

GROUP # 23  
EFFECTS OF ABUSE ON CHILDREN AND OTHERS

Effects on Children:

Domestic Violence affects children whether the child is directly abused, witnesses it or hears it from another room. Often parents will say, "We never fight in front of our children so they aren't affected." This is 100% not true. Children know what is going on. Children are affected by this violence in three ways. (Intermedia: 1994)

Behavior:

- Children may become aggressive themselves.
- Children may become violent towards a parent.
  - Towards abusive parent in anger
  - Towards abused parent as in imitation
- Children may become disobedient.
- Children may withdraw.
- Children may try to overachieve to overcompensate.
- Children may play role of peacemaker.
- Children may become enuretic (wet bed).
- Children may have nightmares, excessive crying.
- Children may become parentified.

Discussion: If any of you have children does this sound familiar?

Feelings:

- Children may feel anger.
  - Children may feel frustration
  - Children may feel resentment.
  - Children may feel fear.
  - Children may feel mistrust.
  - Children may feel sadness or become depressed.
  - Children may feel neglected.
  - Children may feel helpless.
  - Children may feel confused.
  - Children may feel as if they must choose between parents.
- Impaired Intellectual and Emotional Development:  
Violence between partners will often create a barrier that may hinder getting close to one or both parents.
- Children may blame themselves for the parent's fighting.
  - Children may develop low self-esteem.
  - Children may become overly sensitive.
  - Children may develop poor peer relationships.
  - Children may often have poor school performance.

Discussion: If any of you have children does this sound familiar?

**Physical Injuries:**

Children may become unintentionally injured when trying to break up parental fighting.

Children get unintentionally hit when parents throw things.

Children get hit intentionally when parents take out frustration on them.

Abuse often turns towards children.

Discussion: If any of you have children does this sound familiar?

**Effects on Partners:**

Spouses will fear anger.

Spouses will feel frustration.

Spouses will lose trust.

Spouses will feel fear.

Spouses may become depressed.

Spouses may blame themselves.

Spouses may develop psychosomatic problems.

Back pain

Headaches

Menstrual problems

Loss of energy

Spouses may suffer physical injuries

Which will cause missing work and possible job loss

Need for medical care

Spouse may develop alcohol or drug problem as a means of "escape."

Discussion: Does this sound familiar?

**Effects on Self:**

Batterer will develop low self-esteem.

Batterer eventually will destroy relationship.

Batterer may lose job.

Due to arrest (s)

Due to conviction

i.e. cannot sell firearms, etc.

Batterer will face heavy court costs, attorney's fees, incarceration, A.M.E. classes.

Discussion: Does any of this sound familiar?

**Statistics on Violence:**

Violence affects men and women of all ages, races, religions, sexual orientations and income.

One third to one half of all families experience some form of domestic violence.

This includes spousal abuse, child abuse, child sexual abuse, elderly abuse, parents abused by children and violence between siblings.

One fourth of abused women are beaten during pregnancy.

Thirty percent of all homicides are domestic. Either spouse can be a victim. However, women murder seven times more in self defense than men.

Sixty to eighty percent of violent incidents occur when either or both partners are under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

One third of abuse cases include children.

Sixty five percent of batterers and victims were victims as children.

Acts of domestic violence occurs every 18 seconds in the United States.

Twenty percent of all murders are family related.

Twenty one percent of all women who use hospital emergency rooms are due to domestic violence.

Six million women are beaten each year by a "loved" one. Four thousand of them are killed.

One fourth of female suicides were victims of domestic violence.

Victims of domestic violence are three times more likely to be victimized again than are victims of other types of crimes.

Discussion: Are there any questions or comments?

Exercise: How has violence affected your partner and children? Think for a minute about how your violence has affected your partner. Have you noticed changes in their behavior toward you? Write down at least three changes that you have noticed.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How has it affected your relationship with your partner?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

If you have children, write down at least three ways your violence has affected them.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Don't forget that anger is a normal emotion that we all experience. However, violence is an action for which that we are responsible. Learning non-violence can make these problems diminish and allow them to gradually be solved. If your relationship does end and trust cannot be rebuilt then learn this for your next relationship. Remember there are no bad people, only bad behaviors.

Discussion: While we were working on this group four people were severely beaten.

Homework: Complete your Anger Journal for next week.

**GROUP # 24**  
**HOW TO FIGHT DIRTY**

The following is a list of techniques that people should not use when they fight or argue with each other. They are ways of fighting dirty (they are unfair, below the belt). Examine this list and see if you employ any of these techniques. Remember, there are no bad people only bad behaviors. If you use any of these techniques then you can also stop using them.

1. Using the shotgun attack: Here a person doesn't himself to the issue that is at hand. He strikes out in all directions. He attacks his partner's family, friends, past failings, personality quirks, looks, etc. He uses anything that he can think of to hurt and / or confuse.

Discussion: How many of you have used the shotgun attack when fighting?

2. Stuffing your feelings: Here a person bottles up all of her anger and resentment for days or weeks at a time. She holds out as long as she can. Then when some trivial incident occurs she lets it all out in one huge escalation like a balloon popping!

Discussion: How many of you stuff your feelings?

3. Don't listen: Here a person simply doesn't listen to what his partner is saying. He doesn't try to understand her viewpoint. Instead of listening, he thinks about what he is going to say next. He also assumes that he is right and that her opinion is all that matters.

Discussion: How many of you have done this?

4. Be imprecise: Here a person doesn't give clear messages about what is bothering her. She is vague. She talks about things that aren't the real issue. She sends mixed messages. This is often confusing and frustrating to her partner.

Discussion: Have any of you ever been imprecise when arguing?

5. Act like a martyr: This is the person that is always letting people know how hard they have it. They talk about how much they have sacrificed. Example: "I gave up my family for you." These people punish both themselves as well as their partner.

Discussion: Have any of you played the martyr?

6. Fight to win: Here a person never gives his partner a moment's advantage. He dominates and contradicts at every opportunity. He pushes buttons that he know will hurt. He overloads his partner with grievances. He always has to have the last word.

Discussion: How many of you do this?

7. Analyze your partner: Here the abuser labels her partner with psychological terms. Maybe she has read a book or two to get good at it. Example: She tells her spouse that he has low self-esteem, or that he is paranoid, codependent, and alcoholic, a sex addict, frigid, sadistic, etc.

Discussion: Have any of you ever analyzed your partner while you were fighting with them?

8. Harp on weaknesses and / or mistakes: Here the abuser is very critical of their partner. They point out all of their shortcomings. They never let their partner forget their past mistakes. They are always accusing their partner of something by saying, "You always..." or "You never..."

Discussion: Have any of you ever done this?

9. Tease your partner: Here the person smiles and laughs while he is being hurtful and insulting. He may say, "Don't you have a sense of humor."

Discussion: Have any of you ever teased your partner, knowing that it would hurt her? Be honest.

10. Refuse to fight: Here the person refuses to fight or argue with their partner. She may let him know how mad she is by walking or staying away. She may even give her partner the silent treatment for days or weeks at a time. She may also promise anything and agree with her partner without meaning it just to avoid a verbal conflict.

Discussion: Have any of you ever walked away, given the silent treatment or made empty promises to avoid a confrontation.

It is difficult to change old patterns but with practice it will become easier. Also, learning to be in control (not controlling), will raise your self-esteem and really make you feel good.

Homework: Complete your Anger Journal for next week.

**GROUP # 25**  
**HOW TO FIGHT FAIR**

The following is a list of techniques that people should try to adhere to when they fight or argue with each other. They are ways of fighting fair. Examine this list and see if you employ any of these techniques. If you don't, try not to feel badly or punish yourself. Remember, there are no bad people only bad behaviors. If you wish to learn any of these techniques it only takes practice and time.

1. Listen and hear: It is not only important to listen to her but also to hear what she is saying. Try to put yourself in her shoes. Ask her questions and be interested.

Discussion: Do any of you listen but sometimes not hear.

2. Echo your partner: Tell him what you think he is saying so you know you are getting it right. If you have to, ask him to repeat himself.

Discussion: Do any of you do this?

3. Talk about how you feel and what you want: After you listen, then talk. Don't just sit there and engage in a one sided conversation. Don't remain passive and silent. Be assertive. Stop to think. Stop to feel. Tell your partner how you feel and what you want. Be specific.

Discussion: Do any of you do this? If not what do you do?

4. Use "I statements": Utilize previous groups in which we discussed "I feel...", "I think..." and "I believe..." Remember, these statements are non judgmental and don't put the focus on something that your partner has done wrong. This way of speaking focuses on you.

Discussion: How many of you have gotten better at using "I statements." (Remember not to use "You statements.")

5. Stick to only one issue: Concentrate on what is bothering you or your partner. Do not bring up vaguely connected issues or anything else.

Discussion: How easy or difficult is this for you?

6. Forget the past: During a heated discussion, don't sling grievances about the past. Stick to the present. Resolve past wrongs and resentments when things are calm between you and your partner.

Discussion: If you can't get over the past then maybe it is time to think about moving on. Why punish yourself and your partner for the rest of your lives?

7. Don't hit below the belt: Don't push buttons that you know are going to hurt. Don't hit sore spots. Don't name call. Don't label.

Discussion: Have any of you done this?

8. Be accepting: Accept the other person's thoughts and feelings. They are true for her. Never tell someone how she should think or feel. You can always agree to disagree.

Discussion: Do any of you get upset when your partner has a different point of view?

9. Don't mind read or predict: Just because you think you know your partner doesn't mean that you know everything that they think and feel. You must not act as if you can predict the future. If you have a question, then ask.

Discussion: Have any of you every tried to read your partner's mind or predict what she would do?

