

# 1 Background Reading

## Why Positivity?

The *Values in Healthcare* approach is essentially a simple one: having a positive attitude improves health. Being positive leads to greater energy and satisfaction, enhanced clarity in decision-making and an increased sense of well-being. All of this leaves a vibrant impression on family, friends, patients, clients and colleagues. This seems to happen because people around us recognise a change in the atmosphere, a change that is generated by how we think, how we say things and the manner in which we behave.

Workers in healthcare and related professions are trained to be highly self-critical. Consequently, we are more likely to be aware of what we don't do well, rather than what we are proficient at. Critical thinking obviously helps to maintain high standards, but may not always be appropriate when dealing with patients and colleagues at an interpersonal level. Changing our thinking to being more positive about our own work and that of colleagues will improve our own self-esteem and raise morale.

When we as practitioners are positive about ourselves, then we can encourage a positive or life-enhancing change in our patients' and clients' attitudes. When we think positively, those with whom we are in contact will also begin to change.

## Purpose of module

It seems that we all have some idea of what being positive means and most people will relate well to the metaphor of the glass half-filled with water. Whether it's half empty or half full has long been seen as an indicator of someone's pessimistic or optimistic nature. In this module we aim to 'top up' the half-full glass so that it overflows!

Being light and optimistic may come easily to some but for others, being encouraged to *be positive* can sometimes have an infuriating, equal and opposite effect! In this module we will look at the skill of positivity as one we all have that we can nourish, develop and take out for practice-runs.

## **Introduction to the *Positivity* module**

The first half of the module is mainly about recognising the benefits of positive thinking and about developing positive thoughts about oneself and others. The second half builds on these insights by applying the learning to work contexts, and by introducing some more specific techniques for dealing with negative thoughts and cycles of thinking.

## Themes of Exercises

### **The benefit of being positive (3.1)**

Positivity can be expressed in many ways, for example: liking yourself; valuing yourself as you are; being able to make people laugh; calming disputes; or arranging flowers so that they ‘uplift’ a room.

Being positive does bring individual gains and this in itself can create or facilitate change. However, having a positive impact on others around us, in minor and major ways, produces broader gains which all add up. Examples of specific benefits of being positive may be:

- physical – aids recovery from illness and increases energy
- mental – improves self-esteem and makes tasks easier
- social – improves relationships
- spiritual – increases the capacity to be hopeful.

### **Valuing the self (3.2)**

Thinking about ourselves in a positive way is not showing off or being arrogant. If we monitor our thoughts we will usually find that for most of the time most of our thoughts are at the negative end of the spectrum, thoughts like ‘I am no good at that sort of thing’, ‘I always get that wrong’, ‘I seem to make too many mistakes’. Thinking about our own attributes in a positive way gets us in touch with who we truly are and is essential in building self-esteem.

It is important to acknowledge our best attributes without embarrassment or conceit, and to accept praise. When we receive criticism it may be useful to acknowledge it and consider its validity, but not to be resentful of it.

Negative thinking is a matter of habit and can be changed. We were not born with a negative thinking pattern. On the contrary, deep down we are optimistic, trusting and peaceful beings. We may have forgotten that but, if we slow down, the memory will return. We do have control over our thoughts, so we can change the way we think. With practice and determination our thinking can become positive.

The only way to prove the benefits of positive thinking is to try it and observe and recognise the benefits, not only to yourself but to everyone around you.

### **Surfacing positive thoughts (3.3, 3.10)**

Positive thoughts leave us feeling hopeful, lead to inner calm and more creative approaches to challenges that we face. Having some positive thought or belief about

the self is crucial in this. It is important to identify and affirm the positive thoughts and underlying beliefs we have or have had, in order to identify their potential influence and explore how we could make best use of them in our lives.

A preliminary step to thinking positively is consciously to *acknowledge* and *appreciate* the best in oneself and others, rather than focusing on negative attributes. Further steps may involve reinforcing and creating new *positive thoughts, attitudes and beliefs*. Being open to *listening* to our positive selves and reminding ourselves to look for and focus on solutions, rather than dwell on problems, are important methods to start the ball rolling! Eventually, new ways of thinking, perceiving and responding become habitual.

When we start to retrain ourselves to be positive, we are not just engaging on a superficial, 'fast-track' project to better ourselves, but a more thoughtful task of reconnecting to a profound, yet naturally positive inner self.

Below are some examples of positive statements about oneself, others, a current situation, and the future:

- **The self:** I do like myself; I accept my weaknesses; I understand myself; I have special skills and qualities; I value myself; I believe in myself; I am loveable.
- **Others:** I accept others as they are; I look for the best in others; there is something good in everyone I meet; I appreciate others.
- **A current situation:** I am capable of handling the situation; I have all I need; I am fortunate; there is a bright side to everything; nothing lasts forever.
- **A difficult situation:** I look forward to each day; this is an opportunity/challenge in disguise; each day brings something new and beautiful, something to learn.

## Thought exchange (3.4)

### *Mind and thoughts*

How the mind works and what thought is have fascinated philosophers and scholars for centuries. What follows is a simple way of looking at types of thinking:

- **Positive thinking** is valuable; it energises, makes us feel cheerful and leads to improved well-being.
- **Negative thinking** is superfluous; it drains energy, makes us feel unhappy and ill at ease. The resulting state of *dis-ease* can lead to illness.

Superfluous thoughts are mainly worries or concerns about past events or the future and may be associated with feelings of guilt, resentment, insult, fear, hurt, jealousy, frustration, possessiveness etc. Certain attitudes may fuel these feelings and thoughts; consider what you are like when you or others around you are exhibiting criticism, competition, stubbornness, inadequacy, arrogance, anger or greed.

Other thoughts in this category are those that begin, ‘*If only...*’. When these become habitual, they drain our energy. Other habits, such as contemplating or discussing the weaknesses of others or even listening to others making negative comments, drag down our thinking and can create a miasma of negativity that entraps us.

Health practitioners are all too familiar with this; many patients come to complain of their ailments, and those who do the listening are exposed to a daily diet of negative thinking.

A deep source of negative thinking (some would say the deepest) is based on messages about ourselves from the past. As children, we are trusting and believe what others say to us. These messages become imprinted and can accumulate and transform themselves into a belief system that sticks like peanut butter to the roof of our mouths. As adults, however entrapped we feel, we have a choice in how we look at our positive and negative attributes.

Valuable thoughts contain nuggets of positive feelings – patience, unconditional acceptance, kindness, generosity, good-will, happiness, trust, openness and peace. Such positive thoughts leave us feeling hopeful and lead us to search for creative solutions. Positive thoughts can both calm the mind and recharge it with a powerful energy.

### ***Changing negative thoughts into valuable ones***

By constantly checking our thoughts and switching from being critical to being accepting, affirmative or appreciative, we can change superfluous and wasteful thoughts to valuable ones. The following list of questions may help us to do this:

- What qualities have I exhibited today while talking with others?
- What quality thoughts have I had today about others?
- What qualities have I shown in my actions?
- What qualities do I still need to develop?

