SESSION 16

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

- To review the *Putting Across Our Positive Feelings* homework
- To introduce and role play the *Putting Across Our Unpleasant Feelings* social skill
Follow-Up / On

- Ensure clients are making attempts at completion of homework activities. Since this session is not in the early stages, attention should not be directed at group members who have not completed homework tasks.

- 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:

- The focus of this session is **Putting Across Our Unpleasant Feelings**. In essence, the theme of this session is to provide group members with an increased awareness of unpleasant emotions and the expression of them. In addition to fighting (aggressiveness) and fleeing (submissiveness) a third option exists which involves verbal assertion.

  - Aggression and submission are two emotions which are closely related to the fight and flight coping mechanisms. Although these two means of protecting our needs and rights are occasionally helpful, restricting ourselves to them is at times inadequate. We have the option to resolve our differences by talking things out with others. A difficult yet necessary step in generating an assertive message involves using language precisely and effectively. When people are angry, fearful or frustrated they have difficulty in generating a verbal message. During times of stress, our attention and capacity for verbal responses is inhibited.

  - Research suggests that the problem solving abilities of individuals with severe mental disorders is compromised. Thus, the combination of both schizophrenia and the ‘typical’ difficulties generating verbal messages when angry, fearful or frustrated is attenuated.
Due to sessions 16, 18, 20 and 22 requiring varying levels of assertiveness for effective deployment of the social skill, it is suggested that prior to discussing this social skill a component based on the participants rights be discussed.

Provide: Our Rights handout

Referring to this handout, it may be useful to discuss the importance of balancing our assertion (disclosure of what they feel, need and desire) with listening to others (the provision of acceptance and understanding). That is, for healthy relationships with others to take place there should be a balance between assertion and listening.

Provide a rationale for the importance of ‘Putting Across Your Unpleasant Feelings’.

A suggested means of providing the rationale is:

Ask group members the following questions, and write on the white-board or butcher’s paper:

1) “What are unpleasant feelings?”
2) “What are the advantages of putting across your unpleasant feelings”

It is important that the term ‘unpleasant’ emotions is described in terms of valance and it is made clear that it is NOT any better or worse than any other (e.g happiness, joy or excitement) feeling.

The following rationale may be used:

“It is often said, that if you bottle up your unpleasant feelings, it is difficult to feel good since too much of your inner space is cluttered with unpleasant feelings. Being assertive greatly reduces a person’s fear, anger, sadness and relieves the anxiety and tension which is experienced in certain situations. As the person becomes increasingly assertive, they realise they are more likely to obtain some of their needs and defend themselves. They also feel more comfortable with others and don’t approach them with the fear of being hurt or controlled.”

“In the course of others doing their best to please each other, there are times when things are unpleasant or annoying. In our day-to-day lives, we come into contact with a lot of different people. Examples of
unpleasant feelings are anger, sadness, or fear. In order to prevent or reduce the number of arguments or bad feelings, it is necessary to focus on improving the way we express our unpleasant feelings. It is helpful to keep certain things in mind when expressing an unpleasant feeling.”

**Discussing Steps of the Skills:**

- **Provide:** *Putting Across Our Unpleasant Feelings* handout

- Introduce and discuss each step of the skill, using the white board / butcher paper. In addition to providing the steps on a handout to the participants they should be written on the whiteboard/butchers paper, such that all participants can see.

- A suggested introduction to this social skill is:

  “As we go through each of the steps, please write down important points beneath each of the steps, as this will provide you with important reasons for this step. You can then return to this step sheet in the future and have a good record of what you have done within the group.”

- Ensure group members actively take notes during discussion of steps.

  “Here are the steps for helping you to put across your unpleasant feelings:”

1. **Look at the person**

   Based on previous discussions.

2. **Tell them EXACTLY what it was that displeased you (polite and reasonable).**

   “In order that the person understands what has displeased you, it is very important to accurately describe what this ‘gate-crasher’ has done to you. We will call the person that displeases you a gate crasher. Sometimes a gate crasher does not intentionally mean to do something that displeases you, but at other times they know what they are doing.”

   “In order for you to better describe what the other person has done, you can pretend that you have a video recorder and a TV screen in your head. Replay what the other person did that displeased you and describe this back to them.”
"Some people think that the gate-crasher definitely knows that what they did to you bugs you. They often say, “what’s the point of telling that person, since they don’t care”. The other person may know what they have done. Yet, it helps to stop the person repeating what they have done to you by telling them exactly what they have done.