10. Don't try to change your partner: The only person that you can change is you. Don't take responsibility for anyone else.

Discussion: Have any of you wished that you could change your partner?

11. Finish your arguments: If you need to take a time out to gain control that is fine. However, when you have gained control then it is time to come back to discuss the disagreement. Settle what ever the problem is calmly.

Discussion: Do any of you stick around to settle your agreements calmly?

12. Look for unique solutions: Be willing to compromise. Look for new ways of doing things. Work together, not apart.

Discussion: What are some unique solutions that you have tried?

13. Admit it when you are wrong: Remember, a healthy, secure adult can admit when he or she has made a mistake.

Discussion: What do you have to lose by admitting that your not perfect?

14. Eye contact: Always look at your partner. This method lets her know that you are paying attention to them.

Discussion: How do you feel when you are trying to talk to someone and she isn't looking at you?

15. Don't raise your voice level: He is right next to you so you don't have to yell. If you catch yourself raising your voice then calm down or take a time out until you do. (Hint: if your partner is the one who is raising his voice, try talking softer and softer. If she wants to listen then she will have to stop yelling.)

Discussion: Is it possible to have an argument with someone who is yelling at you?

16. Don't Interrupt: Never interrupt your partner when she is speaking. It is rude and disrespectful.

Discussion: Do any of you interrupt when you begin to hear something you would rather not hear?

17. Don't use absolutes: Try to avoid using words like always or never.

Discussion: Do any of you do this?

The more you work on it the easier it will become. Remember, anger is a normal emotion, but violence is an action and we are all responsible for our actions. Learning to be in control (not controlling), will raise your self-esteem and really make you feel good.

Homework: Complete your Anger Journal for next week.



GROUP # 26  
EXPECTATIONS AND ANGER

**Defined:**

Expectations are the mental "bets" that we make with ourselves about the outcome of future events, our behavior and the behaviors of others. They often reflect our goals and standards. These expectations are a powerful force in determining how we respond to others. Anger is frequently related to the expectations that we have for ourselves and others for the different situations that we encounter. (Weisinger: 1994)

**Discussion:** Are there any questions or comments

**Types of Expectations:**

There are four types of expectations that can cause anger. They are:

1. **High Expectations of Ourselves:** When our high expectations of ourselves are not met they can cause us to get angry. Most people believe that it is important to have high expectations. However, when the results that we anticipate do not happen we can become frustrated and irritable. To make matters worse, the results we do get are often appraised in a negative light, and we end up not giving ourselves the positive strokes that we deserve. Logic goes out the window, and instead of being happy for what we did achieve, we consider ourselves failures for not meeting our goals. The result is destructive anger that lowers our self-esteem.

**Discussion:** Have any of you expected so much of yourselves that a minor victory feels like a failure? (Example: I felt bad because I wanted a twenty dollar an hour raise and all I got was a seven dollar an hour raise.)

2. **High Expectations of Others:** Our high expectations of others can cause anger and interpersonal conflict. Think back to a time that you expected your partner, child, friend, co-worker, etc. to do something and he didn't do it. The chances are that his failing to meet your expectations provoked anger.

**Discussion:** Have any of you expected so much from someone that you got angry when you didn't get what you expected? (Example: You planned a romantic dinner for your partner, expecting them to get home from work at 5:00 P.M., and yelled at him/her when he/she got home an hour late because of traffic.)

3. **Anticipatory Anger:** This occurs when we become angry before the other person does or says something because we are expecting the person to do something that we don't like. It makes us say things like "He'll never change." or "She'll always treat me like this." Expecting someone to do something you don't like also makes you hypersensitive to signs that they are going to behave in a certain way. These signs provoke anger even before the person actually acts provokingly. This premature anger can prevent your partner's honest attempt to change his behavior. For example: Maybe your partner wants to lose weight and you get angry when you see him/her go into the kitchen because you expect him/her to go off of their diet. However, maybe your partner went into the kitchen just to clean it up or to use the telephone. This anticipatory anger makes the other person

feel that you lack confidence in them and that will often threaten a trusting relationship. Your anger may trigger the other person's anger, which often will lead them to do something objectionable.

Discussion: Have any of you anticipated failure on the part of someone else, and got mad at them just knowing that they would fail, even before they did?

4. Low Expectations of Ourselves: Low expectations that you can't handle a particular situation will increase your chances of becoming angry. Telling yourself that you can't do something will often result in a self-fulfilling prophecy. This lack of confidence in your ability to cope will lower your frustration level and increase your chances of reacting with anger. Low expectations make you give up more easily and become frustrated more quickly. When you lack the patience to try alternative responses, or lack the confidence that you will succeed, you will find yourself angry at yourself out of desperation.

Discussion: Have any of you decided that even before you tried to do something that you would fail at it so you didn't put your all into it, and did fail?

Exercise: Identifying Expectations

Complete the phrases in the space provided.

Myself (High Expectations):

1. When it comes to work, I should (or should have)...
2. When it comes to the relationship with my partner, I should (or should have)...
3. When it comes to my children, I should (or should have)...
4. When it comes to making money, I should (or should have)...
5. When it comes to how I deal with friends, I should (or should have)...
6. Also, I should (or should have)..

My Partner (High Expectation):

1. When it comes to work, my partner should (or should have)...
2. When it comes to money, my partner should (or should have)...
3. When it comes to cooking meals, my partner should (or should have)..
4. When it come to handling the children, my partner should (or should have)...
5. When it comes to sex, my partner should (or should have)...
6. When it comes to cleaning the home, my partner should (or should have)...

7. My partner also should (or should have)...

**Anticipatory Expectations:**

1. I get angry when I think my partner always...
2. I get angry when I think my partner never...
3. I get angry when I think my children always...
4. I get angry when I think my children never...

**Myself (Low Expectations):**

1. When it comes to work, I can't...
2. When it comes to my relationship, I can't...
3. When it comes to my children, I can't...
4. When it comes to making money, I can't...
5. When it comes to how I deal with friends, I can't...
6. Also, I can't...

**Solutions:**

The first step is to be realistic in your expectations. Secondly, identify those expectations. When you identify your expectations you are giving yourself the opportunity to appraise them accurately. Then use the following strategies:

1. Use past similar experiences as your base line. If you expect your income to double over the next year, but your past experiences tell you that the best you have ever done is only a twenty percent increase you may be setting yourself up for a disappointment. Maybe to expect a thirty percent increase would be a more realistic goal. That way you are still happy with a twenty percent increase rather than being upset.

2. Ask others what they think. At times it is difficult to be honest with ourselves. Sharing expectations that we have of ourselves or of others can give us helpful feedback as to whether or not we are being realistic.

3. Assign percentages to your expected outcomes. This can help us think clearly as to whether we really believe the expectation is going to be met. We can also modify our expectations as the situation changes. This will give us a more realistic outlook.

**Communicating Expectations:**

Letting others know what we expect of them gives them the opportunity to validate whether or not we are being realistic in their ability to meet those expectations. If a person feels that he can't meet an unreasonable expectation he is able to explain his viewpoint. Maybe together you can create reasonable and achievable expectations. Not only will this prevent you from having unrealistically high expectations of others, but it

will save you from needless and unjustified anger. This will also be more conducive to a productive working environment because letting other people know what is expected of them is a characteristic of the most productive relationships and effective organizations.

Remember: Expectations will serve you best when they are elastic rather than static.

**Exercise: Taking Action**

Answer the following questions and finish the following phrases.

1. Think of a recent incident in which you got angry at yourself and note the expectations that you had for yourself.

Were they realistic?

How do you know?

2. List an expectation that you had for yourself.

Are they realistic?

How do you know?

3. List an expectation that you have for your partner.

Are they realistic?

How do you know?

Homework: Complete your Anger Journal for next week.

GROUP # 40  
LETTING GO OF RESENTMENTS

**Defined:**

All of us remember incidents that made us angry. However, there is a difference between those incidents that merely irritated us and those incidents that caused tremendous anger when they occurred. As time passes the remembrance of the minor incidents will usually fail to get us angry. (Weisinger: 1994)

However, more serious provocations affect us differently. These are incidents that happened yesterday, last month or over ten years ago. The major provocation may have been a single event, or a series of events that affected us so dramatically that we were unable to cope. Instead of working out our anger, we covered it up. These are called resentments.

**Recognizing Resentments:**

The best method in dealing with anger is to deal with the feelings not the anger. When you focus only on the anger you act emotionally and re-open the hurt. If you deal with the feelings you have a better chance at getting at what the problem is and healing the hurt.

The following is a list of signs that indicate that you have anger that you still have not dealt with:

1. Feeling unappreciated and un-loved
2. Physical ailments like stomach aches or migraine headaches
3. Hesitancy to call your parents
4. Bickering with your spouse
5. Feeling like you want to "get back" at someone
6. Feeling incomplete
7. Decreasing sexual vitality
8. Self destructive behavior (eating binges, etc.)
9. Having grudges and resenting people or what they do

**Discussion:** The above list of feelings is the manifestations of unresolved anger. They come from a variety of anger experiences all sharing a common theme: They hurt you. Working out your hurt feelings is the key to passing anger and preventing it from becoming everlasting. How many of you relate to one of the above listed feelings? Which ones? Explain.

**Acknowledging your Resentments:**

**Exercise:** The first step in dealing with your feelings is to acknowledge them. This requires you to be strong and finish the sentences:

I feel hurt when \_\_\_\_\_ and I am still hurting.  
I feel hurt when \_\_\_\_\_ and I am still hurting.  
I feel hurt when \_\_\_\_\_ and I am still hurting.

