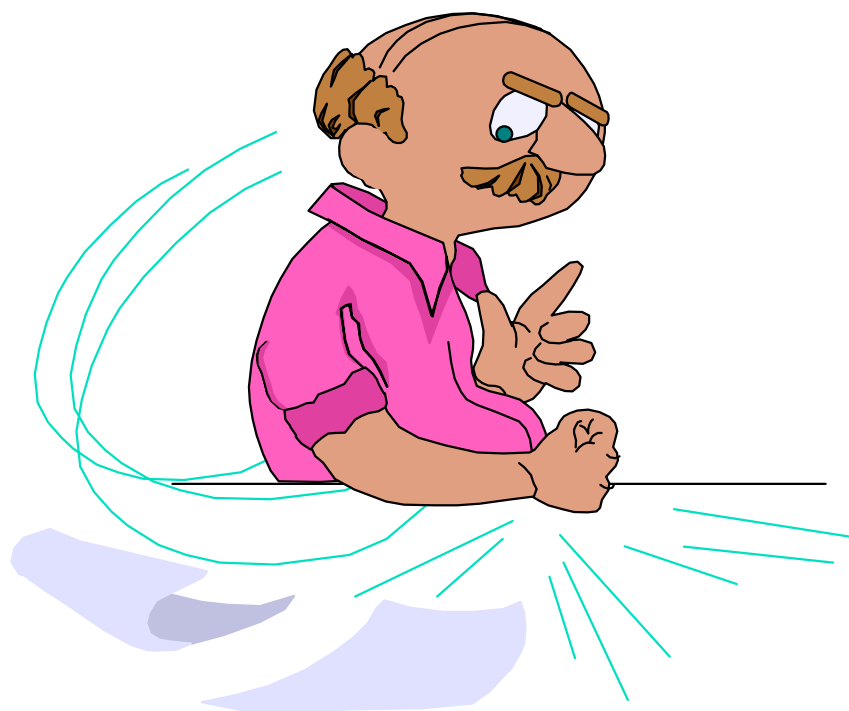


# Changing Wonky Beliefs Training Program

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Web site: <http://www.usq.edu.au/users/machin/cwb.htm>



**Overview:**

This is a manual for the Changing Wonky Beliefs (CWB) training program designed for delivery to groups of individuals who are unemployed, or who are facing organisational change in their workplace (e.g., restructuring, reengineering, or downsizing). The first three parts of the manual introduce the general background of the CWB training program and its main concepts (e.g. Self-efficacy) as well as the trainer's strategies required to present this training. The fourth part includes the modules of the training itself with instructions how to use them.

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- I. Introduction
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## I. Introduction

The mental health of people who lose their jobs often deteriorates. Research shows a clear need for interventions to assist unemployed people to reduce the negative psychological impacts of unemployment and to help them back into work. Evidence exists that a poor level of cognitive well-being, a low level of self-efficacy and contingent self-esteem clearly reduce the likelihood of successful outcomes in job-seeking.

Most re-employment programs aim to clarify job goals and to provide job-seeking or job-related skills. However, very few interventions address the symptoms of poor cognitive well-being (such as lack of a robust self-esteem, low self-confidence or insufficient coping strategies), resulting from job-loss.

This manual will assist trainers to provide training courses and activities to enhance the cognitive well-being of their unemployed clients.

The main focus is to make trainers familiar with the psychological background and training modules related to self-efficacy, self-confidence, stress management and coping strategies, and self-management of distorted thinking.

### ***Program Goals:***

The goals for the trainees who undertake the Changing Wonky Beliefs training program are:

- (a) to increase self-efficacy and confidence to undertake skills-based training and active job search
- (b) to reduce feelings of anxiety and stress, especially those associated with learning and attending training
- (c) to overcome self-doubts and increasing persistence and ultimate success at tasks attempted
- (d) to enhance coping skills, both general and those specifically required to attend training and
- (e) to improve transfer of skills learnt on the course to post-course situations

