair is instructed to exchange sheets, read the other’s answers, and to understand them as fully as possible by asking for clarification or for additional information. After each pair has interacted for 3-5 minutes, the groups re-form, and each member of a pair reads aloud his or her partner’s answers to the questions. Additionally, they tell the group anything he or she has learned about the answers to each question.

- Provide: Why Change handout (participants to complete sentences):
  - a) ‘My biggest difficulties in communicating with other people (friends, family and people I don’t know that well) ARE…’
  - b) ‘If these difficulties in communicating with others’ was not a struggle, I could…’

**Practice makes perfect:**

At this point, the therapist introduces the need for practice outside of session times. It might be useful to point out that practice involves behaving differently, ie., confronting situations.
### Detailed Contents

which have previously been difficult. Foster, perseverance and persistence, within the participants and explain that over time they will think and feel differently.

It will be important that specific tasks and activities that are assigned as homework are practiced whilst participants are outside of the session. Some of these tasks involve: reading, ‘thinking things through in their head’, and doing things.

- Due to the importance of attempting/completing inter-session assignments, the following guidelines are valuable to consider:
  - Identify and prepare to overcome potential obstacles that may prevent the group member from completing assignments (in session and weekly therapist phone call)
  - Obtain a verbal commitment from the client that assignments will be completed.
  - Assignments should be challenging, yet not overwhelming to client.

### Monitoring progress:

- It is important to provide participants with a rationale for monitoring their progress. You might find it helpful to include within your rationale the following (as if spoken to the patient...):

  “Firstly, it helps to stay motivated by seeing the progress you are making, (2) since you are learning new skills and techniques to improve your social skills, these records will allow you to look back on the notes when you have forgotten how to do something you know is important or when you are having difficulty completing something you have done in the past, (3) helps you to identify where you are having difficulty communicating with others, and remind yourself of the manner you handled these difficulties in the past, (4) finally by keeping records and recording progress you become more realistic as to how you present to others”.

### Break Time:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Break Time:</th>
<th>General Therapeutic Structure:</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Provide:</strong> Successful Living handout.</td>
<td><strong>General Therapeutic Structure:</strong></td>
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H/O: Successful Living
**Detailed Contents**

- The previously administered handout incorporates a general overview of the therapeutic approach taken whilst in the session.

- *How the group will work:*
  - "Pick-a-problem" Situation
  - You might begin the discussion in the following manner:
    - "This is the main reason why we have come together in this group. The way this group works is that we all have examples of social situations in which we have difficulties. This is because we are unsure or don’t know how to deal effectively with a situation in which we have to communicate with other people. This is where the group comes in handy in that we will be going through real life examples of situations in which we are having difficulties for a variety of reasons. The people running the group have some examples, yet to make it useful and very effective in helping you reach your goals, we will also rely on you to provide us with examples. Remember that by being in a group you are able to learn from others by seeing how they deal with their problems.”

- ‘Pretend & Practice’ Try-Out
  - Another discussion point.
  - "This is where we set up the situation in which to practice the social situation. In this ‘Try-Out’, we help you plan a situation that has recently occurred or that will soon occur. We then use other members of the group as other role-players.”

- ‘Other Ways’ For Improvement
  - Another discussion point
  - "This is where we look at other ways we could try out and possibly improve the way you are able to deal with the social situation you have just practiced.”

- Re-run with Coaching
  - Another discussion point
  - "This is where we go through the same scene, yet this time we have specific instructions on how to improve our previous try at the social situation. The therapist is also able to coach us along. Coaching is very similar to what we sometimes see happening in a game of football. You have the team members doing the real thing on the playing field and the coach giving them hand signals to guide them and help them in playing the correct way.”

- Have participants read the handout on coaching

**Equipment/Activity**

Session 1: General Group Introduction
hand signals (What WE SAY, HOW SAID, and WHAT WE DO Pointers handout).

Facilitators could also visually introduce members to hand signals for coaching cues:

- a) Forefinger moving across the throat or palm outstretched at patient = ‘Stop the action!’
- b) Hands moving horizontally as if pulling ‘Blu-Tack’ between them = ‘Slow down your pace of speaking.’
- c) One hand moving fast in a right circle = ‘Speed up the pace of speaking.’
- d) Fingers manipulating the mouth in an exaggerated smile or frown or other affective expression = ‘Smile or look serious.’
- e) Both palms up, moving up and down or both palms down, moving down and up = ‘Talk louder’ or ‘Talk softer’.
- f) Forefinger and thumb touching, forming a circle, the other fingers extended = ‘Great job, good work, keep it up.’
- g) Finger pointed to corner of eye = ‘Make more eye contact.’