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**Exercise:**

Most people will fill in the above blanks with an anger-provoking experience. Try instead to focus on letting yourself acknowledge the hurt. The next step in letting go of past anger is to get support for your feelings. Break into dyads. Read your "hurt statements" from the exercise above and instruct your partner to say "I understand." Instruct this person not to make any value judgments. This person is there to support your right to feel. Try it.  
How does it feel?

**Working Through Resentments:**

By getting acknowledgment for your feelings, you will begin to develop confidence in dealing with them. Instead of being frightened or ashamed of them you will begin to feel entitled to them. Also, having your feelings supported makes you feel good.

Often times our anger and hurt occurred so long ago that we feel helpless to do something about it. This can increase resentment. An effective way of dealing with this is to write a letter. It is a good policy to read and re-read your letter as a reminder that you did do something about it. You wrote it off.

Another effective way of dealing with your anger and hurt is by meeting with the target of that anger and expressing your desire to improve the relationship. This is called a peace talk. Below are the ways to make a peace talk work.

1. Make sure you are alone with the person and will not be interrupted.
2. Emphasize how important this meeting is for you and that you are doing it because you care.
3. Express positive feelings
4. Focus on what you want to happen
5. Ask for the other person's feelings- then and now
6. Feel free to get emotional

As you work through this process the pain will begin to lift.

The last step in dealing with past anger and hurt is to get closure. This means that you will no longer allow your past anger and hurt to affect your current life. You have "let it go." This can be a long process but when you finally do, you will be able to live again.

**Exercise:** In the space provided name three resentments that you are currently carrying or have carried in the past. These can be resentments against people, places or things.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Now pick the resentment that you feel the most strongly about and answer the following questions in the space provided.

A. What is the reason this resentment was formed?

- B. What benefit do I get out of maintaining this resentment?
- C. What role does holding this resentment allow me to play?
- D. Do I use this resentment to justify and behaviors, actions or attitudes?
- E. What effect (positive or negative) does this resentment have on other people?
- F. Have any innocent people been hurt or could be hurt by this resentment?
- G. What effect does this resentment have on the person, place or thing against which it is held?
- H. What does this resentment cost you?
- I. Have you lost any relationships because of this resentment?
- J. Has it hurt your health?
- K. Has it caused you any financial difficulty?
- L. Has it caused you any legal hassles?
- M. Can you think of any reasons why you would like to let go of this resentment?

Homework: Complete your Anger Journal for next week.



GROUP # 41  
LEARNING TO LISTEN TO OTHERS

**How to listen:**

The following is a list of ways that are effective in listening to others:

1. The speaker will state clearly what he/she wants to say using "I" statements.
2. The listener will repeat what he/she has just heard the other person say, in detail.
3. The speaker will then confirm what the listener has heard, and then repeat whatever important points the listener did not hear.
4. The listener is then to repeat this back until the speaker is satisfied that he/she heard everything. Only then can the listener respond.
5. Now the roles reverse, and the new listener repeats what he \ she hears until the speaker is satisfied.

**Defensive Reactions to Anger:**

Learning to listen to what another person is saying is a skill. Often times, people spend time concentrating on what they are going to say next. Listening to someone who is angry at us is even more difficult to learn how to do. There are many reasons why this is so.

Many of us react defensively when someone expresses anger towards us. This is particularly true if we grew up in a home where put-downs and humiliation were a way of life. What happens in this case is that another's anger is perceived as a statement about us. Instead, if anger is expressed directly, it is another person's way of letting us know how they are feeling inside.

**Discussion:** How many of you start to get defensive when someone expresses anger towards you?

Do any of you hear your partner's anger as a criticism of yourself?

If we think about the times that we have felt anger towards someone, it usually feels better to communicate it. In fact that is what we want you to do. Don't stuff it! But if the listener acts defensively it seems as if we are not being heard. There are actually three reasons why it is important to express anger. They are:

1. To get it off your chest.
2. To let the other person know how you feel.
3. To feel more intimate with your partner.

The third reason usually surprises people. Actually, when you share your anger with another person, you are telling them that you want to communicate with them feelings that are powerful, possibly scary, and that you trust them and that you want to work through it. You are expressing to them that, although you are angry, you can still control yourself. This, if done properly, can actually promote intimacy.

If you always assume that people are criticizing you when they express anger, life will be very difficult. You may begin to feel that you have to change something about yourself every time your partner expresses anger. Actually, you don't have to change anything: all you have to do is just listen. Afterwards, you may need some time to think

about what the other person said and wants from you. Take a time-out. Then weigh it in your mind when you are by yourself.

Remember: one reason why people respond to anger defensively or angrily is because it reminds them of how their parents expressed anger

Discussion: How do you respond when your partner expresses anger?  
How does it remind you of your childhood?

Another reason that people get defensive or angry when their partner gets angry at them is because they view an argument as a win or lose situation. Someone has to be right and someone has to be wrong. However, it is possible that both people can be right and both people can be wrong. It usually doesn't matter though unless your partner is telling you that you're wrong or bad. Then you may feel as if you are being attacked and your response will be to defend yourself.

Exercise: Answer the following questions in the space provided.

1. Do you see arguments as right and wrong or win and lose situations?
2. Do you always have to get the last word?
3. How would it feel not getting the last word?
4. How does this attitude affect your ability to hear anger?

One of the major reasons that people argue is not because one is right and one is wrong. It is because we are different. Therefore, if people in relationships are different then they probably have different expectations. They probably see and do things differently. One may see a glass filled halfway with water as half full; another may see it as half empty. Neither is wrong. From your own perspective you each see it differently. Different is not bad. It is just different. It is these differences that gives the world color and contrast.

Discussion: Imagine what it would be like living with someone just like you. Imagine that they will have all of your positive traits and all of your negative traits. Imagine that they will have all of your quirks and nasty habits. How long do you think that you could handle it?

Another reason why many people react defensively to hearing someone express criticism or anger towards them is that they may not like those same things about us. If someone is always late for appointments, work or dates he probably knows it because his colleagues, friends and dates probably let him know it. This, in turn, may be a sore spot for this person. Perhaps, over time, this person has come to dislike this part of us but hasn't gotten it together enough to do something about it. Therefore when this person is confronted with it, he becomes defensive.

Exercise: Write down three things about yourself that you don't like and have heard other people complain about.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Exercise: Imagine that your partner is getting angry or critical at these parts of you.

1. What would your usual response be?
2. How could you respond differently?

Once you have come to identify those parts of you that you want to change, you have taken the first step to actually changing. The second step is actually doing it. This may take a great deal of effort on your part. You may want to discuss this with a therapist. However, the key here is taking responsibility for your own "sore spots." It will help you to listen and not get defensive with your partner or anyone else. Remember: no one is perfect and anger is just an emotion. It will pass if you accept it. If you fight it will haunt you forever.

#### Victims and Anger:

If there has been violence in a relationship the victim will probably feel a great deal of anger and resentment. Although the victim is usually afraid to express it for fear of being hit again. If the victim doesn't express it directly, it may come out in indirect ways such as emotional withdrawal, sexual withdrawal, sarcasm, teasing, complaining, being annoyed or not following through with commitments. These indirect ways of expressing anger are likely to cause a fight. Be prepared. It is normal for a victim to act this way. That is why a majority of them leave the relationship.

As a past abuser it takes time for you to rebuild trust. After months and sometimes years, the victim may find that she becomes less and less threatened and may be able to assert feelings, especially negative feelings. These feelings may be about something that is happening now or about something that happened about your past behavior, before you had counseling. You must realize that often victims will keep things bottled up inside and that they too need to express them. Allow your partner to do this or their feelings will continue to come up in indirect ways.

The anger that your partner has about your past violence will be the hardest for you to hear. But he needs to express it (hopefully directly and assertively as you now know how) and you need to hear it. You may get defensive. It may remind you of a part of yourself that you would rather forget. Your impulse may be to defend yourself. Stop. Take a deep breath. Look for anger cues. If you start getting angry when your partner expresses anger, take a time-out. Then come back and discuss it. Remember to use "I" statements.

Exercise: Answer the following questions in the space provided.

1. How do you feel when your partner expresses anger towards you?
2. How do you know when your partner is angry?

3. How do you act defensively towards your partner's anger?
4. How do you act non-defensively towards your partner's anger?
5. Does your partner express anger about past incidents of violence?
6. Do you make it difficult letting your partner discuss their feelings?
7. When you express your anger what do you want from our partner?
8. When your partner expresses anger what does he/she want?

Homework: Complete your Anger Journal for next week.

GROUP # 42  
IMPROVING YOUR RELATIONSHIP

**Connection Times:**

Every couple seems to have a time of the day when they fight the most. Most couples report that their arguments occur at the end of the day when one or both partners return home.

Discussion: Do you or did you find this to be so?

Whenever you find that your "high risk" times occur, you can create a ritual around them. These rituals are called "connection times." The purpose of this is for couples to connect in a positive way at the end of the day or whenever your "high risk time(s) are.

1. It is best to try to establish a certain time so that there are no miscommunications about when this exercise is to be done.
2. Decide who will speak first.
3. That person has five minutes to talk about anything that they want (except using psychological violence).
4. This is a time to talk about whatever it is that's important without being interrupted.
5. The other person is just to sit and listen without making any reactions or responses.
6. If the first person can't fill all five minutes then merely sit together and look into each others eyes or sit side by side in silence. The idea here is to connect with your partner.
7. After the five minutes is over the person doing the talking says "Thank you."
8. Then switch roles.
9. The new speaker will now have five minutes to talk about whatever they want.
10. The same rules apply.
11. Again after he is finished he is to say "Thank you."

Often people don't communicate clearly unless they make an effort to do so. If it left to chance, it usually won't happen. Although it may feel awkward to make an effort to have an intimate relationship with your partner at first it will get easier over time. Also this doesn't always have to be serious. Make it fun.

