

THE DEPRESSION PREVENTION COURSE

Part II: Instructor Notes

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DEPRESSION PREVENTION RESEARCH PROJECT
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY
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PART II. LECTURE NOTES FOR INSTRUCTORS

Sections in italics are suggested wordings to be used in presenting the material in the Depression Prevention Course. Instructors are encouraged to adapt their explanations to the cultural, linguistic, and educational characteristics of the course participants.

Sections found <between these signs> are suggestions to the instructors.

Chapters and page numbers refer to the book on which this course is based:
Lewinsohn, P. M., Muñoz, R. F., Youngren, M. A., & Zeiss, A. M. (1986).
Control your depression. (Revised ed.). New York: Prentice Hall Press.

CLASS 1 -- HOW THOUGHTS INFLUENCE MOOD

READINGS: Chapters 1, 2, and 3 of Control Your Depression (1986)

MATERIALS NEEDED: 1. Copies of Outline 1
2. Copies of the Daily Mood Graph

1. The purpose of the class

"Welcome to the first session of the Depression Prevention Course. What we would like to do today is to review the purpose of the course, to introduce ourselves, and then to begin to cover some of the ideas that we will be studying.

"This course is part of a research program which is studying people's mood, especially depression. What we are trying to learn is:

- 1) How people control their own mood, that is, the way they feel*
- 2) How people can be taught ways to get better control of their mood,*
- 3) Whether once people are taught these skills, that is, these methods and techniques, they become less likely to become depressed in the future, and*
- 4) What kind of an effect mood has on people's health.*

"We will be asking you to give us your impressions as to how it is going. Classes like this one have been given in a number of places throughout the country before, and what we are trying to do now is to see how they work here. We will be asking you what you thought of each of the classes. We would appreciate it if you could tell us what you liked the most, what you found most practical, and what you didn't find helpful."

"What we will be teaching in the eight sessions is how to control your mood better, so that you will be less likely to become seriously depressed in the future. Today we will be covering some of the basics of how one goes about doing this.

"But before we get going on that, let's go around the room and introduce ourselves."

<I recommend that the instructors begin by introducing themselves, with a very short

introduction that includes some background, including where they are originally from, how long they lived in the area, and their interests, especially as they relate to the course. They can then nod to the person next to them to begin. After everyone has introduced themselves, a few remarks about the similarities among the participants, as well as the variety of backgrounds might be indicated.>

<WHAT TO DO IF THERE IS SILENCE, OR IF SOMEONE SEEMS TO HAVE DIFFICULTY TALKING: *"Sometimes it is hard to get warmed up with a group of people one doesn't know. If you feel you would rather pass at this time, just say "Go ahead" to the next person, or just say "pass." You do not have to share your thoughts if you do not want to. We do find that people find it easier to talk as they get to know each other better.">*

2. What is depression?

"Since we are primarily focusing on feelings of depression, it would be worthwhile to describe what they are like.

"The word "depression" is used in at least two ways. Its everyday meaning has to do with a very common mood that almost everyone has felt at some time or another. People describe this mood as "being in a funk," or "being down," or "being out of sorts," "sad," "blue," "down in the dumps," or just "depressed."

"Are there other words that people have heard to describe this feeling?"

<Encourage participation. Write the words down on the board.>

"The reason there are so many words for this type of feeling is probably because so many people have felt it, and because for different people the feeling is a little different. Try to think of how you feel when you are feeling down, so that we can share with each other what it is like in a couple of minutes. Right now, however, let me tell you that this class is not meant to keep you from ever having these feelings again. That would not be realistic. Having feelings of depression

like this is very normal; it is part of being human. We wouldn't want you to stop feeling sad or disappointed when sad or disappointing things happen to you in life. What we would like to do, however, is to reduce the chances that you will get depressed enough so that your daily functioning or your health are seriously impaired.

"The idea of prevention is something that we use a lot, but which we rarely think about. For example, brushing one's teeth is a way to prevent cavities. This doesn't mean that all people who brush their teeth never get cavities. It means that if you compare a group of people who brush their teeth regularly with another group that doesn't, the group that brushes will have fewer people with cavities, and even those who get cavities will have fewer cavities and smaller cavities on the average than those who do not brush.

"What we are trying to do with this course is to see if those of you who take this course will be less likely to get seriously depressed in the future, and that if any of you do get depressed, the depression won't be as severe or last as long as if you hadn't taken the course.

"We also will be checking to see if learning to feel better in terms of your mood has a positive effect on your physical health. That is why we have asked you for permission to check your medical charts."

"Okay, do people want to describe what it is like for them when they feel depressed?"

<Encourage discussion and participation. Add your own experiences with depression to the discussion. The participants must feel that you know what you are talking about. The belief that the instructor is different from the participants must be dispelled right away. We all experience these feelings. We are all in this together. What the instructor has is more information and training about depression, not an invulnerability to it.>

"Okay. It sounds like we are talking about something that most people have experienced. This is not some type of rare, unusual, or uncommon condition. We have all felt it. Now let's turn to what we are trying to prevent, and that is serious depression, what mental health professionals sometimes refer to as "clinical depression," which means a depression that is severe enough that it should receive professional treatment because it is causing the person a lot

of emotional suffering and disrupting his or her daily life.

"In this sense, depression refers to a symptom of a more complex condition, which also includes some of the following symptoms:

1) Feeling "blue," sad, numb (some people say they just stop feeling any emotions), or irritable (some people don't look depressed, but rather they seem to be angry with the world);

2) Not feeling like doing anything, (losing motivation even for things that usually they like), feeling fatigued (tired all the time, no "pep");

3) Problems in getting along with people (not wanting to talk to people, or go out with them, withdrawing, staying in one's room, or in bed, in order not to have to deal with people, or if one has to be with people, being surly, critical, or complaining, so that it is hard to be with them);

4) Feeling guilty, feeling you deserve to be punished, or that you are being punished. (everyone has at some time during their lives, done something they felt they should not have done, or not done something they felt they should have done. When we get depressed, we start to think and think about such things, calling ourselves "bad," "worthless," "immoral," "irresponsible," and other such things. If bad things are happening to us, we sometimes believe that we deserve them.)

5) Feeling burdened by too many responsibilities. Again, most people have a number of things they "have to do," such as making a living, cleaning house, cooking, looking after kids, or after each other, and so on. And everyone has their favorite things they like to do, and chores that are unpleasant for them; for example, some people prefer to dry the dishes, and others prefer to wash them. However, when one gets depressed, it seems like all the chores are unpleasant, and that there are so many of them, that one will never get them done. We also begin to think that we have it worse than most other people, and that those around us are not pulling their own weight, and leaving it all for us to do. (Sometimes this might be true, of course.)

6) When one becomes clinically depressed, one can also begin to feel more physical symptoms, such as lack of appetite (some people begin to eat too much, also), problems with sleep (insomnia, not being able to fall asleep at night, or waking up too early in the morning,

and not being able to fall asleep again), as well as having all sorts of aches and pains, which may be connected to one's ongoing physical problems, but which seem to get worse when one's mood is bad.

3) How common is depression?

"Depression is very common. At any one time, about 6% of the adult population (that's one in every sixteen people) is depressed enough that they could use professional help. At least once during their lifetime, one out of every six adults in the U.S. will become clinically depressed. Depression is even more common among people who need medical care. It is because depression is so common that we are doing this study. We believe that if we could find ways to prevent depression, this would save a lot of people a lot of suffering."

<Ask people if they have had any experience with depression, if they have known people (they don't have to say who it is) who were depressed, and how it affected those people's lives.>

4) How can one deal with depression?

"There are many ways to deal with depression.

"The way we will teach in this class is based on a psychological theory known as 'Social Learning Theory.'

