

Emotional Coping Skills



Outline



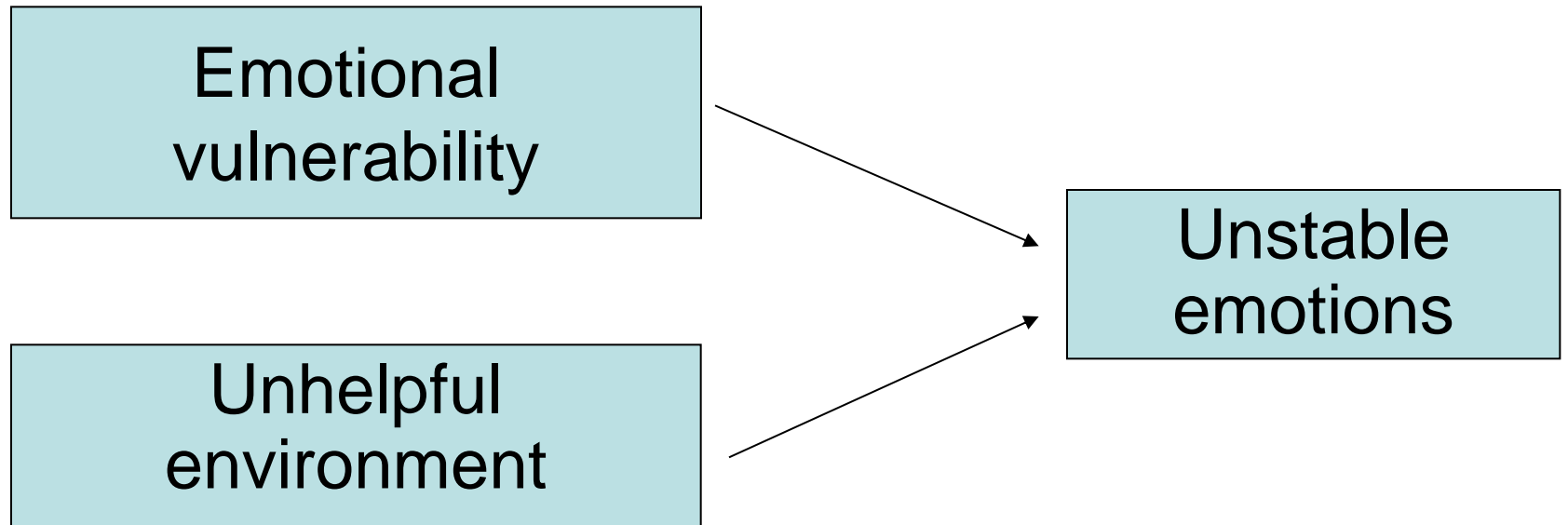
- The underlying theory and model
- How do people manage their difficult emotions?
- What does this tell us about how we need to work?
- Aims of the group
- Session 1: Understanding & Coping with Emotions
- Session 2: Assertiveness

Theory



- The group is based on Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT)
- The therapy is based on the biosocial theory of disorders where emotional vulnerability, in combination with an unhelpful social environment, can lead to the development of unstable or unpredictable emotional reactions.

Model



Theory – Emotional Vulnerability

- Emotional vulnerability refers to the idea that for some people the brain might be hardwired to experience stronger emotions, or that severe emotional or physical trauma can cause changes to the brain that make it more vulnerable to intense feelings

Theory – Unhelpful Environments

- An unhelpful social environment is an environment which fails to treat the person in a manner that conveys respect, attention and understanding.
- Negates, dismisses behaviour of internal world pervasively and persistently
 - “You don’t really feel like that”
 - “Its wrong to feel like that”
- Repeatedly asked to do things that are in direct conflict with the child’s intuition of what’s “right” or what they want

Unhelpful Environments - Examples

- Shy child in an extrovert family
- Extrovert, precocious child in a shy family
- Perfect family syndrome
- Child abuse - sexual, physical, emotional

Consequences

- Question self – invalidate self, ‘emptiness’
- “On edge” – cannot trust self or one’s own emotions
- Feelings seen as dangerous - to be avoided or not expressed
- Vulnerable to be taken advantage of by others - tend to over trust others: “they’ll fix it for me”
- Or trust no one: “I’m on my own”

So...

- Emotions stay around for longer and are more intense
- ‘Small’ things trigger large reactions
- Difficulty in calming (taking the emotion down) or getting motivated (taking the emotion up)
- Emotion-linked attention gets locked on or off
- Harder to inhibit mood related action urges
- Harder to organise behaviour to service long term goals
- Relationships become chaotic and disrupted
-life gets “off” track

Managing Difficult Emotions



- Often someone with this vulnerability will manage fine until something changes in their life
- This can wake up feelings that have been buried
- Others have struggled with such feelings for a long time
- People experience all this as an unmanageable emotion

And...

