

SESSION 13

Self-Talk, Beliefs, and Our Identity

WEAVER Facilitator Guide

This session focuses on self-talk and beliefs. The first part of the session looks at what influences our identity. The *Cabarcas Destiny Model* is a cognitive behavioral model that demonstrates how individuals create their own destiny by repeating behaviors learned as children or that they used in previous similar situations and/or events. We interpret events or situations through our thoughts, which can be positive or distorted depending on our belief system. After developing a thought about the event or situation, we attach feelings to the thought, which will later become an automatic feeling any time the event or thought is repeated. After the feeling, we express words to ourself (self-talk) or to others regarding the feeling or thought attached to the event. Actions (which affirm the former thoughts), feelings, and talk, become coping techniques which are repeated. The repeated behaviors become habits and therefore our "destiny".

Evaluating Your Destiny is an examination of how the clients' thoughts, feelings and words have influenced their actions and habits in similar situations. The journal topic also identifies which habits are hardest to let go of and which thoughts are present in their belief system. The graph that follows is an exercise to help the women look at how both negative and positive experiences have shaped their perception of the world.

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Client Handouts

What Can You Change About Yourself?

At first glance, this may seem impossible to do, but in fact, it is possible. The following will assist you in the process of evaluating what you can change about yourself and what is NOT changeable. There are several areas in your life that influence the way in which you view yourself. Some of these are as follows:

1. Parents, family
2. Social class, money
3. Intellectual ability
4. Physical appearance, facial features, body build
5. Job, role
6. Education
7. Physical strength, stamina
8. Sexual prowess

Some of these are areas that are either very difficult to change or simply unchangeable at this time, so you must accept them. Remember, your self-esteem should never become dependent on any one of these areas. Anytime we put ourselves in a situation to compare ourselves with others we may come out feeling inferior. There are always going to be others who are better looking, have more money, have a higher I.Q., or some other trait. It is important to remember the difference between self-esteem that comes from within and the self-esteem that comes from without. Some traits we can change, others we cannot and we are not "less worthwhile" because we don't surpass another's accomplishment. Change what you can, accept what you can't.

To better understand this development of your "destiny," we can look at the *Cabarcas Destiny Model* on the next page. For each event in your life, you choose a response based on past experiences, old hurts and/or feelings, unresolved issues, self-talk (which can be negative or positive), and self-esteem (which can be high or low).

Cabarcas Destiny Model

The power of how you interpret events profoundly influences your destiny in life. The six components to your destiny are:

1. A **Thought** about an event you experience
2. A **Feeling** about the thought you had. The feeling sometimes reinforces your thought.
3. Your **Words** in conversation are largely based on the previous two components: your thoughts and feelings.
4. Your **Actions** reinforce the words, statements, promises, etc.
5. **Habits** are developed by use/reuse of actions that either gave you the result you wanted or made you feel good. You may make some previous statements part of your philosophy about life.
6. Your **Destiny** is formulated by continuing your habits.

Event	1- Thought	2- Feeling	3- Words	4- Actions	5- Habits	6- Destiny
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Part of the challenge will be changing how you interpret events. For example: If you lost your job today (event), would you be worried or excited? If you thought, "How am I going to pay my bills?" (thought), your feeling would probably be depressed or anxious (feelings). You may call your friends and tell them you're worried and sad (words). Your actions would probably include crying and maybe even misuse of alcohol (action). You might feel better by crying and having a drink, so you develop the habit that: "When life gets tough, have a good cry with some girlfriends over some wine" (habit becomes destiny). You have now developed a negative destiny for yourself: strong emotions + alcohol = eventual problems.

Changing your thoughts, or *self-talk*, will begin to change the rest of the chain. Let's suppose that the same scenario occurs (event), but instead you think that this is an opportunity for you to grow and get a better job (thought). You will probably feel excited and optimistic (feeling). You will probably call your friends and share with them your enthusiasm for this opportunity (words). Your actions will be to look for employment with such a positive energy that you get a job quickly (action). You have now developed the habit of looking at every difficult event as an opportunity for growth. Your more positive destiny: tough scenarios + positive attitude = less stress.

Evaluating Your Destiny

Think of three of the most difficult situations you have dealt with (you may want to include the incident(s) that brought you to counseling). On the following pages, evaluate how your thoughts influenced the rest of the chain. Look at the feelings you associate with each thought. How do you communicate what you are thinking and feeling? What are the actions that you demonstrate to "back up" your words? Have the thoughts and feelings become habit(s) anytime you experience a similar event? At the end, ask yourself if you want this to be your destiny. If not, YOU are now responsible for developing and/or learning new ways to look at events in your life.

