Building Relationship Skills Through Exploration of Sex-Role Stereotypes

DP 003 - Developmental Intervention

By

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INTRODUCTION

The outreach program described herein is one of a series prepared by the staff of the Counseling-Psychological Services Center. The series includes the more frequently requested outreach topics and is designed to assist CPSC staff members respond to such requests. All programs in the series include the following sections:

- Goals/Objectives
- Target Population(s)
- Overview/Summarization
- Outline
- Description of Content
- Special Instructions/Recommendations

These materials are intended for use in single-session (1-2 hour) outreach presentations or workshops. At the presenter's discretion, materials may be used in part or as a whole.
BUILDING RELATIONSHIP SKILLS
THROUGH THE EXPLORATION OF SEX-ROLE STEREOTYPES

Goal

The purpose of these materials is to present a variety of structured and semi-structured exercises that could be used in a workshop on building relationship skills. Part I is designed to increase communication skills between sexes, and to explore how members present themselves to others and how they are perceived by members of the same and opposite sex. Part II is a variety of exercises which can be used (1) in designing a workshop, or (2) as an adjunct to Part I.

Target Population

Part I is a specific workshop designed for participants who have had some experience relating to members of the opposite sex. It should be useful for most college students or adults in a community setting. It could be particularly helpful for young adults beginning to move from dualistic and stereotypic thinking into more complex thinking. Materials in Part II are suitable for a variety of populations. By selecting the appropriate exercises from Part II, the workshop facilitator can devise a program suitable for the particular population with whom he or she is dealing. These exercises could be used with any undergraduate college group and, with perhaps slight modification, graduate students or college faculty/staff groups.

Exercises presented in Part II can be used with several specific populations, e.g., women over 18, individuals currently in relationships. Though the majority of these materials focus on heterosexual relationships, they can also be used in most cases with no changes, and in other cases with adaptations, for general friendship building and for gay relationships.

Overview

Part I

This workshop has three basic components in two sections. In the first section, participants will discuss some of their sex-role stereotypes by generating lists of "advantages" and "disadvantages" of being a woman and of being a man. Participants will discuss their stereotypes and how they do and do not fit those stereotypes in same-sexed and mixed-sex groups and then in dyads. In the dyadic discussion, they will practice active listening. After a break, participants will explore how they present themselves to others by drawing a symbolic representation of themselves and then receive feedback on how they have been perceived during the workshop.

Part II

This part describes a variety of exercises from which workshop leaders may select when designing their own workshops. Included are opening exercises, friendship-building exercises, exercises for developing skills for managing relationships, and exercises for developing skills for ending relationships.
PART I
BUILDING RELATIONSHIP SKILLS THROUGH
THE EXPLORATION OF SEX-ROLE STEREOTYPES

Total Time
Two Hours.

Materials Required
This workshop will require large sheets of paper, such as newsprint, and some sort of markers, such as felt-tipped pens and/or crayons.

Outline

I. Introduction
(5 mins.) A. Introduce leaders and members. Have everyone fill out and wear a name tag.
(5 mins.) B. Explain the goals of the workshop.
1. To explore stereotypes men and women have of each other.
2. To increase communication skills.
3. To explore how members present themselves to others and find out how they are perceived.

II. Explore stereotypes men and women have of each other.
A. Small group discussions of their responses to the four variants of the incomplete statement, "One advantage (disadvantage) of being a woman (man) is _____________________________."
(5 mins.) 1. Explain exercise.
(10 mins.) 2. In same-sex small groups. Goal: generate lists of responses.
(10 mins.) 3. In mixed-sex small groups of 4-8. Goal: to understand (receive) the responses of the opposite sex.
4. In different mixed-sex small groups. Goal: to correct misconceptions each sex may have of each other and to validate those that seem correct.
Outline (continued)

B. Practice in active listening in dyads. Content: responses to the two variants of the statement, "One way I fit (don't fit) the stereotype of my sex is___________________________."

(5 mins.) 1. Lecturette on active listening.

(5 mins.) 2. Demonstration of active listening exercise by co-leaders.

(5 mins.) 3. Demonstration by a volunteer dyad from the group with coaching by the leaders.