- They often try to manage it in ways that help in the short term, but keep them stuck in the long term; for instance:
 - Withdrawing, avoiding, stop looking after yourself
 - Constantly worrying. Unrealistic anxiety leading to avoidance.
 - Anxiety leading to obsessional behaviour
 - Using eating as a solution
 - Escaping through alcohol or street drugs
 - Escaping into a psychotic world
 - Using self harm or planning escape by suicide

Managing Difficult Emotions



- All these ways of dealing with feelings seem like a good idea at the time.
- They bring short term relief from emotion.

But.....

- They do not solve the problem in the longer term
- They can get you trapped into unhelpful ways of behaving which stop you getting on and getting the most out of life.

What does this tell us about how we need to work?

- Remember sensitivity
- Hope and trust
- Relationship
- Support/reinforcement in acceptable/ functional emotional expression – BECOME THE VALIDATING
- Problem solving
- Providing opportunity to develop self esteem and self belief
- AndTeach adaptive emotional coping skills

Aims of the Group

- To teach new skills to deal with emotional vulnerability and unhelpful environments in order to give alternatives to those ways of dealing with horrible emotions.
- By doing so, the group aims to:
 - enhance self-respect
 - learn new behavioural patterns and ways of responding to difficulties
 - decrease interactions that interfere with getting better
 - decrease reactions that reduce quality of life

Preparation – in advance

- Make sure group is advertised on notice boards, and included on Ward Activities Timetable
- Make sure ward manager and shift coordinators know day and time of group
- Make sure you have access to materials

Materials

- Check in advance that materials are available:
 - Flipchart paper to stick on wall.
 - Large felt-tipped pen.
 - Handouts for patients, at least 14pt font.
 - CD player, make sure it works before session.
 - Printed scenarios for patients, at least 14pt font.

Preparation – 30 mins before

- Arrive on the ward 30 mins before group is due to start
- Tidy the room, remove dirty crockery, papers etc.
- Arrange the chairs in a semi-circle facing the notice board
- Switch off or remove any noisy machines, e.g. TV, radio, vending machine etc.

Preparation - 15 mins before

- Visit communal areas and knock on bedroom doors to inform patients about the group, when it starts and finishes.
- Have copies of the handouts ready, printed in at least 14pt font.
- Visit communal areas and patients bedrooms again to encourage them to attend – tell them starting time

Starting the Group



- Introduce yourself and ask everyone to do the same
- Remind people of ground rules
 - Speaking one at a time
 - Allow others to speak
 - Respect others ideas and opinions
 - Not a forum for discussion of own problems
 - Please stay for the whole 30 minutes

Group Ethos

- Be clear about the aims
 - To understand emotions better
 - To work on effective ways of coping
 - Not therapy
 - Adult education style
 - Teach the skills
 - Stay on topic

Session 1

Understanding & Coping with Emotions

- Goals:
 1. to introduce the purpose of the group and explain the model
 2. to reach a better understanding of what emotions are and why we have them
 3. to introduce methods of coping with difficult emotions

Session 1

Understanding Emotions

- **Introduce the model and group**
- Either because of differences in how our brain works, life experiences, or a combination of both, some people are more vulnerable to intense feelings than others. This might not be a problem until they encounter difficulty in their lives, and emotions become overwhelming. This can lead to attempts to manage emotion that help in the short term, but that keep the person stuck in the long term (e.g. using drugs, alcohol, escaping into a psychotic world, using self harm or planning to escape through suicide).
- The purposes of this group is to come up with new ways of dealing with horrible feelings

Session 1

How do you cope with emotions?

- What advice would you give a friend / a fellow patient who was distressed?
- Discuss positive and negative ideas
- Acceptance of emotional suffering as part of life – take a non judgmental approach
- Skills that help in a crisis, survival techniques
- Different methods

Session 1

Coping with Emotions



- **Take care of ourselves**
- Treat physical illness
- Eat balanced meals
- Avoid non prescribed drugs/ alcohol
- Sleep
- Exercise

- Build mastery

Session 1

Coping with Emotions

- **Add pleasant events to our lives:**

- Watching TV/DVD
- Going to the cinema
- Remembering beautiful scenery
- Doing some exercise – walking, swimming, jogging
- Relaxing – having a bath
- Eating - going out for a meal
- Listening to music
- Gardening
- Laughing
- Going to a library
- Camping
- Dancing
- Fishing
- Going on holiday
- Draw a picture
- Going to a party - meeting new people
- Join a club
- Going to the beach / lying in the sun
- Meet an old friend
- Go to a café
- Play board games
- Take photographs
- Thinking about a journey
- Planning my career
- Getting out of debt
- Saving money
- Collecting objects
- Listening to others
- Reading magazines
- Hobbies
- Write a letter

Session1

Relaxation



- Finish the group with 15-20 mins of group relaxation
- Use a CD or tape
- Make sure everyone has somewhere comfortable to sit
- Make sure staff carry out the exercises with the group

Relaxation exercises - options

- Progressive muscle relaxation – with music or without
- Brief muscle relaxation – for use after the longer one
- Relaxation with guided imagery
- Differential relaxation – for use after some practice with previous exercises

Session 2

Assertiveness

- Have you ever had difficulty expressing your opinion in a group of friends or fellow workers? Was it difficult for you to be direct and clear in what you wanted to say?
- Do you self-consciously deny a sincerely made compliment? Do you respond with humorous remarks that make the other person look foolish?
- Have you ever worked with someone on a project only to find that the other person wasn't doing their share? Did you quietly seethe? Did you blow up and afterwards feel uneasy about how you handled the situation?