## II. Theoretical background of the underlying concepts

### **Definition and explanation of Self-efficacy:**

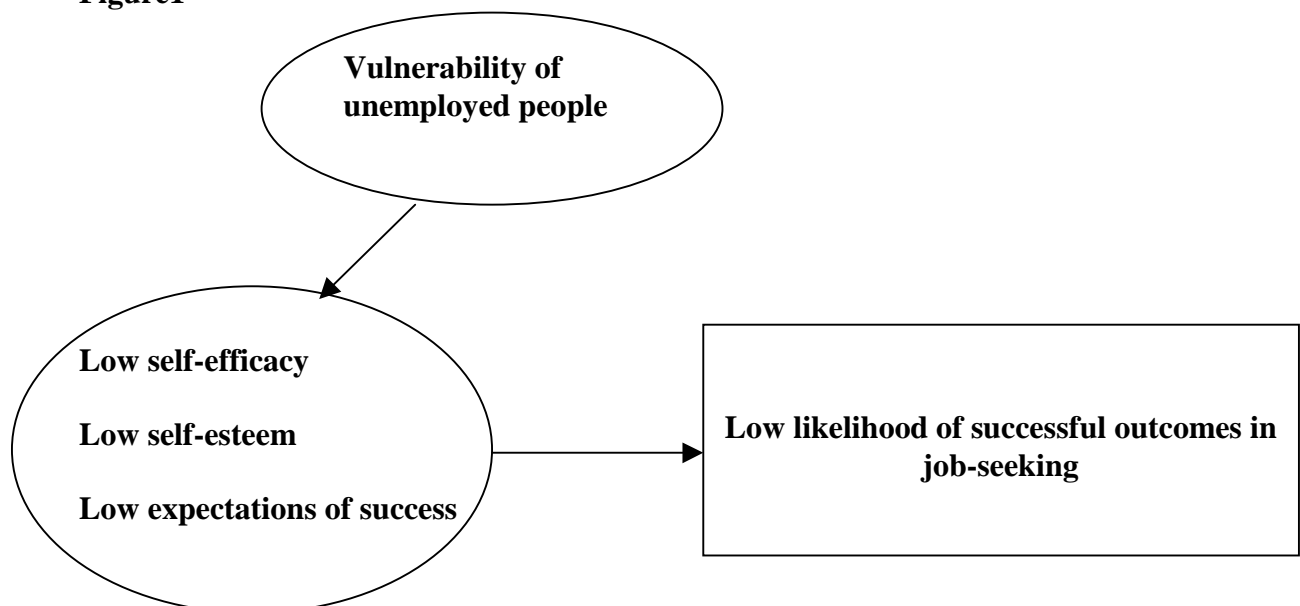
Self-efficacy can be defined as a person's beliefs regarding his or her ability to perform a specific behaviour successfully even in new or stressful situations. It is a personal judgement about one's capability to accomplish a high level of performance. It is self-confidence with respect to specific behaviour.

Efficacy beliefs operate as a key factor for human competence and performance. Different people with similar skills, or the same person under different circumstances, may perform differently, depending on fluctuations in their beliefs of personal efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Skills can be easily overruled by self-doubts, so that even highly talented individuals make poor use of their capabilities under circumstances that undermine their beliefs in themselves. That is, perceived self-efficacy is an important contributor to performance accomplishments, whatever the underlying skills might be. Effective functioning requires both skills and the efficacy beliefs to use them well (Bandura, 1997).

### **Results of low Self-efficacy:**

Evidence exists that a poor level of cognitive well-being, a low level of self-efficacy and contingent self-esteem clearly reduce the likelihood of successful outcomes in job seeking.

**Figure1**



A major problem posed by unemployment is that it tends to rob people of their feelings of competence at a time when they need them the most. Therefore,

unemployed people are (for good reasons) especially vulnerable to low levels of perceived self-efficacy.