(10 mins.) 4. Group breaks into mixed-sex dyads to do exercise.

BREAK FOR TEN MINUTES

III. Exploration of how members present themselves to others and how others perceive them.

(15 mins.) A. Members draw a symbolic "self-portrait" that shows how they present themselves to others.

(10 mins.) B. In cross-sex dyads, members explain their "self-portraits" and get feedback about whether this is how they have presented themselves during the workshop.

IV. In large groups, members share the most important thing they learned about themselves as a result of the workshop.

Description of Content

I. Introduction

As members come in, have them fill out and wear name tags. This will encourage members to call each other by name. Start group in a large circle, but have the room arranged so that the group can break up into small groups (4-8) quickly and easily. Explain the three goals of the workshop.

II. Exploring Stereotypes

A. Break into small same-sexed groups of about 4-8 members, preferably at least two groups of each sex. Provide each group with a large pad of paper or blackboard to list answers to the four statements.

B. After ten minutes, have the members form mixed-sex groups by pairing half of each previous same-sex group with half of an opposite-sex group. These groups should be given the following instructions:
"Your goal in these groups is to understand how the members of the opposite sex responded to these four statements. Later you will have a chance to give feedback to the opposite sex on their perceptions, but right now your goal is only to understand what the opposite sex sees as the advantages and disadvantages of being a man and of being a woman."

The facilitators should circulate between the groups and make sure they are following the instructions in this and all the other exercises. This is an important function that the leaders should actively serve.

C. After ten minutes, the participants should form different mixed-sex groups by pairing the men from one group with the women of another group. They should then be given the following instructions:

"In these groups, your goal is to give feedback about what you see as any misconceptions the opposite-sex members may have of members of your sex. Also, give them feedback on the ways that their perceptions seem especially accurate and/or understanding. Your goal is to give and receive feedback, not to debate or argue about any differences."

III. Active Listening

A. After these three exercises, recombine the whole group and introduce them to the concept of active listening. You should be able to refer back to the last two exercises to point out examples of how active listening can be helpful. Explain that the following exercises will follow the basic active-listening paradigm:

1. "Sender" states his or her message.

2. "Receiver" repeats this message back to the "Sender" in paraphrase.

3. "Sender" either agrees that the "Receiver" has accurately understood the message or makes corrections.

4. If there were corrections, "Receiver" restates his or her paraphrase to reflect the corrections.

5. "Sender" validates the modified paraphrase or returns to steps 3 and 4 if the paraphrase still indicates the "Receiver" has not understood.

B. The facilitators should then demonstrate active listening to the group, first by themselves, and then by coaching a volunteer dyad. Do the following exercise in front of the group:

The group should be divided into mixed-sex dyads and instructed to use the active listening paradigm to communicate to each other their responses to the following questions:
1. "One way in which I fit the stereotype of what my sex is like is ________________________________.

2. "One way I don't fit the stereotype is ________________________________.

IV. Exploring Self-Presentations

A. For this exercise, each member will need some sort of drawing materials: large paper and crayons, felt markers and/or pencils. Members could share different-colored crayons and markers. The facilitators should give the following directions:

"This portion of the workshop will help us understand how we present ourselves to each other. You are to draw a symbolic self-portrait that indicates how you usually present yourself to members of the opposite sex. The drawings are to be symbolic, that is, not drawings of what you physically look like, but some sort of symbol or set of symbols. For instance, if you think you present yourself as an athlete, you might draw a football or a swimming pool as a part of your drawing.

You should indicate what it is you try to get people to think you are like when you meet them. Sorry, but no credit for artistic ability, though there may be penalties."

Leaders should give students examples of self-presentations, such as: an individual who sees him/herself as a growing, maturing person may draw a blooming flower being warmed by the sun; or as an individual who prides him/herself on success and accomplishments may draw a trophy case full of trophies, ribbons, and medals. Give members concrete examples in order to facilitate exploration and creativity in the group.

Group leaders might ask several leading questions during this exercise, such as:

1. What is the one thing you really like about yourself?
2. What is one thing you really dislike about yourself?
3. What is it that you really try to express to other people?
4. What is it that allows you to feel good about yourself?
5. What is it that you try to avoid at all cost?
6. What is the thing that holds you back in your relationships?