**Starting Your Own Rituals:**

For some clients dinner time is a time of constant fighting. One ritual that seems to work is this: once the food is on the plate have everyone in the family hold hands, close their eyes and remain silent for one minute. This is a way of connecting with your family without using words. For many families it is an alternative to prayer.

Starting your own ritual is something that you can develop with your partner. It can be used every day or every week. It should be related to something that is meaningful to the both of you and centers around helping each of you feel better about yourselves and each other. It can include your children, your friends or other family members. It may just be sitting and holding hands for five minutes every morning. It should be something that you can count on. It can be a time when you don't think about

work, neighbors, bills or anything else. No matter how hard the day or week has been it should be something that you both do.

**Homework:** Complete your Anger Journal for next week.

GROUP # 43  
UNDERSTANDING STRESS

**Stress Defined:**

Stress is a physical and emotional response that our bodies demonstrate to any demand. Our body responds physically with increased activation of our neural and hormonal systems. We experience this physical response in our emotions. There is both good stress, called eustress, and bad stress, called distress. As our body increases its arousal from a resting state, performance tends to level us. Thus, some stress in our lives is necessary and good for us however, after a certain point stress arousal decreases performance. Our capacity to cope with the level of stress becomes overwhelming. (Mitchell: 1993)

**Discussion:** Are there any questions or comments?

**Stressors Defined:**

Stressors are events or situations in our lives that activate our stress response. Also, some stressors are substances, such as caffeine or nicotine. Events that cause stress can be categorized into traumatic and everyday stressors. Traumatic events include natural disasters such as earthquakes or hurricanes or events such as automobile accidents or shootings. They are unusual events that overwhelm our normal ability to cope. Everyday stress includes both single-event and chronic stressors. Examples of single event stressors would include seeing a child fall off of a bicycle in a busy street or learning of the death of a family member. Examples of chronic stressors would include trouble in the family or workplace or financial problems.

Perceptions play a key role in how we react to everyday stressors. Therefore, we may react one day with heated anger to being cut off in traffic and with equanimity another day. (Remember: Act. Don't React.)

**Discussion:** Are there any questions or comments?

**Where Stressors Come From:**

Stressors come from three places. They are outlined below:

1. Internal Sources (changing body states):

- hunger
- thirst
- hormonal cycles
- physical activity
- illness
- drugs
- chemicals

2. Cognitive Sources (thinking)

- threats
- worry
- fear
- emotional excitement

3. External Sources (through sensory organs):

- heat
- cold
- sun
- light
- noise
- smell
- taste
- touch / closeness

Discussion: Are there any questions or comments?

Signs of Stress:

There are five categories that can signal stress. They are outlined below:

Cognitive:

- forgetfulness
- confusion
- poor concentration
- difficulty with problem solving
- lack of creativity
- boredom
- lack of concentration
- negative attitude or negative self-talk

Emotional:

- anxiety
- frustration
- irritability
- anger
- resentment
- mood swings
- numbing
- loneliness
- depression

Spiritual:

- doubt
- distrust
- being unforgiving
- loss of meaning
- loss of direction
- cynicism
- apathy
- looking for magical answers

Physical:

- heart palpitations
- nausea



profuse sweating  
rapid breathing  
faintness  
headaches  
muscle aches  
rashes  
tension  
teeth grinding  
dulled senses  
fatigue  
insomnia  
increased illness  
appetite change  
weight change  
digestive problems  
decreased sex drive  
restlessness

**Behavioral:**

withdrawal  
lethargy  
crying spells  
nervous laughter  
nightmares  
reduced productivity  
sudden lifestyle change  
accident-proneness  
out-of-control behavior  
problems at work  
problems at home  
increased use of tobacco  
increased alcohol or drug use

**Discussion:** Are there any questions or comments?

**Stress-Related Disease:**

Repeated or prolonged stress can lead to stress-related disease. Stress activates our sympathetic, parasympathetic, and neuromuscular nervous system as well as increases the production of the hormones epinephrine (adrenaline) norepinephrine, cortisol, aldosterone, and the sex hormones (estrogen, progesterone and testosterone). When activated frequently, or in overdrive most of the time, these systems begin to cause tissue breakdown. Target organs include the nervous system, heart and blood vessels, lungs, digestive system, neuromuscular system and immune system. One way to look at this phenomenon is to look at the activation of epinephrine (adrenaline). This hormone causes our "fight or flight response," which in our evolutionary history was necessary intermittently for survival. However, if we are frequently and repeatedly in "fight or

flight mode," our bodies will begin to break down. Chronic stress also leads to hypersensitivity in our nervous and hormonal systems, so that they become activated more easily under stress.

Discussion: Are there any questions or comments

Homework: Complete your Anger Journal for next week.

**GROUP # 44**  
**STRESS MANAGEMENT**

**Stress Management:**

There are three basic techniques in dealing with stress. They are outlined below:

**Physical Techniques:**

- breathing awareness
- deep breathing
- stretching
- relaxation exercises
- exercise
- massage
- recreational activity
- sufficient sleep
- drinking at least 8 glasses of water per day
- laughing
- crying
- proper diet (avoiding caffeine, sugar, junk foods, cigarettes, excessive alcohol and recreational drugs)

**Psychological Techniques:**

- talking
- re-framing
- positive self-talk
- stopping negative thoughts
- taking breaks
- meditation / prayer
- relaxation tapes
- guided imagery / imagination
- journaling
- assertiveness training
- humor

**Organizing Techniques:**

- time management
- writing lists
- prioritizing
- breaking tasks into smaller units
- tackle important tasks when energy is high
- commit your time reasonably
- block time for family and friends ahead of time
- stress inventory

**Discussion:** Are there any questions or comments?

Exercise: Answer the questions in the space provided.

Name three stressors.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How does this stressor cause stress?

How could you diminish the stress?

How could you get away from or prevent the stress?

How could you come to terms with the stress?

How could you change your personality?

Which of the above is your best option?

Relaxation Exercise:

Have a friend read the following relaxation exercise to you. Or read it yourself into a tape recorder and play it back. After some practice, you should be able to do it on your own.

Put on some loose clothing and take off your shoes. Find a quiet place with soft lighting where you will not be interrupted. Lie down on your back on a rug, a mat or a firm bed with your legs comfortably spread apart, not together or crossed. Get comfortable.

Now close your eyes... Be aware of your breathing... Take full, deep breaths from your stomach... Inhale through your nose... Exhale through your mouth... Inhale slowly... Exhale slowly... Inhale... Exhale...

Imagine that your thoughts are written on the walls all around you. See yourself walking to the light switch and turning out the lights... It is now completely dark in the room... You can not see anything... It is now completely dark in the room... You can not see anything... You back up to the middle of the room and lay down on a soft mattress... It is completely dark in the room... completely dark.

Take full deep breaths from your stomach... Inhale through your nose... Exhale through your mouth... Inhale... Exhale...

Tense all the muscles in your body... face... chest... arms... stomach... thighs... calves... feet... toes... Feel the tension... your limbs are tensed... Now exhale and let go of all the tension and relax... Breathe slowly... Inhale through your nose... Exhale through your mouth... Inhale... Exhale...

Tense all the muscles in your body... hold it... hold it... hold it... and relax...

Keep breathing slowly... from the stomach... Inhale through your nose... Exhale through your mouth... Inhale... Exhale...

Keeping the rest of your body relaxed, tense the muscles in your right leg and foot... Keep them tensed... Everything else relaxed... Keep breathing... Inhale... Exhale... And release... Do it again... Keep everything relaxed... Keep breathing... and relax...

Keeping the rest of your body relaxed, tense the muscles in your left leg and foot... Keep them tensed... Everything else relaxed... Keep breathing... Inhale... Exhale... And release... Do it again... Keep everything else relaxed... Keep breathing... and relax...

Keeping the rest of your body relaxed, tense the muscles in your rear end and lower back ... Keep them tensed... Everything else relaxed... Keep breathing... Inhale... Exhale... And release... Do it again... Keep everything else relaxed... Keep breathing... and relax....

Keeping the rest of your body relaxed, tense the muscles in your shoulders... Keep them tensed... Everything else relaxed... Keep breathing... Inhale... Exhale... And release... Do it again... Keep everything else relaxed... Keep breathing... and relax....

Keeping the rest of your body relaxed, tense the muscles in your right arm and hand... Keep them tensed... Everything else relaxed... Keep breathing... Inhale... Exhale... And release... Do it again... Keep everything else relaxed... Keep breathing... and relax....

Keeping the rest of your body relaxed, tense the muscles in your left arm and hand... Keep them tensed... Everything else relaxed... Keep breathing... Inhale... Exhale... And release... Do it again... Keep everything else relaxed... Keep breathing... and relax....

Keeping the rest of your body relaxed, tense the muscles in your stomach and groin area... Keep them tensed... Everything else relaxed... Keep breathing... Inhale... Exhale... And release... Do it again... Keep everything else relaxed... Keep breathing... and relax....

Keeping the rest of your body relaxed, tense the muscles in your neck... Keep them tensed... Everything else relaxed... Keep breathing... Inhale... Exhale... And release... Do it again... Keep everything else relaxed... Keep breathing... and relax....

Keeping the rest of your body relaxed, tense the muscles in your face and jaw... Keep them tensed... Everything else relaxed... Keep breathing... Inhale... Exhale... And release... Do it again... Keep everything else relaxed... Keep breathing... and relax....

Keep breathing... inhale through your nose... Exhale through your mouth... Inhale... Exhale...

All of the tension has now left your body... You are completely relaxed... Be aware of your body feeling completely relaxed... peace and total relaxation... Be aware of how your breathing keeps you in a state of relaxation...