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Event #1:

Thought(s):

Feeling(s):

Words:

Action(s):

Habit: Yes No Maybe

Event #2:

Thought(s):

Feeling(s):

Words:

Action(s):

Habit: Yes No Maybe

Event #3:

Thought(s):

Feeling(s):

Words:

Action(s):

Habit: Yes No Maybe

Journal Topic: How have my thoughts affected major decisions in my life? How have I begun making changes in how I think about situations and/or people? What thoughts are hard to let go of (Example: "All men are unfaithful", "If he doesn't tell me he loves me, it's because he's mad at me", "If he wants to go out with his friends it's because he wants to leave me", "They fired me because they know I'm dumb")?

On the graph below plot important events, both positive and negative, in your life. Place these events above or below the neutral line and label your age at the time.

Positive Events

+

Birth

Negative Events

-

Positive Events

+

Today

Negative Events

-

(from Geffner & Mantooth, 2000)

How do you feel about the above picture of your life?

Are there more negative experiences than positive?

How has this influenced your view about life?

Where is the graph going from here? Are you in charge of it?

SESSION 14

Changing Self-Talk and Beliefs

WEAVER Facilitator Guide

This following session focuses on changing self-talk and beliefs. The categories in which the participants may have distortions are listed, but the group members can add others if some are not included. Each category asks the participants to include how they talk to themselves when feeling a particular emotion. Even if they have not experienced that particular feeling, encourage each of the women to imagine how they would think if they felt that particular emotion(s). The main emphasis of this session is on learning techniques to change self-talk. Select the exercises that seem to fit your group members, and assign some of them as homework. Each handout relates back to the last two sessions in which self-esteem and self-talk were described and exercises were provided to improve their view and beliefs about themselves.

Category	Self-Talk	Beliefs

SESSION 14
Client Handouts

Making Changes

Changing is one of the most difficult things to do in life. We all have many things we want to change in ourselves, and we all have many obstacles to making these changes. The ability to make and sustain changes in our lives has a great deal to do with our level of self-esteem. The stronger and more intact our self-esteem is, the easier it is to recognize and make needed changes.

Making changes depends on how well we understand our priorities in life. The easiest changes to make are the changes that fit with our life priorities. What are your priorities in life? Use the following list as a guide to describing your priorities. Add ones that may be important to you.

Health	Romance	Power/Recognition
Sex	Work	Roots and Tradition
Money	Religion	Physical Activity
Security	Relaxation	Ownership of things
Feeling good	Appearance	Solitude
Education	Pleasure	Freedom from stress
Stimulation	Sociability	
Family	Integrity	

Remember! Making changes can be difficult for others in your life. When we make changes, others often have to make changes too in order to maintain the relationship. You may find that as you make new and healthy changes, others in your life will continue to treat you as they did before and may even exaggerate their old behavior in an attempt to get you to return to the old behaviors.

New changes take approximately six weeks to become new habits. They must be practiced on an on-going basis. You will find that it will be very easy to slip back into your old patterns during the early stages of making the changes, especially during times of stress.

What I want to do:

GOAL	TIMELINE	OBSTACLES	RESOURCES NEEDED
Finish school			
Do work as...			
Be established or recognized as...			
Live with...			
Be in a stable relationship			
Have children			
People I want to know...			
Places I want to see...			
Skills I want to learn...			
Lose <u> </u> pounds			

Now that you have the list, what strengths can you draw from in order to make them happen? What weaknesses do you have to address in yourself? What are the opportunities that are open to you to help make them happen? What are the obstacles to making them happen?

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	OBSTACLES

Hints for Making Changes Happen

- Plan the wanted change.
- Visualize yourself with the change already in place; always keep this vision in your mind.
- Be a risk-taker. Start with small risks that help or enhance the wanted change. Remember, small risk-taking leads to larger risk-taking.
- **PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE.**
- Learn your needs and practice stating them to others.
- Beware of your "shoulds" and "musts". These are the traps against making the wanted changes. Your "shoulds" and "musts" need to be challenged all of the time.
- Congratulate yourself on the advances that you make.
- Figure out the support you need and ask for it.
- Figure out your support system and use it to help you make the changes happen.
- Be aware of those who will try to sabotage your change and protect yourself from the sabotage.

Changing Self-Talk and Beliefs

One of the key components to changing your attitude is changing your thoughts. If the saying is: "you are what you eat", then a parallel statement could be: "you act in conjunction with your thoughts". There is no such thing as "It just happened". For each action you make, there has been a thought that preceded that action. Whether you choose to drink alcohol or choose to ignore your feelings, these are all choices that you make daily. The way in which you decide to react to a situation is based on your self-talk. The following self-talk statements are stress responses and ways to *reframe* them more positively. Add other stress responses you have said to yourself in similar emotional states. Begin to develop your own reframe statements as well.