We may find it difficult to change our habitual thoughts yet, no matter how much it sounds like a cliché, we *do* have the power to alter the way we think.

Taking responsibility to change is an immense challenge. However, as we become aware that thoughts are the *seeds* of feelings, attitudes, beliefs, speech and actions, the importance of transforming thoughts becomes self-evident – changing our thoughts will change what we say, feel, think and do. It can change how we behave towards others and ourselves.

Below is a list of questions that may be running through our minds when we are anxious, bored, irritated or upset:

- Why isn't this working?
- Why is it taking so long?

- Whose fault is it, anyway?
- Why don't I understand?
- Why can't I do this?
- Why does this always happen to me?

Yet we do not have to think like this; we can change these to questions such as:

- What's working well here?
- What have I achieved already?
- I wonder how this will change things for the better?
- What do I know already?
- What alternatives do I still have?
- How can we best find a solution?

### **Inspired to be me! (3.5, 3.12)**

Another difficult aspect of being positive about ourselves is that even contemplating being positive appears to be an uphill, laborious task as it implies change and a review of where we are coming from. An alternative approach is to look upon being positive as re-connecting with, or returning to, a state of calm, contentment or joy that *already exists* within us. Often we are not sure how to take the first step in moving towards an inner state of positive attitudes, beliefs, motives and perceptions, or may doubt that it exists. However, if we consider that, for many of us, positive thinking has lain dormant under a sediment of negative thoughts, experiences and attitudes for a period of time, then we can look for the methods to resurface it.

What would happen if our starting point, our *spiritual* premise, was a fundamental core belief that we are innately positive? And what if we expanded that further by adding qualities of peacefulness, contentment, compassion, joy, light-heartedness, determination, wisdom, honesty, integrity and strength to that core belief?

Getting in touch with that inner core in silence, through meditation, gives us the experience of being positive at a deep level. This is done by relaxing physically, allowing the thoughts in our mind to slow down and our emotions to become calm. It is then that we begin to get a sense of our inner self with all our positive qualities.

### **Appreciating others at work (3.6)**

When children are learning to walk, write or ride a bike, we encourage them with physical support, smiles and helpful words. We know almost instinctively that they will respond to praise, and so learn more quickly. It seems so easy and natural that we do not even need to think about it. Adults are learning all the time too, yet with them it is different. Praise is rationed and criticism is the order of the day. The result

is that there is little motivation to change. Somehow we have lost the ability to give praise and may even feel embarrassed about it.

There are four simple rules when appreciating others:

- be sincere
- be specific
- identify the quality
- beware of ‘spoilors’.

### ***Be sincere***

It is not just a matter of choosing the right words of encouragement, we have to be genuine in what we say. We all intuitively know what feelings really lie behind what is said, so when giving praise we really have to mean it – this involves being positive about ourselves and looking for the positive in others so that our comments come naturally. Respect for others is also shown through friendly gestures and maintaining good eye contact – these aspects of our body language are a physical demonstration of our sincerity and commitment to what we are saying.

### ***Be specific***

For people whose self-esteem is good, and who are comfortable with themselves, taking praise can be easy. But those who have poor self-esteem will often reject praise because they cannot believe it. ‘Well done’ and ‘Good show!’ may sound a bit empty. Many of the phrases we have used in the past to congratulate actually sound quite dated now – perhaps a sign of how unused society has become to giving praise. So we have to choose our language carefully for it to sound real and believable.

If you wish to encourage a student, choose something specific. For example, for a nurse laying out an instrument trolley, you might say, ‘That’s very helpful, you have assembled everything in the right order’. The nurse can look at what s/he has done and see that the observation is true. Similarly, with patients, a physiotherapist could say, ‘That’s great. You really remembered to look ahead when using the walking frame’.

### ***Identify the quality***

If we can identify the quality that someone is demonstrating by their positive behaviour it gives the praise a depth and builds on a person’s self-respect. A senior ward sister said to a nurse in training, ‘You washed that patient efficiently, and with such kindness and gentleness’. That comment has stayed with the nurse through all her working years. As a result, she tries to bring kindness and gentleness into all her work. She identified these qualities as part of her personality and her practice, and consequently is more aware about living them in practice. Praise is a very powerful tool and a wonderful gift we can give to others.

***Beware of spoilers!***

Sometimes, people really try to praise or encourage, but end their comment with a ‘spoiler’. For example, how does a student pharmacist feel when her tutor says, ‘You did a great job cleaning the drugs cupboard – it looks so organised. I don’t know why you don’t keep it like that all the time. It’s always such a mess!’? That is a spoiler! Other examples are:

- A surgeon says to a junior, ‘You’ve stitched up that wound very neatly... why can’t you do that more often?’
- A staff nurse says to an auxiliary, ‘You concentrated and finished your work quickly. Well done. If you’d only do that all the time, it wouldn’t be such a hassle every day.’

In each case, the comment starts out well but then turns to reproach, and refers to, reminds the person of and therefore reinforces, past negative behaviours – consequently, the praise isn’t effective and the positive feelings usually diminish quickly.

**S.O.S.: Standing back, Observing, Steering (3.7)**

It is possible to apply a *process* that enables us successfully to transform a negative response to a difficult situation or event into a set of constructive thoughts.

Many of us are familiar with the concept of taking time out. We can do this at work, individually or as a team, when stressful situations occur, especially if these events have an impact upon the whole team. We may take a few minutes, physically, to leave the situation, or to *stand back* mentally from the scene. Visualisation, a breathing technique, or being in silence alone or together are all activities which can put a space between the situation and us.

The next step is to re-view the situation, as if we are an onlooker or a detached *observer*. Being as silent as possible, we can ask ourselves if the thoughts we are having are ones we wish to keep, if they are going where we would choose them to.

In the resulting silence, it is possible to *steer* our thinking to where we want it to be; perhaps to a personal affirmation we use to calm and soothe us. This affirmation may be part of our faith or spiritual tradition, or one we have adopted from other sources, something along the lines of: ‘I am aware of myself as calm and peaceful’ or, ‘...as happy and content’ or, ‘I know I am inwardly at peace and I regain that’ or, ‘I see myself as tranquil and cool’. These are all powerful methods to regain quietness or positive states of mind.

The ‘S.O.S.’ technique will not always change situations, nor will it necessarily influence how others respond. Sometimes, the only change may be that our own attitudes or feelings change and so we feel relaxed or lighter. But we do have the power to change the way we think.



### *Saying 'STOP!'*

Sometimes, our thoughts can cause havoc with our emotions and we may try to become still, change the thought or stop it, but, in fact, find that we can't. At these times, it is useful to think, 'STOP!'

Here, the word is used like the full-stop at the end of this sentence. It replaces or stalls any further thought and exhorts us to stop dwelling, speaking or acting on it. Putting this 'STOP' to the thought ends the sentence, and ends the thought.