(To end this exercise, it is recommended that time be allotted to discuss the previous exercise and its effects with each participant. With a feedback exercise of this type it is essential that the leaders...
process the feedback that members receive in order to deal with the possible negative effects of powerful feedback or information and subsequent emotional responses which may occur. A follow-up period of this kind may be helpful in further enhancing the benefits of an important experiential task and minimize the potential for negative effects.

B. After fifteen minutes, have members form mixed-sex dyads. They should explain their "drawings" to each other. Then they should give each other feedback on the accuracies and inaccuracies of the "self-portraits" according to how they have perceived each other during the workshop.

V. Closing Exercise

After completion of the exercises, the members should be brought back together as one large group. Each participant should then briefly describe the most important thing he or she learned about him or herself during the workshop.
Part II

POSSIBLE EXERCISES TO BE USED IN DESIGNING A WORKSHOP ON RELATIONSHIP SKILLS:

BEGINNING, MANAGING, AND ENDING RELATIONSHIPS

I. Opening Exercises

A. Have group members respond to stimuli designed to elicit their ideas and feelings about relationships. Possible stimuli include:

1. Complete the statements:
   a. One thing about relationships is______________________________.
   b. One thing true of me in relationships is_______________________.
   c. What I especially like about relationships is___________________.
   d. What I don't like about relationships is_______________________.
   e. One thing I like about how I behave in relationships is__________.
   f. One thing I'd like to change about how I behave in relationships is_______________________________.

2. Incomplete Sentences (see Appendix A)

3. Tell participants to pretend they are the representatives of a society. Their task is to establish the norms for legitimate expectations in a close personal relationship. The question is, "What could I legitimately expect from my close personal friends?" (Or "from my spouse" or "from my lover," etc.) The facilitator can direct this process by suggesting possible questions that should be answered, e.g.,
   a. Should the person be expected to meet all of your social needs? If not, what needs should be met?
   b. What does commitment mean in a relationship?
   c. How should caring be expressed?
   d. Should other friendships be allowed? What kinds?
   e. How should mutual expectations be shared?
   f. Honesty?
   g. Trust?
   h. Disclosure?
i. Respect for values? How deal with differences?

(From exercise from: a Building Relationships Workshop by Phyllis Miller, Jane Domke and Judy Winkelpieck, Student Counseling Service, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa.)

There are several different ways to present exercises 1-3 above. Participants can start by responding individually with paper and pencil and then share responses with larger groups: dyads, triads, small groups (4-8), or with the whole group. One possibility in sharing the ideas in dyads or triads is that this can be done as part of building communication skills such as active listening (see Friendship Building Exercise #D). Another possibility is to have participants respond in the large group (or a subgroup) from the outset. The facilitator should record the responses on a blackboard or large paper. A small number of considered responses could be solicited or, alternately, members could be given instructions for brainstorming, i.e., to respond quickly, without criticizing their, or other's, responses. Particularly with exercise 3, participants could start in small groups and then have these groups report back to the entire workshop.

Group discussion of the ideas generated by the above can be stimulated by such questions as: Which ideas or norms are rational? Which are irrational? Which are helpful, which destructive? What are the differences between those generated by men and those by women? Which norms (exercise 3) would participants want to live by?

B. Have participants start by sharing their expectations, goals, fantasies and/or fears of the workshop.

C. Have participants explore how they present themselves to others. This can be done by having them describe how they present themselves and/or by having them get feedback from other members as to how they are perceived. The combination of both will generate more useful information, as members can then discover and explore discrepancies between the two. If this combination is used, however, this should probably not be used as a first exercise before any trust has been established and before members have much information on which to base their feedback. Possible exercises include:

1. Have participants write a one-paragraph description of themselves, in third person, as they would expect someone else to describe them after a first meeting. Have them share these descriptions in dyads and "correct" the descriptions anonymously to the group and have members guess whose self-description is being read.

2. Same as #1 above, but have participants draw their self-presentations symbolically.

3. Use the Gestalt exercise. "Right now, I am aware that you...." to generate first impressions in dyads.
D. Place members in same-sex groups and have them respond to the following:

1. The advantages of being a female are __________________________.
2. The disadvantages of being a female are __________________________.
3. The advantages of being a male are __________________________.
4. The disadvantages of being a male are __________________________.