What is Assertive Behaviour?

- Acting assertively means standing up for your assertive rights and expressing what you believe, feel, and want in direct, honest, appropriate ways that respect the rights of the other person.

Assertion is

Standing Up for Rights

Expressing Feelings,
Opinions, Preferences

- Honestly
- Directly
- Appropriately
- Respecting Others' Rights

Session 2

Assertiveness

- **Brainstorm: What is Assertiveness?**
 - Write answers on flipchart.
- **Provide definitions of:**
 - Assertive Behaviour
 - Non-Assertive Behaviour
 - Aggression

Session 2

Assertiveness, Non-Assertiveness, & Aggression

- Discrimination Test of Assertive, Aggressive, and Non-assertive Behaviour

Carefully read each situation and then rate response as either assertive, aggressive, or non-assertive.

- Your husband wants to watch a football game on TV. There is something else that you'd like to watch. You say,
- Well, ah, honey, go ahead and watch the game. I guess I could do some ironing.

Session 2

Assertiveness, Non-Assertiveness, & Aggression

- A parent is speaking to her children when they haven't cleaned up their room and says,
- You've got to be the worst kids in the whole city! If I had known parenthood was going to be like this, I would never have had any kids at all!
- You are doing some teaching with colleagues but you're doing all the planning, teaching, interacting, and evaluating of students. You say,
- We're supposed to be teaching together, yet I see that I am doing all the work. I'd like to talk about changing this.

Session 2

Assertiveness, Non-Assertiveness, & Aggression

- A mate of yours criticises your appearance in front of your friends. You say,
 - I really feel hurt when you criticise my appearance in front of other people. If you have something to say, please bring it up at home before we leave.
- A good friend calls and tells you she desperately needs you to help with a charity event. You don't want to do it and say,
 - Oh Fran, I just know that Jerry will be angry with me if I say yes. He says I'm always getting involved in too many things. You know how Jerry is about things like this.

Session 2

Assertiveness, Non-Assertiveness, & Aggression

- Your partner expects dinner on the table upon arriving home from work and gets angry when it is not there immediately. You respond,
- I feel awful about dinner. I know you're tired and hungry...its all my fault. I'm just terrible.
- Susan is talking with her daughter on the telephone and would like her grandchildren to come for a visit. The parent says,
- I had a funny dream last night. I dreamt that the grandchildren came to visit me.

Session 2

Acting Assertively

- **Acting Assertively**
 - 2 Basic Types of Assertive Messages
 - **I want statements:** “I want to do this” or “I want you to do this”. Also includes: “I’d like you to do this”.
 - *I do want to know what I did that made you angry but I don’t want you to call me names.*
 - *I’d like to think about your question and then get back to you.*
 - *I want you to check with me first before you ask other people to join us for dinner.*
 - **Effects:**
 - Help clarify to both yourself and others what you really want.
 - It tells other person how to fulfil your wants

Session 2

Acting Assertively

- Sometimes people misinterpret a simple expression of preferences or wants as non-negotiable demands.
- Can reduce the likelihood of this occurring by asking the other person about their preferences or willingness to do what you want:
- *I do want to know what I did that made you angry but I don't want you to call me names. Is that OK with you?*
- *I'd like to think about your question and then get back to you. What do you think?*
- *I want you to check with me first before you ask other people to join us for dinner. Would you be willing to do that? Or What do you want to do?*

Session 2

Acting Assertively

- **I feel statements:** “When you did that, I felt this way”, “I liked it when you did that”, “I didn’t like it when you did that”
- *I didn’t like it just then when you told me to go on a diet.*
- *I feel sad when you talk about how you don’t trust people to care about you.*
- *I liked it when you helped with the dishes without being asked.*
- **Effects:**
 - Help you express your feelings without attacking the other person.
 - They clarify for yourself and others how you feel.
 - Other people can then take this into consideration when they make decisions about how to act.

Session 2

Acting Assertively

- **Points to remember:**

- Disagreements are a normal part of any relationship
- It may take several discussions before you can sort out the problem
- Making a compromise doesn't mean that you are weak
- Most of us get our own way some of the time but not all the time
- Being 'in the right' doesn't necessarily mean that you should get what you want
- Often both people are partly right

Question and Answer