Category: *Fear and Anxiety*

Stress Response: I'm afraid I will always be alone; I won't do a good job.

My Stress Response: _____

Reframe: I don't have to be alone. I can have a close relationship. I can do my best, which is a good job.

My New Thought:

Category: Impending Doom

Stress Response: I'm afraid of losing my mind; Men are just going to take advantage of me.

My Stress Response: _____

Reframe: I won't go crazy. I can control my emotional responses and get help if I need some support coping with this. I have had some disappointing relationships. I can be cautious before I involve myself but isolating won't help me.

My New Thought: _____

Category: Anger and Frustration

Stress Response: I hate myself for letting this happen. I hate my partner. He/she did this to me on purpose.

My Stress Response: _____

Reframe: I may have made a mistake, but I'm not a bad person. I can take responsibility for my actions but I don't control everything around me. My partner is responsible for his/her behavior, and I choose how I respond.

My New Thought: _____

Category: Guilt and Remorse

Stress Response: I shouldn't feel so angry and hateful. I can't believe I said that to her -- I feel so horrible about it.

My Stress Response: _____

Reframe: I have a right to my feelings -- ALL of them. If I think I have hurt her feelings, I can acknowledge it and make my best effort to avoid repeating it.

My New Thought: _____

Category: *Shame and Self-disgust*

Stress Response: I will always be helpless and cannot control my life. I am fat and ugly. Who would want to be with me? I can never tell anyone I was molested. They'll think I caused it, and it's so embarrassing to say that it happened.

My Stress Response: _____

Reframe: I have control over many areas of my life. I am a beautiful person inside and out, and I can work on either the inside part or the outside part if I choose. I don't have to be a victim for the rest of my life. I can be a confident, strong woman because I trust in myself.

My New Thought:

Category: *Sadness*

Stress Response: I lost my relationship. I feel empty and numb. I now have a criminal record and I feel like a failure.

My Stress Response: _____

Reframe: My relationship is over, but my life is not. I am coping. My actions have cost a lot, but not everything. I will survive this experience and learn from it.

My New Thought:

(Koonin, 1992)

- If you have any other "categories" or stress-response statements, include them in your journal.
- Each time you tell yourself something positive, put it on paper.
- During days when you find it challenging to "pick yourself up," read your written self-talk and you will feel like your own best friend.

Techniques for Changing Self-Talk

I Rewrite your internal monologue

- A. Accept the past: you cannot change it. What you can do is work with the present situation.
- B. Quit putting yourself down. The purpose of life is to find enjoyment and meaning, not to evaluate yourself. Give up "shoulds", "oughts" and "musts" and replace them with "wants" and "would likes".

Example: Say to yourself, "I want to do my best at my job". Do not say, "I must be the best person at my job".

- C. Think about good experiences in the past. Be proud of your achievements. Dwell on your successes, not your failures. Use the techniques that helped you in the past to be successful.

Example: If you did well in athletics, then get active in some type of sport again.

D. Use the following techniques for thought change

- * Write down negative thoughts in detail. This will help you be more aware of them. Also, it will help you discover their patterns and what triggers them. Awareness helps you change and control negative thoughts.
- * Block negative thoughts by **thought stopping**. When you have a negative thought, tell yourself silently or out loud **STOP!** Refuse to allow yourself to think negatively.
- * Replace negative thoughts with positive thoughts. After saying **STOP!** to the negative thought, think of a positive thought immediately. Remember to draw from your successes.

II. Recognize lowered self-esteem cues

- A. Figure out which situations bring down your self-esteem. Is it when you feel someone is not interested in what you say? (Rejection) Are you comparing yourself to others physically, intellectually, or financially? Is it specific circumstances, settings, events, holidays, or interpersonal interactions? Is it after you drink or use drugs?
- B. Use your knowledge of what cues lowered self-esteem to help you to overcome it. It may be necessary to avoid certain things or situations that make you feel this way. You may also choose to work on improving in a certain area.
For example: If lowered self-esteem is a result of non-assertiveness, then take training classes to improve this skill.