Regroup in mixed-sex groups and discuss responses. The whole group could then generate a list of "accurate" and "inaccurate" perceptions they have of the opposite sex.

II. Friendship Building Exercises *

A. Explore with the group members the various methods of initiating and building friendships which they have attempted in the past.

B. Present and discuss a model of behaviorally-oriented skills which are effective in initiating and building relationships. Emphasize concepts such as communications, mutuality, respect for the other individual, shared responsibility for the friendship, personal involvement and risk-taking.

C. Have the co-leaders model, in a role-play situation, the skills and behaviors (verbal and non-verbal) which facilitate friendship building.

D. Present the concept of "active listening" to the group and have the group break up into dyads to practice this active listening among themselves. Emphasize focusing on content, examining the meaning the message has for the speaker, focusing on the feelings which the speaker is attempting to convey, reflection, and paraphrasing by the listener. In addition, present to the group the behaviors which are not a part of listening: questioning, interpreting, advising, disagreement, ignoring, etc.

E. Utilizing the incomplete statements in Opening Exercise A(1), or by asking the group members to discuss their attitudes, opinions and thoughts about relationships, have them split up into dyads and practice active-listening skills and self-disclosure skills. If desired, the dyads may return to the group to discuss the content of their discussion and to talk about the process which occurred during the discussion which facilitated the ability to communicate and to become more intimate with each other. Focus both upon the attitudes expressed in the dyads which involved attitudes about their relationships, and the process of active-listening/self-disclosure.

*Based upon the group manual: Art of Friendship Building. H.D. Zimmerman, Kutzman State College.
F. Pass out the Self-Awareness Inventory (Appendix B) and have each group member fill it out. Have the group discuss their responses and what they learned about themselves in relationship to the inventory. (Self-Awareness Inventory, in group manual: Intimate Relationships: Changing Old Patterns, A Structured Group Leaders' Manual; Authors: Patti Follansbee, Jackie Hallissey, and Sharon Kennedy. Southern Illinois University Counseling Center.)

III. Exercises for Developing Skills for Managing Relationships

These exercises are specifically designed for individuals who are currently in a relationship with a Significant Other.

A. Ask the group members to envision their "ideal relationship" silently for several minutes. Then ask the individuals in the group to share their experiences with the group. If needed, rotate around the room, asking each members to respond in turn, in order to facilitate self-disclosure on this issue.

B. 1. Facilitate the group in focusing upon their individual goals by having the group take five minutes to fantasize about and write down all of their lifetime goals. Encourage them to be as creative and imaginative as possible without censoring anything. Then ask them to write down and restate their three major life goals. Finally, ask them to imagine that they have only six months to live and have them write down, list or imagine what they would do with those six months.

2. Next, have them think for five minutes of themselves in an important relationship and explore in their mind the lifetime goals they would have for their partner, goals which are meaningful to the individual and agreeable to the partner. Have the group members focus on and write down three major relationship goals. Then have the members imagine that they and their partner have six months to live and have them think about and write down what their material plans would be.

3. Have the group members individually assess the compatibility of their goals: for themselves, and between their partner and themselves. Have them compare their lifetime plans and their "six-months-to-live" goals. Have them think about the importance of each of their goals and the value of maintaining their relationship in terms of their goals.

4. If possible, have the group members individually share their goals and the process they experienced during the exercise. (Exercise taken from Managing Relationships: A Dual Purpose Leader's Manual for a Life Theme or Life Transition Workshop. Michael R. Slavit, The University of Texas at Austin Counseling-Psychological Services Center.)

C. If the group consists of couples, utilize the above exercise in dyads and have the couple compare their goals within the dyads.

D. Have the group split up individually to complete, on a sheet of paper, responses to the following incomplete sentences:
1. What I would like most to communicate to my partner about resentment is

2. What I would like most to communicate to my partner about my appreciation is

3. I want to communicate these things because I feel

4. I am hesitant to communicate this because I feel

Then take fifteen minutes to return to the group and have the group members present their responses to the group to discuss.