Continue to breathe slowly... Let yourself float...

Inhale... Exhale... Inhale... Exhale...

Pause

When you are ready, stretch and slowly sit up.

Discussion: How do you feel?

Homework: Complete your Anger Journal for next week.

GROUP # 45  
SELF-ESTEEM: PART ONE

With friends, relatives, the court system, the media and a host of others telling you that you are a bad person because you cannot manage your anger, it is important for you to understand that you are not. You have worked hard over the past weeks and months towards change. Remember: There are no bad people only bad behaviors, and bad behaviors can be changed. (Krawetz: 1990)

The following exercises will serve to strengthen your self-esteem by teaching you how to depersonalize rejection, deflect shame, end uncaring relationships and eliminate feelings of self-pity. You will learn or re-discover strengths and insights that will help you make some tough but necessary decisions which will help to improve your present quality of life.

In order to be successful, memorize the newly discovered self-esteem strengths that you will find in the following exercises. Take control of your own life. Stop playing the passive role of the victim. If you can do this, then never again will anyone ever have the power to make you feel inferior.

As you complete the following exercises there are some basic rules that must be followed. Then you will no longer have to continue holding onto feelings of self-pity, irresponsibility, selfishness, self-condemnation, worthlessness, pessimism, resentments, dishonesty and a fear of change. It is your right to enjoy a responsible and fulfilling life that is enriched with inner pride and self-respect. Good Luck!

**Updating Your Achievements:**

**Exercise:** This is a powerful way to develop increased self-esteem; the action will automatically strengthen your feelings of personal competence and self-worth. The same process will allow you to analyze the long-term changes and successes that have taken place in your life. In fact, by taking stock in your achievements and making a decision to imprint those experiences into your consciousness, you will develop into a stronger, more resilient person, better equipped to deal with life's challenges and unexpected adversities. You will also feel happier about yourself.

On the following page, list the personal achievements that you once were unable to accomplish but now can do. (Example: I never thought I did anything meaningful in my life. because I was too busy or unconnected to analyze my progress. Now that I've reminded myself of my new computer mastery and the fact that I have saved enough money for a condo down payment, I feel more significant and ambitious.)

**Response:**

**What Others Like About You:**

**Exercise:** If you are like most people you probably don't spend time thinking about why others like you. It may be because you are too busy, too modest or too unappreciative to take stock of your precious character and personality traits. It is important for you to find out why others respect or admire you. This supportive feedback will nurture your pride, strengthen your self-awareness and halt the tyranny of self put-downs

Your friends and other people like you because you are unique. There is no one else in this entire world that looks, thinks, acts and feels like you. You are special.

You may be admired simply because you are kind, generous, helpful, industrious, courageous, strong, determined, have a great sense of humor, are very loyal, a great dancer, a wonderful cook, are honest, sharing or are a decent human being.

On the next page, list some of the important qualities about yourself supplied by family friends, co-workers and classmates who respect you. Avoid talking to negative people, who will focus on your alleged shortcomings. (Example: I talked to some people I trust and they told me I was special because I am caring and helpful and make them laugh. I also found out that I'm liked because I never judge my friends and always help them deal with their personal problems. I didn't think I was so popular.)

Response:

**Power of Self-Reliance:**

**Exercise:** Self-reliance is the cornerstone of self-esteem. It shows the world that you are independent and in control of your life, that you exude resourcefulness, integrity and accomplishment. You are also happier, freer and more fulfilled than those who rely on others to provide their life's purpose, financial resources, validation, and self-fulfillment.

By choosing not to be self-reliant and allowing others to take charge of your life, you are inevitably creating negative feelings of low self-esteem and uselessness. That is because self-esteem plunges after you surrender your autonomy, motivation and precious individuality in order to become dependent on others.

You may turn into an overprotected person, nonassertive, feeling helpless and depressed and quite easily manipulated by those who need to feel superior to you. You must remember that the more times you take responsibility for your own life and don't let others control or define you, the stronger your self-esteem becomes.

It is relatively easy to become confident, competent and self-reliant. Select a practical, sensible realistic goal and then go after it. Even if you don't succeed at first, going after a goal will transform you into a stronger person; persistence produces increased self-esteem. If you persist, you can achieve new goals and freedoms you never dreamed possible. You transform yourself into a more assertive, independent and accomplished person.

On the next page, list some steps that you would like to take to increase your self-reliance. Don't be afraid to take some small risks. They are part of the growing process. If you are self-reliant, state how you were able to strengthen your self-esteem. (Example: My husband had me convinced that I'm good enough only for raising children and doing housework, but he's through defining my self-worth. I'm signing up for college courses and I'm planning to take a part-time job to become more independent.)



Response:

**Validating Your Success:**

**Exercise:** It is damaging to measure your self-esteem by the external symbols of success such as professional advancement, money, power, expensive automobiles, jewelry or a large house. It is also unfair.

Why allow someone else's material wealth to define your self-esteem? Instead, validate yourself for your personal triumphs such as following your dream to help make the world a better place or for having deep values that set you apart from single-minded materialistic achievers or for being a great parent, friend or neighbor.

Remember, deep self-esteem results when you define and acknowledge exactly what is important to you, and then support, endorse, and validate your success. Never compare yourself to others. You are too special to do this.

On the next page, list the priorities and successes that have added a special richness to your self esteem.. What is important to you? Were you true to yourself by going after a goal that was more significant than material success? (Example: Instead of becoming a well-financed corporate lawyer, I followed my heart and remained home to raise a loving family. My children are my success story and I feel good about that.)

**GROUP # 46**  
**SELF ESTEEM PART TWO**

**Choosing Realistic Goals:**

**Exercise:** Selecting goals that are realistic and that are within the realm of your human potential to achieve them will increase your self-esteem. They will serve to give you feelings of success, satisfaction, achievement and a sense of self-appreciation. (Krawetz: 1990)

However, setting goals that are beyond your capabilities will produce tremendous outpourings of self-loathing, rage, and crippling self put-downs when you don't achieve them. As a result you may decide to give up permanently.

Remember that there are no realistic goals or objectives that will take away your self-worth. In fact, there will be very little self-criticism if you don't succeed at first because you will know that it is still within your power to do so.

On the next page, show how your self-esteem increased after you decided to go after some reasonable goals that were within your performance expectations. (Example: I thought that by the time I hit thirty, I'd be president of my own company. But after going through two difficult bankruptcies and one nervous breakdown at twenty six I realize that I can be happier and cash-solvent by working for someone else who offers me both security and job satisfaction.)

Response:

**Transforming Rejection:**

**Exercise:** In many ways rejection can actually bolster your self-esteem; if you know how to turn a disappointing rejection into a positive change. This change begins with a new way of thinking that avoids rushing to negative conclusions and cruel self put-downs. The truth is that no one rejects you. People make choices based on their respective needs.

You should never allow your precious self-worth to plunge just because the combination of your life's experiences did not meet the requirements of another person or a company. Don't ever give anyone that much power.

Try to examine other reasons that may explain why you experienced rejection. It may be because another person feared your strengths and openness. Maybe you reminded someone of a childhood enemy. Maybe it was because of your age, sex, religion, etc.

Why would you want to be around people like that anyway? You deserve better than that.

Remember that rejection can serve as a catalyst to improve your life. The transition can widen your opportunities to seek out friendlier people and organizations who will be more receptive and appreciative of you.

On the next page, show how you transformed a previous rejection into an opportunity to find something or someone better for yourself. Explain how the process raised your self-esteem. (Example: I didn't get the job on the newspaper because editors are threatened by smart, creative, resourceful reporters. Now they're really missing out on me. I'm happier working in advertising, where my talents are appreciated and the pay is better!)

Response:

#### Eliminating Self-Pity:

**Exercise:** There is no need to indulge in self-pity. It will only create feelings of hopelessness and weaken your self-image. Self-pity usually develops in people who feel that life has been unfair to them. It also manifests itself in those who feel unloved, are addicted to failure and abuse, or need to be seen as martyrs, worthy of sympathy.

Self-pity is a destructive process that cripples self-esteem because it eliminates all possibility of hope. It also transforms into futility, indecisiveness and an inferior self-image.

Self-pity can be eliminated. This occurs when you assume personal responsibility for your setbacks by taking actions that transform your perceived weaknesses, frustrations and despair into new energies that in turn repair your optimism, increase your choices and rebuild your self-esteem.

On the next page, show how your life and self-esteem improved after you took decisive actions to triumph over the negative consequences of self-pity. (Example: I felt so sorry for myself after I couldn't marry my girlfriend that I turned into a whiner, hiding behind depression, despair and hopelessness to avoid life. I felt like a loser. I finally pulled out of my self-pitying slump by mustering the inspiration needed to take charge of my life and found someone else.)

Response:

**Letting Go of Envy:**

**Exercise:** Envy will destroy your self-esteem and diminish all your proud achievements. It is a self-punishing behavior that will transform you into an unworthy and inferior person. Regardless of how much emotional or material success you have attained the painful self put-downs of envy will always strip you of the feelings of self-acceptance to which you are entitled, because you will always be humiliated by your cruel comparisons to others.

Your best defense against envy is to stop comparing yourself to others and appreciate how you are special. Be happy for those more fortunate than you even though you will probably never know the sacrifices they made to get where they are.

On the next page, list examples that show why letting go of envy helped to strengthen your self-esteem. (Example: While I wouldn't mind having a Mercedes-Benz, I am content with my Honda because I realize that the money that I save allows me the luxury of being able to work a little less and have more time to spend with my family.)