"A theory is a scientific explanation about how something works. Social Learning Theory tries to explain human behavior in general. Its name includes the words "social" and "learning" because this theory states that most of human behavior can be understood in terms of what we learn to do in social situations. By social situations, what is meant is contact with other people. For example, the theory states that most of what we do is the result of what we have learned from our parents, family, friends, acquaintances, and the other role models, that is, other people we have seen in the mass media, at work, school, in our neighborhood and so on.

4a) "What we learn includes our actions, our thoughts, and our feelings. We learn to talk

and walk and dress in certain ways, we learn to think along certain lines, and we learn to feel happy in response to certain events. For example, people from different places have different accents; there are people who are good at thinking about numbers, or about food flavors, or about sports; and, depending on where you learned to like them, different songs can bring out many different feelings in different people. These actions, thoughts, and feelings are learned. And that means that one can learn other ways to act, think, and feel.

"Most of what we have learned in life has been due to chance. That is, we generally have not decided what we would learn about life. We happened to be born in a certain place, among certain people, and we learned both helpful and harmful things throughout our life. The purpose of this class is to allow each of the students in the class to discover what are the things they learned which contribute to good and bad moods, and then to purposefully, consciously, change those things which produce depression and learn ways to achieve a generally good mood.

4b) "Of the three things which we have been mentioning (that is, actions, thoughts, and feelings), actions and thoughts are easier to change directly.

"If one is feeling depressed, just telling oneself to feel better is usually not very helpful. However, if one is sitting home alone, one could tell oneself to get up and do exercise, turn on the television, pick up a book one has been meaning to read, call up a friend, or go somewhere where there are people one can talk to. Similarly, if one is thinking about all the bad things that have happened in one's life, it is relatively easy to remind oneself of the good things that have happened, or how even the bad things are not as bad as the things that have happened to some other people. Changing thoughts and actions can have an influence on how you feel. Sometimes it makes better sense to work on one's mood indirectly by changing the thoughts and actions which in turn change the mood, rather than attempt to change the mood directly.

"It is important to remember that thoughts, actions, and feelings affect each other. Therefore, there will be times in which feelings of depression will affect the kinds of thoughts

you have or the kinds of things you will do (or not do). It is important at those times to realize that you do not have to be at the mercy of your feelings. Just as the feelings you are experiencing can control your thoughts and actions to some extent, so can you control your feelings by controlling your thoughts and actions.

4c) "By learning which thoughts and actions influence our feelings, we can learn to get more control over our feelings.

"This course is designed to help you to discover which thoughts and actions are most closely related to your mood. We will be doing this very systematically, that is, step by step. Once you learn this, you will be able to have more control over your mood by changing those thoughts and actions.

4d) "To help you change those thoughts and actions, you need to learn:

1. "What comes before the behavior (the antecedents) that make the behavior more likely to occur. Does planning help? Does it help if you tell someone you are going to do it? Does it help if you dress in the right clothes (for example, if you want to exercise)? How can you make it easier to do what you know will help your mood to be better?

<Encourage participation>

2. "What comes after the behavior (the consequences) that make the behavior more likely to be repeated? Does it help to note down that you did it? Does it help to give yourself a mental pat on the back? Does it help to tell someone else how you are doing? Does it help to reward yourself in some small but meaningful way?

<Encourage participation.>

3. "What happens during the behavior (mental factors) that make it easier to continue doing it? Does it help if you tell yourself how well you are doing? Does it help if you give yourself a pep talk as you are doing it? Does it help if you remind yourself why you are doing it? Does it help if you imagine good things happening if you continue?"

<Encourage participation.>

"In future classes we will be covering these things in detail."

5) *"Psychologists have found that there are some strategies which increase the chances that we will actually do what we have decided to do. These strategies are called "self-control skills." We believe that people who have a lot of "will-power" have learned to use these skills so well that they are not even aware they are using them. People who do not have much will power are those who have never learned them. The best way to learn something fast is to do it systematically. Therefore, we will be using these techniques in very specific ways.*

a. *"Rewarding yourself is a very powerful method for learning to do something new or to increase how often you do something that you haven't done very often in the past. Most educators know that this is one of the best methods to motivate students. There are many ways to reward yourself. The most natural way is to notice when you accomplish something and to tell yourself how well you are doing. You can make the rewards more powerful by*

making them more tangible, for example, by promising yourself to go see a movie, to take 30 minutes off during a busy day, or to eat something you like. We believe that people who have a lot of "will power" have learned to do this with themselves, even though many of them are not aware they are doing it."

b. *"Step-by-step change. Many people who get depressed do so because they set up too high a goal for themselves, and, when they don't reach it, they give up and feel bad. It is important, when you are involved in a self-change program, to break up your large goals into little ones. As you accomplish each small part of the goal, you get closer to accomplishing the whole goal. You can also reward yourself more often, instead of waiting until you have done the whole thing.*

c. *"Learning by seeing how others do it. This is one of the best ways to learn. This is how we learned to talk, to walk, to dress, to read and write. And we did this little by little, step-by-step. We were rewarded by our parents for learning to talk, by the way they smiled, or said 'good boy!', 'good girl!'; by a hug, or by their looking happy when we said something. This step-by-step method made it possible for us to learn a whole language in about three to five years. That's amazing! And if you don't think so, you have never had to learn a new language. It's hard!*

"In terms of preventing depression, it is important to learn from others by noticing how others handle situations that are difficult for us. For example, how do other people who have the same type of problems that we have face up to them? Of course, we are going to do better than some people, and worse than others. To learn better ways of dealing with difficult situations, it is good to see how people who are doing it well handle them.

d. *"Keeping track of what you do and how you feel. This is very important if you want to know whether your new skills are working. During this course we will show you how to keep track of your mood, and how to keep track of the things that affect your mood. You want to make sure that the things we are teaching you are really working. To do this, you will keep track of your mood and how it changes throughout the class".*

- e. *“Writing down your plans for what you want to change and how you will reward yourself. This is also very important. It is easier to keep track of your progress when you have things down on paper. We will talk more about this later.”*

FROM BOOK LEARNING TO REAL LIFE

THE MOOD GRAPH: Some of the things that should be emphasized are:

- That people should use the whole range, not just “1”, “5”, and “9”
- That they should do it each day, at the end of the day, and not all at once at the end of the week
- That it will feel more natural as they practice it. (There will be days when it will be hard to decide on an “average” for their mood. They should do the best they can.)
- There is no “right answer”. Only they can determine how they have felt each day.

It might be good to do a practice week on the board so people get a chance to see how it works.

CLASS 2 -- HOW THOUGHTS INFLUENCE MOOD

READINGS: Chapters 5, 9, 10, and 11 of Control your Depression (1986)

REVIEW: Begin the class by briefly mentioning the key ideas from the last class:

1. Depression can be part of normal changes in mood, but it can also be part of a number of symptoms that together are an emotional disorder that should be treated by mental health professionals.
2. Social learning theory is one way of trying to think about human behavior. It states that most human behavior is learned from our social environment. The ways we think, act, and feel are learned, and so, we can learn ways to reduce the chance of our becoming seriously depressed in the future.
3. Self-control. The types of skills that we will be teaching in the class are meant to increase the amount of control we have over ourselves, our thoughts, actions, and feelings. The purpose of teaching these skills is to increase our freedom.

FREEDOM: *"From a social learning point of view, freedom is not seen as an absolute, but rather as something that one can have more or less of (a continuum). For human beings, the social learning concept of freedom refers to the number of alternatives that a person has in any situation. So, if one person can react to a certain situation by choosing from six alternatives, that person has more freedom than another person who only has two alternatives.*

"The purpose of this class is to teach ways to come up with many different reactions to real-life situations. We believe that the more choices a person has, the more likely that person is to choose ways to handle life that will not result in serious depression, and that will help him or her to live a more fulfilling, satisfying life. To get more specific, we know that everyone has times which are hard to handle. By learning a number of different ways to cope, we hope to make it possible that more of you will be able to find ways to handle those tough times in a way that produces a reasonably good outcome under the circumstances. We hope to reduce the number

of times in which you feel powerless or feel that the situation is totally hopeless, and increase the number of times in which you feel in control, and able to get the most out of life.”