E. Discuss the concept of negotiation within a relationship, focusing upon "I" statements, the expression of what one sees, feels, thinks, imagines, and wants in a relationship. Explain the concept of avoiding generalizations and emphasize the use of specific descriptions of behavior in negotiation and problem-solving. In addition, include in your discussion the focus upon making clear what you want in a relationship with your partner. Next, have the individuals pair up and practice negotiation skills with each other. If the group is made up of couples, do this exercise with non-partner dyads for 10-15 minutes and then proceed to working with the couples in dyads in negotiation exercises. Give them five minutes to ponder an issue to discuss before they begin negotiation. Focus on: (1) describing specific behaviors; (2) labeling feelings; (3) stating intentions or desires. Begin with a light issue and then move on after five minutes to a more important, "heavy" issue.

IV. Exercises for Developing Skills in Ending Relationships

These exercises are optional exercises to be used with a group of individuals who are interested in the process of ending relationships and developing the skills involved in coping with the loss of a Significant Other.

A. Hand out "Assumptions Frequently Made About Relationships" (see Appendix C). Ask the group members to indicate whether each statement is true or false for them. After this, ask the group to discuss each item for twenty minutes. Share with the group that, for the most part, all of the statements are true, and allow for discussion on the statements which the group or individuals do not agree upon.

B. Utilize the Managing Relationships/Ending Relationships exercise by Michael R. Slavit (see Appendix D).

C. Have the group take five minutes to think about past relationships, then have individuals describe the process by which the relationship ended. Use reassurance and support in allowing the group members to talk about painful, traumatic, emotional material and to allow them to question the abnormality, bizarreness, or unusualness of their experiences.
D. Present a lecture on *The Phases of Separation* (Slavit, 1980). Begin by talking about disillusionment - the insight that one cannot change the partner, while accentuating the negative characteristics and focusing on the positive. Discuss erosion - the wearing away of marital satisfaction, the increase in resentment and decrease in positive interaction, the lack of communication. Then discuss detachment - the "I don't care" phase where emotions are deadened or transferred.

E. Discuss with the group the emotional phases after detachment: physical separation, mourning, second adolescence and hard work. Engage in a discussion about the various individual reactions possible in these phases such as relief, shock, loneliness, confusion, anxiety about the future, alternating between feelings of excitement and depression. Explain that these feelings will end at some point. Mourning is an act of psychic cleansing and discarding of the lost one's memory, or the unleashing of anger, or anger toward one's self. Discuss the various ways in which mourning may be expressed. Also, discuss second adolescence, or the period in which new adventures and new risks are possible. Talk about over-reactions, over-indulgence in "acting out" behavior or new activities. Discuss the possibility and danger of forming "rebound" relationships. Finally, discuss the hard work involved in integrating new attitudes, new behaviors, new confidence, and new skills involved in the process of separation. Explore the anxiety which may accompany growth and change.
APPENDIX A

INCOMPLETE SENTENCES AS STIMULI FOR SELF-DISCLOSURE

In groups, it is sometimes difficult to think of what you want to say about yourself in order to begin establishing relationships with others. This exercise, then, can serve as a stimulus to help you think about your interpersonal life. Finish each incomplete sentence. Do this without spending a great deal of time thinking about what you will (or should!) put down. Let the sentence stem act as a stimulus, and put down whatever arises naturally.

1. People who like me ____________________________
2. People who love me ____________________________
3. One thing I really like about myself is ____________________________
4. One thing I really don't like about myself is ____________________________
5. I dislike people who ____________________________
6. I like people who ____________________________
7. When people ignore me, I ____________________________
8. The way I express my liking for others is ____________________________
9. When someone praises me, I ____________________________
10. When I don't like someone who likes me, I ____________________________
11. When I let someone know something about my inner self ____________________________
12. I am at my best with people when ____________________________
13. When I am in a group of strangers, I ____________________________
14. I feel lonely when ____________________________
15. When someone is affectionate with me, I ____________________________
16. I think I have hurt others by ____________________________
17. Those who don't know me well ____________________________
18. An important interpersonal value for me is ____________________________
19. What I am really looking for in my relationships is ____________________________
20. I get hurt when ____________________________
Appendix A