GROUP # 47  
SELF-ESTEEM: PART THREE

**Preventing Perfectionism:**

**Exercise:** Going through life as a perfectionist will always damage your self-esteem and strip you of any warm feelings of self acceptance you may have for yourself. That is because the impossibly high demands you make of yourself and the unrealistic expectations you place on others will invite only disappointment, self-repudiation and widespread unhappiness. (Krawetz: 1990)

Living your life as a perfectionist will also set you up for continuous rejection and self put-downs, and deny you peace of mind because demanding perfectionism usually results in failure. Even if you achieve an exceptional result, chances are that you will still be unhappy as you will still find reasons for not being good enough. That is the destructive nature of perfectionism and that is why it destroys self-esteem. Nothing is ever good enough.

Remember, being a perfectionist may paralyze your future chances of success in either your personal or professional life because you will eventually fear taking any new actions that might produce an imperfect result. Preventing perfectionism begins by saying "no" to unreasonably high demands that produce only failure and self-contempt. The new way of thinking requires you to choose goals that are easier to achieve and are within the realm of your possibilities. Moderate your expectation and stop focusing on faults and flaws and then watch your performance and self-esteem escalate.

Below, show how your self-esteem increased after you gave up the emotional pain of perfectionism and brought more acceptance happiness and satisfaction into your life. (Example: I always felt miserable and hated myself because I didn't have the thinnest body in the health club. I hated my shape so much because it wasn't perfect that I quit the health club. I also didn't want others to see my flaws. Months later, after I finally saw the light and let go of the unrealistic demands that I had placed on my body I was finally able to appreciate my special form and I rejoined the health club.)

**Response:**

**Revising Unfair Labels:**

**Exercise:** All things change, including the cruel nicknames and negative label that were once embedded into your childhood consciousness by family members with unrealistic expectations or by bullies who needed someone to pick on.

Whatever your achievements, if those destructive labels still exist in your mind, they will always sabotage your successful reality. You can put an end to harmful concepts and esteem-destroying messages by purging the painful remembrances with positive affirmations.

The process of revising unfair labels is relatively simple. Begin by replacing the false concepts of the past with positive labels of your own choosing. Allow your new self-perception to reflect your pride, achievements and dignity.

In the space below, list the positive affirmations you'll create to remove a destructive label from your memory bank and replace it with a kinder reality reflecting your present triumphs. (Example: My classmates always called me "dairy Queen" in high school because I had a weight problem. But at the tenth-year class reunion, I was the slimmest, prettiest, most successful woman there. "Starlet" is how I feel about myself today. I am bright, attractive and a real winner.)

**Response:**

### Ending Uncaring Relationships:

**Exercise:** Remaining in an uncaring relationship is harmful to your self-esteem because it reinforces the notion that you are not worthy enough to deserve intimacy or commitments from your partner.

Although they know it is not good for them, many people will stay in one-sided relationships. It may have evolved into a bad habit that you've learned to live with, or you're simply afraid to meet new people.

You can rebuild your self-worth and transform your relationship into a more loving experience by first asking for the love, caring and respect you rightfully deserve. If the answer from the other person is no, ending that relationship may be one of the smartest moves you will ever make.

You will soar to new heights and experience a new confidence and self-respect because you broke free of a relationship that was destructive to your self-esteem.

In the space below, write down what your primary and long-term relationship needs are; then examine whether you are having enough tender moments or too many stress-filled heartaches in your present relationship. (Example: All I want out of life is love and commitment, but I'm not getting that from Nancy, she doesn't love me back and refuses to get married. At this point I'm tired of her excuses and put-downs and I'm ending the relationship so that I can feel better about myself and perhaps find someone better.)

Response:



### Overcoming Shame:

**Exercise:** Shame is a self-inflicted put-down in which you tell yourself that you are worthwhile by pinpointing the origins of your emotional pain. However it can be overcome. It is a healing process that requires insight, sharing and compassion.

You were brought into this world feeling shameless. It was not until you become older that someone maligned your self-worth. It is important to know how your shame began, because those distorted mental imprints need to be eliminated in order for you to restore your damaged self-esteem.

When did your shameful feelings first occur? Were negative messages drummed into your head by condemning authority figures or were you the innocent victim of someone else's rotten behavior? Did you stuff down all of your emotions to avoid feeling shame? Any of these negative experiences may be the reason you're feeling unworthy now.

You can conquer the emotional setbacks that shame produces by airing the origins of your painful remembrances with someone that you trust. Select a friend or therapist to begin the recovery process. At first, you may feel hesitant talking about your unhealed wounds. Eventually, however, you will experience relief and self-acceptance as those you confide in don't belittle or betray you., as others may have done in the past. The truth is that you will be admired for being honest and courageous enough to face an unhappy part of your past and using a compassionate outlook to transform it. Your recovery begins when you endorse yourself for being as survivor despite the harmful origins of your shame and for having the determination to persevere. Recovery becomes stronger when you forgive others for the shame they instilled in you.

However, if you refuse to confront your shameful feelings that were induced by others to cripple your self-worth, you will only prolong your self-inflicted cycle of shame and unfulfillment. If you have suffered enough because of shame, it is time to start anew as a self-accepting person. Here is how the rebuilding process begins:

In the space below, recall a shame-producing experience that may still prevent you from feeling good about yourself. Sharing your unhappy experiences in a secure setting can free you of the low self-esteem those brutal experiences produce. (Example: I always felt ashamed of my alcoholic father; he always came drunk to my Little League games and embarrassed me in front of everyone. When I became older, I realized I had no control over his behavior and wasn't responsible for it. Although the painful remembrances remain, I understand it was his shame and not mine.)

**Response:**

**Homework:** Complete your Anger Journal for next week.

**GROUP # 48**  
**SELF ESTEEM: PART FOUR**

**Choosing New Behaviors:**

**Exercise:** Choosing new behaviors such as beginning a new exercise routine, improving your performance in the workplace or deciding to be more outgoing is a wonderful way to elevate your self-confidence. It will provide instant awareness results to strengthen your feelings of self-esteem and accomplishment. (Krawetz: 1990)

The following will help you with immediate success: Keep your new behavior choices simple and within your abilities to complete them. Don't go after unattainable life style choices that will produce negative assaults on your self-worth when you fail to achieve them.

The reward is that within a very short period of time you will be able to see success in achieving your new lifestyle objectives and you will feel a corresponding increase in your self-esteem awareness.

The truth is that you will probably feel so encouraged by your new endeavors that you will select additional behavior changes to strengthen your feelings of success and accomplishment.

In the space below, list three or more behavior modification choices that will help you feel better about yourself after you achieve them. Remember, taking the first action sets the self-esteem success process in motion. (Example: I know that if I start eating better food and give up sugar, I'll feel more confident about my health. If I stop hiding behind the television set on weekends and give up thinking like a social failure I'll feel better about myself and attract others. I also need to get serious about paying bills on time.)

**Response:**

**Listening to the Positive:**

**Exercise:** The ability to listen to positive statements about yourself and to resist negative put-downs that others make is a necessary component of strong self-esteem. It also requires a better way of listening.

Many people sabotage their own self-worth by rejecting all favorable comments about themselves. They don't believe they deserve the positive comments, or perhaps they've known only negative imprinting all their lives. The good news is that esteem can thus be improved. The solution is as follows:

To combat negative listening, always listen, remember, and internalize the positive comments you've received from others. Make a conscious effort to etch all favorable comments into your mind. Reject all put-downs. Within a short time, not only will you like yourself more because you've broken your addiction to negative listening, but others also will enjoy talking to you more.

In the space below, recall some positive comments made about you that you once rejected because you felt they were unwarranted or undeserved. (Example: I must have a hard time liking myself because I can't believe the nice things my new boyfriend says about me. He tells me that I'm pretty and bright and the most caring person that he's ever met. I'm going to believe him because I've spent my entire life listening to the negative things people have said about me. It is time for a change.

**Response:**

### Overcoming Shyness:

**Exercise:** Shyness is negative thinking behavior that is activated whenever good people fall prey to their poor self-image and believe they are inferior or unacceptable to others. Shyness can result in a lifetime of broken hopes and dreams unless it is corrected by improved self-esteem awareness and healthier insights.

Defeating shyness starts with correcting all negative imaging behavior patterns that exist in your consciousness, and replacing distorted images with the strengthened self-esteem attributes you have written down in the previous SELF-ESTEEM exercises. Memorize and internalize your new self-esteem traits until they become an integral part of your new self-image. That is the most effective way to correct the outdated negative self-image patterns you've been carrying around for years.

You will transform yourself into a happier, more positive, more accepting person who doesn't fear meeting others. There is something else you should know about shyness. Almost everyone sometimes feels inadequate and has touches of shyness so stop thinking of others as superior to you. They aren't, unless you give them that power by belittling yourself.

You can also harness the anxieties that shyness produces by acting smarter in new social situations. At those times, avoid self-centering behavior and keep the focus on others.

Minimize your initial nervousness at meeting others in a new social situation by talking to people of your own sex, if you feel more comfortable doing so. Remain true to your integrity and self-worth and don't try to impress others by acting different from what you really are. Just be yourself and you will avoid the self-condemning put-downs that will follow when you have to reject your true self to win another person's acceptance.

In the space below, list some of your rediscovered self-esteem traits to increase your feelings of self-worth and eliminate your old shyness behavior patterns. (Example: There is no reason why I should feel shy about meeting others. I am proud of my appearance. I feel self-confident about my skills and I know that it is normal to have faults. I am a very special and courageous person. I am lovable. Also I've learned to personalize rejection in case I don't meet someone else's expectations. I am too significant to feel shy.)