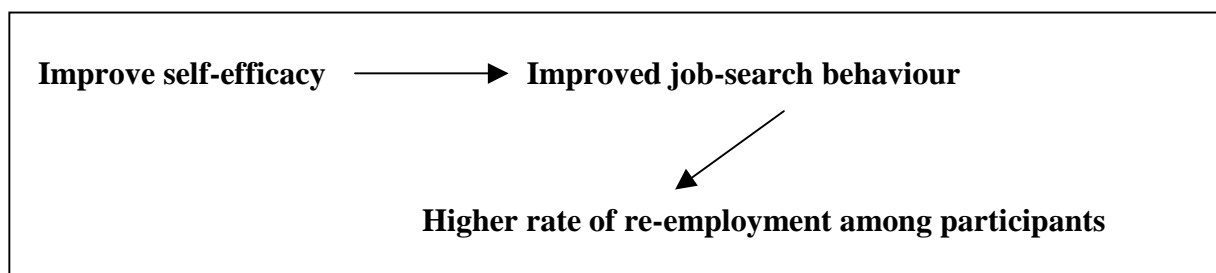
Conclusion:

While it is important to have useful skills, having skills without self-efficacy is useless. People with high self-efficacy and moderate skills will be successful. The confident, competent job-seeker is the successful job-seeker. He or she is also the job-seeker who can weather difficulties and disappointments without a collapse in self-esteem.

### ***Effects of high self-efficacy:***

High levels of self-efficacy can have very positive effects. Self-efficacy has been shown to influence one's choice of activities, to improve one's levels of performance *regardless of objective skill*, and to promote persistence in the pursuit of difficult tasks. Additionally, high self-efficacy has been demonstrated to reduce both the perceived stress involved in performing difficult tasks and physiological indicators of stress (heart rate, blood pressure...). Successful training programs *have proved* that enhancing self-efficacy is the key to achieving worthwhile outcomes.

### ***Plan of the workshop:***



Self-efficacy training has successfully triggered this chain.

Therefore the trainers' goal is to use both word and actions to send messages such as:

- 'you are competent'
- 'you can trust yourself'
- 'your experience and thoughts are valuable'
- 'you have the right to feel confident'

**The motto of this program is: It is more important that participants gain confidence and competence than that they get it right.**

### III. General Trainer's strategies required

The self-efficacy program seeks to engage participants on a personal level, and has as a major focus the empowerment of participants. Active learning for participants is promoted through group discussions and activities. Participants are to be encouraged to focus on strategies that will lead to enhancing their self-efficacy and confidence, especially confidence for learning. They are to be encouraged to generate personal knowledge and understanding, personal solutions, and personal strategies, thereby affording the course and the learning a high degree of relevance. Trainers are required to generate the emotionally supportive elements of the program. It is their role to provide encouragement, support and appropriate positive feedback for successes on the program. The trainers' behaviours and attitudes will be modelled by participants and influence their responses to the training and their interactions with one another.

#### ***Self-efficacy enhancing strategies:***

Individuals acquire information about their levels of self-efficacy through the following general sources. Trainers should create meaningful and timely experiences for participants based on these key strategies as outlined below:

##### ***a) Giving unconditional positive feedback***

The main procedural trainer-tool to increase the participants' self-efficacy is to give positive feedback to them. This positive feedback has to be unconditional, that is even constructive criticism is not appropriate in this sort of workshop. It would be counterproductive to correct people if 'getting it right' came at the expense of their self-efficacy. Trainers are relied upon to give positive feedback very frequently – more frequently than they will find comfortable at first. **Using unconditional feedback, the trainer becomes a reliable self-esteem enhancer who installs in the participants that the trainer really does care and can be counted upon to express positive regard toward them. When this happens, the participant's self-esteem is raised and the trainer acquires a considerable amount of motivating power.**

Trainers must each develop and expand their own vocabulary of positive feedback. Try to find 'active' alternatives to the word 'good' or 'nice'. The more use of active and specific the words, the easier it is for participants to accept the feedback and apply it to specific behaviours. Examples of active words for positive feedback are: capable, useful, perceptive, thoughtful, an aid to, sound, understanding, caring, empathetic, proficient, valuable, attentive, considerate, vigorous, calm, rational, patient, realistic, detailed, wise, supportive, helpful, nurturing, conscientious, articulate, generous, interesting, instrumental in, dependable, thorough, warm, effective, satisfying, creative, logical, practical, well thought out, appropriate, skilled, desirable, beneficial, efficient, kind, careful, insightful, alert, determined, healthy, concerned, gentle, invaluable.