THE DAILY MOOD GRAPH: Go over the mood graph. Present your own, or an imaginary one on the board, so that people see what one looks like when it is filled out. Briefly glance at the participants' graphs, to pick up on any trends, or to catch any which are filled out wrong.

<Obtain the daily mood ratings of each person as they walk in, calculate the average mood per day, and display that on the board. Perhaps this could be done on poster paper, or even on a regular sheet with big numbers. Keep those averages for future reference.>

Reinforce the participants for filling out their Mood Graphs. Point out that this is a new skill for many of them, and that they are already learning skills that they may be able to use in their lives. It is imperative that the instructor show by his or her behavior that homework is important, otherwise the participants will not take it seriously. If there are people who have not done their homework, it may be worthwhile to mention some of the excuses that people give themselves for not doing the homework.

IN-CLASS EXERCISE: RELAXATION

“One of the things that is often seen together with depression in people is tension. It is possible that tension contributes to people getting depressed. It is also possible that when people start to get depressed, they become more tense. In either case, the tension adds to the burden of being depressed.

“Tension usually involves both a feeling of being tense as well as actual muscular tension. When the muscles are tense, they are using up energy. This can lead to feeling very tired at the end of the day. In addition, continual muscular tension can produce physical problems, such as pain, headaches, neck aches, and so on. And tension in general can also cause other problems, such as problems with the digestion, ulcers, and so on.

THE DEPRESSION PREVENTION COURSE

Part II: Lecture Notes for Instructors: Lecture 2

"By learning to relax, one can stop wasting one's energy in useless muscle tension, and this energy can then be used to deal with everyday tasks. Many people who go in for treatment of depression find relaxation training very helpful. We will teach you this technique now and practice it in future classes so that you can use it preventively.

"Sit in your chair, with feet flat on the floor, and your body in a comfortable position. We are going to practice a technique called "deep muscular relaxation." This technique involves tensing and relaxing most of the muscle groups in your body.

"First see how I tense and relax my left hand, and you try doing it. Place your hand on your lap, make a fist with it, and tighten up the fist as hard as you can without causing discomfort or pain. Then hold the tension, hold it, feel what it is like to be tense, and then relax the hand all at once. Pay attention to what it is like to relax. What you want to learn is what it is like to be tense and what it is like to be relaxed, so that later you can just remind yourself to relax and you will be able to do so instantly.

"Now I want you to close your eyes so that you can reduce the distractions around you and pay attention only to my instructions for relaxing. You should know that this is not hypnosis. You will be in total control of how much you relax. The purpose of teaching you this is to allow you to develop greater control over yourself, your actions, your thoughts, and your mood. Deep muscle relaxation is a skill that you learn. The more you practice it, the better and faster you will be at relaxing.

"It is also helpful to use your breathing to help you relax more deeply, by combining your breathing with the tension-relaxation exercises. First, allow your breathing to become slow and easy, very smooth, very rhythmic. <Pause> Pay attention to how that feels. <Pause> Allow yourself to imagine that each time you exhale you go deeper and deeper into a state of complete relaxation. Let your breath take you down farther and farther into a very calm, very relaxed state. Some people like to imagine that each time they breathe out, they are going down one more step down a long stairway, and the lower they go, the more relaxed they get. Let your

breath relax you as much as you can, and then we will add the tension-relaxation exercise. A

<Pause.>

"Okay, now, let's begin with your right hand."

<Follow the list of muscle groups in the attached relaxation instructions. Remind participants to use their breathing in between groups. It is sometimes helpful to have them breathe in when they tense up, and breathe out when they relax.>

<The relaxation session should be between 20 and 30 minutes long. All muscle groups should be covered the first time, however, even if it takes longer. In future classes, it is okay to focus on the major muscle groups and skip some of the smaller ones.>

1. Thoughts affect mood.

Specific thoughts make it more or less likely that you will become depressed. This is a key concept that must be accepted by the participants if they are to consider the rest of the class relevant, and the homework worthwhile. It is best to try to illustrate it with examples.

Examples:

"We know that thoughts affect behavior. For example, we keep our doors locked because we think about the fact that there are people who like to steal things, even though that may never have happened to us.

"Thoughts also affect our feelings. For example, if I ask you to remember the most embarrassing moment in your life, you might actually feel embarrassed, and some of you might actually get a little red in the face, even though, of course, nothing embarrassing is going on right now. Similarly, if I ask you to think back to a time in which you were really angry, or really sad, you might feel the same emotion again.

"Thoughts, then, are very powerful, especially because they are always with you, and so they can continually have an effect on your body and mind. People who are always worrying about their problems, never relax. Their bodies are always working: Their muscles are tight, their stomach is churning, their eye and neck muscles are straining. It's no wonder then that they feel

tired, have indigestion, or even ulcers, and get headaches, backaches, and so on. They can also become emotionally exhausted, burned out, or depressed. Once they are depressed, they feel less like doing things, feel more tired, and more pessimistic about whether they can do anything to change things, and so they get into a vicious spiral, in which they worry more, get more depressed, get more tired and less able to carry out their daily activities, and so their problems increase, which gets them more depressed, and so on."

2. Working with thoughts.

"You know, it's amazing to us how little we are taught about how our thoughts affect our lives. Neither at home, nor in school, are we trained to learn to use the power of our thoughts to help us achieve what we want to achieve in life. Of course, people do say things like "That's not a good attitude", or "You are such a negative thinker", but other than comments like that, we do not get real training on exactly which kinds of thinking are good for us, or why.

"I would like to begin to talk about thoughts by going over some of the advantages and disadvantages you will find in working with them. The advantages are that thoughts are always with you. You are always thinking about something, and if you pay attention to what you are thinking, you can usually identify what is making you feel the way you are feeling. Even if a particular thought causes you only minor bother, the fact that it is with you constantly can multiply its power, so that soon you are really bothered by what you know should not be a big deal. Similarly, by telling yourself to think in different ways, you can influence your own mood. We will get to some of the things you can say to yourself next week. Today we will be learning to identify different kinds of thoughts, so that you can begin to work with them.

"It is helpful to think of your thoughts as your internal environment, that is, a world within yourself in which you live most of the time. Just as we are now concerned with the condition of our physical environment, we should also learn to pay attention to the condition of our mental environment. One can think, for example, of mental "pollution", of thoughts and beliefs that muddy up our mental world, which produce negative emotions, negative mind sets, which in turn

THE DEPRESSION PREVENTION COURSE

Part II: Lecture Notes for Instructors: Lecture 2

make our life miserable. In order to turn this around, of course, we need to know which of these thoughts and beliefs are producing this negative effect on us, and what kinds of thoughts might help us counteract the negative ones.

“We should say at this point that our thoughts are not the only source of negative emotions. there are two types of stress that affect a person: stress from outside, and stress from inside. The stress from outside (external stress) refers to the stress from life in a imperfect world, from lack of money, from illness, from losing loved ones at times, from the conflict and the violence that is real and that is written up in the papers, and talked about in TV and the radio. There are a lot of problems in the world, and it would be unrealistic to try to ignore them. They do affect our mood.

“Internal stress is the type of stress that is produced within us as reaction to the external stress, or the type that we produce ourselves because we have learned unhealthy ways of thinking. This type of stress can include things we say to ourselves, muscular tension, and tension we might produce in our lives with the people with whom we live, for example, taking out our frustrations with our families, friends, or neighbors.”

“The total amount of stress that affects us can be figured out by adding the stress from the outside and the stress from the inside. Although there are no really exact ways to figure this out in terms of numbers, we can imagine an example that will demonstrate how we can affect this total.