Positive Feedback

A further discussion point

“This is where we are able to hear from the group facilitators and the other participants as to how we have done in our role-play. This is very important as other people who have had the opportunity to see us act in this role-play may have some helpful hints.”

‘Outside-the-Program’ Work

A further discussion point

“Although it is sometimes considered a chore to do homework, the difference between homework you remember doing at school and what we call ‘Outside the Program’ work is that it involves using the social skills you have learned or practised in our groups and applying it in your lives outside the group.”

Obtain a verbal commitment from the client that assignments will be completed. Assignments should be challenging, yet not overwhelming to client. This is especially important in the first of the group sessions, as ‘guaranteed’ successful completion of tasks would generate confidence and provide further impetus to complete progressively more difficult tasks.
**General Course Structure:**

The following suggestions may provide participants with a general idea of what is to be completed in during the session. It is important that any questions related to the content of the course are addressed and answered.

“In this course we will be focusing on three main areas which have been shown to be very useful in social situations. These are Conversational Skills, Community Living Skills and an Awareness of Your Emotions.”

“In the Conversational Skills portion of this course we will be helping you to better your skills in making requests, listening to others, and beginning, continuing and ending a conversation. All of these areas are useful in enabling you to communicate your thoughts, needs and feelings to other people. Also it will better equip you to respond to others’ when they communicate with you.”

“The Community Living Skills learning module will assist you in communicating your needs and wants to others, so as to obtain good advice and help in thinking through your problems. Also, you will learn to better ensure that you are communicating to others the correct message and that you understand what others are saying to you.”

“The Awareness of Your Emotions part of this social skills programme will help you to better express both your positive (e.g. happiness) and your unhelpful emotions (e.g. sadness). Also, in order for all of us to prevent discussions turning into arguments and conflicts, we will learn how to better deal with situations which would lead to this.”

Ask group members to complete the *How am I going* assessment questionnaire. This questionnaire is useful as it allows the participants to become increasingly aware of the benefits of the social skills programme. Additionally, it allows the facilitators to determine the impact the programme has had on individual participants from a subjective perspective.

**H/O:** *How am I going*
DETAILED CONTENTS

COLLABORATIVELY ASSIGNED HOMEWORK:

Provide: *My Journal - Session 1* handout

Due to this being the first journal page completed by participants, the following rationale could be provided to group members:

“The journal page provides a means of listing the homework items we have all decided as appropriate, and thus acts as a reminder for the activities that are required between sessions. Secondly, it provides space for you to summarise important points learned within the session. For the remainder of sessions, this will be done at the end of each session for approximately five minutes. It is likely instruction for completing this section will be repeated over the following sessions. A summary of the session is not purely the content presented, instead, it is this AND personal points relevant for each of you.”

EQUIPMENT/ACTIVITY

Homework

H/O: *My Journal - Session 1*
Handouts & Worksheets
Better Living In Social Situations

Group

Time:  
- 2 times a week (_______and _______)
- ______ till ______

Place:  
______________________________

First session:  
______________________________

Final session:  
______________________________

Group Rules:

1. All things talked about in the group are to remain confidential.

2. There is to be no use of unhelpful terms or labels in the group.

3. All members are to be respectful and helpful to each other.

4. No new members to join after week 2 of the programme.

5. There will be at least one break in each session.

6. Participants should try to attend each session and attend on time. If you are not able to attend, then phone the therapist on:

7. There will be a 'buddy' system.

8. The therapist will phone each week to see how things are going.
Why Change?

My 3 biggest difficulties in communicating with other people (friends, family, and people I don't know very well) ARE...

- **Problem 1:** ____________________________
  
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<th>10</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>No problem at all</td>
<td>one of my biggest problems</td>
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- **Problem 2:** ____________________________
  
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- **Problem 3:** ____________________________
  
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If these difficulties in communicating with others’ were not such a struggle, I could...
SUCCESSFUL LIVING

• “Pick-a-Problem” Situation

• “Pretend & Practise” Try-Out

• “Other Ways” For Improvement

• Re-Run with Coaching

• Positive Feedback

• “Outside-the-Program” Work
“What WE SAY, HOW SAID, and WHAT WE DO” Pointers

- Eye Contact
- Expression on our Face
- Tone & Volume of our Voice
- Body Language
- Things we Say
How am I going?