'STOP' can thus defuse charged emotions and allow a painful thought to dissolve. If the thought or emotion returns, it is possible to apply 'STOP' again and again!

### **The impact of being positive at work (3.8)**

Being positive does bring individual gains and this in itself can create or facilitate change. Any individual change will have a positive impact on others around them in the workplace, including patients/clients, colleagues, the team and the broader organisation.

Examples of specific benefits of positivity may be:

- health and effectiveness at work – having more energy, better workload management
- relationships with patients/clients – able to listen more receptively, provide a sense of hope
- relationships with colleagues/team – more open to collaborating on problem solving.

### **Recycling thoughts (3.9, 3.11)**

#### *Cycles of thinking*

Even with the best intentions, we can find ourselves stuck in cycles of negative thinking; frequently, these are fuelled by negative self-belief. These cyclic thoughts are, at best, wasteful of our time but more often, they are depressing or even destructive, especially if the cycle is tapping into a deep-seated lack of self-esteem, self-respect or self-confidence. Cyclic negative thoughts are harmful and, by definition, have become a habit.

Imagine a situation such as facing an examination or a driving test. Some people will respond to this with anxiety, foreboding or a fear of failure. These feelings conjure up images of past failures and this in turn taps into deeper anxieties and *self-doubt*. Should the examinee now fail, it will confirm that s/he truly cannot pass such tests and that the original fear of being a failure was justified. Thus the prophecy is self-fulfilled; the cycle now propagates and rapidly becomes habitual.

However, cycles of thinking can be positive too. Some people invariably respond to tests or events with feelings of optimism; they see success, prepare adequately and are confident. If this is not natural to us, we can train ourselves to respond in this way. Being optimistic taps into images of past success and generates a quiet self-assurance. These prophecies are also self-fulfilling and thus a cycle of positive thinking is propagated and will, in time, become a habit.

Should the driver fail, s/he is able to accept it with self-respect, acknowledge that more practice or knowledge was necessary, and move on. To conclude, creating habits of positive thoughts, feelings, attitudes or beliefs is possible but not quite as easy as ordering a pizza! So we will need to focus specifically on this task, and this we can regard as a *retraining* of our minds.

## 2 The Facilitator's Guide to Module 3

### Session I: Being positive

#### Aims

- To gain awareness of our own thought patterns and the beliefs which underpin them
- To consider the concept of choice in how we think
- To practise and recognise the benefits of positive thinking
- To transform negative cycles of thought into positive ones
- To practise appreciation of the self and others
- To create a positive self-image

#### Process

In this session, participants consider the benefits of being positive, before undertaking some appreciative self-questioning. A reflective exercise follows during which they recall positive thoughts and beliefs they employed in a number of situations, and apply their discoveries to a future, difficult scenario. These exercises provide a foundation for the more challenging task of changing negative cycles of thinking into positive ones. Finally, the tool of meditation is utilised to further strengthen positive thinking and consolidate participants' positive self image.

### Session II: Positive interaction at work

#### Aims

- To explore and recognise the benefits of being positive at work
- To practise using positive affirmations in the workplace
- To practise a technique for steering away from negative thinking towards positive thinking
- To apply positive thinking to difficult work situations

#### Process

This session begins by exploring some 'rules' for appreciating others, and applying these to a work context. A visualisation provides the opportunity to practise a technique for standing back from negative thoughts and steering towards positive

thinking. A further exercise involves participants in acting out difficult work situations and then re-enacting them in a positive way, in order to explore and identify the benefits of positivity in the workplace. Following the session review, action planning invites participants to identify one positive thought or belief which they can incorporate into their life or work. The session closes with making affirmations both for the self and for other participants.

## Programme/plan for Module 3 *Positivity*

|  |                                  |                        |
|--|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Introduction</i>  |                                  | 30 minutes             |
| <b>SESSION I      <i>Being positive</i></b>                |                                  |                        |
| Exercise 3.1   | The benefit of being positive    | 25 minutes             |
| Exercise 3.2   | Valuing the self                 | 15 minutes             |
| <i>Movement exercise</i>                                   |                                  | 5 minutes              |
| <i>Break</i>   |                                  | 20 minutes             |
| Exercise 3.3   | Surfacing positive thoughts      | 45 minutes             |
| Exercise 3.4   | Thought exchange                 | 10 minutes             |
| Exercise 3.5   | Inspired to be me!               | 15 minutes             |
| <i>Lunch break</i>   |                                  |                        |
| <b>SESSION II      <i>Positive interaction at work</i></b> |                                  |                        |
| Exercise 3.6   | Appreciating others at work      | 35 minutes             |
| Exercise 3.7   | S.O.S. – a visualisation         | 25 minutes             |
| <i>Movement exercise</i>                                   |                                  | 5 minutes              |
| <i>Break</i>   |                                  | 15 minutes             |
| Exercise 3.8   | Being positive at work           | 40 minutes             |
| <i>Session review</i>                                      |                                  | 10 minutes             |
| <i>Action planning</i>                                     |                                  |                        |
| Exercise 3.9   | Thoughts into action             | 30 minutes             |
| <i>Evaluation</i>  |                                  | 10 minutes             |
| <i>Closure</i>   |                                  |                        |
| Exercise 3.10  | Appreciating the self and others | 10 minutes             |
| <b>Total time</b>  |                                  | <b>5 hours 45 mins</b> |

### Follow-on/homework

|               |                               |            |
|---------------|-------------------------------|------------|
| Exercise 3.11 | Re-cycling thoughts           | 30 minutes |
| Exercise 3.12 | Tuning into positive thoughts | 20 minutes |

## Materials



- Pens/coloured pencils and paper
- Flipchart and marker pens
- CD player/tape recorder (optional)

### Session I

- Worksheet 3.1: The impact of being positive
- Worksheet 3.2: Valuing the self
- Worksheet 3.3: Surfacing positive thoughts
- CD track no. 7 Inspired to be me (or relaxing background music)
- Coloured paper/cards (A5)

### Session II

- Handout 3.6 Appreciating others
- Worksheet 3.6 Appreciating others at work
- Worksheet 3.8 Being positive at work
- CD track no. 8 S.O.S. (or relaxing background music)
- Pinboard or other surface for display, and Blu-tak or pins
- Values cards (see **Part 5: Additional Resources**)
- Coloured paper/cards (A5)

### Follow-on/ homework

- Worksheet 3.11 Re-cycling thoughts
- CD track no. 9 Tuning into positive thoughts

## Preparation

- 1 Read the introductory notes at the beginning of the session/s so that you are familiar with the way in which the theme is being introduced and explored. Review the list of references and resources for this module in **Part 5: Additional Resources** and reflect on your own experiences.
- 2 Familiarise yourself with the main learning tools which are being used in the session (see **Part 4: Spiritual Tools**).
- 3 Read through the session guidelines and look at the suggested session programme which will incorporate:
  - Session introduction
  - Exercises
  - Movement breaks

- Breaks
- Session review
- Action planning
- Evaluation
- Closure

Plan each part of the session and timings in detail, using the session notes, **Part 2: Guidance for Facilitators** and the optional exercises in **Part 5: Additional Resources** for more detailed suggestions.