THE DEPRESSION PREVENTION COURSE

Part II: Lecture Notes for Instructors: Lecture 2

“Let’s say that two people have the same negative experience happen to them, for example, getting sick with the same illness. Let’s say that the kind of illness they both get produces 100 points of stress in terms of pain, discomfort, and so on. These would be the objective, external sources of stress for these two people, and in this case, both would have 100 points worth of external stress.

“Now, let’s look at how the two people react to the illness. One person (let’s call her Linda) realized how much trouble the illness will be, and she decides that she is not going to let the illness get her down anyway. She will do what she needs to do to take care of herself, but she will also take care of other parts of her life so that the illness doesn’t become her whole life. Instead of thinking of herself as “a sick person”, she decides to think of herself as a person who is good, decent, who has friends, who has plans for her life, and who also happens to have an illness. In reacting to her illness, Linda has produced some internal stress, of course (we can’t expect that she will be totally unaffected by having an illness), but it is not very much. Let’s say it is 25 points of internal stress.

“The other person, (let’s call him David), reacts very badly to the illness. For him, the illness represents terrible bad luck, he feels that he is being punished for something, or that he doesn’t deserve this illness and that it is unfair for him to get sick. He becomes angry at other people who are healthy (as far as he knows, anyway). He stops getting together with friends, becomes sullen and hard to talk to at home, so that everyone in the family feels that David is always angry. When they try to cheer him up, he says ‘If you were sick, you wouldn’t feel like having fun either.’ Soon he has become a bitter man, whose friends are afraid to talk to him, and who thinks of himself primarily as a ‘sick man’. By his reaction to the illness, David has produced a large amount of internal stress, let’s say around 150 points worth of stress.

“If we look at Linda’s and David’s total stress level, we can see how one’s reactions to external stress can create very different levels of total stress. Linda’s external stress is 100, and her internal stress is 25, for a total of 125. David’s external stress is 100, and his internal stress is 150, for a total of 250. David has twice as much total stress as Linda, even though they both

have the same illness. Our purpose in this course is to find out how to reduce total stress by reducing internal stress.

"Let's go back to the outline now. We had just been emphasizing the fact that thoughts are always with you. People are always thinking, even though they are often not aware of what they are thinking about. This is not unusual. The best example is that of reading something, getting to the bottom of the page, and then realizing that 'your mind was somewhere else.' In this case, one is not aware of what one is thinking about until the reading process (in this case, having to turn the page) breaks up your thought so you realize what has happened. Once we get into the habit of doing anything, it is easy to do it without being aware of it (like chewing one's fingernails or playing with one's hair or beard).

"The thing about thoughts, however, is that, thoughts have meaning, and therefore they affect people's mood. In many ways, your thoughts have an effect on you that is similar to that of people saying things to you. Children learn to do things that grownups tell them. A small child who is told not to touch a hot stove will often point to the stove and say 'No. Hot!' and maybe shake his head. He or she is learning to control the impulse to touch the stove by telling himself or herself what parents have said. Even adults use this method of "talking to oneself" when we are doing something that is out of the ordinary. For example, when we are going somewhere for the first time, we often carry on a conversation in our head that is like the directions we were given. We might say 'Let's see, go down Potrero Avenue to 23rd Street, find the seven story gray building, go up the seventh floor, turn right, then left....' There is nothing wrong in talking to yourself like this. We all do it. Once we do it often enough, however, we don't notice it anymore. And we don't notice the effect the things we say to ourselves have on us.

"To learn to use this process to our advantage, we first have to learn to recognize different types of thoughts.

- 3. "For the purpose of this course, by 'thoughts' we will mean 'sentences we tell ourselves.'*
- 4. "There are at least three kinds of thoughts you should learn to recognize: Constructive vs. destructive thinking has to do with the effect that these thoughts have on people. If you think*

THE DEPRESSION PREVENTION COURSE

Part II: Lecture Notes for Instructors: Lecture 2

of it in terms of how you would feel if people said things to you, this distinction makes a lot of sense. There are people who are good for your morale. They know what to say so that you will feel good about what you are doing. They give 'constructive criticism', criticism that helps you 'stay together,' that 'builds up' your self-esteem. Then there are people who say 'destructive things', things which help people 'fall apart', that 'destroy' your self-confidence.

<Encourage participation here. Have the group come up with examples of these types of things people can say, and move to thoughts people can have that have similar constructive or destructive effects.>

"Necessary vs. unnecessary thinking refers to thoughts that make a difference vs. those which don't make a difference. There are thoughts which might be a 'pain,' but which we need to keep in mind in order to get through our daily routines, things like 'I have to take out the garbage,' or 'I have to get a shot next week,' and so on. Then there are other thoughts that are a 'pain,' but which are not necessary because it doesn't matter how much you think about them. These kinds of thoughts are thoughts like 'there is going to be an earthquake any day now.' (Especially if you don't do anything about it, like moving out of the area, or getting emergency food and water ready, or other helpful actions.) When unnecessary thoughts are endangering your peace of mind, it is time to put a stop to them."

<Encourage participation here. Ask for examples of these kinds of thoughts.>

"Positive vs. Negative Thoughts. These are thoughts that affect your mood for the better or for worse. These are possibly the easiest thoughts to learn to recognize, and they are the ones that most has been written about in the past. This is where the 'positive thinking' approach comes from, which many people have found useful in bettering their mood.

<Encourage participation. Get examples.>

<You may want to say something here about the fact that this course is not just a "positive thinking" course, but that it involves many other self-control strategies.>

5. Thinking Errors.

Go over the errors listed. See list of thinking errors in David Burn's book Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy,

6. Keeping track of thoughts.

Have people make their own personal lists of thoughts which are prevalent in their minds these days. They can suggest some for the "group list" (referred to in the outline as "Let's make a list together") but the focus should be in getting them started on their own lists.

Then pass out 3x5 cards, at least seven (one per day) to each participant. Have them put a "+" on one side, and a "-" on the other. Suggest that they keep track of "important" (that is mood-influencing) thoughts throughout their day. One good strategy is to take out the card at breakfast, lunch, dinner and bedtime, and jot down the thought occurring during the last part of the day.

HOMEWORK: Read homework assignment.

1. Continue Mood Graph. (Have copies ready.)
2. Practice relaxation. (20 minutes twice a day is the bet.)
3. Begin tracking thoughts on 3x5 cards.

CLASS 3 -- LEARNING TO CHANGE YOUR THOUGHTS

READINGS FOR THE INSTRUCTOR: REVIEW CHAPTERS 9, 10, AND 11

REVIEW: Remind the participants briefly about the purpose of the course: to teach them ways in which they can have greater control over their mood.

Review the social learning assumptions about 1) how people learn to think, act, and feel, and 2) how thoughts and actions can affect mood and therefore, how one way to get a handle on one's mood is to learn which thoughts and actions help one feel better. Eventually, one will actually learn to feel better without having to think as much about the specific techniques.

Go over the Mood Graph. Have participants add up their positive and negative thoughts from their 3x5 cards and write them under their mood scores for each day. Then they should look at the two highest and lowest mood scores. Are there any trends yet? For example, are the number of negative thoughts the largest on the days with the worst mood? Even if only one or two participants actually show this trend, it is worthwhile to emphasize the relationship between mood and thoughts. A brief discussion of anecdotal material from the participants regarding any noticed relationship between their thoughts and their mood is useful at this stage.

Drawing up an individualized "inventory of thoughts" (see page 226) is helpful at this time to pinpoint for each person the types of thoughts (the "themes" if you will) that are most salient for the participant at this time.

What is likely to come up at this time is that sometimes the mood comes first and the thoughts follow. This is a good time to remind participants about the circular nature of thoughts, action, mood, thoughts, etc. no matter where the circle begins, one can enter it at any place and affect the process.

In order to give the participants as much information as possible to take with them, for this session the outline is fairly extensive, detailing each of the thought-change methods. Conversely, the instructor's lecture notes are relatively short. The techniques are detailed in the outline, and

also covered in the pages indicated in the book.