Name: 
Date: 

These are the social skills that we will be working on in the group. Could you please look at each of the following skills and decide how comfortable you are in using them now. Please use the following scale for deciding how comfortable you are in using the social skills:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Not at all comfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>little comfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>somewhat comfortable</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>quite comfortable</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Very comfortable</td>
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Making Requests

Listening to Others

Beginning and Continuing a Conversation

Understanding a Conversation

Ending a Conversation

Putting Across Your Positive Feelings to others

Putting Across Your Unpleasant Feelings to others

Reaching a Together Solution

Turning Down Unwanted Requests or Actions

Inspecting Your Concerns
SESSION 2

SESSION OBJECTIVE:

To introduce and role play the *Making Requests* social skill
Making Requests

Establishing a Rationale:

- In order to motivate the group leaders to learn a new social skill, a rationale for its importance could be provided. This is done by both eliciting from group members the importance of learning the social skill as well as providing reasons for its importance.

- It is suggested to ask group members the following questions, and write on the whiteboard:

  1. "Why is it sometimes important to ask another person to do something?"
  2. "Why is it sometimes important to ask someone to change their behaviour?"

- A suggested conclusion is:

  "In anyone's life, situations come up where it is necessary to ask another person to do something or ask for something. A request that is heard as a demand or as nagging usually does not lead to the person wanting to follow through with the request. Making a request in a positive way, however, is usually less stressful and is more likely to lead to the request being met."

Group Activity:

‘You Have It & I Would Like It’

- The desire to make a request implies that someone wants something from another person. In order to demonstrate how individuals request items from others, the following group activity can be used to illustrate how this is done.

- By engaging in this exercise clients are able to discover that there are limited approaches for obtaining something (tangible and intangible) from others. With several trials involving the above exercise, it will be become apparent that there are a few common approaches to obtaining something from another person.

- Have group members form pairs, with one member of the pair pretending they have something and want to keep it. The other person attempts to persuade the first person to give ‘it’ to him or her, by speaking to them.

- After the pair has finished their interaction, a different pair of individuals should be formed.
In this second interaction, the roles of individuals should be reversed, such that the individual who was the ‘I have’ is now the ‘I want’ segment of the pair and vice versa.

Upon completing the two separate interactions, group members discuss how they felt in their roles, and what aspects of the communication were helpful in obtaining the ‘wanted item’, and which did not help.

Frequently, the requestor begins with statements supplying information such as: rationally reasoning why ‘it’ should be handed over and making polite requests.

If these methods are unsuccessful for the requestor, ‘arm-twisting’, offering a mutually positive trade, making demands or using guilt to ‘convince’ the individual to comply are used.

When the individual who has the item begins to feel like they have done something wrong (guilt), this typically results in negative feelings (fear, anger) in the individual who is being convinced to comply and a desire to cease the social interaction may occur.

A suggested manner for ending this group activity, follows:

“This exercise demonstrates that most people have few ‘request-making’ tools in their tool bag. When you look at the tools they do have available, some may cause unnecessary stress between people. So even though it is important to learn communication skills which are useful in getting what is wanted, it is just as important to build and keep the relationship between people healthy, rather than cause it to crumble.”

**DISCUSSING STEPS OF THE SKILL:**

Provide: *Making Requests* handout

Introduce and discuss each step of the skill, using the white board. The purpose of breaking a skill down into its component steps is to facilitate the teaching process by helping group members to focus on improving one step at a time. In addition to providing the steps on a handout to the participants they should be written on the white-board, so that all participants can see.

Each of the steps is briefly discussed, eliciting from group members the importance of each step.
or directly explaining it. The focus should be on eliciting the rationale, not providing. When discussing the steps, the leader points to the step on the whiteboard. Only a few minutes is allocated to this discussion. It is important that instead of presenting the steps in a lecture format, the group participants be given an opportunity to describe the steps and the importance of each one.

The following is a suggested means of addressing each step:

“There are no guarantees, of course, but a request usually goes better if you keep in mind the following points.

1. Look at the person.

“Usually, the speaker looks directly into the listener’s eyes, and the listener moves his or gaze around the speaker’s face. If you are listening, it is important to be mindful not to stare at one single spot on the speaker’s face. This could result in the other person becoming uncomfortable. When the speaker pauses, the listener then has an opportunity to speak, and they usually ‘break off’ eye contact. As opposed to ‘butting into the conversation’, the listener wanting to speak tries to ‘catch’ the speaker’s eyes to signal the desire for a chance to talk. This is sometimes called correct turn-taking.”

2. Say exactly what you would like the person to do, and why you need/want it.

In addition to the aforementioned points, it may be useful to discuss the difference between needs and wants.