- 4 Photocopy any handouts and exercise sheets, and make sure that you have any other equipment listed under *Materials*.

## Helpful hints about this module

Some participants may find the focus on being positive quite challenging and not sufficiently 'reality-based'. The aim of this session is to recognise that we all have inner beliefs based on 'positivity' which we can surface and find ways of expressing, with many benefits on how we see ourselves and how we relate to others. However, some of the exercises may bring out difficult reactions, including negative thoughts and memories. You may need to be prepared to alter the timing of exercises according to the process within the group or team. You may also need to allow any very unhappy member of the group, who is finding it difficult to come up with positive options, to opt out until s/he feels able to rejoin the group. In this case, be prepared to give some time to such a person or arrange for appropriate support to be on hand.

In preparing your introduction to the session, it may be worthwhile to emphasise that, while the session may be challenging, there are many worthwhile outcomes which the exercises can surface. Even one 'new' positive approach or way of thinking can become a valuable resource for the individual or group to use in their personal and working lives.

## 3 Introducing the Module



30 minutes

Run through your planned introductory session which may include:

### **Quiet time**

### **Introductions/optional warm-up exercise**

#### **Overview of session**

- Theme of session
- Aims and learning outcomes
- Programme/plan for the session
- Practical considerations
- Any questions

#### **Setting the tone**

- Ground rules/principles
- Participants' expectations

#### **Review of last session/homework**

See **Part 2: Guidance for Facilitators** for further guidance on introducing the session.



# 4 The Exercises

## Session I: Being positive

### Exercise 3.1

## The benefit of being positive



Process:

Reflection and discussion in pairs



25 minutes

#### Learning outcome

At the end of this exercise participants should be able to:

- ✓ identify the potential benefits of being positive on different aspects of health and well-being.

#### Materials



- Worksheet 3.1 The impact of being positive
- Flipchart and marker pens

#### Facilitating the exercise



1 Distribute **Worksheet 3.1 The impact of being positive** and ask participants to get into pairs.

2 Introduce the exercise as follows:

“Begin by sitting quietly and on your own reflect on times when you felt positive about yourself. Then, looking at the worksheet, consider the gains or benefits of being positive on each of the areas listed. Jot down any spontaneous thoughts.”

Allow 5 minutes for this.



**3** Ask everyone to briefly share their thoughts with their partners.

Allow 5 minutes before moving into feedback.

**Feedback  
15 minutes**



Gather everyone back into a large group and facilitate a brief feedback on each of the areas listed on the worksheet. You could note responses on a flipchart under the four headings, and display this during the session for reference.

Invite comments and comparisons on what positivity (being positive) means to different individuals.

## Exercise 3.2

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# Valuing the self



Process:

## Appreciation



15 minutes

### Learning outcomes

At the end of this exercise participants should be able to:

- ✓ utilise appreciative self-questioning to identify positive thoughts and qualities about themselves
- ✓ recognise the benefits of valuing the self.

### Materials



- Worksheet 3.2 Valuing the self
- CD player/tape recorder and relaxing background music (optional)

### Facilitating the exercise

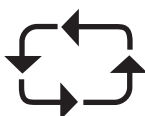


- 1 Distribute **Worksheet 3.2 Valuing the self**.
- 2 Ask participants to answer each of the questions on the worksheet on their own. Encourage them to answer the questions spontaneously, rather than giving considered responses, since any deliberation may lead to self-criticism, doubts and negative thinking.

Carry out this part of the exercise in silence or with background music.

Allow 5 minutes before moving on to group feedback and discussion.

### Feedback 10 minutes



Within the group, ask individuals to discuss how they felt undertaking the exercise. Some prompt questions could include:

- Was it challenging to be positive about yourself? If so, why?
- Why is it useful (and acceptable) to have positive thoughts about oneself? (Link back to Exercise 3.1)
- How do you feel having done this exercise?



**Movement exercise**



5 minutes



**Break**



20 minutes

## Exercise 3.3

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# Surfacing positive thoughts



Process:

## Reflection



45 minutes

### Learning outcomes

At the end of this exercise participants should be able to:

- ✓ identify positive thoughts and beliefs in relation to different situations, through reflection
- ✓ apply positive thoughts and beliefs to a difficult situation in order to bring about positive change.

### Materials



- Worksheet 3.3 Surfacing positive thoughts
- Flip chart and pens
- CD player/tape recorder and relaxing background music (optional)

### Facilitating the exercise



The first part of this exercise is a guided reflection during which participants will be invited to identify and write down certain positive thoughts that may occur to them. This is followed by a discussion on how to put into practice what they have discovered.

- I Distribute **Worksheet 3.3: Surfacing positive thoughts**. Ask participants to work in silence and to be alert, but comfortable, so that they can write as they reflect. Play quiet background music if you wish.

**2 Introduce the exercise as follows:**

“ I am going to ask you to recall a number of situations and to identify the positive thoughts or underlying beliefs you experienced in them. Try to stay relaxed and respond to each in a spontaneous way. Jot down your thoughts on the worksheet as I ask you to. For this exercise, try to ignore or bypass negative thoughts. We will look at these in later exercises.”

**3 Slowly read the instructions below, pausing after each question and allowing about a minute for participants to write down their thoughts.**

“ We will be contemplating four situations which are on your sheet. For each, I will ask you to identify any positive thoughts, and also any underlying beliefs you might hold:

Theme 1: The self

Recall a time when you felt very positive about yourself; perhaps you felt particularly happy or content. Go into this experience for a moment **(allow 3 minutes)**.

- What were your thoughts about yourself? Write them down.
- Can you identify the underlying belief you had about yourself? It may be a quiet voice or thought you rarely listen to. If you can put it into words, write this down.

Theme 2: Others

Recall a time when you felt happy with people you did not expect to find it easy to be with. Recall what happened in that scene to make it positive **(allow 3 minutes)**.

- How did you start to think and feel about these people as you changed your attitude towards them? Write this down.
- What was the old and new belief or assumption you were holding about them? Think about this and write it down.

Theme 3: A current situation

Recall a situation that some people would say was hard but which you usually deal with very positively or very well. Take your time **(allow 3 minutes)**.

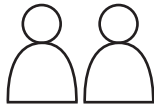
- How do you think about this situation?
- What do you believe may be helping you?

#### Theme 4: Anticipation of a difficult situation

Think of a difficult situation that you know you will have to face in the near future. Contemplate what you think you will find most challenging (**allow 3 minutes**).

- Is there one of your current thoughts about it that you are willing to change? What would you like to change it to? Write these down.
- Are there any core beliefs you can have about yourself or the situation that will help you sustain this thought? Write these down. ”

**Allow about 20 minutes for this main part of the exercise, before moving into a brief discussion in pairs.**



- 3** Invite participants to spend 5 minutes sharing their responses with a partner, listening with respect to their partner in turn. Ask them to try to draw out thoughts and beliefs which seem of most value to them, perhaps concentrating on theme 4.