1. Priming. (p. 149)
2. Self-reward. (p. 151)
3. Thought interruption. (p. 147)
4. Obsessive time. (“Worrying time”) (p. 148)
5. The Blow-up Technique. (p. 148)
6. The worst that could happen. (Not covered in the book. Self-explanatory.)
7. Time projection. (p. 152)
8. The Pause. (Not covered in the book.) This is meant to be a very short pause less than a minute long. Its purpose is to give the user a feeling of control over his or her own thoughts, even for a minute. The technique is ideal for situations which appear overwhelming, in which the person feels as though in the middle of a rushing river of events, with a subjective feeling of being out of control. The pause allows the person to experience the fact that one can set up a mental “safety zone” within which one can rest briefly, regain some perspective, and allow one’s energy to build up enough to tackle the situation. It is also meant to give the user practice in finding that subjective state of being at peace, relaxed, inwardly still, which can serve as a refuge from hectic situations.
9. Self-instructions. (Chapter 11)
10. Relaxation practice. Repeat relaxation training, but do it much faster. (Approximately 15 minutes).
11. Review of types of thoughts to recognize. (From Session 2)
12. Beliefs. Becoming familiar with the book by Ellis would be most helpful. Chapter 10 in Control Your Depression (1986) gives helpful hints on how to present the material.
13. An argument for optimism is self-explanatory.

I like to accompany this presentation with a figure as follows:

I begin with the leftmost dot and show that at any instant, one can choose how to think and act, and these choices will have a positive (upward) or negative (downward) effect on one's mood. (The figure represents time from left to right, with each column being "an instant", and mood on the vertical axis, with up being feeling good, down feeling depressed, and the row in the middle being average mood). The ideal level of mood would be above or at the middle row most of the time. Between columns, I draw arrows as I exemplify a thought or an action one can choose to engage in. Thus I can show graphically the changes in mood that come about due to specific thoughts and actions.

A more detailed explanation of the self-fulfilling prophecy, with examples, is helpful here. The examples should have to do with mood as much as possible.

HOMEWORK:

1. Daily Mood Graph continues.
2. Continue self-monitoring thoughts. Place greater emphasis on keeping a count of positive and negative thoughts on the 3x5 cards.
3. Have participants jot down the techniques they tried out and how they worked (to discuss their experiences with them next week.)

CLASS 4 -- HOW ACTIVITIES AFFECT MOOD

READINGS FOR THE INSTRUCTOR: The instructor should read Chapter 6 of Control Your Depression (1986) and fill out the Pleasant Activities Schedule prior to teaching this class.

REVIEW: Remind participants that the purpose of the course is to learn to control one's mood better, and that so far we have been looking at how thoughts affect one's mood. Today's lecture has to do with how one's activities affect one's mood.

Go over the mood graph. Go over the number of positive and negative thoughts for the week. Have students find the three best and three worst mood days. Have them average the number of positive and negative thoughts for the best and worst days. Is there a relationship?

Discuss which techniques covered last week were most helpful, and exactly how they were used. Which ones did people find did not work well? Perhaps different people found different techniques helpful. Use this to show that the main thing is to remember that what we are after is to give people a lot of alternative ways to influence their mood. No one will find all of them useful. The important thing is to try as many as possible so you can find the ones that work best for you.

Are the positive and negative themes that people are discovering in their 3 x 5 cards changing, or are they generally the same? If there are patterns, these patterns might be good targets for the techniques that we will teach in future classes. For example, if one issue is having too many things that one has to do versus things one wants to do, it might be good to keep this in mind as we start to focus on pleasant activities. If the patterns are around relationship issues, this might be something to cover during interpersonal skills training.

1. "The fewer pleasant activities people do, the more depressed they feel."

This is a very commonsensical notion, as are most of the techniques we cover in the course.

In a way, the more commonsensical the techniques, the closer they will be connected to everyday issues, and the more understandable they will be for most people. One hopes that, when we are talking about how human beings tick, the explanations we give will be readily acceptable to human beings, as opposed to being esoteric and distant from everyday experience.

This particular concept needs to be highlighted in two ways:

First, the usual explanation is that one does fewer things when one feels down. And this explanation is correct, but incomplete. A more complete explanation is that reducing pleasant activities makes you feel worse, and feeling worse reduces your pleasant activity level, which makes you feel even worse, and so on. The concept being addressed here is a key concept for the whole course, and has been addressed before, namely the reciprocal nature of these processes. This concept is what makes it possible to suggest to people that increasing their pleasant activities even when they feel bad, can elevate their mood.

Second, this approach has been used successfully in the treatment of depression, with people who were feeling low, and not feeling like doing much. As they began to increase their pleasant activities, their mood improved. Then, of course, they felt like doing more pleasant things, and their increased pleasant activity level became more “natural”.

2. The “chicken and egg” question is met here head on.

It is best to ask participants to give examples of both kinds of possibilities, that is, times when they felt bad and reduced their activity level, and times when they reduced their activity level, and then began to feel bad.

Here are a couple of illustrative examples to sprinkle through the discussion:

a. Many people find it hard to move from one location to another. One reason this is so is because people, places, and activities they were used to and which were pleasant for them are no longer available to them at the new location. It takes a while to develop new friendships, to find places where one can feel comfortable, and to begin to engage in activities that one enjoys. The point here is that, in addition to missing the people they left behind, their usual level of pleasant activities has gone down a lot, and it has placed an additional burden on their mood. As they find ways to increase their level of pleasant activities, their mood improves, although they usually

continue to miss their distant loved ones.

b. When people have to reduce their usual level of activity because of an illness, the reason many feel low (in addition to their sadness at having the illness, and perhaps having pain or discomfort) is that their usual level of activity is reduced. People who cope well with their illness usually find alternative ways of keeping themselves busy with things they find enjoyable and meaningful, even if this means changing their interests from say, participating in sports to learning to enjoy being a spectator, or from physical activities to mental or creative activities. In this way, two people with the same disease, and with the same level of pain or discomfort, might feel very differently emotionally. The one who has learned to find new ways of enjoying life will feel better than the one whose pleasant activity level dropped and was not replaced with alternative ways to feel good.

3. Thinking about the answer to the “chicken and egg” question.

The purpose here is to start to sow the seed for the interpersonal skills sessions, and other issues that may come up in the future. Specifically, we want participants to begin to use the reciprocal determinism concept across a number of issues. We have just had a discussion of how mood and activity level affect each other; at this time, other examples can be used.

For instance, the way a relationship is formed could be discussed, and how the way we are treated by others can be influenced to some degree by the way we treat others.

<This is a good place to bring out the probabilistic nature of life in general and of these techniques in particular. We are not saying that the way we treat others determines totally how they will treat us. What we are saying is that it is more likely (or that the probability is higher) that we will be treated well if we treat others well. Similarly, we are not saying that if you engage in a lot of pleasant activities you will definitely feel better. What we are saying is that the chances are increased that your mood will be better, or that most of the time, when you increase your activities, your mood will improve. For those times in which it does not, you can try other methods, such as looking at what you are thinking, or your interpersonal relationships, or other areas in your life. This probabilistic concept can be disappointing to some people, but it also has a preventive effect in that, if used properly, it can serve as a buffer against discouragement if the

methods they choose to use first do not have an immediate effect.>

4. The concept of the vicious cycle.

In a way, the vicious cycle can be better described as a vicious spiral. The concept of the consequences of engaging in specific thoughts or actions on ones mood is best exemplified with a directional metaphor, that is, the less you do, the lower you move into a depressed mood, and the more you do, the higher you move.

5. Self-explanatory.

6. Pleasant events are very individualized.

We are not trying to get people to engage in activities that other (even most people) consider pleasant. Individuals have their own preferences. Pleasant events should be enjoyable or meaningful to people.

See pp. 73-75 in Chapter 6.