“A clear and direct request is much more likely to be successful since it states what is wanted from the other person. An example of a direct request would be, “I understand that you like to have milk in your tea, but if you would put the milk back in the refrigerator after using it, the milk would stay fresher longer, and I would appreciate it.” This statement indicates precisely what is wanted (putting milk back in fridge after using it). A much different way involves saying things in an indirect way. An example of this would be to say, “put things away.” Saying it this way does not make it clear that the speaker wants the other person to put the milk back where they obtained it from after using it. This
DETAILED CONTENTS

statement hints or suggests what is wanted and provides incomplete information.”

“This is very similar to what some people often call, ‘spelling it out’. This means describing what is wanted in ‘acting or doing’ terms. This helps to make the request clear and direct. This involves a statement of the behaviour that is desired of the other person. Behaviour is what you see others doing around you. If you have trouble describing the behaviour, imagine the person being video-taped, doing what it is you want them to do. When you describe the behaviour it also helps to make clear the request involving difficult things to describe.”

3. Tell the person how you would feel, if your request is carried out.

In making your request, use phrases like:

“I would like you to ____ and I would feel………..”
“I would really appreciate it if you would do ____ and this would make me feel………..”
“It’s very important to me that you help me with ____ as this would make me feel………..”

BREAK:

ROLE PLAY FORMAT:

Modelling Skill in Role Play
Upon discussion of the steps of the skill, this is immediately followed by the leaders of the group modelling the skill in a role play. This demonstration is designed to provide the group members with a model of how the steps of the skill fit together in a socially effective performance.

In terms of this role play:
1. Plan in advance the role play
2. Choose a role play which is applicable to group members (examples can be provided by the group members themselves, as well as case managers and others that work with the client group).
3. Role play should be brief and to the point.
4. If possible, use only group leaders for this
initial role play. If there is one group facilitator, then a group member who is cooperative and likely to respond appropriately may be the best choice.

Notification of the beginning and end of the role play is important to the group participants. In the initial instances of role play, group members may require prompting to indicate that a role play is or is no longer occurring. One method of doing this is to use clear verbal commands such as:
“Role play begins, now” &
“Role play ends”

As opposed to the initial assessment (Role Play Test), an element of theatre or drama is introduced such that interest is generated and the sessions do not appear ‘lecture like’.

This level of detail is not provided in future session notes.

Engage in role play (the following role play may be used, or a substitute may be used). Once again, it is important that this role play is engaged in at least once prior to the running of this session. Additionally, it is important to use as much dramatic skill in your role play (as well as humour), so as to maintain interest in the client group.

This could be used with group members:

GROUP FACILITATOR 1: “Now that we’ve talked about the different steps for making requests, we’d like to demonstrate this skill for you in a role play. In this role play, we are going to pretend that we live in a flat with one other person. Please imagine that I am sitting next to one of the speakers connected to the stereo. I am currently reading the newest ‘TV Times’ magazine and my room-mate comes in and turns on the stereo music so loud that a picture hanging on the wall begins to shake. [GROUP FACILITATOR 2] (or group member) will be playing the role of the person who comes in and turns up the volume of the stereo, so that the music is very loud. I’m going to be making a request to [GROUP FACILITATOR 2] to turn down the music. What we would like you to do is to see which steps of the skill you see me do. Any questions?”

GROUP FACILITATOR 1: “Okay”. (Moves two seats to the centre of the group and positions a
third seat opposite from him for the imaginary Stereo). “Let’s pretend that I’m sitting here reading my magazine.” (Points to magazine to indicate reading it)

GROUP FACILITATOR 2: “I’d like you to come in and turn the music on the stereo up loud. This can be your seat (pointing to the adjacent seat). Role play begins now.” (Sits back in his chair and pretends to be enjoying reading the magazine).

GROUP FACILITATOR 2: (Walks up to stereo) “Oh, I’m a little bit bored. I think I will turn on this radio. (Turns on stereo).”

GROUP FACILITATOR 1: “Hey, [GROUP FACILITATOR 2], you have just turned up the stereo so loud. It annoys me when you turn the stereo up so loud that I cannot even concentrate on what I am doing. I’d appreciate you talking to me first if you decide to come into the room and turn up the stereo so loud. This way we could calmly work something out.”

GROUP FACILITATOR 2: “I’m sorry. I didn’t realise you were trying to concentrate on reading your magazine.”

GROUP FACILITATOR 1: “Well, I was. I would appreciate if you could turn down the music so that I can concentrate on my magazine and you can enjoy your music possibly at a different time.”

GROUP FACILITATOR 2: “Okay. [GROUP FACILITATOR 1]: Role play finished!”

An important next step, is to involve the group members in a discussion of the role play which was demonstrated for them. A suggested means of discussing this follows.