Allow 5 minutes for each person to share, prompting pairs when it is time to swap roles. Then reconvene the group for feedback.

#### **Feedback 15 minutes**



- 1** Begin by emphasising that with each situation and for each person, there may be one particular thought or belief that is especially powerful in transforming negative into positive experiences. In any situation, we can choose what we think – in fact, this choice is our responsibility.
- 2** Now invite each pair to feed back one or more important thought or belief. Record these on a flipchart.
- 3** Encourage participants to contribute any further useful and positive thoughts or beliefs they had, and add these to the flipchart. Examples of positive thoughts might include:
  - ‘I look forward to each day’; ‘This is an opportunity/challenge in disguise’; ‘Each day brings something new, something to learn’.
- 4** Ask participants to sit quietly again and to reflect individually on the final situation, drawing on the group’s ideas and their own conclusions and making any additional notes on their worksheets.

- 5** If you have extra time available, discuss some of the following questions:
- How did you find the exercise – could you identify positive thoughts and beliefs?
  - Can you connect your positive thoughts and beliefs to your feelings and actions?
  - Which comes first – a positive experience or a positive thought?
  - By changing your thinking, can you change how you experience other people and situations?
  - What implications does this exercise have for our thoughts about patients or clients?



## Exercise 3.4

# Thought exchange



Process:

## Appreciation and play



10 minutes

### Learning outcome

At the end of this exercise participants should be able to:

- ✓ change negative thoughts into positive ones.

### Materials



- Paper (A5) and pens

### Facilitating the exercise



- 1 Give each participant a sheet of A5-size paper and introduce the exercise as follows:

“Write down a negative thought, about yourself or others, that you want to throw away.”

**Allow 2 minutes.**

- 2 Ask everyone to do the following:

“Fold the paper, marking it with a symbol or sign so that you can quickly identify it again. Throw it into the middle of the room. If you feel like it, sigh with relief, shake your hands or feet, jump around.”

**Allow 2 minutes.**

- 3 Ask everyone to do the following:

“Pick up from the floor one of the discarded pieces of paper (not your own). Write down a positive affirmation on the bottom of the card to counteract the negative thought.

Return this paper to the centre of the room.”

**Allow 2 minutes.**

**4** Finally, ask participants to find their own, original piece of paper:

“Pick up your own original piece of paper, read the affirmation and absorb it.”

Allow 4 minutes.

**Helpful hints** Remind the group that:

- it may be easier to practise ‘re-cycling’ our thinking when we are doing it for others
- negativity may enhance our drive to create something positive
- doing something positive is a stimulus for creating positive thoughts or affirmations.

Being appreciative of others can seem superficial or superfluous when we are not used to doing it. However, real appreciation can be conveyed by identifying a quality which reflects what we wish to impart and delivering it with sincerity. With a little practice, it is easy to *train* our attitudes, beliefs and perceptions to be appreciative rather than cynical.

## Exercise 3.5

---

# Inspired to be me!



Process:

**Meditation**



15 minutes

### Learning outcome

At the end of this exercise participants should be able to:

- ✓ use meditation as a tool for creating a positive image of themselves and for encouraging the development of positive thinking.

### Materials



- CD track no. 7 Inspired to be me (or relaxing background music)
- CD player/tape recorder (optional)
- Paper and pens/coloured pencils

### Facilitating the exercise

This exercise will use reflection and the power of imagination at a deep level, which helps to build inner strength.

- 1 Ask the group to sit comfortably and relax.
- 2 Play **CD track no. 7 Inspired to be me!** or read out the following text, playing background music if you wish. The text needs to be spoken slowly and clearly, pausing where you see an ellipse (...) to allow time for reflection, and pausing longer where you see two ellipses (... ...), to allow time for developing an idea.

“Sit comfortably on your seat with your feet on the floor and hands resting on your lap. Let your body, shoulders and face relax.

Allow yourself to become quiet. Take a few deep breaths to draw in fresh air, and breathe out, letting go of any tension or negative thoughts. With each in-breath, imagine that you are filling up with positive thoughts and feelings... Breathe in positivity, letting it reach up to your scalp, and then breathe out, feeling your whole body relax...

Turn your thoughts towards how you see yourself at present... do you accept yourself as you are? Reflect on this for a moment... ... View yourself however you are and begin to accept what you see... You may like to focus on what you value about yourself, your strengths and special skills that perhaps you take for granted... nonetheless, these qualities and skills are special and make you unique. Appreciate these in yourself... value these in yourself, just as they are... ...

You may start to notice the peace that lies within you when you are being positive... ... Appreciate that the essence of your being is strong and positive... that qualities you value or treasure, lie within... ...

How would it be if you could maintain a positive frame of mind about yourself, no matter what was happening...? How would you cope in situations...? How would you see yourself and how would you relate to others... ...?

Take a moment to create that image... Now, in your mind, make a list of qualities that relate to this image... ... List the qualities you would like to acquire or create anew... Let these take shape... ... This is a new you.

Allow this image of your more content self to become clearer... spend some moments being this... experience it fully... ...

Finally, when you are ready, turn your thoughts back to your breathing, the sense of calm and peace in your body, back to where you are sitting, comfortable and relaxed. Return your awareness to the room.”



## Lunch break

## Session II: Positive interaction at work

### Exercise 3.6

# Appreciating others at work



Process:

## Appreciation



35 minutes

#### Learning outcomes

At the end of this exercise participants should be able to:

- ✓ understand the value of appreciating others
- ✓ create positive, appreciative statements about others.

#### Materials



- Values cards (see **Part 5: Additional Resources**)
- Handout 3.6 Appreciating others
- Worksheet 3.6 Appreciating others at work
- Cards or pieces of paper and pens
- Pinboard or other surface to attach cards to

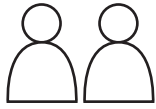
#### Facilitating the exercise



#### **Part A: Rules for appreciating others** (10 minutes)

Distribute **Handout 3.6 Appreciating others** and allow everyone to read it through, asking participants to pay attention to the four rules on giving real recognition. You may wish to go through this briefly, inviting or offering examples and reminding participants to beware of 'spoilers'.

Allow 10 minutes before moving on to the next part of the exercise.



### **Part B: Appreciating others in practice (10 minutes)**

---

- 1** Distribute **Worksheet 3.6 Appreciating others at work** and ask participants to form pairs.
- 2** Run through the task described on the worksheet and ask participants to work on it in their pairs.

Allow 10 minutes before moving on to the next part of the exercise.

### **Part C: Appreciating each other (10 minutes)**

---



There are two variations at this point, depending on group size and whether the group members know each other.

- 1** Ensure everyone has a card or piece of paper. Form groups of up to 8 people.
- 2 (a)** If it is a work team who know each other, lead this part of the exercise as follows:

“ Write your own name at the very bottom of your piece of card or paper. Pass the card to the person on your left and accept a card from your right.