It is also important to point out that pleasant activities need not be expensive or really special. In fact, the more non-special they are, the more of them you can build into your everyday life. It is fine, of course, to set up special pleasant events into your life at regular intervals. This can provide you with the pleasant event of thinking about how nice it will be to do your special activity.

<This brings up another point: Pleasant activities can be internal or external. Many of our pleasant activities are mental. In fact, to some extent, our mental activities can determine whether something is pleasant or not. If we feel guilty about having fun, for example, this will spoil pleasant events.>

7. Not only are pleasant events individually defined, but the level of pleasant activities is also an individual matter. Some people need fewer pleasant activities to feel good.

For example, older people in general engage in fewer numbers of pleasant activities, but their mood is generally not much different from that of younger people. It may be that older people have learned through the years which activities are truly more enjoyable for them, and that they are more efficient at picking things they really find pleasant. Younger people engage in many more activities, but may be less good at knowing which they really like.

8. Depending on the participants, the following analogy might be useful:

As human beings are learning more and more about the world, they are also learning more and more about what makes us tick. One hopes that as we learn more things, we will be better able to help ourselves live the kinds of lives we want, to be healthy, to feel good.

One of the things we are learning is that we can control our bodies a lot better than we used to think we could. There is a method called biofeedback which allows people to increase their control over such things as their heartbeat, their skin temperature, and even their brain waves. The way this works is by letting people see exactly how fast their heartbeats (by measuring their heart beat the people know how fast it is beating) and then asking them to try to increase or decrease their heart beat. When people are told whether their heart is changing speed of beating, they can actually learn to do so on purpose. That's why the method is called "biofeedback," because people get feedback (that is, they are told how well they are doing) about a biological function.

We think that getting feedback about how your behavior affects your mood can help you to get better control over your mood. This is a kind of "behavior feedback." Specifically, you will learn what level of activities (and exactly which activities) are connected to your mood level.

To come up with an individualized list of activities, we have developed a questionnaire which lists a large number of activities that many people consider pleasant. Out of these activities you will identify 100 which you will then keep track of. (Actually, 90 will come from the PES, and 10 are self-generated, in order to allow people to add activities relevant to them that are not in the PES.)

The rest of the instructions are in the book.

However, follow the handout directions for coming up with the list.

"A note about how the PES was developed:

"Large numbers of people living in Eugene, Oregon, were asked to write down activities which they themselves considered pleasant. All of these activities were placed on very large lists, and more people were asked to rate them in terms of how please they considered them. Based on the ratings from these people, the final list of 320 items were decided on. It must be

THE DEPRESSION PREVENTION COURSE
Part II: Lecture Notes for Instructors: Lecture 4

remembered that these activities will be pleasant for some people and not for others. In fact, there are some activities which may be considered unpleasant, or even immoral by some people.

We are not saying that if you do all of these activities you will feel better. We want you to use this list to come up with those activities which affect your own mood in a positive direction.”

9. Relaxation. “As you get better at relaxation, you will be able to do it as you are doing things around the house, at work, or as you are visiting people and at other times. The purpose is to allow you to let yourself relax as you go about your usual activities. Therefore, we will be getting faster and faster at doing these practices, so you can see how fast one can relax oneself.”

This relaxation session and the future ones should be gradually reduced to no more than five minutes.

HOMEWORK:

1. Use Daily Mood Graph.
2. Continue tracking thoughts. Total number of positive and negative thoughts will be recorded in the mood graph form.
3. Total number of pleasant activities can also be transferred to the mood graph form.

CLASS 5 - INCREASING PLEASANT ACTIVITIES

READING: REVIEW CHAPTER 6, Control your Depression (1986).

MATERIALS NEEDED:

1. Outline for participants.
2. Worksheet (5)

Includes: Have to/Want to list,
Nearby Pleasant Activities, and
Reward list

3. Contract (2 pages)
4. Mood graph for the week

REVIEW: Go over Mood Graph. (Transfer to participants' summary graph.)

Ask people for their individualized list of pleasant activities (to record their number of activities per day) and lead a discussion about how it was keeping track of them.

Did they learn anything in the process? Are there some activities that were hard to enjoy? Why? (Too tired, too expensive, too many people around, too anxious?)

Are there some activities that they hadn't done in a long time and which they really enjoyed and would like to do more often?

1. Planning for pleasant events.

"One of the greatest problems that people have with the pleasant events list is that they don't have time to do the pleasant events. Just thinking that makes some people feel bad! What we have to do, then is to try to increase the chances that we will do them. Once we are doing them, the activities will feel good, and we will get used to doing them, and it will get easier and easier. But getting started is hard, even if what we are trying to do is fun.

"The best way to get something done, is to plan for it in advance.

"Once you plan something, you commit yourself to do it, which means that you have made a choice to do it, you have placed doing it high on your priority list, and you have placed it in perspective, that is, you have thought about how it fits into your life.

"Another reason for planning ahead of time is to make sure that you are balancing what you have to do with what you want to do. One of the reasons people don't do pleasant things is that they feel they are not finished with all the stuff they have to do. By planning ahead you can make sure that you are done with what is absolutely necessary, and that you build in some recreation time."

<"Recreation" = Re-creation, that is, creating yourself new again. Every time you take control over a part of your life, even something that seems as unimportant to some people as doing pleasant things, you help to create the person you are going to be in the future.>

Changing the "future-past":

"Sometimes people think about what things would have been like if they had done something or other in the past, say ten years ago. Yet, everyone knows that one cannot change the past. Or can one?

"See what you think of this idea, which is a way of "changing the past", only in this case, it is the "future past".

"Consider a person who is thinking like the one above, that things would have been a lot

better if she had begun to do this or that ten years ago: "How different things would be now," she thinks. Now use time projection to move forward inside your imagination ten years in time. Imagine yourself thinking about the past ten years. What kind of things would you like to have done in that time? What kind of person would you like to have become in that time? Stay ten years ahead in your imagination for a minute more. While still there, think: "It would have been nice to have started doing this or that ten years ago!"

"Now, consider the fact that today will be that "ten years ago" when it really is ten years later, way in the future. There in the future, your past, in this case ten years' worth of your past, will no longer be changeable. Your future past will have already happened. But right now, it is still ahead of you, and you can "change it", that is, you can control it, you can make it be more of what you'd like it to be, so that ten years from now it will be the "past" that you have made yourself."

"Balancing what has to be done with what you would like to do can be a way of getting more control over your pleasant activities.

"Take a piece of paper, draw a line down the middle, and write "Have To" on the left side, and "Want To" on the right hand side. Consider the week ahead, and start writing down the things that you have to do this week. If there are things that you feel you have to do someday, but not necessarily this week, write those on the back of the paper. Don't try to do everything in one week! Now think of the kinds of things that it would be fun to do this week and that could be done this week. Again, if there are pleasant things which you have been wanting to do for a long time, but which take a lot of time, or a lot of money, or a lot of preparation, write them on the back of the sheet for future reference. Your list for this week should only include things that are reasonable to do in one week.

"Now you can start to plan. The goal of your plan should be to balance the things you have to do with the things you want to do. That does not mean you must do exactly as many have to's as want to's, because some activities take longer than others and are worth more in terms of energy and involvement. The goal is to make sure that you are spending more time than in the

THE DEPRESSION PREVENTION COURSE
Part II: Lecture Notes for Instructors: Lecture 5

past doing things that are pleasant so that you do not feel that you are only doing things that you have to do.

"Pick at least one pleasant thing per day for each day of this week that you will actually do.

"For example, you might have the following list:

Wednesday: Listen to a record I love to hear but haven't heard for months (or years).

Thursday: Spend 30 minutes purposefully doing nothing, 'lounging around'. (Pick a specific place to do this. It could be your bedroom, browsing through the library, walking slowly or sitting in a nice outdoor setting, and so on.)

Friday: Pick a special television program you are interested in and set things up so you can watch it undisturbed.