“Why don’t we all talk about what you saw in that role play. (Have group members attend to social skill steps). How about my eye contact? Was I looking at [GROUP FACILITATOR 2]?”

It is suggested to continue asking questions from group members, (verbal, non-verbal and paralinguistic aspects of role play) e.g. eye contact, voice tone, content, look at specific aspects of request making. Ask if [GROUP
FACILITATOR 1] was effective in getting the point across.

It is suggested to finish this discussion with a closing statement, such as:

“That was an example of how to constructively make a request.”

Engaging Client in Role Play

Have each group member practice this skill with another group facilitator or participant with the provision of instructions, similar to the modelling exercise. It is preferable to have group members model the same role play which was initiated by the group facilitators, so as to familiarise participants with the specific skills and minimise difficulties with adapting the steps to generalised role plays. Due to this being early in the life of the group, it is unlikely that group members will volunteer to be part of a role play. As opposed to inquiring who would like to participate, it is advantageous to engage an individual who is deemed likely to participate.

Providing Positive Feedback

It is important that positive feedback be provided to the group participants in a specific format. Even during the poorest performance, the focus should be on an aspect which would be considered positive.

Positive feedback should be elicited from group members, as well as from the group leaders. In order that positive feedback be elicited from group members, it is important that questions potentially be phrased in the following manner:

“For this role play that [name] did, what did you like about the way they did it?”

“For the making requests social skill, which steps of the skill did you see [name] doing?”

It is important that any negative feedback is cut off as soon as it is detected. This is because although the performance of the social skill may not be well done, positive feedback CONSISTENTLY precedes constructive feedback. If it is obvious that this was a poor performance, then it may be advantageous to direct group participant’s feedback at specific aspects of the role play.
Providing Corrective Feedback

Corrective feedback is designed to enhance the performance of ensuing role plays for that individual. It is important the corrective feedback be: short, non-faultfinding, and behaviour specific. As opposed to the provision of positive feedback and the inclusion of group members, it may be important for group facilitators to solely exercise this provision of feedback. This is to help individuals obtain specific recommendations for improved performance.

As opposed to focusing on all aspects of the performance which could be modified, it is suggested that the provision of corrective feedback be limited to a maximum of two key elements. This is to limit the ‘over-flooding’ of information to the participants.

Questions to group members can be addressed in the following manner:

“All the feelings you are expressing are normal. The next time you express your feelings, you could try using….”

Engaging Client in Further Role Play

This further role play involves incorporating the corrective feedback mentioned from the previous role play. As opposed to providing the instructions in the form of a question, it may be beneficial to incorporate this in the form of a request such as:

“[Name] I would like you to try another role play of this same situation. What I would like you to do a little bit differently this time, however, is to include….(corrective feedback)”

More Positive and Corrective Feedback

In providing further positive feedback, it is important to include how the corrective feedback was incorporated into their role play. If this has not occurred, then positive feedback could be focused on other aspects of their performance.

A useful style of providing corrective feedback is a similar style as previously mentioned (short, non-critical and behaviour specific).

Positive and Corrective Feedback may be provided in this manner:
Session 2: Making Requests

Engaging Other Group Member

Due to vicarious learning being an important component in this programme, it is essential that all group members be included in at least two separate role plays. This is to improve the likelihood of individual group members learning the social skill from direct experience as well as being provided with the opportunity of observing others participate.

It is important to use these previously mentioned principles for all role plays. Additionally, it is beneficial to provide participants with ample amounts of positive reinforcement. In beginning the role plays, it is often useful to incorporate a group member who is comparatively more socially skilled or cooperative, so as to improve the smooth flow of the group. This said, it may be disadvantageous to have a specific order in which the group members are selected once they become familiar with the concept of role plays.

COLLABORATIVELY ASSIGNED HOMEWORK:

- Provide: My Journal – Session 2 handout
- Provide: Session Divider #2 handout

To facilitate homework completion, it is important that tasks are clear and specific to each group member. It is suggested that group facilitators ‘circulate’ amongst participants, to ensure specific homework tasks have been set.

Suggested homework tasks in addition to the performance of outside group role plays include:
1. Asking clients to think of problems experienced previously.
2. Have clients keep a ‘tally’ of the number of times they have used a specific social skill. This would tend to increase the frequency of said social skill.
3. Think of a specific application of the social skill and break it down into steps, prior to using it in practice.

It is suggested that the facilitators rate the participants on cooperation, attention and performance (CAP Rating Scale).

