**Elements of Healthy Relationships**

*Prior to starting, ensure that you have viewed the homefun assignments so you can confidently review them with the client.*

***Hi \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

Welcome back to the session today. We are currently in session 3 of 10 sessions. Today we will talk about elements of healthy intimate relationships. Before we begin with our warm up exercise, I would like to check in with you. How are you feeling in this moment, what sensations, thoughts, and emotions come up for you right now? Can you rate your mood from 1-10?

***Let’s start off with our warm-up based on positive psychology….***

* *(If needed: The reason why we do this is to help us focus, highlight, and identify some of the positive things that you do and are doing to manage your social-emotional well-being.)*
  + *How has another person shown that they care about you within the past week?*
  + *What has happened this week that has been exciting?*
  + *Describe something fun that you did today.*
  + *What was something nice you said to someone this week?*
  + *Describe something that made you laugh this week.*
  + *Describe something you were thankful for this week.*
  + *What was a challenge you overcame this week?*
  + *What was something that made you feel happy this week?*

**Ok so let’s spend some time discussing the worksheets from last week:**

* Relationship Gratitude Sheet
* Couple’s Gratitude Journal

**Relationship Gratitude Q):** How did you find the relationship gratitude worksheet? What stood out for you?

**Couple’s Gratitude Journal Q):** What was it like for you to note down gratitude about your partner? Did you notice any mindset shifts from this journal? Will you keep practicing it - why or why not?

**Ok so let’s spend some time discussing the videos from last week.**

**Video: Fight Smarter: Avoid the Most Common Arguments Patterns (Esther Perel)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4UAg4Axhg6g&feature=emb_rel_pause&ab_channel=EstherPerel>

***Let’s review the fight smarter by Esther Perel video:***

***Q) What stood out the most for you from that video?***

**Q) What were your takeaways?**

**Q) What skills/strategies did you learn?**

**Q) How can you apply these skills to your own relationship?**

**Fight Smarter: Avoid the Most Common Argument Patterns – By Esther Perel**

* You don’t get to decide what is worthy of getting upset about and what is not.
* What is confirmation bias? It is when we pick up evidence along the way to confirm what we believe is true. If your partner has decided that you are dissing him, they will focus on the times when they can confirm this belief.
  + *\*Check in with client to make sure they understand the concept of confirmation bias...important concept in relationship building\**
* We organize our own reality, we often organise this reality through confirmation bias.
* Confirmation bias gives us this order. Even if what is true is really negative, we still believe in it because it’s comforting to have order.
* Use validation statements with your partner & apologise:
  + “I totally know how much you hate this” & “I am sorry”
* What is internal/external locus of control?
  + For example: We believe that when we are late it is because of something external (like the weather), yet when someone else is late, we attribute it to their personality (they are a careless person). Therefore saying “Mine is excusable, yours is not.”
* Esther recommends not using absolutes like “I feel like you **never** show up.”
  + It puts people on the defense and is not the reality… When we use absolutes, especially in the negative, your partner will probably be able to find one example where this was not true.

**Now let’s spend some time looking at “Equality in Relationships” and the Non-Violence Wheel.** These both demonstrate elements of respectful relationships.

[review each spoke of the wheel] \*see worksheet\*

**Q) What are your takeaway points from the “Equality in Relationships” and the Non-Violence Wheel?**

To summarize:

* Equality means that you consider the other person’s needs and feelings. Power and control focuses on intimidation and threats.
* Equality means that you are honest and open with your partner. Power and control is based on fear and force.
* Equality is based on respect and trust. Power and control is based on distrust and disrespect.
* Equality leads to a sense of belonging. Power and control leads to feelings of isolation.
* Equality leads to safety. Power and control leads to emotional and physical damage.
* Equality means that both people have the same rights and responsibilities in the relationship.