Saturday: Call someone on the phone whom you have been meaning to talk to but hadn't made time to call. (Long distance rates are cheaper on the weekend!)

Sunday: Arrange to do something in the company of other people.

Monday: Buy yourself something fun and not too expensive.

Tuesday: Read something leisurely, just for fun. For example, a magazine, or parts of the Sunday paper.

"Each of these would be just one special treat you give yourself each day. You would also be trying to do as many pleasant events from your 100 item list as you can.

"By anticipation we mean thinking about what might interfere with your plans and solving these possible problems ahead of time.

"For example, in order to watch a television program undisturbed you might have to make arrangements for someone to take care of things during that hour or two, such as answering the phone, taking care of children, or even (if you don't own a television set), arranging to visit someone who does.

"Another example might be having two or three alternative places where you could go nothing, such as a park, an indoor shopping mall, and a library. This way, if a park was your

THE DEPRESSION PREVENTION COURSE
Part II: Lecture Notes for Instructors: Lecture 5

first choice, and it rains, you could go to the mall instead: and if the mall is closed for some reason, you could go to the library, or even go home and soak in the tub.

"Pick a specific special pleasant event now, and see if you can think of how to increase the chances that you will do it, by planning ahead."

<At this time it is good to ask for examples from people who don't mind sharing their special events, and how they plan to make sure they do happen.>

"By resisting demands on your time, we mean being able to negotiate around obstacles that can get in the way of your doing things. If people are likely to ask you to do things for them at times in which you had planned to do a special pleasant event, for example, you simply say that you had another commitment at that time, or simply say you cannot do it (without explaining why - that's okay to do), or offer to help with the particular request at another time (earlier or later).

"One of the things depressed people often feel is a lack of control over their own life. By planning for pleasant events, for meaningful events in your everyday life, you will be learning to increase your control over your life, as well as to increase your feeling of control."

2. Focus on the relationship between thoughts and activities: Are there thoughts that will make it more likely that they will do the pleasant activities? Are there thoughts that reduce the chances that they will do them?

Are there thoughts that help them enjoy the pleasant activities? (E.G., "I work hard, I deserve to have fun," or "The more pleasant activities I do, the better I will feel, and the more energy I'll have to do the things I have to do.")

Are there thoughts that make it harder for them to enjoy what they are doing? (E.G., "This is kids' stuff. I am an adult; I shouldn't need to do fun stuff to feel good," or "I haven't done all my chores: I shouldn't relax until I have finished them (of course, one is never done, so one can never relax.)"

3. *"Another big problem that people have regarding increasing their pleasant activities is*

THE DEPRESSION PREVENTION COURSE
Part II: Lecture Notes for Instructors: Lecture 5

feeling that pleasant activities cost a lot of money. Although it is true that some pleasant activities cost a lot of money, it is important to remember that there are many things one can do which are free or at least inexpensive."

<This is a good chance to exemplify how telling yourself "To do pleasant things you need a lot of money" can work against you, while telling yourself "I want to do more pleasant things which don't cost much. Let's try to think what things I can do that are free or inexpensive" will increase your chances of coming up with some good ones, will give you a greater feeling of control, and increase the pleasantness in your life.>

"Let's help ourselves by coming up with a list of things one can do nearby that are free or don't cost much.

<You should allow the group to carry this task through, but be ready to step in and get them warmed up if there is too long a silence.

<Here are some possibilities:

1) In San Francisco, public transportation, the "MUNI" is reasonably cheap. With \$1.00 (less if you are a senior) one can:

- < Go to the ocean, to walk on the beach
- < Go to Aquatic park, walk through Ghirardelli Square, the Cannery
- < Go to Fisherman's Wharf, walk to Pier 39
- < Go to Golden Gate Park
- < Go Downtown, window shop, watch the people

2) The public libraries are free, quiet, with literally thousands of books to browse through, read, and even borrow. Some also lend phonograph records and videotapes. They also have computer terminals.

3) There are bargain matinees at many movie theaters, where you can see good movies for four dollars or less, which usually cost six to 10 dollars at regular times. (Pick a double feature, and get even more for your money!)

4) There are free public lectures at many places throughout the city. These are listed in the pink

section of the Sunday paper.

- 5) There are jogging courses at many parks, including some which have exercise courses built in.
- 6) People come from all over the world just to be in San Francisco. It can be such a waste to be here and not take advantage of its beautiful sights, its architecture, its street artists, and so on.
- 7) Free concerts take place at different parts of the city.
- 8) City College offers low cost courses to San Francisco residents in a number of areas. One can take them for fun, or to actually obtain a college degree.
- 9) One can volunteer to help out a number of causes. This is a good way to feel really needed, and to meet people who have similar interests.
- 10) Some museums, the zoo, the symphony, and other organizations have special days in which entrance fees are reduced or even free. You can be on the lookout for those days.>

4. Relaxation Practice. Relaxing while active.

The focus of practice sessions now should be how to make them really short and really deep (in terms of relaxation). The point is to make them so easy to do that participants can actually practice them during their everyday routines.

This practice session should be done with eyes open. Do not use tension and relaxation this time. The use of cues, such as taking a deep breath and letting it out slowly, or "taking inventory" of every part of their body quickly and relaxing each part that feels tense, can be very helpful. Use imagery, especially tactual imagery, which interferes less with paying attention to what one is doing.

5. Trying out a self-change program:

"The self-change goal for this week is to increase the number of pleasant activities in your life.

"To do this, we suggest that you use a contract with yourself."

<Hand out the contract form>

THE DEPRESSION PREVENTION COURSE
Part II: Lecture Notes for Instructors: Lecture 5

"The contract for this week should have two parts:

"First, to increase the average number of pleasant activities for the week. Let's say you averaged 25 pleasant activities per day during the first seven days that you kept track. This week you are to increase the number of activities by 1, 3, or 5 activities per day. In other words, for this week choose a number higher than your average, and try to do at least that many activities per day. (You can do more, of course.)

"Secondly, use your list of 'nearby pleasant activities' as another goal, that is, doing one special activity this week.

"In addition to the activities which you agree to do, you should also put into your contract rewards for fulfilling it. For example, you should have daily rewards for meeting your daily goals, and perhaps a special weekly reward for meeting your goals five, six, or seven out of seven days.

"Daily rewards should be small but meaningful for you, that is, something that would really motivate you, but that is not hard to give yourself. Weekly rewards should be something specially rewarding, perhaps something more elaborate, or something that takes longer to do."

"Let's come up with a list of rewards."

6. This section is meant to increase chances that people will be successful in achieving the goals they have set for themselves. The purpose is to deal with doubts or arguments they might use on themselves (not necessarily on purpose) that will be obstacles to reach their goals.

7. This is a time for general discussion regarding the purpose of the course.

Issues regarding gaining greater control over their mood and over their lives should be covered. Comments regarding the nature of probabilities in human history and how they apply to individuals might be mentioned, as follows:

"As human beings have lived in the world longer, they have attempted to gain greater control over the things that happen to us by chance. Instead of relying on gathering food from

THE DEPRESSION PREVENTION COURSE
Part II: Lecture Notes for Instructors: Lecture 5

plants that grow naturally, for example, we began to choose plants to grow, and to water them, and even develop new breeds of plants to increase the chances that we would have the food we needed. By now we have even learned to store food, freeze it, etc., so that we can eat things even out of season. What all these advances do is to increase the chances of positive things happening, in this case, having food to eat. This doesn't mean that people never go hungry. Many still do. But a large percentage of humanity now has enough to eat all the time. Perhaps someday we will be able to say that about all humanity. It is up to all of us humans to help that to happen.

"The purpose of this course is to see if we can help people to change the probabilities for living a more fulfilling life, for preventing serious depression, so that positive feelings are more likely to be part of their lives, more of the time, and so that they can have tools with which to handle difficulties in the future. How much it is possible to do about this is not known at this time. Projects such as this one are trying to find out how much we can push back the boundaries of what is now considered ordinary, normal, inescapable, or unavoidable suffering.