### ***Strategies for Giving Positive Feedback***

Refer to these guidelines to make your feedback helpful, positive, and reinforcing. In our program, Positive Feedback is:

**1. Specific rather than general.**

It is more helpful to cite a specific action (“the way you gave encouragement to your teammates was very supportive”) than to state a general impression (“You did a good job”). This helps the receiver remember the behaviour and continue to use it.

**2. Descriptive rather than evaluative.**

By describing our own reactions rather than making judgement, we leave the individual free to use our feedback or not as he or she sees fit. Because trainers avoid presenting a particular set of values, participants are less likely to react defensively to any feedback.

**3. Concrete rather than abstract.**

Use concrete examples and active language that the receiver can link to his or her own experience and behaviour. Examples of active words can be found on page 5.

**4. Focussed on behaviour rather than personality.**

It is important to refer to what a person does rather than comment on what we imagine he or she is. It is less threatening to a person to hear “you have a lot of ideas to share” than “you are quite a talker”.

**5. Focussed on the sharing of ideas rather than the giving of advice.**

By sharing ideas and information we leave the participants free to decide for themselves, in the light of their own goals in a particular at particular time, how to use the ideas and the information. When we give advice we tell them what to do with the information, and in that sense we take away their freedom to determine for themselves what is for them the most appropriate course of action.

**6. Focussed on the value it has for the receiver.**

The feedback provided should serve the needs of the recipient rather than those of the giver. Help and feedback need to be offered, not imposed.

**7. Well timed.**

Feedback is generally more meaningful if it is given as soon as is appropriate, when it can still be concrete and relatively free of the distortions that come with the lapse of time.

**8. Focussed on what is said rather than why it is said.**

Feedback should not be based on what the trainer has inferred rather than observed. Assumptions about the motives of the person giving feedback may prevent the receiver from hearing it or cause him or her to distort what is said. In short, if I question why a person gives me feedback, I may not hear what he or she says.

**b) *Encourage participants to make self-disclosures***

This is the revealing of personal information about oneself, including feelings and concerns. Self-disclosure works in two ways. First, the trainer makes moderate self-disclosures, perhaps talking about his/her own period of unemployment, to suggest that it is okay to have these concerns and it is safe to express them in the training session. Participants having been trusted with the trainer's feelings, feel safer in revealing their own. Second, when participants make self-disclosures in an atmosphere of unconditional positive regard, the trainer is then able to reflect back their experience in a positive way and increase their feelings of being normal, competent and valued.

**c) *Vicarious Learning - Seeing other people perform the behaviour successfully.***

This is also termed behavioural *modeling*. It involves observing someone else's success in coping with problems or completing a task, which can help the observer understand how to approach the task and raise their own personal efficacy. For example, watching a friend or colleague who you believe to be like yourself successfully complete a task will stimulate a belief that you too can carry it out successfully. The greater the similarity between the people modeling the behaviour and the participants, the more likely it is that participants will experience self-efficacy enhancement. ("If they can do it, so can I").

**d) *Actively rehearsing the behaviour.***

This is the most powerful method of enhancing self-efficacy. Perceptions of failure during rehearsal, of course, lower self-efficacy. Therefore it is important that a lot of positive feedback be provided.

**e) *Performance Accomplishments***

This involves the identification and acknowledgment by participants of previous successful performances of behaviours that have resulted in an expectation of being able to successfully perform a task. For example, an athlete who has a history of successful competitions is likely to feel confident they will perform successfully in an upcoming competition. Also, a person who can recall situations where they managed to learn complex tasks will be more likely to feel confident that they can perform successfully again.

**f) *Verbal Persuasion.***

Unemployed people often harbour distorted, automatic-thinking patterns (see Module 2), which lead to self-doubts and a low level of self-efficacy. Verbal persuasion involves encouraging someone to attempt a task, which can help a person to overcome distorted thinking, self-doubts and to persist at a task. For example: inspirational talks and encouragement raise beliefs that people can cope successfully with what has been difficult for them in the past. Such persuasion can come from someone else, or emanate from your own *self-talk*. Trainees, who learn how to give and receive

encouragement from others and themselves, are likely to increase their confidence for the task of learning. Again, positive reinforcement plays a vital role.