**Q) Is there anything that stands out for you based on the summary I just read? Anything you’d like to further discuss and delve into?**

**Elements of a Respectful Relationship**

Here are some identified *elements of a respectful relationship:*

* Honesty
* Sharing responsibilities
* Trust
* Security respect
* Sharing assets
* Support
* Fun
* Intimacy
* Good communication
* Patience
* Physical and emotional safety
* Reliability
* Responsibility
* Loyalty
* Understanding
* Shared interests and goals
* Room to be an individual
* Other (Ask client to identify any other elements…)

**Q) Which of the above elements of a respectful relationship are present in your current or most recent relationship?**

**Q) How would you rate your current or most recent relationship based on some of the identified elements of a respectful relationship?**

**Q) What are two examples of how you have shown respect and love for your partner?**

**Q) Describe three things you would like to be able to do to improve your relationship.**

**Time-Outs: A Skill to Keep Your Relationships Healthy**

A Time-Out allows you to leave a situation so you can cool down. It helps you avoid becoming abusive.

The first step is to understand what a time-out is. A time-out is to be used when you know that if you stay in a particular situation you are liable to lose your temper and become abusive. Does your heart begin to race? Do you begin to feel overheated? There are signs that tell you when you are first starting to get angry – you may not need to take a time-out then – and signs that, if your anger continues to rise, tell you from past experience that you are about to become abusive. You need to figure out what these warning signs are.

When someone takes a time-out, they leave a situation in order to cool down. They walk, exercise, mediate or do deep breathing exercises – whatever it takes to help them calm down. They also think about how they can return and continue the argument in a healthy way – this means what they can say and do so the argument does not become tense again. A time-out should be about one hour – come back too soon and chances are your anger is still too difficult to deal with in a healthy way.

Talk to your partner about time-outs. Let your partner know the time-out is about your need to take a time-out, so you can avoid becoming abusive. Let your partner know they can also take a time-out if they feel they will become abusive.

**Q) Are Time-Outs something you have used before? Have you called it something different? What are your thoughts on this skill, could it be useful for your relationship?**

**Mindfulness: A Skill to Move From Reactive to Responsive**

**What is Mindfulness?**

There are many ways to describe ‘being present’ and mindfulness will feel different for each individual. However, the essence is still the same – mindfulness is a mental state achieved only by focusing your awareness on the present moment, while acknowledging and accepting your feelings, thoughts and bodily sensations. Mindfulness is as much a meditative practice as it is a learned skill. Perhaps the easiest way to describe mindfulness comes from John Kabat-Zinn, a world-renowned Mindfulness Meditation teacher and creator of the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center. He says, “Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.”

When we are mindful, we experience our thoughts and our emotions with a calm sense of acceptance. We do not judge. Instead of focusing on the many tasks that we have to accomplish in the future, we simply allow ourselves to realize and truly experience the task at hand. There can be nothing else but the present moment when we live in a mindful state.

Mindfulness is not just noticing that we are angry, or hungry, or even that we are doing the dishes; mindfulness is the art of being aware of these moments, with purpose and intention. It is noticing the sensations of the water on our hands as we wash the plates, the motion of the sponge as it gently whirls in a circular motion. It is being aware of the rhythm of our breath in and out, and of consciously bringing our thoughts back to the task at hand as they lose focus and wander off. This very act of observing the present moment, without reaction or judgment, is the key to our practice.

**HOMEFUN:**

**Video:**

**Brené Brown Braving - A talk on the anatomy of trust - 10:00 MINS**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G72JWvqdNLA

**Read and work on: (can access these forms on therapistaid.com)**

* Relationship Conflict Resolution (worksheet)
* Review Equality/Non Violence (handout)

**Check out –** Mood 1-10 & Discuss Session Takeaways

**End of Session 3**

# EMAIL Client

**MFFS 10-Week HIR course – Session 3**

Hi \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

It was great to be with you for session 3 today. The goal of this program is for you to obtain skills and knowledge to develop Healthy Intimate Relationships to improve your day-to-day intimate relationships.

**Our homefun this week is:**

1. Watch:
   1. **Brené Brown Braving - A talk on the anatomy of trust - 10:00 MINS**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G72JWvqdNLA

* + 1. ***What are the main points of this video?***
    2. ***What skills/strategies did I learn?***
    3. ***How can I apply these skills to my own situation?***

1. **Complete Relationship Conflict Resolution worksheet**
2. **Review Equality/Non Violence Handout**

**Do what you can, you do not need to do all of it at once. Breaking it down and doing about 5-10 mins a day can sometimes make it easier. Please reach out to your counsellor if you need support.**

Warm regards,

Your Name