Due to facilitators having varying frequency of contact time with the participants, it may be useful to collaboratively generate these ratings. The same 5 item Likert scale is used for cooperation, attention and performance.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DETAILED CONTENTS</th>
<th>EQUIPMENT/ACTIVITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✍️ Please see the Frequently Used Worksheets / Assessments section for the CAP Rating scale and rating scale criteria.</td>
<td>Cap Rating Scale</td>
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Handouts & Worksheets
Making requests

Steps of Skill:

1. Look at the person.

2. Say *exactly* what you would like the person to do, and *why* you need/want it.

3. Tell the person how you would _feel_ if your request is carried out.
**SESSION 3**

**SESSION OBJECTIVE:**

- To review the *Making Requests* social skill
**Review of: Making Requests**

1) **Review of events (since previous session):**
   - This component provides an opportunity to ‘ease’ into therapeutic content. Sufficient time for this component, allows the facilitator to determine how things have progressed since the previous session.

2) **Reaction and Opinions regarding previous session:**
   - As a major goal of treatment is for social skills learned within the programme to be generalised outside of the session, it is important for group members to reflect on the previous sessions. Suggested means of addressing this include asking group members the following questions:
     
     a) ‘Have you had any further thoughts on what we covered in our previous session on Making Requests?’
     
     or
     
     b) ‘When you had time to think about it, what were your reactions to our last session?’

3) **Homework review:**
   - This emphasises the importance of self-help, allows the therapist to identify difficulties and misunderstandings that might otherwise go undetected, and provides an opportunity to positively reinforce independent attempts at solving difficulties. In order to address this component, the following questions may be used to address this area:
     
     a) ‘What were the results of your homework assignments?’
     
     b) ‘What difficulties did you encounter?’
     
     c) ‘What could you do to overcome these in the future?’

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**NOTE:** It is suggested to use the session which follows the introduction to a new social skill, as a review session.
**Detailed Contents**

- **d) What have you learned?**
- **e) How can you use what you learned to tackle other problems?**

**Role Plays:**

- In addition to role plays which have been suggested by group participants and individuals with frequent contact with clients and group facilitators, the following role plays may be used during this group.

**Scenes used in role plays:**
1. Ask someone to go to lunch with you.
2. Ask someone to help you with a chore or an errand.
3. Request a case worker to talk about a problem.
4. Ask a friend to borrow one of his or her CD’s.
5. Ask someone at the day program to turn down his or her radio.

- Suggested role play sequence is:
  1. Modelling skill in role play
  2. Engaging client in role play
  3. Providing positive feedback
  4. Providing corrective feedback
  5. Engaging client in further role play of similar situations
  6. Providing more positive and corrective feedback
  7. Engaging other group members

**Collaboratively Assigned Homework:**

- Provide: **My Journal – Session 3**
- Provide: **Session Divider #3**

- To facilitate homework completion, it is important that tasks be clear and specific to each group member. It is suggested that group leaders ‘circulate’ amongst group participants, to ensure specific homework tasks have been set.

- It is suggested to rate participants cooperation, attention and performance on the **CAP Rating Scale**.

**Equipment/Activity**

**Role Plays**

**Homework**

- H/O: **My Journal – Session 3**
- H/O: **Session Divider #3**

**CAP Rating Scale**
Session 4

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

* To review the **Making Requests** homework
* To introduce and role play the **Listening to Other People** social skill
Session 4: Listening To Other People

**Recommend structure of session:**

**FOLLOW-UP / ON:**

**The following points guide this section:**

1) Review of events (see previous session):

2) Reactions and Opinions regarding previous session:

3) Homework Review:

**ESTABLISHING A RATIONALE:**

It is important that the rationale for the importance of ‘Listening to Other People’ be provided. It is beneficial to principally elicit this from group members first and then provided by facilitators.

Attendance and listening to others’ in social situations is one of the necessities for functional social awareness. A significant proportion of individuals with severe mental disorders display deficient interpersonal behaviour due to their internal focus and intermittent outward attention. As a result, they sometimes fail to obtain accurate information in making an appropriate response, thus producing minimal social facilitators or positive reinforcers to others.

It is suggested to ask group members the following questions, and write on the white-board or butcher’s paper:

1) “Why is it sometimes important to listen to another person?”

2) “What are some of the ways you are able to show someone you are listening to them?”

Upon obtaining the rationale for this social skill, a potential means of concluding the rationale segment of this session includes:

“When you are having a conversation with someone else, it is important for the other person to see you are listening and that you are paying attention. When the other person can tell you are listening, they are...”
more likely to want to continue talking to you. There are some specific things you can do to show the other person you are interested in them."

