Class #6: Practicing Assertiveness/ Your Mood and Life Events

What We Will Cover in Class #6:
Estimated Time

1. Review Homework from Class #5
   1. Relaxation Practice
   2. ABC-Stop-D: Complete Diary of Thoughts
   3. Assertiveness Practice Sheet  
   25 min.

2. Role Play: How to be More Assertive in Caregiving Situations  
   20 min.

3. Refreshment Break  
   10 min.

4. Mini-Lecture and Discussion: Recognizing Common Signs of Depression  
   10 min.

5. Mini-Lecture and Discussion: How Life Events Affect Your Mood  
   30 min.

6. Relaxation Ratings and Practice  
   5 min.

7. Homework for Next Week  
   5 min.

8. Summary of Class #6  
   5 min.

Tiempo Total = 120 min.
1. REVIEW HOMEWORK

A. Relaxation Diary: We will briefly review any problems that you are having with this exercise.

STOP!

Leaders: Encourage continued practice of the relaxation exercise and daily ratings of tension. Praise all attempts.

B. ABC-Stop-D: Complete Diary of Thoughts. We will ask for a volunteer to share their diary and we will briefly go through all the steps. We will also ask each person in class to describe their experience with this weeks diary, since this is the last week that we will formally go over this form in class.

STOP!

Leaders: Record A-B-C (stop) D columns on the board or on a flip chart and write out at least 1 complete example as it is given. If there is time, do a second example.

C. Assertiveness Practice Sheet. We will briefly ask for a volunteer to share and review their Assertiveness sheet. This is a good time for you to review any problems that you are having with this exercise and practice assertiveness training.

STOP!

Leaders: Briefly write out an example of the Assertiveness Practice Sheet on the board or on a flip chart. Discuss how the experiences went: Then ask others to talk about their experiences, and any obstacles that the class participants are having with the assertiveness training.
2. ROLE PLAY: HOW TO BE MORE ASSERTIVE IN CAREGIVING SITUATIONS

Now, we want each person to pair up with a partner, so we can all practice the assertiveness skills we discussed last week. You will continue to have about 10 minutes to play all 3 roles (passive, aggressive, assertive). The other person that you are working with will pretend to be either a family member, a friend, or a health care professional with whom you have difficulty expressing your needs. Then you will both switch roles so that your partner has the chance to practice being passive, aggressive, and assertive in a similar type of situation. This will take another 10 minutes. Finally, we will come back together as a group and talk about how this felt. We would like you to be honest about your thoughts and feelings, so that we can encourage you to practice this technique in the next week.

STOP!

Leaders: Assist participants in doing this practice and monitor their time. Allow a maximum of 20 minutes for this exercise.

3. REFRESHMENT BREAK 10 min.
Introduction to Life Satisfaction

So far, we have talked about changing your thoughts to help you manage the stress of being a caregiver. At the beginning of the class we showed you how both your thoughts and your behaviors can affect how you feel. Now, in the rest of the course, you will learn how to change your behavior to help you feel better. We will learn how to change your behavior to help you feel better. We will present several “key” or main ideas for overcoming depression and the exercises in a form which you can take with for future use.

You could think of your workbook as a “tool chest.” When you have finished the course you will be able to use several of the tools for reducing depression. The tools we have discussed so far help give you a better understanding of the situation; the tools we will discuss now help you do things to feel better.

Leaders: Read the following material and have participants follow along in their notebooks.

4. RECOGNIZING COMMON SIGNS OF DEPRESSION.

Depression is a group of negative feelings and behaviors coupled with an absence of pleasure in one’s daily life. Generally, we describe depressed people as “feeling low” and having a drop in mood. We can learn more about what depression is by recognizing its common signs.

Six Common Signs of Distressed Mood:

1. Feeling and Acting Sad: gloomy, down in the dumps (sometimes without knowing exactly why).
2. Problems with People: problems with your wife, husband, or other family members or friends.

3. Feeling Guilty: saying things like “it’s all my fault” or “I never do anything right.”

4. Feeling Burdened: all your troubles are caused by others. Too much is expected of your, as if you were carrying the world on your back.
5. Physical Signs:

1. Sleep Problems
   a. Waking too early
   b. dificultad en quedarse dormido

2. Change in eating habits
   a. Loss of interest in eating-weight loss
   b. Eating too much-weight gain

6. Physical Signs:

Becoming less active and feeling “slowed down”. You just don’t have the energy to get things done. This in itself can lead to even greater problems with mood, but we’ll get into that a little later!