“In describing the behaviour it is important not to use fuzzy talk. This is when you either ‘beat around the bush’ or when you are not being specific about what has happened. An example of Fuzzy talk is when you say something like, “Be a cleaner person”. This could mean umpteen things. A more exact description could be, “In the morning, you leave your dirty dishes sitting on the breakfast table.”

“In telling the person what it was that displeased you, it is important to remember to be both reasonable and polite”

It is suggested to have participants provide a rationale for reasonableness and politeness

3. Tell them how you FEEL at that moment.

“In order for the gate-crasher to be more willing to change their behaviour towards you, it is important for them to understand how you feel about the situation. You can’t read another person’s feelings. They may not know what they have done and how it affects you.”

Problems in identifying emotions tend to include:
(1) substitution of one emotion for another. This can be overcome by asking themselves, “When I experienced the negative effect of the others behaviour, what was the first feeling I experienced”?
(2) Difficulty in stating the degree of feelings. Sometimes adding modifying adjectives such as a little angry, somewhat angry, very angry can be helpful.

4 Tell person why their behaviour affects you.

“In order that the other person takes you seriously, it is important to provide them with an understanding of how the gatecrasher’s behaviour has affected you. This involves telling them how it really affects you.”
**Session 16: Putting Across Our Unpleasant Feelings**

**DETAILED CONTENTS**

- This includes tangible why’s such as: “it doesn’t work now”, “my time is wasted”, “makes extra work for me”, “too late to make plans”, “can’t concentrate”, “wake up an hour or two earlier”

**BREAK:**

- Due to the possibility of group members experiencing difficulty in expressing negative feelings, have clients take example from role play and apply steps of social skill to this.

**ROLE PLAYS:**

- Go through example on white board in which each step of social skill is applied to an example. E.g. for the role play of: ‘Your case manager missed an appointment with you’:
  1. Look at person
  2. “You have missed your appointment with me”
  3. “I am unhappy (cross, upset, mad) about that”
  4. “I’ve waited around for you” or “I had something else I had / could have done” or “I’ve wasted my time”.

**COLLABORATIVELY ASSIGNED HOMEWORK:**

- Provide: **My Journal– Session 16** handout
- Provide: **Session Divider #16** handout
- Assign example from one of the non-performed role plays and have group members write out their responses for each of the steps.
- Rate participants on the **CAP Rating Scale**.

**EQUIPMENT/ACTIVITY**

- Break
- Role Plays
- Homework
  H/O: **My Journal– Session 16**
  H/O: **Session Divider #16**
  **CAP Rating Scale**
Handouts & Worksheets
1. I have the right to simply be myself.

2. I have the right to express my feelings.

3. I have the right to express my opinions and beliefs.

4. I have the right to say “yes” and “no” for myself.

5. I have the right to be listened to.

6. I have the right to make requests of others.

7. I have the right to change my mind.

8. I have the right to say “I don’t understand”.

9. I have the right to make mistakes.

10. I have the right to feel safe, respected, and comfortable.

11. I have the right for privacy.

**Others:**
**Putting Across Our Unpleasant Feelings**

Steps of Skill:

1. Look at the person.

2. Tell person **EXACTLY** what it was that displeased you (polite / reasonable).

3. Tell them **how** you **FEEL** at that moment.

4. Tell person **why** their behaviour **AFFECTS** you.
Session 17

SESSION OBJECTIVE:

To review the *Putting Across Our Unpleasant Feelings* social skill
DETAILED CONTENTS

Review of: Putting Across Our Unpleasant Feelings

- Recommended structure of the review session:

**FOLLOW-UP / ON:**

1) Review of events (since previous session):

2) Reaction and Opinions regarding previous session:

- It is important to have the clients both review the steps of the social skill and to briefly explain the rationale for it.

3) Homework review:

**ROLE PLAYS:**

Scenes used in role plays:
1. You strongly believe, your case manager has missed an appointment with you.
2. You live in the city and your family lives in Bunbury. You usually play soccer and attend a volunteer job on the weekend, yet you have cancelled both due to an upcoming family visit. Your family cancels the weekend visit.
3. You previously planned to meet your friend at the local park for lunch. Your friend was late meeting you for lunch.
4. Your room-mate left dirty clothes in the hallway.
5. Your mother has been delivering flyers to homes around where she lives and you have helped out several times. She now calls upon you every time she has the job of delivering flyers, assuming you want to help. You love your mom, yet you don’t have time to help her deliver the flyers.
6. You are sitting with several friends outside of the Living Skills Programme. A man next to you is continually blowing smoke in your direction, and you don’t like this.