III. Learn to relax

- A. **Relaxation.** Lie or sit in a comfortable position. Close your eyes. Breathe deeply, tensing and relaxing each muscle group. Begin with your feet and lower legs, move up to your abdomen, arms and shoulders. Finish the exercise with your neck and face muscles. Concentrate on feelings of warmth and relaxation. Practice doing this at least once a day.
- B. **Exercise.** Choose something you enjoy and will continue. Join an aerobics class, ride your bike, or walk at the park with your children. Pick a time of day that is convenient and exercise at least 2-3 times a week.

IV. Change your unrealistic expectations

- A. **Irrational Thinking.** Your view and perception of the world influence you. Often this takes precedence over actual reality. How you see things is often more important than what really happened. Your beliefs about yourself influence how you feel and what you do.

Example: Your partner tells you that he is going to hang out with his buddies (event); you tell yourself, "He doesn't love me because I'm overweight" (belief). You become depressed and feel horrible about yourself (emotion).

(Geffner & Mantooth, 2000, adapted from Ellis & Harper, 1975)

MORNING EXERCISE:

- A. Before getting dressed, stand naked in front of the mirror and affirm character assets. Say "I love you" five times to your image.
- B. While dressing, think about people who love you and positive changes that are to come.

EVENING EXERCISE:

- A. Write down all the positive things you did today and the good feelings you had (only the positive and the good)
- B. Write down your most outstanding character assets of the day and why they were outstanding.
- C. Call or spend time with a sponsor or friend, and share your day with them.

Do this every day for 30 days. Write without thinking about the exercises; writing has a powerful effect. See how the affirmations become easier each day. See how differently you feel about yourself as the exercise progresses.

(Geffner & Mantooth, 2000)

PART 3: FAMILY OF ORIGIN

Thinking about the topics and exercises for the past few weeks, what might be something that you would like to change in behaviors, beliefs, or in how you accept the attitudes of others without challenge? Now, develop your own personal change plan:

Family of Origin: How We Learned Our

Behaviors and Beliefs

What is the change I think I need to make?

What makes this change necessary?

How will this change make my life better?

What do I have to give up to make this change?

What are the steps I need to do in order to make this change?

What will be the possible roadblocks to making this change?

What help do I need to make this change?

How will I reward myself for the progress I make?

PART 3: FAMILY OF ORIGIN

SESSION 15

Family of Origin: How We Learned Our Behaviors and Beliefs

WEAVER Facilitator Guide

The purpose of this session is to have participants begin to look at the patterns that exist in their lives as well as the values, attitudes, and expectations that they bring into their relationships. In essence, we are looking what we learned from our childhoods and what behaviors became automatic, passed from generation to generation without question or challenge.

In order to change behaviors, their roots must first be recognized and understood. The exercise in this session is intended to help clients begin the recognition process.

In doing this exercise, go through all of the questions thoroughly. Try to help the group members make connections between their past and present behavior. Ask them to share their experiences and ideas of what was/is acceptable behavior. When members disclose having witnessed as a child, abusive behaviors between parents or other adults, ask them to relate how it felt to them at that time. This can help them develop empathy and insight towards what their own children may be experiencing.

Conclude the exercise by helping clients understand that change is possible, and help them work on targeting changes they want to make.

Please be prepared that this discussion may spark strong emotions and painful memories in many of the clients.

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SESSION 15

Client Handouts

Looking at Where We Came From

The family we grew up in has a strong effect on who we are and what we believe --- about ourselves, about how we should be treated by others, about how we should treat others, and about the way relationships are "supposed" to be. Our families of origin teach us ways to give and receive love, how to take care of ourselves and of others, and what love means. We bring these lessons into our relationships, and whether we want to or not, we often repeat patterns learned in our childhood in our adult lives.

In this section, we are going to explore your family, the relationship "rules" you learned, the ways that love was expressed, and what it meant to be a "girl". In addition, we will look at the kinds of violence and abuse you may have been exposed to and the kinds of intimate relationships that you grew up around. The purpose of this section is to help you recognize what you have learned to expect from a relationship, and how those expectations may be helping or harming you. You will also be able to identify the changes you want to work on in your beliefs about relationships.

What was it like growing up in your family? Where were you in terms of siblings? How many boys, how many girls? Who were you closest to or least close to? What was the composition of your family? Who was the "head" of the family? How close were your siblings in ages? Who was the "favorite" in the family? What was your role?

What was/is your relationship like with other family members? Who are you most like? Most unlike? What made/makes you different from the others in the family?

What is your best/worst memory from your childhood?

Was there a father in your family? If so, describe your relationship with him. Was it loving? Was it distant?

Who I Am / Who I Want to Be

WEAVER Family Guide

Was there a mother in your family? If so, describe your relationship with her. Was it loving? Was it distant?