These six common signs of depression are just a few of the possible feelings that can go along with “the blues.”

STOP!

Leaders: Take a moment now to have each of the participants list some signs of depression that may be unique to them. Encourage everyone to write down at least two signs below.

Question 1
Do you have a way of feeling or acting when you are “down in the dumps”?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________
5. MINI-LECTURE: HOW LIFE EVENTS AFFECT YOUR MOOD.

The following steps illustrate our way of thinking about depression. Learning this technique and how events affect mood will increase your understanding of how depression affects you.

Leaders: Read the following material and have the participants follow along in their notebooks.

A. Each person lives within an environment

B. The environment contains both pleasant and unpleasant events.

Example: A day of sunshine would be a pleasant event. Losing money would be an unpleasant event.

Minus = unpleasant events

Plus = pleasant event
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C. Each day our environment is made of many pleasant and unpleasant events.

The following are some pleasant and unpleasant events:

**Pleasant events:**

4. Having lunch with a good friend.
5. Having a check arrive in the mail.
6. A day of sunshine.

**Unpleasant events:**

7. A quarrel with a friend.
8. Receiving a large bill.
9. Hearing that someone you know is ill.

**Leaders:** Encourage everyone to complete at least 2 entries in each category.

**Question 2.**
List an event(s) that is:

a.) especially pleasant to you. 

b.) especially unpleasant to you.
D. We cannot help experiencing or reacting to these daily events.
E. These pleasant or unpleasant events control the up and down movement of our mood.

Pleasant Events

Unpleasant Events

The MOOD Rollercoaster

F. Depression or general low mood can develop when we have far too many unpleasant events or far too few pleasant events. As a caregiver, having too many unpleasant events or too few pleasant events may leave you feeling like you have no control. You may say to yourself “What’s the use?” “It seems like there’s nothing we can do to make things better.”
G. Wrong! Wrong! Wrong! We can make choices about many of the events that occur in our environment.

REMEMBER THE POWER TO CHOOSE EVENTS GIVES US CONTROL OVER OUR MOOD. LEARNING THE SKILL OF CHOOSING THE RIGHT KIND OF EVENTS HELPS US TO ANTICIPATE AND AVOID DEPRESSION.
UNDERSTANDING OUR MOOD

We know that our mood is constantly changing every hour of every minute. Everyone has different boundaries of limits when it comes to how comfortable they are with changes in their mood.

A. Mood cannot be represented by a straight line.

B. A “Mood Line” moves in an up and down pattern.

10. Normal mood moves within certain limits, limits that are slightly different for each of

When our mood is within certain guidelines or limits, it can be said that we are in our comfort zone.
MOOD LEVEL

A. Imagine that your mood is a missile traveling along a path where the boundaries are set unique to your mood level. The direction of the missile are maintained by the your own boundaries. Our skills and strategies for coping with depression teach you to strengthen your boundaries. This will enable you to sustain your mood level within your comfort zone, thus, avoiding depression.
B. Sleep drops into a “depressed mood” can be controlled by strengthening your “limits for mood.” This is done by learning specific skills which give you control over the level of your mood.

\[\text{Diagram: Depression under Control} \quad \text{Depression not under control}\]

C. The coping skills you will learn in this class will help you to keep your mood within the comfort zone.

\[\text{Diagram: Comfort Zone}\]

STOP!

Leaders: Go around the group and see what questions people have about these ideas. Ask the participants if they can see themselves in these descriptions: Are they a person whose moods goes up and down, especially when faced with difficult situations while caregiving? Allow about 10 minutes for this. Then turn to the “Mood and Your Pleasant Event” form on page 110 and explain the form and stress that it needs to be completed for the next class.
6. RELAXATION EXERCISE

Make yourself as comfortable as possible. First, I’d like you to remove any objects from your lap and place your feet on the floor. Place your hands on your thighs. Don’t cross your legs or your arms. Close your eyes so you can’t see the light or other people and so you won’t be distracted by what’s going on around you.

Now breathe deeply, and imagine that you are in an empty vase that you have to fill up to the rim with air. Inhale deeply again, and exhale ... while you’re exhaling say the word “Amen” or “calm” silently to yourself ... continue breathing as deeply as possible ... always filling up the bottom of your lungs and then exhaling ...

Right now, notice where your body is most tense. Make yourself as comfortable as possible. Relax the tension in your neck, shoulders, arms, back, legs and feet ... Keep breathing deeply and exhale, saying to yourself the word that you’ve chosen.

