

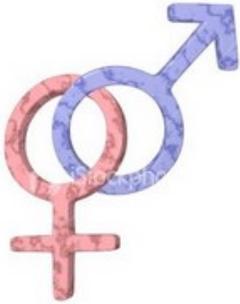
Problem-Solving Group: Men and Women Getting the Best Out of Each Other.....



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Thursdays, October 2nd, 9th, 16th and 23rd
Sheri & Les Biller Patient and Family Resource Center
(6:00 pm to 8pm)

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Why We Are Here?

Men and Women Getting the Best Out of Each Other

Research has clearly demonstrated that the differences between women and men are very small compared to their many similarities. But when it comes to coping with cancer, sometimes small differences can have a big impact.

Women and men often manage distress in different ways, yet there are specific skills they can learn to bring out the best in one another. Indeed, research has shown that anxiety, depression, and frustration can be minimized through effective communication and joint problem-solving. Men and women care about each other and need each other—and through the unique contributions of each, they can solve problems more effectively and, together, navigate through the crisis of cancer.

The Sheri & Les Biller Patient and Family Resource Center has launched this unique problem-solving group; *Men and Women Getting the Best out of Each other*. This problem-solving program takes a strengths-based approach in maximizing the ability of women and men to work together. *Men and Women Getting the Best Out of Each Other* assists men and women in every kind of relationship—whether friends, spouses, siblings, or otherwise connected—to identify and maximize their innate strengths to best manage the challenges of illness.

We welcome you and are glad you chose to be a part of this exciting new problem-solving group!!

Problem-Solving Group Guidelines

These are important guidelines that help make the group process a positive experience for everyone:

Honest communication and deep respect for each other is the foundation of this program, as are a sense of adventure and fun!!

Because it is important for group members to feel respected and safe to share their concerns in a supportive environment, we ask each group participant to agree with the following:

1. I understand the importance of respecting confidentiality. Although we cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality, information that is shared within the group should stay within the group.
2. I understand the importance of treating all members of the group with dignity and respect.
3. I understand participation in the group process includes sharing and offering feedback to others.
4. I understand completion of an anonymous evaluation sheet at the end of each session will be requested. I understand that other evaluative forms may be distributed to the group. Information gathered from the group will help in preparing future groups and in modifying this one. Names or other identifying information is NOT to be put on any of the evaluation questionnaires.

Problem-Solving Group Outline

Week 1

- 1) **Registration/Welcome**
- 2) **Guidelines**
- 3) **Group exercises**
 - Write the animal that comes to mind when you think of a woman/man under extreme stress.
- 4) **Overview-Why Gender Matters?**
- 5) **Men and Women in separate exercises**
 - How do you know when the man/woman is stressed?
 - When you are really stressed?
 - What does the man/woman do that helps the least?
 - What does the man/woman do that helps the most?
- 6) **Group discussion**
- 7) **Your Mission**
 - From the worksheet-Each person select one most helpful behavior and count how many times you and your partner perform the most helpful behavior during the next week.

Week 2

- 1) **Registration/Welcome**
- 2) **Guidelines**
- 3) **Review exercise from prior week**
- 4) **Communication and problem-solving**
- 5) **Group exercise-Practice C.O.P.E**
 - You need to get to the hospital for a scheduled appointment and you have a flat tire, what do you do?
 - What can the woman and man do together to give the man space while enabling the women to still feel supported (when you are really stressed)?
- 6) **Men and Women in separate exercises**
 - What are some common problems that women/men have in relating to men/women when there is an illness in the family?
- 7) **Your Mission**
 - Please read pages 27-46 in your new handbook
 - Use C.O.P.E. for a problem identified in your life
 - Be ready to talk about how you used C.O.P.E to solve a problem next week.