Do you remember any physical or emotional abuse when you were growing up? If so, who did the abusing? Who was abused? How was it handled in your family? What was your reaction to the abuse?

What form of discipline was used in your family? Who did the disciplining? What kinds of things did you get disciplined for?

Did anyone in your family suffer from psychological problems, chemical abuse, problems with the law, major medical problems, suicides, or deaths? How did the family deal with these?

What were the "rules" in your family of origin for being a "good":

mom/dad:

daughter/son:

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husband/wife:

woman/man:

Did any of these roles conflict? For example, if to be a good wife, a woman had to always put her husband first, how did that conflict with her being a good mother?

What were the consequences of breaking those rules? What are the rules for the above now that you are an adult? What have you changed, deleted, added, or modified? What are the consequences for breaking the rules now? Do any of them conflict with one another? For example, in order to live up to the rules of being a "good" mom, does a woman have to violate some of the rules for being a "good" wife?

Many women will have to challenge the "good girl" rules that they have been taught to live by as they grew up and into their adult lives. What are some of the "good girl" rules that you will have to confront?

"A good girl is..."

Polite
Nurturing
Emotional
Submissive
Dependent
not too smart
Pretty
Strong
responsible for those around her

"A good girl should..."

be sexy, but not too sexy
take care of the house
take care of the kids
be a superwoman
put her needs aside
be clean
be ready for sex at any time
be available to men
dress right

List any others you can think of here:

(From Myhand & Kivel, 1998)

What impact has your family of origin had on your relationships, both positive and negative?

What have you learned about yourself and your relationships from doing this exercise?

SESSION 16

Who I Am/Who I Want to Be

WEAVER Facilitator Guide

The purpose of this exercise is to help the participants understand the difference between who they want to be and who they are now. In addition, they can determine how to get where they want to be and formulate a plan for change.

Have the participants fill out their puzzles and present them to each other. Discuss belief systems, where they come from, how they impact our lives, and the necessity to make some of them healthier.

Use the following suggestions for directing the group.

- How do your values direct the way you lead your life?
- Who is in charge of your life? If it isn't you, why not?
- How important is it for you to please others? What has pleasing others cost you in your life?
- When you make an important decision about your life, what are the things you consider? Do you think about how/what others will think about you? How the decision might affect others? What you will have to give up? Do you think of your needs first or the needs and wants of others first?
- What are some decisions you have made that you are proud of?
- What are some decisions you have made that you are ashamed of? What do you wish you had done differently?

Have the group make a list of the things that would make them feel successful to themselves. Then, look at the lists and divide them into internal and external characteristics. In looking at the two completed puzzles, discuss the differences and what each member will have to do to attain their desired goals. Have them look at what they would have to give up in order to get what they say they want.

Homework for the week. Have each member list out for the next seven days, how they have spent their day. At the end of each day, each member is to mark the list in the following way:

A blue mark to denote the things that were pleasurable.

A red mark to denote the things that were negative.

Look at the lists first thing in the next group, and use it as a guide for helping group members realistically assess where they are in their lives as compared with where they want to be.

SESSION 16
Client Handouts

Who I Am/Who I Want to Be

In this session, we are going to take the things you learned in the previous session and develop two "puzzles". One will show how you are now and the second will show how you would like to be. It may be that these puzzles will be similar or even identical. It may be that the two puzzles will be entirely different. The purpose is to give you an idea of where you are, how well you like where you are, and what you might like to change about yourself.

Me Now

My boundaries:

My fears:

My supports:

My hopes and dreams:

My goals:

My regrets:

My "Wish I would have's"

**Things I want to change/
things I think I can't change:**

My beliefs:

**Things I need to do and
learn:**

My accomplishments:

My strengths:

My weaknesses:

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Fill in the puzzle pieces with information about you. The first puzzle shows the real you, based on what you learned in your family of origin and your life experiences up until now.

The Me I Want to Be

My boundaries:

My fears:

My supports:

My regrets:

My "Wish I would have"

**Things I want to change/
things I think I can't change**

My hopes and dreams:

My goals:

My beliefs:

**Things I need to do and
learn:**

My accomplishments:

My strengths:

My weaknesses:

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Fill in this puzzle with the "you" that you would like to be. After both puzzles are filled in, ask yourself the following questions:

1. How close are the two "Me's"?
2. What are the biggest areas of difference?
3. What do I want to let go of? Where did I learn these things? How can I let go of them?
4. What is it that I want to change about myself the most? What are the obstacles to doing that?
5. What do I still do in spite of knowing that it is wrong for me? What makes me continue doing it?
6. How do I help myself become who I want to be?
7. How do I keep myself from becoming who I want to be?