GROUP ACTIVITY:

‘Socially Anxious or Uninterested’

It is suggested that the facilitators model an individual who fits the following description:

‘Susan would like to be perceived as a warm and friendly person, yet her basic fear of people and social situations results in her appearing like someone not interested in being with others. Consequently others may see her as somewhat cold and uninterested, not because of what she says– she sounds friendly enough– but because of body language cues that suggest, ‘Don’t get close’.

It is important that the body language modelled by Susan is likely to be interpreted as being uninterested and cold. At the same time, another interpretation could be being uncomfortable in social situations.

Once the group facilitators have modelled Susan, it is important to ask the group participants what her body language was saying to them.

GROUP ACTIVITY:

‘Guess What This Means?’

This exercise is designed to provide the members of the group with the message that our bodies are constantly communicating how we feel physically and emotionally. This incorporates how we feel about ourselves, others, and how we feel about a situation.

A suggested manner of introducing this group activity follows:

“Have you ever: (1) noticed how much more slowly you tend to move and walk on days when you’re tired or sad, (2) found yourself slamming a door or throwing something when angry; (3) observed how you sit or stand when you approach a person you like as you talk to them? Each of these is a small outer sign of how we are possibly feeling inside which is communicated through the language of our behaviour. This means that it is not only what we say, but what we do that tells a message to other people.”
Use six separate Body Posture handouts. These are not for end of group distribution to group members. Have group members form pairs. Ask one member of each pair to take one of the diagrams which depicts a posture, and have them model this posture for the other member of the pair. This activity can be introduced with the following introduction:

“Whether we realise it or not, we are constantly sending out body messages that tell other people what we sometimes are feeling inside. When the individual who models the posture has had a chance to show this posture to you, what is their body message saying?”

It is beneficial to have the observer in the pair guess what the other person’s body posture means.

After the group pair has finished their interaction, the diagram which the pair has been modelling and observing is returned to a group facilitator, and a different body posture depiction is chosen. In this second interaction the previous ‘observer’ is now the ‘modeller’ of the depicted body posture and vice versa.

Upon completing the two separate interactions, group members in their respective ‘observer roles’, are to discuss the importance of how much ‘unsaid’ information is communicated beyond what is actually said.

Upon completing this group activity, a potential manner of concluding is:

“This exercise hopefully demonstrates that most people are able to communicate a lot of different things to others by the different postures they are displaying in front of us. So remember, it is not just what we say, but how we say it and what our bodies says that also counts.”

BREAK:

(1) Listening, (2) Puzzled, (3) Rejecting, (4) Frightened, (5) Excited, (6) Upset diagrams

Break
**Detailed Contents**

**Discussing Steps of the Skills:**

- Provide: *Listening to Other People* handout

This is where an introduction and discussion of each step of the skill, using the white board / butcher’s paper is completed. In addition to providing the steps on a handout to the participant’s it is useful to write on the whiteboard/butcher’s paper these skills, such that all participants can see.

Each of the steps is briefly discussed, eliciting from group members the importance of each step or directly explaining it. When discussing the steps, the leader points to the step on the white board. Only a few minutes is allocated to this discussion. It is important that instead of presenting the steps in a lecture format, the group participants be given an opportunity to describe the steps and the importance of each one.

A suggested means of introducing this social skill includes:

- “It can be very annoying to talk to someone who does not seem to be paying attention to you. Furthermore, if you are the one not listening properly you may miss the point the other person is trying to make. Hints for becoming a good listener include:”

Discussion relating to social skills steps:

1. **Look at the person. (make eye contact)**

   “Usually, the speaker looks directly toward the listener’s eyes, and the listener moves his or gaze around the speaker’s face. If you are listening, it is important to be mindful not to stare at one single spot on the speaker’s face. This is because this can result in the other person becoming uncomfortable. When the speaker is ready to pause so that the listener now has a chance to speak (shift the floor), he or she breaks off eye contact. As opposed to ‘butting-into the conversation’, the listener wanting to speak tries to ‘catch’ the speaker’s eyes to signal the desire for a chance to talk. This is sometimes called correct turn taking.”

**H/O: Listening to Other People**
2. Act interested.

“Remember that in addition to your eye contact, it is important to make sure your body posture is giving the other person the correct message.”

It is suggested to ask the group members to:
“Position yourselves to show me that you are really interested in what I am saying.”

“OK, show us the body posture which shows that you couldn’t care less about me or about what I am telling you”.

Another prompt includes:
“What are the differences in someone’s body position when they are interested and also when they are not interested in what is being said?”

3. Show that you are paying attention.

“You can do this by simply nodding your head or by saying small comments such as: ‘tell me more’, ‘oh?, I see…’, ‘right’, ‘yes’, ‘gosh, go on’ or ‘I hear you, sure’.”