Write an appreciation of the person named on the card. Write it at the top of the card and fold it so the words are not visible. Each person in turn will write and fold again, so a fan or concertina is created!

Now pass the card to the person on your left and accept a card from your right. Write an appreciation at the top, fold the card and pass it to the person on your left as before. Continue until you have your named card back.

Read your card slowly to yourself and accept the gifts it contains.”

Allow up to 10 minutes before moving into feedback.

- 2 (b)** This next version of the exercise can be used for teams, irrespective of whether group members know each other well or not. Spread out the values cards on the floor and lead the exercise as follows:

“ Please write your name clearly at the bottom of your card on one side (Side A) and in the middle of your card on the other side (Side B). You will be writing an appreciation on the cards of some of the people in this room. Put your card in the centre of the group, Side B showing, and sit down.

Now choose a card at random from the pile. Write an appreciation at the top of Side A (one sentence or phrase only), by using either your knowledge of, or your intuition about, this person, or by picking a values card.

Fold down the top so your words do not show. Pass this card to the person on your left and repeat this up to six times. If you get your own card, you may wish to swap with someone. Place all the cards back in the centre and find your own. Read your card slowly to yourself and accept the gifts it contains.”

**Allow up to 10 minutes before moving into feedback.**

**Feedback  
5 minutes**



- 1** If there is time, briefly discuss the benefits of using appreciation in the workplace.
- 2** You may wish to ask everyone to display their cards on a pin board so that everyone can read the types of appreciation being expressed.
- 3** Invite people to share anything they feel touched by.

## Exercise 3.7

---

# S.O.S. – a visualisation



Process:

Visualisation



25 minutes

### Learning outcome

At the end of this exercise participants should be able to:

- ✓ use the S.O.S. technique to stand back and observe negative thoughts and steer thinking towards the positive.

### Materials



- CD track no. 8 S.O.S. (or relaxing background music)
- CD player/tape recorder (optional)

### Facilitating the exercise



- 1 Explain the technique of 'S.O.S.', drawing on the **Background Reading** paper.
- 2 Explain to participants that this is a visualisation exercise. Invite them to sit upright in a comfortable position, with feet on the floor and hands held loosely in their laps.
- 3 Play the **CD track no. 8 S.O.S.** or read the following in a clear, gentle voice, pausing where you see this sign (...) to allow an opportunity for reflection. If you are reading aloud, you may wish to play background music.



“ Sit comfortably and relax. Let your body relax... let your breathing become easy... and your thoughts quiet...

Now, think of a difficult or unresolved situation in your working life at present. Picture that scene as though from a distance... Observe the scene from a safe place as if looking at it on a screen... you are an observer looking on... ... **(pause for 20 seconds)**.

Ask yourself: What is the interaction like...? What thoughts and feelings are being experienced and exchanged...? What is each person's body language ...? What is the expression on your face...? What is the atmosphere...? What effect is it having on your body...? What effect does it have on others around you...? What is the outcome...?

Be silent for a minute and allow yourself to be calm and return to a positive inner space. Imagine what value or quality you would like to bring to that situation.

Put this quality into your mind... really hold it and tune into it... See that quality, sense it, hear it and touch it... Imagine that quality is going into your whole being, into your muscles, your face, your shoulders, your chest, your back, your skin, your jaw... in fact, into your whole being...

Now, having taken time to create new thoughts, picture another screen close to you, in front of the previous one. Play that same scene again, but with your chosen qualities in action. Can you see your positive qualities or values affecting that situation or interaction...? Reflect on this for a few moments....

What is the interaction like now...? What are your thoughts or feelings...? What is your body language... the expression on your face...? What is the effect on your body...? How do you feel...? What is the atmosphere like...? What is the effect on others...? What is the outcome now...?

What other positive qualities are you able to use in that situation or interaction...?

As you reflect on the difference, what did you let go of...? What have you added ...?

Now, slowly allow yourself to become aware of the room, take a few deep breaths and have a stretch if you wish.”

**Feedback**  
**10 minutes**



Bring the group together for discussion to consider any points arising from the exercise.

**Helpful hints**

Remind participants of the 'STOP' technique for repetitive, negative thoughts, especially if they are involved in very emotionally charged situations (see **Background Reading** paper).



**Movement exercise**



5 minutes



**Break**



15 minutes

## Exercise 3.8

---

# Being positive at work



Process:

Play



40 minutes

### Learning outcome

At the end of this exercise participants should be able to:

- ✓ recognise the benefits of being positive at work.

### Materials



- Worksheet 3.8 Being positive at work
- Pre-prepared flipchart with three headings (allowing space to write a list under each):
  - a) *Your health and effectiveness at work*
  - b) *Your relationships with patients/clients*
  - c) *Your relationships with colleagues/your team*
- Flipchart and marker pens

### Facilitating the exercise



- 1 Ask people to form groups of between 4 and 6 people, and distribute **Worksheet 3.8 Being positive at work**.
- 2 Explain that each group will think of a particular difficult situation (step 1), act it out amongst themselves (step 2) then re-enact it in a positive way (step 3), introducing some of the ideas and techniques for positive thinking and appreciation they have explored during the session.

Allow up to 25 minutes for this exercise, prompting the groups to move through the three steps of the exercise as necessary.

**Feedback**  
**15 minutes**



- 1 Gather everyone back and ask each group to briefly feed back on the situation they chose and how they brought positivity into it. What effects did they experience?
- 2 Broaden out the discussion by inviting comments and comparisons on what positivity at work (being positive) means to different individuals.
- 3 Using your pre-prepared flipchart, share and consider the benefits or gains of being positive at work in each of the three areas, making a list under each heading.

## 5 Session Review



10 minutes

### Guidance notes

Briefly review the session by displaying the session aims, learning outcomes and session programme. Remind participants of the activities they have undertaken.

Pick out any highlights, referring to materials that participants have produced and which you have displayed.

Hand out the **Background Reading** paper for participants to take away, pointing out any references and resources for this module, should they wish to explore the theme in more depth.


See **Part 2: Guidance for Facilitators** for further guidance.

## 6 Action Planning

See **Part 2: Guidance for Facilitators** and **Part 5: Additional Resources** for information and guidance on action planning. Below is a suggested short action planning exercise which could be incorporated into this session.

### Exercise 3.9

## Thoughts into action

 30 minutes

#### Materials



- Flipchart from Exercise 3.3 Surfacing positive thoughts
- Paper and pens

#### Facilitating the exercise




- 1 Draw on the list of positive thoughts and beliefs the group generated in Exercise 3.3 Surfacing positive thoughts.
- 2 Invite each participant to choose one positive thought or belief they would like to adopt for the coming week ahead. It should be linked to a situation where changing their thinking could make a difference.