**COLLABORATIVELY ASSIGNED HOMEWORK:**

- Provide: *My Journal – Session 17* handout
- Provide: *Session Divider #17* handout
- Rate participants on the *CAP Rating Scale.*

**HOMEWORK:**

- H/O: *My Journal – Session 17*
- H/O: *Session Divider #17*
- *CAP Rating Scale*
SESSION 18

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

- To review the *Putting Across Our Unpleasant Feelings* homework
- To introduce and role play the *Reaching a Together Solution* social skill
Follow-Up / On

- Ensure clients are making attempts at completion of homework activities. Attention should not be directed at group members who have not completed homework tasks.

The following point guide this section:

1) Review of events (see previous session):
2) Reactions and opinions regarding previous session:
3) Homework review:

Establishing a Rationale:

This social skills follows on from Putting Across Your Unpleasant Feelings. As was discussed in relation to the preceding social skill, it is advantageous for individuals to express their unpleasant feelings. It allows for the emotional aspects of the disagreement to be dealt with first. Then, the actual reasons for the dispute are likely to be handled more constructively once the unpleasant emotions have reduced in intensity.

It is suggested that a rationale for the importance of *Reaching a Together Solution* be provided. Group facilitators provide and guide elicitation of this rationale from group members.

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

1. “How do we tell when a strong disagreement is happening?”

Signs that a disagreement is occurring include:

1. **Crisis**: A crisis is an obvious clue that a disagreement is occurring. Violence, heated arguments, impulsive behaviour often indicate a disagreement.

2. **Tension**: Feeling tense is another obvious clue. Tension tends to distort your perception of another person and of what they do. You may focus on the negative aspects of your relationship and ignore the positive aspects.
3 Misunderstanding: People often misunderstand each other by making false assumptions about a situation usually because of unclear communication or poor rapport. Your thoughts may keep focusing on the problems. Often misunderstanding results from two people having different perceptions about the problem.

4 Incidents: Often a disagreement begins with minor situations that leave you feeling rather upset and irritated for a while but is forgotten within a few days. Small incidents simmer in the back of your mind until something else happens which is then blown out of proportion.

5 Discomfort: This is the intuitive feeling that something is wrong, even though you can’t put your finger on it. These feelings are useful because they can act as a signal that something is not quite right and maybe you could do something about it now. You may do something that helps resolve certain issues.

A second potential question to pose is:

(2) “How can we prevent a strong disagreement from getting out of hand?”

“Some of the possibilities include:”
1. Change subject
2. Compromise
3. Leave situation
4. Reaching shared agreement

If common forms of disagreement resolution such as denial or avoidance are mentioned by group members, then they should be acknowledged but not accepted as justifiable means of resolving misunderstandings.

Denial: This will typically be raised in the manner that disagreements can occasionally be so threatening that some people deny the existence of the interpersonal problem. When a person consistently denies that problems exist, they make themselves unnecessarily vulnerable and that can be dangerous.

Avoidance: Although people may use this strategy to keep a relationship healthy, it actually undermines the relationship and leads to withdrawal from social situations.
**Detailed Contents**

**BREAK:**

**Discussing steps of the Skills:**

- Provide: *Reaching a Together Solution* handout

- Introduce and discuss each step of the skill, using the white board/butcher’s paper.

- A suggested introduction could be:
  
  “As we go through each of the steps, please write down important points beneath each of the steps, as this will provide you with important reasons for this step. You can then return to this step sheet in the future and have a good record of what you have done in this session.”

- Ensure group members actively take notes during discussion of steps.

- A suggested rationale to be provided is:

  “Sometimes people discover that they disagree with each other, even though they want to do something together. When this occurs, it is helpful to work out a compromise. This usually involves getting some of what you want, and giving up something. The goal is to discover a solution which is acceptable to all involved.”

- A suggested means of guiding this discussion is:

  “Here are the steps for helping you to reach a together solution.”

1. **Tell other person of your need briefly**

   “It is important that your problem is said in terms of your needs, and not solutions. If you tell the other person what you think is the solution before hearing what their need is, then you might be causing more problems then solving them. Remember the whole reason there is a disagreement is because you have ‘clashing solutions’. So don’t start off by telling the other person what you think is the solution. What is most important is that there is a win-win solution so that each person is able to get part of their needs met.”

