***Stress Management Training***

Session Seven. Lecture Script

***Positive Thinking (Cognitive Behavioural therapy).***

Negative thinking is a habit. Habits are a way of saving energy. Most of what we do is habit. From getting up in the morning to going to bed at night is governed by habits built up over years. By noting your negative thought patterns, and thinking up positive alternatives , you have begun to change your habit. If you have used the ABC form you will have noticed a great difference between your positive and negative thoughts, feelings and behaviours. Now we are going to focus on the positive.

We can begin to think positively just by deliberately thinking the direct opposite of the negative thought, and by concentrating on the positive aspects of any situation. It often helps to imagine someone else who is standing up to the negative thoughts for us. Imagine a very good friend who has known you for years and accepts all your strengths and weaknesses. The friend is always on your side and is always ready to remind you of the positive things about yourself. Challenges to negative thinking must be strong and forceful, begin any challenge to a negative thought by shouting NO or SHUT UP, then replace it with the positive opposite.

The following situations are when you most need to be on your guard against negative thinking:

* When you meet strangers
* When you have contact with people you find attractive.
* When you have made a mistake
* When you feel criticised
* When you talk to people in authority.
* When you feel hurt.
* When you feel someone is angry with you.
* In situations where you risk rejection or failure.
* In conversations with parents.
* In conversations with anyone who may be disapproving.

We can use the following techniques to deal with negative thoughts.

The Stop Technique.

When you have a negative thought, take a deep breath, shout STOP in your mind and think very hard about something else. This is especially useful if the negative thoughts involve repetitive worrying about a situation. Repeat as often as necessary.

Change Your Body Position

When you have a negative thought, change the way you are sitting, standing and breathing. Unclench your fists, drop your shoulders, relax your jaw, take a deep breath. This helps positive thoughts to follow.

Present Awareness

Bring yourself into the present. Over-ride your negative thoughts about the past or the future by looking around the room and saying out loud what you can see, or hear, or smell. Spend a minute or two saying sentences which begin with “Now I am aware of….. .”

Exaggerate the Problem

Think of all the worst things that could have happened but did not.

Paradoxical Intention.

If you are nervous about a situation, exaggerate the nervousness in your mind. Say “I am so frightened I could die”, or something similar. You my well get bored with being nervous more quickly than if you try to suppress your nerves.

Look at yourself in the Mirror and Smile!

Cue Cards

Take three positive thoughts about yourself and write them down, put them in places you will see them often. When you do see them, read them out loud.

***Positive thinking takes time and hard work, but it is a habit that is well worth developing.***