21. I am at my best with people when

22. What I feel most uncomfortable about in my relationships with others is

23. I like people who

24. When I think about intimacy, I think of

25. When someone gets angry with me, I

26. I get angry with another when

27. What I distrust in other people is

28. One thing that makes me nervous in interpersonal situations is

29. When I really feel good about myself, I

30. When others put me down, I

31. In relating to others, I get a big lift when

32. Regarding relating to others, this week I learned that

33. When I like someone who doesn't feel the same way about me, I

34. I feel awkward with others when

35. The thing that holds me back in my relationships with others is

36. I feel let down in relationships when

37. Others like it when I

38. Interpersonal relationships are important, but

39. When someone sees the way in which I am vulnerable

40. In interpersonal situations, what I run away from most is

Taken from Gerard Egan, Interpersonal Living
APPENDIX B

SELF-AWARENESS INVENTORY

Rate your level of satisfaction with yourself in the following areas:

1. Myself as a man or woman
   Low  High
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. My relationships with people of my own sex
   Low  High
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. My relationships with people of the opposite sex
   Low  High
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. Knowing what I want:
   a. from women
      Low  High
      1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

   b. from men
      Low  High
      1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. Asking for what I want:
   a. from women
      Low  High
      1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

   b. from men
      Low  High
      1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Appendix B

6. Persisting in getting what I want:
   a. from women
      Low                               High
      1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   b. from men
      Low                               High
      1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7. Taking care of myself
   Low                               High
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8. Being aware of what I am feeling
   Low                               High
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

9. My ability to express my feelings appropriately, directly and honestly
   Low                               High
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

10. How I feel about my body the way it is right now
    Low                               High
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

11. How I express myself through my body
    Low                               High
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

12. Being able to experience my sexuality fully
    Low                               High
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Appendix B

13. How I am with myself when I am alone

   Low  High
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

14. Being able to give affection:
   a. to women

   Low  High
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

   b. to men

   Low  High
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

15. Being able to receive affection:
   a. from women

   Low  High
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

   b. from men

   Low  High
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

16. Ability to express my creativity

   Low  High
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

17. Satisfaction in my chosen work

   Low  High
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

18. Ability to have fun and enjoy

   Low  High
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Appendix B

19. **Free from stereotypes or role expectations:**
   a. from women
      
      | Low | High |
      | 1  2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
   
   b. from men
      
      | Low | High |
      | 1  2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |

20. **My ability to plan, order, and structure my environment**

    | Low | High |
    | 1  2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |

21. **My ability to use and express my own power**

    | Low | High |
    | 1  2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
APPENDIX C

ASSUMPTIONS FREQUENTLY MADE ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS*

(Answer True or False for each item)

1. Breakups would best be planned, if possible.
2. In general, self-survival supercedes maintenance of a relationship.
3. Less ambiguity in a breakup can reduce grieving time.
4. Talking about problems during a relationship is better than not talking about them.
5. One will not die from normal grief.
6. Grieving does not last forever.
7. Renegotiating a "friendship" out of a "lovership" is not always possible.
8. People who have recently broken up are generally very needy for support and caring, and vulnerable to entering into dependent relationships.
9. It is smart to be careful about getting involved with someone recently separated.
10. It is better not to get quickly re-involved in another relationship if you are recently separated.
11. It is important to recognize and accept that there are "impediments" in people which are not likely to change.
12. Bad relationships are hardly ever the result of one person.
13. There is no perfect time to break up and avoid trauma.
14. If you "want out" of a relationship, you don't have to justify your feelings.
15. There is no such thing as a perfectly secure relationship (there are no guarantees).
16. Reasons for having gotten involved at one point may not be sufficient to maintain the relationship.
17. The period following a breakup can be a rich time for personal growth.
18. Following a couple's breakup, mutual friends may drop out of the picture.

19. Being lonely and living alone are not one and the same.

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APPENDIX D

UNDERSTANDING FEELINGS ASSOCIATED
WITH THE ENDING PROCESS

The following exercise is conducted as a guided imagery experience, with participants sharing emerging feelings with other group members in groups of four. This exercise is intended to help the participants to get an in-depth understanding of the emotional process which they either are going through or have gone through, which Kessler referred to as the emotional stages of DISILLUSIONMENT, EROSION, and DETACHMENT.