"There are many examples of ways in which human beings have learned to do things which most people would have said we had zero chances of doing. Years ago, human beings would have said it was impossible for people to be underwater for more than four or five minutes, and survive. Now we have scuba gear and submarines. Years ago, it was known that if any one fell from a great height, he or she would die. Now we have parachutes, hang gliders, even individual flying platforms. Years ago it was said that if God had meant for humans to fly, God would have given us wings. Now flying is a very ordinary event. When I was born, most intelligent people would have said that chances of going to the moon were zero. Now we know we can do it.

"All of these examples can be seen as instances in which human beings were faced with situations in which the probability of doing what we wanted was considered zero, or near zero, and, by thinking carefully about the problem, and by experimenting with ideas that made sense we were able to change those probabilities, and accomplished things that are positive for us and

our descendants.

“We hope that as we progress in our work with preventing depression, we will discover ways to reduce the amount of suffering from loss of hope, and make it possible for more people to remain feeling enthusiastic about life, satisfied, and able to share that satisfaction with their loved ones.

“You do not have to wait to put these ideas into practice. There is no reason why you can't experiment with your own life, and test these ideas, picking out the ones that work for you, and sharing what you find with your family and friends. You might find that things that used to make you depressed can be handled in more constructive ways, so that you do not add the burden of depression to the other burdens that life sometimes places on us.”

HOMEWORK: As described in outline.

CLASS 6 -- HOW CONTACTS WITH PEOPLE AFFECT MOOD

READINGS: CHAPTERS 8 and 9 of Control Your Depression

REVIEW: Go over Mood Graph for last week. Obtain weekly averages.

Have participants find their two best-mood days and their two worst-mood days.

Have them check the number of pleasant activities which they had during their two best and two worst days.

Are the number of pleasant activities related to their mood during those days?

Have people give examples.

How are their number of pleasant activities going?

Have R.A.'s average the number of pleasant activities for the first week they were tracked and for this past week. Are the averages increasing?

How did the contracts work? Any problems?

How about the rewards? Did it feel like they helped? Which rewards worked the best for people? Which didn't work?

Going back to thoughts to keep them in mind: Were there particular thoughts which were most helpful in getting the number of pleasant activities high? Were there thoughts which got in the way of increasing their pleasant activities?

1. See pages 107-108
2. Repeat the reciprocal determinism concept to encourage participants to get together with others even if they don't feel like it. The more positive interactions they have the better they will feel and then they'll feel like it and it will feel more natural.
3. Self-explanatory. The instructor can add to this if it feels appropriate but keep it simple. Emphasize points a) and b).
4. See pp.119 -121 and pp. 185-193.

5. See pp. 108-119.
6. See pp. 125-139, and Chapter 8.
7. This is meant to be a group exercise. The point is to brainstorm ways to increase pleasant social contacts.

HOMEWORK:

Continue Mood Graph and Pleasant activities monitoring.

Have people track their daily interactions on 3x5 cards just as they tracked thoughts. Place a "+" on one side of the card and a "-" on the other and take out the card and fill it in at breakfast, lunch, dinner, and bedtime.

CLASS 7 - INCREASING INTERPERSONAL ACTIVITIES

READINGS: CHAPTER 8

REVIEW: Get averages for daily mood graph. Show how averages have been changing from week to week. (They should have been getting better.)

Get averages for pleasant activities. Are they increasing also? Did anybody continue using their contract from last week? If so, reinforce them.

Encourage discussion about the interpersonal interactions. Which were pleasant, which were negative? Which do people wish they had handled differently?

1. Fairly self-explanatory.

Encourage people to make suggestions. Acknowledge that it is easier to give advice than to take it. Therefore, tell them to feel free to come up with ideas for each other. Some of them might be dynamite.

2. Where does one meet people nearby?

Encourage group participation.

<Note that these two sections have been dealing with “increasing your network of people”, or increasing the number of people that you know. The next two sections deal with what you do once you know them.>

3. and 4. After going over these points, suggest that they use another contract form to increase the number of pleasant interactions they have had. Take the number they had last week, average it across the week, and, as we did before, try to increase the number by having them do at least the average number each day.

5. Relaxation exercise should again be quick and focused on relaxing when one is in the

company of others.

<The class up to now should have taken less than one hour. The second hour should be spent primarily writing down their goals in the form provided.>

6. This serves as an introduction.

7. Point out that most of us have the basic needs in the hierarchy met. That is , most of us have food, clothing, shelter. Even in the big city, we are fairly safe, say, in comparison when we were at the mercy of wild animals, or in comparison to places in the midst of a civil war or unrest.

To meet our other needs takes some planning. Once one has one' s goals clearly in mind, one can start to work toward those goals. Otherwise, one rarely reaches them.

8. Explain the need to have our values and our goals be fairly well matched. Otherwise, we might not be satisfied when we reach our goals.

9. Use the forms provided to begin to identify specific goals.

If possible, photocopy the goals once they are done, so that the instructor can see what areas to focus on in the next class.

10. Discuss inappropriate goals.

11. Point out again, that many of us already met many goals through our life, and that we should give ourselves credit for having done so.

12. To try to use what people have learned in this course, we ask that they take the time to write down how they would like to work these methods into their lives. How would they like to think and act to try to have more satisfying lives?

HOMEWORK:

This is a large homework assignment.

It is best if participants can finish the goals in class.

Participants should be encouraged to think about things they wrote down during the week, and to report back any changes they decided on after thinking more about it.

THE DEPRESSION PREVENTION COURSE
Part II: Lecture Notes for Instructors: Lecture 8

The Daily Mood Graph, the Pleasant Activities, and the 3 x 5 cards with interpersonal interactions should continue for this last week.

Get averages for pleasant activities. Are they increasing also? Did anybody continue using their contract from last week? If so, reinforce them.

CLASS 8: PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE: PREVENTING DEPRESSION

REVIEW:

<This the last session of the course and there should be enough time allowed for people to talk with each other to say those things which they have been wanting to say for the last few sessions but never thought were important enough to express. For example, they might share disappointment with having to end the course or with the things they thought the course should have done and didn't. These are what are called "termination issues" in other settings.>

The outline for this class is fairly self-explanatory.

The intent of the material is to leave the participants with a context on which they can hang the experience they have had as well as to review the kinds of things they have learned during the course. It is surprising to many mental health personnel how new many of these ideas are to people and how excited they can be about some of the techniques.

1. This concept refers to "promoting positive mental health," that is, not just trying to get to an average level of health but to a better-than-average level of health. This way, if crises arise, one has extra resources to use while still not depleting one's emotional health below the average level. The analogy is to becoming physically fit, so that if an illness or crises arises the body has a lot of extra energy to deal with it.
2. Self-explanatory.
3. This concept refers to the fact that from social learning point of view, one's personality is defined by one's behavioral patterns, including the way one thinks, feels and acts.
4. This refers to using what they have learned in the course, such as ways of thinking and acting that will make it more likely that they will feel good, satisfied, and not depressed, to try out a "different" personality that is less likely to become depressed.
5. Self-explanatory. Remember: if you don't think you can control your mood, you'll be less likely to do it.

6., 7., 8., 9., 10. Self-explanatory

11. "Assumptive world" is a term used by Jerome Frank in Persuasion and Healing (1973, Johns Hopkins University Press). One's assumptive world is the sum total of one's assumptions about reality. The way to deal with this is to remind participants that our assumptions about reality, or our beliefs, can be considered thoughts, just like any other thought, and that we can attempt to identify them, and, if necessary, change them, so that they can help us live life fully, instead of getting in our way.

12.A final note regarding life control.

Before participants leave, they should fill out the "List of Skills" form. This list is meant to find out which skills they remember, which they used, and which they found useful.