Now imagine that you’re searching for the most safe and peaceful place that you know ... Are you searching for it indoors or outdoors? When you find it, look at it closely. What is it like? Use all of your senses to enjoy it as much as possible.

What’s around you? What colors do you see? What smells do you notice? What sounds do you hear? Do you hear the chirping of birds? Or are you on the beach and hear the calls of the seagulls and the crashing of the waves? Or maybe you’re listening to the pleasant sound of a river’s current.

Can you make out the breeze moving through the branches of the trees? ... Perhaps you’re listening to the silence of a mountain peak. Pay attention to the colors. Are they bright? ... The sounds, are they loud or soft? ... What sensations do you feel? Is it warm out or do you feel cold? ... Do you like being here alone? Look closely at your place, enjoy it, you are in peace.

Enjoy for a few moments the experience of being in your peaceful place.

Soon I am going to ask you to come back from your peaceful place, knowing that you can always go back to this place just by closing your eyes ... and by breathing deeply three times ...

Slowly leave your place and focus all of you attention on your breathing.

Little by little you will leave your place, and tell yourself that you can always return to this place just by closing your eyes and breathing deeply three times. I’m going to count from 5 to 1, and when I reach 1, I’ll ask you to come back to the classroom ....

5 ... 4 ... 3 ... 2 ... and 1. Open your eyes and come back to the classroom.
RELAXATION DIARY: TENSION EVALUATION

In-Class Practice Rating:

1. First, write the number that represents your current tension level.

   Before the relaxation exercise, I feel
   ___________ (rate your tension from 1 to 5)

2. Now, we will conduct a brief relaxation technique that will last about 5 minutes.

3. Finally, evaluate your tension level after you have practiced the relaxation technique.

   After the relaxation exercise, I feel
   ___________ (rate your tension from 1 to 5)
7. HOMEWORK TO DO BEFORE CLASS #7

1. Relaxation Diary. Please contineu practicing your relaxation technique everyday this week.

2. Assertiveness Practice Sheet. We also would like you to continue practicing the Assertive Technique this week.

3. Mood and Your Pleasant Event. Finally, we want you to pay attention to the events in your life this week. Think about what events you did that helped your mood. Bring in at least ONE EVENT that you do this week that made you feel better in some way. An additional copy of the Mood and Your Pleasant Event Form is in Appendix F.

Remember to keep practicing all the skills you are learning. The more you can practice, the easier this will get!
RELAXATION DIARY: TENSION EVALUATION

Use This Scale to Rate Your Level of Tension

1 = Not at all tense
2 = Slightly tense
3 = Moderately tense
4 = Really tense
5 = Terribly tense

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TENSION</th>
<th>COMMENTS (why I felt this way, etc.)</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Before relaxing: _____</td>
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<td>After relaxing: ______</td>
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ASSERTIVENESS PRACTICE SHEET

Use this sheet to write down any notes you need that will help you remember how you felt about being assertive this week. Write what the situation was, what assertive communication skills you used, how it turned out and what your feelings were. You can either use Section A to explain your situation and then you can use Section B to record the rest of the information.

Section A. The situation in which I practiced my assertive skills:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Section B.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What I said or did in the situation</th>
<th>How the situation turned out</th>
<th>How I felt</th>
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Mood and Your Pleasant Event

Describe below an activity you engaged in that improved your mood this week:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Using the following scale, indicate your mood before and after using the activity you engaged in.

Use this scale to rate your mood.

1 = Very Unhappy
2 = Unhappy
3 = Average
4 = Happy
5 = Very Happy

Mood level before the activity: ______

Mood level after the activity: ______
8. SUMMARY OF CLASS #6

In this class, we gave you an opportunity to practice the assertive technique we discussed last week and to think about how to apply it to your situation as a caregiver. We want you to focus on using this technique in the weeks ahead, and reporting back to us next time about how it felt and whether or not it was successful in getting your needs met.

We also learned the warning signs of depression, just as we learned the warning signs of anger in Class 3, and we learned how depression affects us and impacts our daily mood. We showed you that our mood levels are constantly changing due to the various events and activities we engage in throughout the day. We stressed that our coping skills can help us when we are experiencing low or depressed moods.

But most importantly, we learned that pleasant activities and unpleasant activities in our life attribute to our mood and how we feel. So that engaging in more pleasurable events like gardening, playing Bingo, or visiting with friends attribute to more positive and happier feelings in our days rather than negative ones.

What’s coming in the weeks ahead: how to keep track of your mood and level of pleasant events; how to overcome obstacles to increasing your pleasant events, and ideas for trying pleasant events with your relative or the person whom you are caring for.