Response:

### Sharing Your Inner Feelings:

**Exercise:** Sharing your inner feelings about the good, the bad and the ugly will strengthen your self-esteem by getting you in touch with feelings that you have repressed or denied or that you didn't know existed. Releasing your feelings will also end the self-punishing pattern of running away from buried remembrances that still produce shame, anger and other emotional disruptions. When you stuff your feelings, however, others may receive an unfavorable impression of your personality and be driven away. They may see you as a cold, distant, uncommunicative person who doesn't want friends.

Understand that your pattern of withholding feelings probably took root during your childhood when you were threatened, scorned or ridiculed for expressing yourself. That is why you closed down. Now it is safe to talk about your feelings.

In the space below, describe a feeling that you have kept bottled up for years because it has been too painful to talk about. Address it so that you can heal your past and your self-esteem. Share the information with a therapist or someone else you trust to help soothe the disappointment. (Example: I have kept the pain closed up for too long that I'm a survivor of incest. I need to begin the healing process by expressing my shame, fear and anger to someone I trust. I want to change the way that I feel about myself and get rid of the guilt and low self-worth that have eaten away at my insides.

**Response:**

**Homework:** Complete your Anger Journal for next week.

**GROUP # 49**  
**TRAITS AND EMOTIONS OF SELF AND OTHERS**

Examples of opposite character traits in people:

1. Introverted / Extroverted
2. Expressive / Reserved
3. Excitable / Calm
4. Loud / Quiet
5. Reserved / Easy
6. Moody / Steady
7. Aggressive / Passive
8. Witty / Serious
9. Playful / Earnest
10. Thinker / Feeler
11. Mature / Childlike
12. Organized / Disorganized
13. Responsible / Irresponsible
14. Detail Person / "Big Picture" Person

Examples of how positive characteristics become interpreted with time:

1. Extroverted becomes:
  - a. loud and obnoxious
  - b. "My partner never stops talking."
  - c. "My partner is flighty and all over the place at parties."
2. Quiet or calm becomes:
  - a. uncommunicative
  - b. "My partner never talks."
  - c. "My partner never wants to do anything fun."
3. Responsible becomes:
  - a. "up tight"
  - b. "a prude"
  - c. "My partner has too many rules."

**Discussion:** Why do you think that you were attracted to someone who is the opposite of you?

Many people are attracted to someone who appears to be their opposite because they are either looking for conflict, looking for something that is missing in them, or to feel needed. (Co-dependency can be subconscious at the beginning.)

The truth is that we all have both characteristics but just don't see it in ourselves and without realizing it we see it in someone else.

**Discussion:** Why does something that is so attractive, lose its attractiveness?

The reason that something that is so attractive at the beginning but eventually loses its attractiveness is because we were attracted for the wrong reasons. Normally after 52 weeks of group, two things usually occur. Either people realize that their needs have changed and they end the relationship or they put aside their differences and start

over again for the right reasons (called maturity). Remember: In the second scenario, trust takes a long time to rebuild.

**Exercises:**

A. Looking beyond the initial physical attraction, list at least three character traits that attracted you at first to your current partner (or if you are not in a relationship, character traits of a significant partner from your past).

1.

2.

3.

B. Now list the opposite of each of these characteristics.

1.

2.

3.

C. Which of pairs of opposites in A and B describe you and your partner? Write them below.

My Partner

Me

D. Now think of any other ways that you and your partner are opposites. Write them below.

My Partner

Me

E. Pick one of the positive characteristics from A and D that initially attracted you to your partner but have become something you think of negatively now. Write the characteristic and how you "frame" it now.

Characteristic    How I "Frame" It Now

F. Finally write down one characteristic of yourself that you do not express very often. (Hint: Look for characteristics that your partner has in A and D.) Then write what you could do to develop that characteristic.

Remember: The more that you try to control people, the more you push them away.  
Also, Try to think if the differences between you and your partner are your agenda or your partner's agenda (Example: Is your partner disorganized or just at something that you want organized?)

Homework: Complete your Anger Journal for next week.



GROUP # 50  
FUNCTIONAL VS. DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILIES

**Functional Families:**

For a family to be a functional or nurturing family simply means that it works. In the ideal functional family there is a partnership between a healthy father and mother. The absence of either parent can lead to dysfunction in one way or another. A functional family is also characterized by the existence of healthy, functional boundaries. (Newbold: 1995)

In a functional family, parents are able to meet their own needs as well as the needs of their children. Functional families also have rules that stimulate personal growth. These rules are fair, realistic, clearly identifiable, consistent, predictable and edifying.

Healthy family members communicate with themselves and others openly and honestly. They discuss family problems together. They understand that it is acceptable to have and express feelings such as anger, and pain without the fear of abusive repercussions. Healthy family members accept responsibility when they are wrong and are able to ask for forgiveness and to forgive. They give each other permission to be themselves. They have respect for individuality and provide support for growth. They are comfortable with their own bodies and have healthy sexual outlooks. Remember: this is the ideal functional family. It is hardly common.

**Dysfunctional Families:**

A dysfunctional family by contrast simply means that it doesn't work, although it may look like it does. The dysfunctional family is often a dictatorship that is run by its sickest member. It does not function in a healthy way. Family members are unable to find stability. There is also a lack of boundaries.

In many cases alcoholism or drug addiction is the primary cause for a family's dysfunction although there also can be a host of other reasons. These other reasons may include a serious illness such as cancer, a recent death in the family, mental illness, an extramarital affair, some form of abuse or any other great stressor.

**Dysfunctional Family Roles:**

It is important to understand not whether or not my family is dysfunctional but to what degree it is dysfunctional and what role did I play, if any. In an effort to find some type of stability in an unstable and stressful environment, different members of the same family adopt different roles in order to survive. This role is a pattern of defenses which individuals adopt to give them the least amount of stress. They are as follows:

1. **The Addict:** Anyone in the family can play this role but usually it is the mother or the father. Here the father, for example, may be an alcoholic. He is the root of the family's dysfunction. He is often dependent and is always shifting the blame on someone or something else. He has repressed feelings of pain, guilt, shame, fear and anger. He is out of touch with reality and hides behind walls of anger, denial, charm, projection, rigidity, aggressiveness hostility, self-righteousness, high standards for others, grandiosity, over-achievement, blaming and perfectionism. He medicates his pain and bad feelings with

some addictive substance or behavior that becomes debilitating. This could be overeating, gambling, sex, drugs, or alcohol. He uses this medicator to relieve pain but does nothing to relieve the pain of the family. He compulsively uses people places or things.

Discussion: Who was the addict in your family when you were growing up?  
What was the addict's addiction?  
Who is the addict in your present family?  
What is the addict's addiction?

## 2. The Chief Enabler:

The chief enabler is usually the mother in the classic dysfunctional model of the alcoholic family. She is the one who is closest and most depended upon by the addict. She enables him in his disease by doing things like calling work and telling them that he is sick when he's actually really drunk or hungover. She enables the disease to progress by doing things for the addict that he should be doing for himself. As the addict increasingly loses control, the chief enabler, makes more of the decisions and takes on more responsibility.

She is codependent which means that she depends upon the addict to justify her need to be a caretaker. She develops dependence upon the other person or thing to the point of neglecting herself.

She is usually super-responsible and wears a fake smile and pretends that everything is great. However, she has repressed feelings of hurt, anger, emptiness, guilt and inadequacy. She feels stuck, overwhelmed and powerless. She hides behind walls of martyrdom, seriousness, control, denial, people pleasing, caretaking, protecting, rescuing, over responsibility, self-blaming, hostility, low self-worth, physical illnesses and fragility.

The role of caretaker makes the chief enabler feel important and self-righteous. The family benefits because someone is taking responsibility for things in the home. She will pay the price for her caretaking with physical or emotional illness. Her primary compulsion is to take charge. She is a control addict.

Discussion: Who was the chief enabler in your family while you were growing up?  
Who is the chief enabler in you present family?

## 3. The Hero: The family hero is usually the oldest child. He or she is super-responsible. He not only takes responsibility off of his mother's shoulders, but does his best to make good grades, make the team, work at an extra job, or anything else to make the family look good. He provides a sense of worth for the family. He takes on a lot of the responsibility that the enabling spouse can't fulfill because she is busy taking care of the addict.

The hero often has feelings of guilt, inadequacy, loneliness, confusion, anger and hurt. He hides behind walls of trying to be someone special, people pleasing, helpfulness, approval-seeking, over achieving, intellectualizing and somewhat parentified. He gets a lot of the attention. He is compulsive and driven and becomes a workaholic. It is not uncommon for the hero to become the addict later on in life.

Discussion: Who was the hero in your family when you were growing up?  
Who is the hero in your present family?

4. **The Scapegoat:** The scapegoat is often the second child. He or she is often rebellious and takes away the focus from the addict. He has a very strong peer alliance outside of the home because he doesn't feel as if he belongs in the family. He carries the pain of the family which is why he is called the scapegoat. He gets blamed for the problems in the family even though his behavior is the result, not the cause of dysfunction. The addict is the problem in the family. The scapegoat often gets in trouble with the law doing things on purpose or subconsciously to get out of the family.

He has repressed feelings of insecurity, rebelliousness, defiance, blaming, acting out, trouble making, peer preference over his family, chemical abuse, getting arrested and going to prison and withdrawing. If the scapegoat is female her acting out may result in an unplanned pregnancy. The scapegoat is often a low achiever and a high risk for suicide.

Discussion: Who was the scapegoat in your family when you were growing up?  
Who is the scapegoat in your present family?

5. **The Lost Child:** The lost child is often the middle child. He or she is typically sweet, quiet, and shy. She is the child the family doesn't have to worry about. She offers the family relief. She learns not to rock the boat. She tends to stay in her little fantasy world and often ends up with a lot of emotional problems. She can be very manipulative and have trouble making decisions, but is often very creative and artistic.