Week 3

- 1) **Registration/Welcome**
- 2) **Guidelines**
- 3) **Review exercise from the prior week**
 - Provide an example of how you used C.O.P.E in the past week
- 4) **Men and Women in separate exercises**
 - What is the one particular thing you do not get about man/woman in your life?
 - When have you felt most emotionally connected or effective with a man/woman in your life? Specific behaviors or stories.
- 5) **Group discussion**
- 6) **Your Mission**
 - From the worksheet-Each person select one behavior that made you feel the most emotionally connected or effective in your interactions with a member of the opposite sex. Then count how many times you and your partner perform the behavior during the next week.

Week 4

1) Registration/Welcome

2) Guidelines

3) Review exercise from prior week

- Practicing specific behaviors where you felt more connected or effective, to a member of the opposite sex.....

4) Group Exercise

- Can you please list one or two things that men/women do that especially drive you crazy?
- Practice C.O.P.E
 - What can you do to ensure that you and your partner apply the knowledge and tools you learned in this problem-solving group to your daily lives (when you are really stressed?)
- If you were facilitating this problem-solving group what would you want to teach men and women on how to get the best out of each other?

5) What have we taught each other?

- There are clear and identifiable things that men and women do that are helpful or frustrating to each other and they can all be changed
- Women and men can learn to interpret the behaviors of each other in a way that makes us more understood
- Women and men are able to communicate effectively and to connect in an honest and respectful manner once they are able to understand each other's struggles
- Confusion is very common in the interactions between men and women because there are so few opportunities to talk in an honest and deeply respectful way
- Women and men are spectacular problem solvers when they work as a team
- Being a wise and courageous person is a decision
- The C.O.P.E problem-solving model is particularly useful in times of stress when women and men work on a common problem together.

6) Mission for Life

- Decide to be a healthily, wise and courageous person
- Use the C.O.P.E problem-solving model
- Keep lists of supportive, respectful and helpful behaviors
 - Use as tools to help in times of stress
- Focus on the strengths in each other
 - Men and women working together to get the best out of each other
- Live the life of the woman or man you aspire to be everyday.

Now here is some useful information.....

Why Teach Problem-Solving?

- 1) Problems are a normal part of life
- 2) Stress makes it harder to solve problems, but is an opportunity to learn new problem-solving skills
- 3) People are superb problem-solvers
 - Men in particular-like to solve problems
 - Men and women together are spectacular problem-solvers
- 4) Men and women can learn new problem solving skills and teach them to the others in their lives
- 5) People with good problem solving skills
 - Have a better life, cope better, are less depressed, and less anxious

How to use Problem-Solving?

- 1) Identify a problem
 - A problem is something that needs to be fixed or at least managed or your life is not as good
 - A problem is something that you must deal with
 - A problem is something that is more serious than an issue and needs to be addressed, or your life is a lot harder
 - A problem is something that personally concerns you and motivates you to manage it better.
- 2) Decide to cope
 - Decide to be an effective, healthy, courageous person by “deciding” to cope. To have a thoughtful and wise response to life’s many hassles and problems by using the scientifically proven C.O.P.E. model of problem solving.
- 3) Use **C.O.P.E.**
 - System of problem-solving to manage minor hassles and serious problems
 - **C.O.P.E:** THE MODEL
 - **CREATIVITY** - promotes the use of creative thinking through brainstorming to overcome obstacles and barriers. You can learn to be more creative.
 - **OPTIMISM** – focuses on the role of positive thinking and hope. You can learn how to increase your optimism.
 - **PLANNING** – teaches an orderly and systematic process for developing a plan of action. You can learn how to turn stress into an orderly and healthy response.
 - **Expert Information** – obtaining accurate information about the problem. You can learn how to gather information from others about the problem situation so your responses accurately address the problem at hand.

The COPE Model-The Short Story

The COPE Model starts with a clear definition of a specific problem. It would be really nice if the COPE Model of problem-solving started with the letter “C” but like in life, things are seldom that simple. The COPE Model of problem-solving starts with “E” for Expert Information. So, once a problem is clearly defined in words that most people can easily understand, then the next step is to get Expert Information. Once the bare essentials of the problems are identified, then Creativity (by brainstorming) is used to develop a diverse list of imaginative solutions to the clearly stated problem. Throughout the COPE Model process optimism and perseverance are used to create a sense of direction, motivation and hope.