***g) Managed emotional arousal.***

This involves reducing an individual's levels of anxiety and stress. Self-doubts are often fuelled by anxiety about potential failure. When people feel stressed or threatened, their confidence and feelings of personal efficacy drop and their performance often suffers as a result. For example: strategies or training that lead to a reduction in anxiety and self-doubts, or which allow them to be managed, allow attention to be focused on the task at hand.

***h) Encourage social support.***

That includes, showing acceptance of and empathy for individual beliefs, feelings, behaviours; giving positive feedback; contributing to the empowerment of participants; reinforcing positive coping behaviours; the role of the 'helper'; making relevant self-disclosure statements. More concrete examples are: modelling support and caring toward your co-trainer; praising good helping behaviours in participants; encouraging moderate self-disclosures from participants; asking the group to help their peers with ideas; setting up the role of the helper.

***Other general principles:***

A critical element of the program is the learning processes through which the content is delivered. All modules of the self-efficacy course are designed to meet the needs of adult learners, and are based on principles that have been developed to enhance adult learning. These principles are:

- **Adults like to learn through doing.** Adults generally do not respond well to heavy theory sessions and long periods of input by trainers. Using a variety of training experiences will enhance learning.
- **Adults like to draw on their own experiences.** Learning needs to be personally meaningful, and must be congruent with past experiences. Participants' life experiences should be utilised in the learning process.
- **Adults prefer to learn specific, relevant tasks.** Adults prefer to learn what they need to know. Participants should be involved in goal setting. Learning should be tied to skills transfer.
- **Adults are nervous and sometimes worry about learning.** This is especially the case for people who have had poor experiences at school. The training should be non-threatening. Participants should be informed where the training is heading, and also what is expected of them.

## IV. The training modules:

The following description of the training modules consists of information for the trainer and instructions that the trainer gives to the participants. The latter are marked with quotation marks.

### *Introduction:*

#### ❖ **Exercise 1: Icebreaker**

Ask the participants break up in pairs and introduce themselves to each other. Let them describe their worst experience with an employer (or in a job interview or in a previous training program) to their partner. Then let each participant being introduced to the group by their partner, mentioning the experience belonging to the person.

Note: Some of the participants might be reluctant to give these self-disclosures at this stage. So, emphasise that the release of self-disclosures is totally optional and any other interesting experience or attribute of the person is valuable too.

## **Module 1: Confidence Building**

The aims of this module are to enhance the participants' confidence by

- a) making them aware of their personal job skills
- b) rehearse how to present skills to the employer (optional, because of length)
- c) declare confidence of one's own skills in public

### **a) Identification of personal job skills**

Presenting skills and abilities in the most positive way is essential for a good resume, a good job application, and a good job interview. Many people sell themselves short because...

- They don't present their skills, abilities and personal traits in a convincing manner, and...
- They are not aware that certain skills and qualities that they have might be of interest to an employer, and so fail to mention them.

A prerequisite for being able to present the skills positively is to know them well!

### **❖ Exercise 2: Personal Strengths**

Step 1: Distribute the Abilities and Personal Strengths List (see Appendix 1).

(Trainers' input)

"This is a short list of skills that we would like you to review.

This list will...

- Help uncover skills you hadn't thought of before to include in a job application or interview.
- Help you discover which skills and strengths you like and dislike using.
- Usually helps people feel good about themselves".

Step2:

(Trainers' input)

"Go through the list. Check off all the skills that you have, or have ever used at any time or in any context. For example, if you collected money for a going-away present for someone, then you have dealt with money and could do it again. If you organise and schedule for five kids, then you have organising skills. If you used a skill as part of a hobby or club, that skill is as worthwhile as one you used on a job, and it should be checked off."

Step3:

(Trainers' input)

"Once you have done that, go back through and put a 'YES' next to the skills you have checked that you enjoy using. Put 'NO' next to those you truly dislike using. Leave the rest unmarked."