- 2 Ask them to write the situation and the thought or belief on a sheet of paper and to share them with a partner.  
Allow 15 minutes
- 4 Invite each pair to discuss ways in which they could introduce some of the ideas and techniques into their work situation.  
Allow 15 minutes

**Helpful hints** The last part of this exercise could be done in work teams.

## 7 Evaluation

 10 minutes



### Materials

- Copies of evaluation *pro forma* (if being used)
- Pens

### Guidance notes

Run through your planned evaluation activity (see **Part 2: Guidance for Facilitators** and **Part 5: Additional Resources** for information and guidance on evaluation).

As an alternative or additional activity, you may also want to give out a more formal evaluation form at this point for participants to complete now or return by a given date.

Remember to plan in some time as soon as possible after the session to complete your own evaluation of how you think the session went.

## 8 Closure

Lead the group in your planned closure activity (see **Part 2: Guidance for Facilitators** and **Part 5: Additional Resources** for information and guidance on closures), or use the suggested activity below:

### Exercise 3.10

---

# Appreciating the self and others



Process:

Appreciation



10 minutes

#### Learning outcomes

At the end of this exercise participants should be able to:

- ✓ accept and identify positive qualities in the self
- ✓ affirm positive qualities in others.

#### Materials



- Coloured paper (A5) or cards
- Pens
- A hat or dish to hold the cards
- CD player/tape recorder and background music (optional)

#### Facilitating the exercise



Distribute pieces of coloured paper or card, so each person has two. Inform them that they will give a gift to each other and to themselves.

You may wish to play some music during this closing exercise.



**Part A: Sharing affirmations (5 minutes)**

---

**1 Invite participants to do the following:**

“ On one piece of card write a positive **affirmation** that you would like to give as a special gift to another person. It can be written in the form of, 'You are special because...' or, 'You have the qualities of...'. You may like to think of someone who inspires you to help you with ideas, if you wish.”

**2 Collect the cards, folded up, into a dish or hat; mix them up and then ask each participant to pick one out at random.**

“ This is a special gift for you to reflect on and absorb. Take it away in the awareness that this is something you already have within you.”

**Part B: Affirmations for the self (5 minutes)**

---

**Invite participants to do the following:**

“ On your second card write 5 positive affirmations or statements about yourself, starting, 'I love/like myself because...'. Be sincere with yourself and be positive. This is your gift to yourself, an affirmation of your own ability to appreciate.”

## 9 Follow-on/homework

### Exercise 3.11

---

# Re-cycling thoughts



Process:

Listening



30 minutes

#### Learning outcomes

At the end of this exercise participants should be able to:

- ✓ identify negative cycles of thinking
- ✓ change negative into positive cycles of thinking.

#### Materials



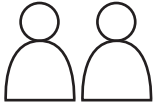
- Worksheet 3.11 Re-cycling thoughts

#### Facilitating the exercise



- 1 Briefly explain the concept of negative cycles of thinking and the problems associated with this, drawing on the **Background Reading** paper.
- 2 Ask participants to get into pairs, and give out **Worksheet 3.11: Re-cycling thoughts**. Introduce the exercise as follows:  
“First, on your own, write down a cycle of negative thinking with which you are familiar. It is useful if this is a cycle that you recognise in yourself, even if it is occasional. Then jot down as many positive thoughts as you can that may help to counteract the negative cycle.”

Allow 5 minutes.



### 3 Ask participants to work in their pairs as follows:

“Share your negative cycle of thinking with your partner, and any positive thoughts you have come up with. Work together with the positive thoughts to create cycles of positive thinking that may be helpful to either of you. By the end of the session you will each have a positive cycle of thought to turn to.”

Allow 15 minutes.

#### Feedback 10 minutes



Invite pairs to feed back on how effective they were in working together on solutions, and to give an example of a cycle of positive thought they created.

#### Helpful hints

This is a co-operative task that requires listening. Often participants find they can help each other despite finding their own cycle difficult to move out of. It may be that partners come up with one positive cycle that both can utilise equally well.

## Exercise 3.12

---

# Tuning into positive thoughts



Process:

Meditation



20 minutes

### Learning outcome

At the end of this exercise participants should be able to:

- ✓ practise a meditation exercise which will help them to experience the benefits of positive thinking and further develop their capacity for positivity.

### Materials



- CD track no. 9 Tuning into positive thoughts (or relaxing background music)
- CD player/tape recorder (optional)

### Facilitating the exercise

**1** Introduce the exercise as follows:

“To be creative and to consolidate new ideas, we must often first become silent. In this exercise we will do this. A guided meditation can help us tune into our inner positivity, even when we are stuck in a negative cycle of feelings about the self. The following exercise has been devised with this context in mind. Note down any ideas, thoughts or inspirations that arise as you follow this exercise.”

**2** Play the **CD track no. 9 Tuning into positive thoughts** or read the following text in a clear, gentle voice, pausing at ellipses (...). You may wish to play background music if you are reading aloud.

“ Sit comfortably with your feet on the floor, and hands, shoulders and face relaxed. Allow yourself to become quiet and take a few deep breaths to draw in fresh air... Breathe out, letting go of any tensions. With each in-breath, imagine that you are filling up with positive thoughts and feelings... Breathe in positivity, letting it reach up to your scalp, and breathe out, feeling your whole body relax and all tension draining away...

Breathe naturally... observe your breathing as you breathe in and observe it as you breathe out. Let your breathing settle down and become deeper... perhaps there are thoughts whirling around... ..

Take your mind back to the image of a relaxed and positive you that you created in an earlier meditation... this image reflects what you can be when tapping into your inner strength... it reflects your inner self, and you may like to stay with that image or create a new one...

Sitting in silence... let a thought about being content come into your mind... it may be a thought about what being satisfied and content means to you... be content for a moment... ..

**(pause for 8 seconds).**

You can feel your inner calm and tranquility start to resurface... you experience how different it is to shift from one mind-set to a more soothing and contented mind-set... .. **(pause for 10 seconds).**

So you stay with this soothing, comforting thought... .. perhaps in your mind's eye you can stay there for a longer time and really start to absorb this change... Soak in the calm... or the thought or image that evokes peace and contentment in you... stay there... .. **(pause for 8 seconds).**

When you are ready, turn your thoughts back to the calm of your breathing... return to observing your breath... become aware of your body and your chair... and your surroundings.”

### Feedback



**Ask for comments from the group. Allow about 5–10 minutes for their feedback.**

### Helpful hints

**Encourage participants to do something similar when they feel stressed at home, and also perhaps in the workplace as a team.**

**With practice, this type of meditation can be very effective in shifting negativity from the mind, and only takes a few minutes.**

## Worksheet 3.1

---

# The impact of being positive

On your own, consider what are the gains or benefits of being positive, on:

- a) *Your body or physical health?*
- b) *Your mind or mental health?*
- c) *Your relationships or social health?*
- d) *Your spirit, faith or belief system?*

In pairs, consider the benefits or gains of being positive.