   “A good way to remember how to tell the other person of your need is to say, “I need to…” [your goal, not the solution]”

**Equipment/Activity**

**Break**

H/O: *Reaching a Together Solution*
### Detailed Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Listen to the other person’s needs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Remember to use your ‘Listening to Others’ skills. It is important that the other person is telling you of their needs and not providing you with the solution to the problem. Occasionally, you may find yourself ‘up against a brick wall’, since the other person does not appear to be telling you their needs. Because it is important to know exactly what the other person’s needs are, and because they may not state them clearly, quite a bit of time may be necessary to understand and correctly state what the problem is in terms of needs.”</td>
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<tr>
<th>3. Say other person’s needs and your needs in a one-sentence summary of the problem.</th>
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<tr>
<td>“Once you have listened and understood the needs of the other person it is important to put their needs and your needs in one complete sentence. This is important since in order to solve the problem you are having you must have a good idea of what the needs of both of you are.”</td>
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<tr>
<th>4. Brainstorm all possible solutions together</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Once you both know what the problem is, you can begin to search for possible solutions. The purpose of brainstorming is to come up with as many solutions that both of you can think of. Don’t worry about whether the solution you think of is right or wrong. The goal here is to put as many on the ‘table’ as possible.”</td>
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<tr>
<th>Suggested guidelines for effective brainstorming:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✔ Don’t explain or ask for explanation</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔ Suspend judgement of acceptability</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔ Go for goofy ideas</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔ Add to/combine ideas with other persons’ idea.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔ List every idea</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔ Don’t attach the person’s name to the idea</td>
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</table>

### Equipment/Activity

<table>
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<tr>
<th>5. Together...choose the solution</th>
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<tr>
<td>“It is important that the decision in choosing a solution has been made together.”</td>
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</table>
Guidelines in evaluating which solution is most advantageous involves:

- Ask other person what solutions they favour
- State what alternative look best to you
- Observe which choices overlap
- Jointly decide on one or more of the alternatives.

**ROLE PLAYS:**

- Provide: *My Journal – Session 18* handout.
- Provide: *Session Divider #18* handout
- Change pairs in buddy system
- Read over notes
- Ensure outside group activities are functional, achievable and specific for each group member.
- Rate participants on the *CAP Rating Scale*.

**H/O:**

- *My Journal – Session 18*
- *Session Divider #18*
- *CAP Rating Scale*
Handouts & Worksheets
Reaching a Together

Solution

Steps of Skill:

1. Tell other person of your need briefly.

2. Listen to the other persons need.

3. Say other person’s need and your need in one-sentence-long summary of the problem.

4. Brainstorm all possible solutions together

5. Together...choose the solution
Session 19

SESSION OBJECTIVE:

To review the *Reaching a Together Solution* social skill
Review of: Reaching a Together Solution

Recommended structure of the review session:

FOLLOW-UP / ON:

1) Review of events (since previous session):

2) Reaction and Opinions regarding previous session:

It is important to have the clients both review the steps of the social skill and to briefly explain the rationale for it.

3) Homework review:

ROLE PLAYS:

Scenes used in role plays:
1. You want to go to lunch with your friend at Hungry Jacks. They do not want this type of food today.
2. Your case manager asks you to schedule an appointment for 3:00 p.m. on Thursday. You have plans to go on a Living Skills’ outing at that time.
3. You and your friend want to go see a movie. You want to see a love story, and your friend wants to see a horror movie.
4. In planning an outing for the Living Skills Programme, the coordinator suggests swimming. You would rather go to the bowling alley.
5. You want to visit your family next weekend. They have other plans.

COLLABORATIVELY ASSIGNED HOMEWORK:

Provide: My Journal – Session 19 handout
Provide: Session Divider #19 handout
Rate participants on the CAP Rating Scale

Follow-Up / On:

H/O: My Journal – Session 19
H/O: Session Divider #19
CAP Rating Scale
Session 20

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

- To review the *Reaching a Together Solution* homework
- To introduce and role play the *Turning Down Requests / Actions* social skill
FOLLOW-UP / ON:

- Ensure clients are making attempts at completion of homework activities. Attention should **not** be directed at group members who have not completed homework tasks.