Yes = Enjoy using  
No = Dislike using  
Blank = Neutral

(Trainers' input)

“Doing this will help you decide if a job is one you would enjoy, and will help you identify jobs you might hate so you can avoid them. “

Step 4 (plenary)

Discuss the exercise. Let each participant share one skill or strengths they checked off that they would not have thought about otherwise or they never thought about telling an employer.

### **b) Presenting skills using concrete examples (Rehearsal of skill presentation)**

(Trainers' input)

"In the job-seeking process the presentation of ones skills is crucial."

**“It is important to remember that you control almost everything the employer knows about you.** The employer is dependent on your ability to present yourself. Everything you do, say or write conveys an impression of you to an employer. The flip side is that if you do not reveal anything about your skills and strengths, the employer won't know what they are. Something we don't always think about in our job search is that interviewers are really delighted when applicants know how to present themselves well. It makes their task much easier. So you have got to present your skills and strengths effectively, convincingly and impressively. You have already gotten a good start on this by completing the skills list.”

“To impress an employer with your skills, you must present them in the right way. For example, if you have a skill like writing it is important to tell an employer you have got it.”

“The more **specific** you are, the stronger the impact you make. Consider the following example:

- ‘I have experience as a writer’ is not very specific. ‘I wrote product descriptions for our yearly sales catalogue in a way that made it more interesting and easier to read. In the first quarter after it was published, sales order went up by 10% - or there were about 20 people giving a positive feedback to it.’
- The second statement is much more specific and gives prospective employers a clearer picture of what you can do for them. We will refer to this as being **concrete.**”

“What we are going to focus on now is how to present your abilities in the most concrete way.”

**❖ Exercise 3:**

Step 1:

(Trainers' input)

“Recall a skill or ability you feel you are good at, like being reliable, or good with numbers, or hardworking. Look at the list of abilities we worked on before and choose one you would like to describe more fully.”

“If nothing comes in your mind right away it may help to remember a past accomplishment.”

Step 2:

Distribute Describing Your Skills Using Concrete Examples (Appendix 2).

(Trainers' input)

“Using concrete examples means that we are going to put together a brief description or ‘story’ that will help employers recognise and remember that we have a particular ability.”

“We want these descriptions to be short and to the point so we are going to organise into four main points. These points will serve to convince the employer how valuable our skills have been in the past and how we will be able to use these skills to benefit this company in the future.”

1. State the skill or strength
2. Give specifics: When, where, what, How
3. Show beneficial results
4. Explain how this will help the new employer

“You may think that, just through common sense, an employer would be able to recognise the value of your particular skills to the organisation. But experts have shown that this is rarely the case – **you must spell it out if you want the employer to recognise it.** A good analogy for this is the strategy advertising professionals use to make an impression on us. In a short space of time they make sure we have a very clear image of their product, service or message. We come away knowing what it is, why it is good and what it can do for us. The impression they make is carefully planned and not left to chance. It falls upon you in same way to help employers come to the right conclusions about you.”

“The form (Appendix 2) we passed out shows how to use these steps to lead an employer to a positive impression of your skills and strengths.”

“Take about five minutes now to jot down some concrete examples of your own describing one of your skills. No one else will read these so they can be in outline form. In a few minutes you will get the opportunity to practice using those examples to impress an employer.”

Allow five minutes to complete.

Step 3 (group role play):

Tell participants that we will be using small groups of three for this role-playing exercise. Define the job of each role and the way they work.

(Trainers' input)

“In this exercise, you are going to use the skills and abilities you just wrote on your Concrete Examples sheet. One person in each group ‘plays’ the applicant. The **Applicants** are going to practice using their concrete examples to impress the employer.”

“Another person plays the interviewer (employer). The **Interviewers** have an easy job. They start the ball rolling by asking the opening question, in this case it is, ‘What are your qualifications to do this job?’”

“The third person acts as a helper. The **Helpers** will listen to the answers and give positive feedback, that is always emphasising the things the **Applicants** did that were effective and positive. This is very important because we don't automatically know what we do that works. The **Helpers** must notice and tell us the positive things so that we know to keep on doing them.”