4 Preven interruptions

“This involves attempting to reduce the amount of distractions which might be happening around you. This may include turning off the TV / radio or going to a quiet room.”

5 Repeat main point, during break in conversation.

“This step may seem difficult, yet to do it best, it is important to repeat only the main point of what the person was saying in one or two sentences. Also, instead of trying to use the exact words the speaker used, it is more powerful and certainly easier to use your own words. By putting their message into your words, it helps the other person realise you are listening and it helps you understand the conversation.”

Although the following point is important within the skill of listening, it is not included as a step for this social skill. It is essential that it be mentioned, as due to information processing difficulties (encoding of and processing
information), there may be difficulties in understanding what has been said.

"Ask questions if you don't understand. This helps the conversation be useful and a positive experience to occur as a result of listening to the other person. It is important to ask questions to make sure what has been said has been understood."

**ROLE PLAYS:**

- The general structure for role play follows:

  **Modelling Skill in Role Play**
  - Facilitators model social skill with selected role play.
  - It is important to bring to the attention of group members the beginning and end of the role play.

  **Engaging Client in Role Play**
  - Group members practice skill with group leader with the provision of instructions, similar to the modelling exercises. As opposed to inquiring who would like to participate, it is advantageous to engage an individual who is likely to be cooperative.

  **Providing Positive Feedback**
  - It is important to provide positive feedback in a specific format.
  - It is suggested that this be elicited from group members and group leaders.

- Potential means of providing feedback includes:

  "For the role play that [name] did, what did you like about the way they did it?"

  "For the Listening to Other People social skill, which steps of the skill did you see [name] doing?"

- If negative feedback occurs, it is imperative to cut off as soon as it is detected.
- Positive feedback CONSISTENTLY precedes constructive feedback.

**Providing Corrective Feedback**

- A beneficial format of providing corrective feedback includes being: short, non-fault-finding, and behaviour-specific.
Additionally it is useful to limit it to a maximum of two key elements.

A useful manner of providing corrective feedback includes:

“After watching your role play it would be even better if [name], included _______ and _______ in there role play. What do you [name] think about that?”

Engaging Client in Further Role Play

This further role play involves incorporating the corrective feedback, mentioned from the previous role play.

A suggested means of conveying this is:

“[Name], I would like you to try another role play of the same situation. What I would like you to do a little bit differently this time, however, is to include…[corrective feedback]. Now just to make certain I have said this correctly and it is understood by you, what new bits will be included this time?”

More Positive and Corrective Feedback

Include how potentially the corrective feedback was incorporated into their role play. A suggested way of saying this includes:

“I really like the way you included the specific feedback [previous mentioned corrective feedback] in that role play”.

Engaging Other Group Members

This involves progressing engaging each group member in successive role plays.

Collaboratively Assigned Homework:

- Provide: *My Journal– Session 4* handout
- Provide: *Session Divider #4* handout

In order that homework be completed, it is important that tasks be clear and specific for each group member. This necessitates facilitators ‘circulating’ from one member to the next in order that they apply specific homework tasks to the social skill learned within the group.

It is suggested to rate participants cooperation, attention and performance on the *CAP Rating Scale*.
LISTENING to Other People

Steps of Skill:

1. Look at the person.

2. Act interested.

3. Show that you are paying attention.

4. Prevent interruptions.

5. Repeat main point, during break in conversation.
SESSION 5

SESSION OBJECTIVE:

To review *Listening to Other People* social skill
DETAILED CONTENTS

Review of: **Listening to Other People**

- **Recommended structure of review session:**

  **FOLLOW-UP / ON:**
  1) Review of events (since previous session):
  2) Reaction and Opinions regarding previous session:
  3) Homework review:

  **ROLE PLAYS:**
  - Scenes used in role plays:
    1. Listening to someone who is talking about a favourite hobby.
    2. Listening to someone who is talking about a favourite TV show.
    3. Listening to a staff member who is talking about the rules at the Community Residence.
    4. Listening to your doctor telling you about your medication.
    5. Listening to a friend talk about a recent outing.

  **COLLABORATIVELY ASSIGNED HOMEWORK**
  - Provide: *My Journal - Session 5*
  - Provide: *Session Divider #5*
  - It is suggested to rate participants cooperation, attention and performance on the **CAP Rating Scale**.

  **Follow-Up / On**

  - **Role Plays**

  **Homework**
  - H/O: *My Journal - Session 5*
  - H/O: *Session Divider #5*

**CAP Rating Scale**