## Worksheet 3.2

---

# Valuing the self

Identify your positive qualities and thoughts by answering the questions on this sheet. Be spontaneous and jot down any thoughts which arise, rather than spending too long considering your response:

*What qualities have I shown today while talking with others?*

*What positive thoughts have I had about others?*

*What positive thoughts have I had about myself?*

*What have I done well today?*

## Worksheet 3.3

---

# Surfacing positive thoughts

List some positive thoughts and beliefs which come to mind in each of these areas:

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <i>1 Self</i>                | <i>2 Others</i>                                |
| <i>3 A current situation</i> | <i>4 Anticipation of a difficult situation</i> |



## Handout 3.6

---

# Appreciating others

When children are learning to walk, write, or ride a bike, we encourage them with physical support, smiles and helpful words. We know almost instinctively that they will respond to praise, and so learn more quickly. It seems so easy and natural that we do not even need to think about it. Adults are learning all the time too, yet with them it is different. Praise is rationed and criticism is the order of the day. The result is that there is little motivation to change. Somehow we have lost the ability to give praise, and may even feel embarrassed about it.

There are four simple rules when appreciating others:

- be sincere
- be specific
- identify the quality
- beware of ‘spoilers’

### **Be sincere**

It is not just a matter of choosing the right words of encouragement; we have to be genuine in what we say. We all intuitively know what feelings really lie behind what is said, so when giving praise we really have to mean it – that means being positive about ourselves and looking for the positive in others so our comments come naturally. Respect for others is also shown through friendly gestures and maintaining good eye contact – these aspects of our body language are a physical demonstration of our sincerity and commitment to what we are saying.

### **Be specific**

For people whose self-esteem is good, and who are comfortable with themselves, taking praise can be easy. But those who have poor self-esteem will often reject praise because they cannot believe it. ‘Well done’ and ‘Good show!’ may sound a bit empty. Many of the phrases we have used in the past to congratulate actually sound quite dated now – perhaps a sign of how unused society has become to giving praise. So we have to choose our language carefully for it to sound real and believable.

## Handout 3.6 (continued)

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### **Appreciating others**

If you wish to encourage a student, choose something specific. For example, for a nurse laying out an instrument trolley, you might say, 'That's very helpful, you have assembled everything in the right order'. S/he can look at what s/he has done and see that the observation is true. Similarly, with patients, a physiotherapist could say, 'That's great. You really remembered to look ahead when using the walking frame'.

### **Identify the quality**

If you can identify the quality that someone is demonstrating by their positive behaviour it gives the praise a depth and builds on a person's self-respect. A senior ward sister said to a nurse in training, 'You washed that patient efficiently, and with such kindness and gentleness'. That comment has stayed with the nurse through all her working years. As a result, she tries to bring kindness and gentleness into all her work. She identified these qualities as part of her personality and her practice, and consequently is more aware about living them in practice. Praise is a very powerful tool and a wonderful gift we can give to others.

### **Beware of spoilers!**

Sometimes, people really try to praise or encourage, but end their comment with a 'spoiler'. For example, how does a student pharmacist feel when her tutor says, 'You did a great job cleaning the drugs cupboard – it looks so organised. I don't know why you don't keep it like that all the time. It's always such a mess!?' That is a spoiler! Other examples are:

A surgeon says to a junior, 'You've stitched up that wound very neatly... why can't you do that more often?'

A staff nurse says to an auxiliary, 'You concentrated and finished your work quickly. Well done. If you'd only do that all the time, it wouldn't be such a hassle every day.'

In each case, the comment starts out well but then turns to reproach, and refers to, reminds the person of, and therefore reinforces, past negative behaviours – consequently, the praise isn't effective and the positive feelings usually diminish quickly.

## Worksheet 3.6

---

# Appreciating others at work

With a partner, practise giving appreciation. Discuss together and write down a few ways you can be more appreciative of others in 3 or 4 work situations. The 'others' might include a patient, a student or supervisee, a colleague, an administrative assistant etc.

Using the guidelines in Handout 3.6, write down some specific things you might say to be appreciative of them.

Remember to:

- *be sincere*
- *be specific*
- *identify the quality*
- *beware of 'spoilers'.*

1

2

3

4

At the end of your discussion, make **one** commitment to be more appreciative that you can apply at work or at home:

## Worksheet 3.8

---

# Being positive at work

- 1 Think of a difficult situation for one of the themes below.
- 2 Act out the difficult situation in the group in some way, eg as a mime or play, with one person directing the roles people have to play.
- 3 Now repeat the same situation in a positive way.

### **The themes**

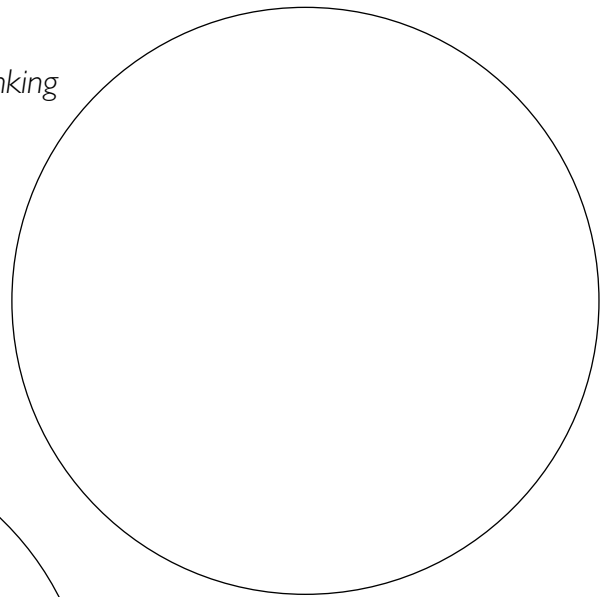
- a Your health and effectiveness at work
- b Your relationships with patients/clients
- c Your relationships with colleagues/your team

## Worksheet 3.11

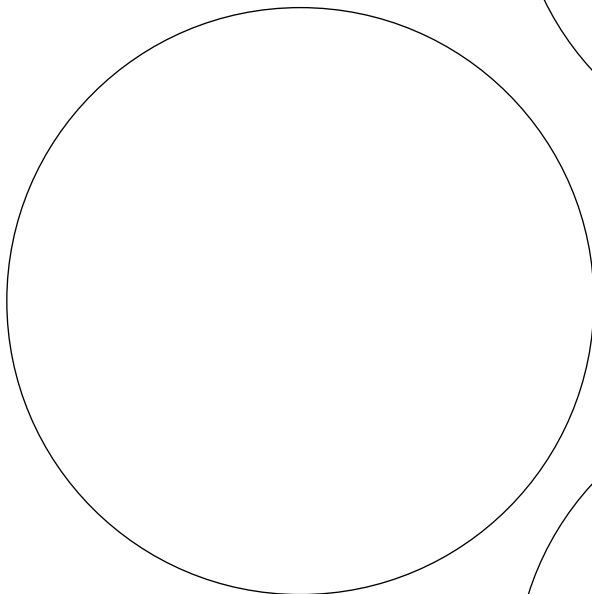
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# Re-cycling thoughts

*Cycle of negative thinking*



*Positive words*



*Cycle of positive thinking*