We are providing a word-for-word transcript of the directions for this exercise, which you may adapt to your own style and preferences as you see fit. Arrange the participants in groups of four and proceed.

ARRANGE GROUP IN SMALL GROUPS OF FOUR

"We've already explained the stages that a relationship typically goes through in its ending: DISILLUSIONMENT, EROSION, DETACHMENT.

"We're now going to give you the opportunity to consider your own experiences more fully in light of this information; to locate yourself in this process; and to identify the major feeling states which this process has engendered in you.

"In order to do this, I will lead you through an exercise in which you can just focus on your own experience, without need to interact with others who are here.

"I'm going to begin this experience with a brief relaxation exercise. The purpose of this exercise is to help you to screen out unnecessary distractions so that you can focus on your own inner experience.

"And so I want you to arrange yourself as comfortably as you can in your chair, arranging your back, neck, and head in as comfortably aligned a position as possible."

RELAXATION

"And now, I'm going to ask you to recall certain experiences to mind, and to picture these experiences as vividly as you can. When I describe a type of experience to you, I'll ask you to picture either a specific scene which you can remember, or an imaginary scene which exemplifies or represents the type of experience I'm describing. Whether you recall a specific scene or imagine a typical one, imagine the scene as vividly as you can. Give yourself permission to feel any emotions which arise. These feelings will be your teachers, and will help you to identify any issues which you may wish to resolve in order for you to continue as healthily and happily as you can with your life.

"Again, take a slow, deep breath...exhale, and relax."
"And now I want you to recall to mind the first time you can remember feeling strongly disappointed with your relationship. Recall this experience as vividly as you can. Fill out your memory of this experience with as many details as you can. . . the physical setting. . . the season of the year. . . people who may have been present. . . your mate's facial expression. . . your mate's tone of voice. . . and the thoughts and feelings you remember having. Stay with these images and feelings for a little while.

"And now, I'll ask you to say 'goodbye' to this memory, realizing that you may return to it if it's important for you to do so. And now, just return to feelings of relaxation. Take a slow, deep breath. . . exhale, and relax."

(Trainers: Take a few minutes to help the participants to again achieve a deeply relaxed state.)

"And now I want you to bring back to mind the first time you can remember thinking that the relationship might end in the foreseeable future. Recall this experience as vividly as you can. Complete your recollection of this experience by including as many specifics as possible. . . When did this occur? . . . Where? . . . Who was present? . . . Picture your partner's face and voice as you were thinking that the relationship might end. Again, stay with these images and feelings for a little while.

"And. . . again, get ready to leave this image, remembering that you may return to it if you wish. And, relax. . .

"And, now, I want you to think of a scene in which you and your partner were not behaving in a mutually enhancing way - a scene in which you may have actually been mutually detracting - or destructive. Though it may be uncomfortable for you to recall such a scene, I'll ask you to do so because it will help you to understand better how your relationship was undermined. Again, think of the time and place of the scene. Think of as many of the details as you can, and stay with the thoughts, feelings, and images that the scene brings out.

"Again, get ready to leave this scene. . . and relax. . .

"And, now, I want you to recall to mind a time when you first remember thinking: 'I just don't care anymore.' . . . in effect, the time when you may have first felt that you would soon be out of the relationship. Picture your partner as you may have while thinking these thoughts. Picture your partner's posture, facial expression, and voice. Recall this as vividly as you can, and just be with the thoughts, feelings, and images that come up.

"And, now, I'll ask you to get ready to leave these images behind, and to again become aware of the presence of three other individuals with you in the group. Continue to relax. . . I'll give you a few more minutes to just relax with your eyes closed, and to think about the parts of your experience which you would like to share with the other three members of your group. I will ask you to share only those aspects of your experience which you would really like to share. In a minute or so, I'll ask you to open your eyes. . . and to look around at the other members of your group. . . and to share in turn with one another any feelings which seem important to you right now. When I ask you to open your eyes, I'd like you to move immediately into this next phase of the exercise without interruption. And, now, whenever you feel ready, just slowly open your eyes and continue."