“If the **Interviewee** runs out of things to say, **Helpers** and **Interviewers** can make suggestions.”

“Everyone will get a turn to play each role; we will let you know when to switch.”

Have participants split up in groups of three. To save time, identify who will have the roles of **Applicant**, **Interviewer** and **Helper** for the first round. Have them rotate after seven minutes.

Step 5 (plenary):

Discussion. Record some of your positive observations to share with the larger group later on. Give lots of reinforcement to every participant, including helpers who have remembered to give positive feedback.

### ***(c) Declare the confidence of skills in public***

#### **❖ Exercise 4: “I would hire ... because...”**

Step 1

*If Exercise 3 was completed:*

(Trainers' input)

“Take a moment to look at the other two members of your group. It is quite possible that you can now see characteristics in them that they can't always see for themselves.”

Distribute 'Thinking like an Employer' (Appendix 3).

(Trainers' input)

"Complete the sentence on these forms for each of your team members."

"I would hire \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_."

"Make just two brief statements per person. Take four or five minutes to do this, sign each sheet and give it to the person you wrote about."

*If Exercise 3 was not completed:*

Form pairs and let them exchange their 'personal strengths' sheets. Distribute 'Thinking like an Employer' (Appendix 3) and let each participant choose two of their partners' strengths they would appreciate most if they were an employer.

Step 2:

Take the 'Thinking like an Employer' sheets. Have each member read aloud the statements made about them: 'John says he would hire me because I...'"

(Trainers' input)

"We realise that it is not always comfortable to say nice things about ourselves but a job-search situation is not time for modesty. You have got to be prepared to identify your own best qualities and say them straight out!"

"So after you have each read four statements made about you we want you to finish by saying '... and it is true'. Don't be shy about it, show your confidence."

## **MODULE 2: SELF TALK**

### **The aims of this module are:**

- To introduce participants to the concept of self-talk
- To identify and understand impact of automatic thinking in everyday life
- To identify effect of automatic thinking on self-efficacy
- To identify effect of automatic thinking on learning

### **Background:**

This module is based upon the cognitive behavioural therapy approach of psychology (e.g., Beck, 1976), and in particular on the work of Seligman (1990). The cognitive behavioural model assumes that our thoughts and views of the world determine feelings and consequent behaviour. It follows that any intervention should be aimed at thinking, and in particular, at the "explanatory style" used. Changes in feelings and behaviours are produced with the learning of more constructive thoughts and statements, and the development of a more optimistic explanatory style. The outcomes from this process include better than expected achievement, better health, and less proneness to depression.

Once learned, the skills taught and the concepts associated with this module have the potential to be pervasive and to hold a lifelong influence. To achieve this, skills and concepts need to be learned in a way that is most suited to the target participants. As a minimal and universal requirement, repetition and practice are especially important. The first exercise has a focus on identifying automatic thoughts. Later exercises address the skills of disputation and replacing the dysfunctional thoughts.

Successful outcomes for this module depends substantially on the individual facilitator's understanding of the material. This can most efficiently be resolved by reading Seligman (1990) together with other information on cognitive behaviour therapy. These references have been included as Appendix 18.

### **(a) Self Talk: Automatic Thinking**

#### **❖ Exercise 5: Developing the concept of automatic thinking**

Step 1: Distribute the Identification of Automatic Thoughts sheet (see Appendix 4).

(Trainers' input)

Ask participants to write down some statements about how they felt when they experienced their worst situation with an employer e.g. their worst job interview or their worst training experience.

Alternatively, ask them how they felt, when they engaged in the introductory exercise. Ask them to remember what it felt like to have to introduce yourself to someone who they had not met before; what it felt like to have to speak in front of the whole group.

Some participants may report feelings of being relaxed and comfortable. Many, however, will recall varying degrees of anxiety and feeling uncomfortable with the task.

### Step 2 (Plenary)

In plenary generate a list of individual's feelings on the white board, which has been divided into three columns labelled "A", "B", and "C". Record the feelings in column C (Consequences) of the A-B-C format. (Some participants will only be able to describe what they DO, and will be unable to describe feelings. "Doings" are recorded under C).

