Life-Situation Interventions: Interpersonal

Chapter 6

Life Situation Stressors: Interpersonal

- Identification of relational conflicts that add stress but are worth addressing.
- Accepting responsibility to manage that conflict and build better interpersonal communication.
- Choosing what areas to invest time and energy (and what area not to)

Social Support Networking continuing from before

- We know from the previous classes that:
  - Social support is the sense another is
    - accepted for oneself
    - loved for oneself
    - needed for oneself
    - an active part of a group
- Social support can
  - reduce stressors
  - prevent the negative consequences of stress
- Social isolation is a stressor & health risk
Developing a Strong Social Support System

- How can we strengthen the relationships with supportive others in our lives?
- Practice the conflict resolution technique
- Apply the assertiveness skills
- Be caring and open with others

Interpersonal Life-Situation Interventions

- Asserting Yourself
- Conflict Resolution
- Communication
- Time Management

Assumption of Basic Rights

- You have the right to put yourself first sometimes
  - mistake 1: it is selfish to put your needs ahead of others
- You have the right to make mistakes
  - mistake 2: it is shameful to make mistakes. I must be perfectly competent in all situations
- You have the right to be the final judge of your feelings and accept them as legitimate responses
  - mistake 3: if I can't get others to see my feelings as reasonable there is something wrong with them or me
- You have the right to have your own opinions and convictions
  - mistake 4: I must respect the view of other people (esp. authority figures) and keep my differences to myself.
- You have the right assert these rights w/o explanation sometimes
  - mistake 5: I must explain my intentions, feelings, actions to others when I do not act in a way I think they may not appreciate
**Asserting Yourself**

- **Assertive behavior**
  - Expressing yourself and satisfying your own needs. Feeling good about this and not hurting others in the process.
- **Nonassertive behavior**
  - Denying your own wishes to satisfy someone else's. Sacrificing your own needs to meet someone else's needs.
- **Aggressive behavior**
  - Seeking to dominate or get your own way at the expense of others.

**Nonverbal Assertiveness Characteristics**

- **Stance characteristics**
  - Stand straight, remain steady, and directly face the people to whom they are speaking.
- **Speech characteristics**
  - Speak in a clear, steady voice, loud enough for the people to whom they are speaking to hear them.
  - Speak fluently, without hesitation and with assurance and confidence.

**Nonverbal Nonassertive Characteristics**

- **Stance characteristics**
  - Lack of eye contact; looking down or away.
  - Swaying and shifting of weight from one foot to the other.
- **Speech characteristics**
  - Whining and hesitancy when speaking.
Nonverbal Aggressive Characteristics

• Stance characteristics
  – Leaning forward, with glaring eyes.
  – Pointing a finger at the person to whom you are speaking.
  – Clenching the fists.
  – Putting hands on hips and shaking the head.
• Speech characteristics
  – Shouting

Verbal Assertiveness: The DESC form of verbal expression

• Great for dealing with ongoing conflict themes
  – Name a of ongoing interpersonal conflict in your life!
• Describe the situation or behavior
  – Paint the fundamental conflict picture for the individual
• Express your feelings about the behavior/situation
  – The effect on your feelings (they are legitimate)
• Specify the change in behavior or situation
  – What to you want specifically
• Consequences for making the change should be expressed
  – What will happen if behavior changes; what will happen if it does not

Verbal Assertiveness: The DESC- You Try

• KEY: own your feelings…. No “you make me” statements
• Describe the situation or behavior clearly
  – When....
• Express your feelings about the behavior/situation clearly
  – I feel....
• Specify the change in behavior or situation clearly, assertively
  – I prefer, want, would like...
• Consequences for making the change should be expressed
  – If you do ... then.....; if you don’t ...... then.....s
Conflict Resolution

- Conflict: clash between 2 or more competing goals/perspectives
- Improved conflict resolution skills can
  - decrease the number of stressors we experience
  - improve our interpersonal relationships
  - decrease duration of ongoing stressor and stress response
- Conflict resolution can be impeded by
  - aggressive responses = loneliness and reduced support
  - submissive (nonassertive) responses = hopelessness
  - lack of effective listening = loneliness
  - focus on winning = 2 losers
  - lack of understanding of other person = loneliness
  - inability to consider alternative solutions = doomed to repeat & lose

Tools for Resolving Conflicts

- Applying active listening skills
  - paraphrasing other’s thoughts & feelings
  - what is the effect of doing this on self & other?
- Brainstorming to explore alternative solutions
  - all solutions presented initially without discussion of appropriateness
  - collective discussion of solutions
  - Use assertive expressions (DESC) to work around solutions where conflict may exist.
- A caring approach that takes effort
  - designed to produce agreement and 2 winners, not to manipulate
    (author’s note about your response to the “psychology crap” response from others)

Enhancing Verbal Communication

- Already covered:
  - Describe your thoughts and feelings.
  - Use “I” statements and minimize “you”.
  - Make “improving the relationship” your goal.
  - Apply active listening skills.
- Other practical techniques:
  - Plan time to talk.
    - allocate sufficient time
    - eliminate distracters (phones, T.V., etc.)
  - Begin conversations with agreements.
  - Limit your use of the word “but.”, use “and”
  - Avoid “why” questions….. Why?
**Time Management Strategies**

- Assess how time is spent
  - establish a time diary
  - tally the time spent for each activity per day
  - evaluate your use of time
    - quantity of time for each activity
    - personal value for doing the activity
- Set goals around values: Long & short-term
- Prioritize goals and activities (ABC lists)
- Create what “not to do list”
- Schedule your day

**“Tricks” for Effective Time Management**

- Maximize your rewards by scheduling rewarding activities
- Say "NO!"… it's okay especially when you know what you should be doing!
- Discriminately delegate tasks to others
- Evaluate tasks once: where possible work on and finish
- Use the trash can
- Limit interruptions: An active effort to minimize
- Invest time to manage your time