She will have repressed feelings of being ignored, confused, hurt, inadequate, unimportant and anger. She hides behind walls of being quiet, withdrawn, invisible, being a loner, a dreamer and super-independent. She will avoid stressful situations, will be low achieving, may have problems with asthma, bed-wetting, may have an eating disorder, may have a confused sexual identity and may be promiscuous.

Discussion: Who was the lost child in your family when you were growing up?  
Who is the lost child in your present family?

6. **The Mascot:** The mascot is usually the youngest child. He or she provides comic relief from stress for the family. He learns that things get a little easier around the house when he acts out. He is often immature and is not taken seriously. The family regards him as fragile and in need of protection. The mascot discovers that being cute or funny relieves tension around the house and helps them to get in the spotlight occasionally.

The mascot has repressed feelings of being crazy, being scared, high anxiety, hurt, loneliness, confusion and pain. He hides behind walls of providing distraction, being gutsy, feeling special, having pets, seeking attention and clowning around. They are often hyperactive, fragile, compulsive, givers and can't handle stress.

Discussion: Who was the mascot in your family when you were growing up?  
Who is the mascot in your present family?

### **Dysfunctional Family Rules:**

In addition to establishing survival roles, dysfunctional families also develop unhealthy rules within the family system. These unhealthy rules stifle personal growth. They are usually unrealistic, debilitating and are always changing so that the member can never get them right. They are usually more non-verbal than verbal and subconscious rather than conscious. Some of these include:

1. Don't talk, keep secrets, and never talk about it
2. Don't feel, don't express feelings, stay out of touch with feelings, internalize feelings
3. Don't trust, don't expect accountability
4. Shift blame to others, deny, deny, deny, never accept responsibility
5. Pretend everything is fine, play it safe, make us proud
6. Always stay in control, be strong, be good, be right, be perfect, act like the perfect family, and go to church holding hands.
7. Do what is right even though that always changes
8. Don't be selfish, it's bad to have needs
9. Do as I say, not as I do
10. Don't rock the boat
11. Don't talk back, dad is always right
12. Speak when spoken to

**Discussion:** What were the unspoken rules in your family when you were growing up? What are the unspoken rules in your present family?

**Exercise:** Break up into groups of two and discuss what roles you played in your family while you were growing up and who played the other roles your family. Then we will share our stories out loud if you are ready to share.

**Homework:** Complete your Anger Journal for next week.

**GROUP # 51**  
**DIFFERENCES IN CONTROL AT HOME AND AT WORK**

This treatment manual is designed to be used with anyone including military personnel or veterans. If you find that you have a number of veterans in your group, this section should be presented. Otherwise continue on to the following one.

**The Military:**

Recent studies have shown that military families experience a high incidence of domestic violence. Many men and women in this society learn to feel violent, aggressive and superior to their partners particularly men who have the additional experience of being trained to fight in war. In this situation, violence becomes a way of life. In addition to this training or indoctrination process, military personnel and their families experience special stresses that civilian families may not experience. (Duluth: 1995)

**Discussion:** Have any of you been in the military and can you relate to this?

**Violence in Context:**

There are certain situations where violence is not only legal, but is encouraged when necessary. An example of this is war. When a soldier is on the battlefield it comes down to his and his fellow soldier's lives, or the life of the enemy. Soldiers are given military training to defend their position or attack the enemy and under command will carry out that training. In police work, an officer is trained to defend himself / herself in the line of duty. If the occasion calls for it, that officer may be required to utilize deadly force when no other options are available. An officer may have to use violence to effectively subdue a suspect resisting arrest. Although there are gray areas in both of these situations where we might question whether violence was necessary, there is agreement among most people that these situations may sometimes require violence.

**Discussion:** Are there any questions or comments?

In other situations, violence is not legal but is excusable due to the circumstances in which it is used. Self defense is one such example. In California, as in many states, the concept of self defense is clearly defined by law. For example, if someone slaps you in the face you cannot take a gun and kill him / her. A justifiable act of self defense must meet several criteria. First, there must be an apprehension of danger. Second, this danger must be imminent, or likely to occur soon. Third, you must use like force against like force; i.e., you cannot use force that is likely to cause great harm against force that is not likely to cause great harm. Fourth, you must be in a situation where you cannot retreat or escape it is not self defense if you provoke someone to act violently so that you can be violent. Often a batterer will say that he / she was acting only in self defense, even though his / her partner was half their size and he / she could clearly escape the violence.

In most situations violence is clearly inappropriate, inexcusable and against the law. Battering your partner clearly falls into this category. However, it is here that we have a dilemma. When we teach certain professionals such as those in the military, the

police or certain professional athletes to use violence in specific situations, we find that some of them also use that violence outside of their professional boundaries. The solution is actually simple in theory but harder in practice. If we are going to teach someone to use violence in a particular situation, we have to teach them other skills to use in situations where violence is clearly inappropriate. When the conflict is at home and not on the battlefield, we must teach other techniques to help them resolve conflict or defend their position.

Our experiences in counseling active duty service persons tells us that people can learn to distinguish between illegal violence and the appropriate expression of anger. In fact, those who experience healthy, non-violent relationships at home are more likely to perform to their greatest potential on their jobs, in the military as well as elsewhere.

Discussion: Are there any questions or comments?

#### The Military and Stress:

In addition to violence training, military personnel experience stresses that may affect a person's frustration or anger level on a daily basis. These stresses include:

1. Low pay and having family to support.
2. Being separated from immediate family for extended periods of time.
3. Having to change locations frequently.
4. Not being able to reach family during tours of duty.
5. Lifestyle differences in inter-racial / cultural marriages.
6. Lack of contact with extended family and relatives.
7. Living abroad in different cultures.
8. Lack of privacy, with the military controlling every move.
9. Working long hours at difficult jobs.
10. The need to have control over others of lower rank at work but that control not working at home.
11. Having to take orders at work and not wanting to take them at home.
12. Feeling as if the military doesn't care about you or your family.

These stresses can be very real and difficult to cope with for many active duty personnel. However we can work with one aspect of these stresses, and that is the anger that results from them. Anger is a reaction to these stresses. If you can learn healthy ways of dealing with the anger that results from stress, then you will be better equipped to deal directly with the stress itself.

The military now has decided that domestic violence in all of its forms can no longer be ignored and must be treated. Like alcohol and drug abuse, domestic violence affects morale readiness and job performance. Family advocacy personnel in all branches of the service are requiring that domestic violence offenders either receive treatment for this problem or be evaluated for discharge from the service. Programs for batterers are being started on military installations around the world to teach men non-violent ways of coping with stress and conflict at home.

Discussion: Are there any questions or comments?

### Post Traumatic Stress Disorder:

Another stress found associated with the military is Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. This condition has been found with military personnel who have experienced combat. PTSD is very prevalent with Vietnam era veterans who, for a number of reasons, had great difficulty adjusting both to combat situations in Vietnam as well as returning home.

Vietnam was different from previous wars in many ways. Four of these include the age of the soldiers, the lack of decompression time between leaving the combat zone and arriving in the U.S., the unpopularity of the war at home and the date of estimated return from overseas, usually 365 days. Many men and women who served in combat situations or saw the results of combat, came back to the states experiencing major changes in their emotional state of being. Many were plagued with flashbacks, found themselves acting as if they were still in combat, feeling angry, depressed, suicidal, having nightmares, sleep problems, feeling guilty for surviving, having memory problems and feeling as if they want to explode. They needed to somehow reconcile what they had to do to survive in Vietnam, with the negative messages they received from society for participating in the war in the first place.

In 1979, the President signed the Veterans Health Care Amendment Act. The primary purpose of the program was to provide readjustment counseling to Vietnam veterans. Today there are programs across the country that deal specifically with the problem of PTSD as well as discussing readjustment in general, such as relationship problems, employment development and substance abuse issues.

Discussion: If any of the above characteristics apply to you, it is suggested that you talk to someone who knows about Vietnam readjustment at your local Vietnam Veterans" Outreach Center or your local Veterans Administration Hospital.

Discussion: Are there any questions or comments?

### What to Do:

If violence is a problem in your life, chances are that you are not feeling very good about yourself nor about your relationship with your partner. In addition, the military feels strongly that you should deal with this problem, and it can assist you in getting the help that you need. You can look for help on the base or in the civilian community. The main difference is that in the civilian community you will have to pay for services. The military has counseling services specifically set up to address the problems that active duty personnel and their families experience.

If you feel that alcohol or drugs are related to your problem with violence you may want to start the change process by talking with an alcohol or drug counselor on your base or post. This person will probably be aware of treatment services in your area for violence as well. A regional military hospital or a branch clinic on the base has mental health professionals on staff that is available to talk with you about your family or job difficulties. A specific domestic violence program, sponsored by your branch of the service, may be available in your area.

Like the criminal justice system in the civilian community, the military command is now taking domestic violence seriously. This means that if the family advocacy

representative is aware of the violence at home, you will most likely be required to attend counseling. No one likes to be told what to do; however we encourage you to use this situation as an opportunity to change the course of your life and your relationship. Counseling can be a punishment or an opportunity to feel better about yourself and your family; it all depends on how you use it.

Don't forget, you are not alone. Many people in the military, as in the civilian community, are experiencing violence in their lives and are getting help from counselors. This is not a sign of weakness. If you had a medical problem you wouldn't think twice about getting help from a doctor; if you were in a pinch in a combat situation you wouldn't think twice about asking for help from one of your buddies. Likewise, violence in the home is a tough problem that can have many serious consequences for you and your family members. Ask for help!

Discussion: Are there any questions or comments?

Homework: Complete your Anger Journal for next week.