These are the four key steps for effective problem-solving.

C - Creativity

O - Optimism

P - Planning

E - Expert information

Step One – Expert Information

Obtaining assistance and identifying resources is a very critical part of the process.

1. Understanding the problem:

- Define the problem
- Is it realistic that the problem can be changed or managed better?
- What if anything has been tried in the past?
- What can be done to help?
- What can reasonably be done?

2. When to get professional help:

- Immediately - for medical problems or problems that could endanger the health of the person
- When to wait - keep communication open with health care professionals.

3. What you can do to help:

- What can be done to deal with the problem
- What can be done to prevent the problem from happening or becoming severe.

4. Possible obstacles:

- Attitudes and misinformation are common obstacles that can interfere with carrying out a plan.

5. Carrying out and adjusting a plan:

- How to evaluate if a plan is working?

- What to do if the plan is not working?

Step Two - Creativity to Overcome Obstacles (Brainstorming)

Three steps to promote creative thinking to overcome obstacles and barriers:

1. Visualize the obstacle from someone else's point of view
2. Ask other people who have faced similar problems for ideas about how to get around the obstacle
3. Ask how important or serious the obstacle really is.

Step Three – Optimism

Three things that promote an optimistic attitude:

1. Positive Attitude: maintaining a positive attitude and being willing to talk honestly is one of the most important things that can help a caregiver
2. Expect to Succeed: increases one's ability to achieve a goal
3. Take Frequent Breaks: allows the caregiver to re-energize and maintain a positive outlook.

Step Four – Planning

Problem solving involves an orderly and systematic process. Here are four keys for developing a systematic plan:

1. **Get the facts:**
 - Be clear about what is happening. This means being able to separate facts from opinions.
2. **Review what can be done:**
 - Ask health care professionals for recommendations
 - Incorporate personal experiences to develop ideas and strategies
 - Set realistic goals.
3. **Decide on the best strategy:**
 - Compare the advantages and disadvantages of the different approaches
 - Develop a strategy that has a reasonable chance of achieving goal(s).
4. **Consider obstacles:**
 - Consider what could interfere with the plan
 - Think creatively about what can be done to deal with the obstacles.

The C.O.P.E Model—Summary

1. Identify a problem
2. Say in words so that others can understand how you will know that the problem is improved or is solved
3. Decide to use Optimism (focusing only on the good things that can happen -the positive!)
4. Use Creativity (via brainstorming) in managing or solving the problem
5. Choose the best very options from your brainstorming that are most realistic and easiest to do

6. Use this option or options to make a plan of action
7. Break this plan of action down into small manageable steps
8. Commit to starting the small manageable steps as close to today as possible, like right now!
9. Within a reasonable time frame, usually 5-7 days, has the problem improved
10. If yes, congratulations, if not, think about if you chose the right problem (go back to #1), or if you need to break the steps down even further (Go back to #7)

Communication Guidelines

- Decide to be a wise and healthy person in your interactions by focusing on solving the problem at hand
- Be honest
- Be clear and specific
- Focusing on who is right means that you both lose
- Use “I” messages rather than “you”
- Respect the rights and feelings of others
- Be a good listener by listening three times as much as you speak
- Accept that communicating takes time
- Avoid bringing up past conflicts and hurts

Communication Model

TALK

Time to listen, Time to control emotions and *not* the time to take action

Attention and Attitude to serious listening (quiet place with no interruptions with at least 20 minutes to focus on one content area only)

Learning by listening to serious concerns (ask questions to better understand. Listen three times more than talking)

Keep checking it out by asking, "I think I heard you say....." (Have the courage and respect to accept what is being said as an accurate reflection of the other person's viewpoint without any debate or offering advice.)

Communicate with each other in a way that you will be proud of later!!