- 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:

- This social skill follows on from *Putting Across Your Unpleasant Feelings*. As was discussed in relation to that social skill, it is advantageous for individuals to express their unpleasant feelings. This is advantageous in that it allows for the emotional aspects of the disagreement to be dealt with first. This is since the actual reasons for the dispute are likely to be handled more constructively once the emotions have subsided.

- In essence refusing a request involves saying the word ‘no’. Although it is simple to say to oneself, it has been shown that many individuals have difficulty in saying it to others’. Mental Health Practitioners, highlight this as one of the most prevalent social skill deficits evidenced by their clients.

- We live in a world which involves being surrounded by people who make many requests and demands on us. Individuals who have difficulty saying ‘no’ lose some control over their lives. Due to the inherent limitations of having a severe mental disorder, control in these individual’s lives is compromised and further attenuated when turning down others’ requests is difficult.

- It is suggested to ask group members the following questions, and write on the white-board or butcher’s paper:
(1) "Why is it necessary to sometimes turn down someone's request or ask them to stop what they are doing?"

(2) "Can you think of recent times you have said no to other people? Please give the group a short description of these times"

**Discussing Steps of the Skills:**

- Provide: Turning Down Requests / Actions handout
- Introduce and discuss each step of the skill, using the white board/butcher's paper
- A suggested introduction could be:
  "As we go through each of the steps, please write down important points beneath each of the steps, as this will provide you with important reasons for this step. You can then return to this step sheet in the future and have a good record of what you have done within the group."
- Ensure group members actively take notes during discussion of steps.
- A suggested rationale to be provided is:
  "It is not possible to always do what other people ask of us. There may be times in which we are too busy, or unsure of how to do what they ask, or simply we may not want to do what they ask of us. Being rude, rough, or harsh in turning down the other person's request may result in that person being hurt or quite angry. By being clear about our refusal and not speaking in a hesitant manner, we can avoid misunderstandings and arguments."

- A suggested means of guiding this discussion is:
  "Here are the steps for helping you to turn down another person's request / actions:"

1. **Look at the person**

- Previously discussed as an important step in most of the previously discussed social skills

2. **Tell other person you cannot do what they asked** or don't like what they are doing.
“This involves saying ‘no’ without telling the other person you are sorry for not being able to give the person what they have asked for. This could be phrased like, “Unfortunately I am not able to…”

3. Give short explanation for your refusal... if necessary.

If continues...

4. Tell other person how you are feeling (if necessary).

“The reason you give should be the real reason and not an excuse. It is also important to shorten your explanation and not feel like you have to justify your reason AND not provide them with what they have asked for. Remember it is a reason and not an excuse. Additionally, it is important to match what is said with how it is said.”

5. Tell other person to bring an end to their request or action.

**Role Plays:**

**Collaboratively Assigned Homework:**

- Provide: *Session Divider #20* handout
- Change the buddy system
- Read over notes
- Ensure outside group activities are functional, achievable and specific for each group member.
- Rate participants on the *CAP Rating Scale.*
Handouts & Worksheets
Turning Down Requests /Actions

Steps of Skill:

1. Look at the person.

2. Tell other person you cannot do what they asked or don’t like what they are doing.

3. Give short explanation for your refusal...if necessary.

4. Tell other person how you are feeling (if necessary).

5. Tell other person to bring an end to their request or action.
SESSION OBJECTIVE:

- To review the *Turning Down Requests / Actions* social skill
Review of: Turning Down Requests / Actions

Recommended structure of the review session:

FOLLOW-UP / ON:

1) Review of events (since previous session):

2) Reaction and Opinions regarding previous session:

It is important to have the clients both review the steps of the social skill and to briefly explain the rationale for it.

3) Homework review:

ROLE PLAYS:

Scenes used in role plays:
1. A friend asks you if you want to go to the bowling alley, but you don’t like bowling.
2. One of the people you live with asks you to pick up some groceries, but you are not feeling very well today.
3. Your friend asks you for a cigarette, yet you are often being asked for cigarettes and you don’t have very many left.
4. You have lent money to your friend in the past, and you are experiencing difficulty in saying no to his requests. This friend asks you for some money.
5. You are watching a special TV show on how to prepare tasty meals, and your friend comes into the room and changes the channel to cricket.

COLLABORATIVELY ASSIGNED HOMEWORK:

Provide: My Journal – Session 21 handout
Provide: Session Divider #21 handout
Rate participants on the CAP Rating Scale.

Follow-Up / On

Role Plays

Homework

H/O: My Journal – Session 21
H/O: Session Divider #21
CAP Rating Scale