Record any self-talk statements in column B (Beliefs) on white board.

Record situations in column A (Antecedents or Adverse events).

**It is very important that the participants understand that automatic thoughts are the primary cause of the emotional consequences that we experience, and not the adverse event that triggered the thoughts.**

## ❖ Appendix 5: Case Studies

Work through one or more case studies in Appendix 5 with the group to further highlight the influence of self-statements on feelings. The case studies can be worked through in small groups, in plenary, or alternatively, work through one in plenary and then do another or others in small groups. If in small groups, move to plenary after exercise, identify themes, highlight role of self-statements, generalise to other life and learning situations.

Step 1: Distribute the Case Studies sheet (see Appendix 5).

Alternatively, write case studies on board, or use an OHT of Appendix 5.

### Step 2:

(Trainers' input)

Ask participants to work in small groups. They should clearly identify the feelings associated with each situation, and generate a list of possible messages that the case study actors are telling themselves. In plenary session, generate list of messages on white board.

Record self-statements in column B (Beliefs) on white board.

Record situations in column A (Antecedents or Adverse events).

### Step 3 (Plenary):

Ask participants to identify the characteristics of these self-statements which determine our behaviours. Generate a list on the white-board, and summarise themes identified. Themes include: where they come from, how influential they are, how

much control we have over them, whether we believe the messages, and that they are always there.

Step 4

*Handout:* Distribute Handout “Characteristics of Self Statements” (see Appendix 6) and go through with participants. Encourage discussion.

### **(c) Self Talk: Overview of A-B-C Format**

The purpose of this part is to ensure that participants understand the concept of automatic thinking.

(Trainers’ input)

Review the A-B-C model on the white-board: that is, A = Adverse events; B = Beliefs, thoughts or self-talk that occur as a result of your interpretation of the adverse event; and C = Consequences, the feelings and/or emotions that arise from the distorted or “wonky” thinking.

#### **❖ Exercise 6: Identifying A-B-C’s**

Step 1: Distribute the Identifying A-B-C's sheet (see Appendix 7).

(Trainers’ input)

Have participants work in small groups to complete the Handout on “Identifying A-B-Cs” (see Appendix 7). The last part of this Handout asks participants to reconstruct an adverse event from their personal experience, and to fit this into the A-B-C format.

Step 2 (Homework):

Emphasise the importance and necessity of practice for the learning of these skills. Provide participants with Worksheet “Identifying your own A-B-Cs” (see Appendix 8). This provides two further simulation exercises, and then asks participants to generate four more adverse events and place them in the A-B-C format.

The results of this homework can be used on a possible second day of training. Participants should bring the completed home Worksheet to the training session on the next day. It will not be shown to others, but will form the basis of some individual class work.

### **(d) Self Talk: Distorted (“Wonky”) Thinking**

It has been implied in the A-B-C model that the self-statements or beliefs which influence our feeling or behavioural responses are often dysfunctional. That is, the self-statements or Beliefs are somewhat distorted, irrational or ‘wonky’.

#### **❖ Exercise 8: Case Studies**

Step 1: Distribute the Distorted Thinking Exercise sheet (see Appendix 9).

(Trainers' input)

In small groups have participants complete the Distorted Thinking Exercise (see Appendix 9). This exercise asks participants to read and discuss several scenarios, and to identify any distorted/wonky thinking that has been demonstrated.

Step 2 (Plenary):

In plenary, generate a list of distorted thinking from each scenario.

Step 3:

Distribute Handout "8 Types of Distorted Thinking" (Appendix 10) and work through examples with participants.

Alternatively, use an OHT of Appendix 10.

### **(f) Self Talk: Disputing Negative Thinking - Solutions - A-B-C-D-E**

Disputation is the most important skill to attain in the process of developing and living an optimistic explanatory style. Once automatic distorted thoughts have been identified, disputation is the key to optimistic thinking. It is a skill, which requires constant practice.

(Trainers' input)

Reiterate the concepts of automatic and distorted thinking. At this stage it is useful to provide participants with some background information with regard to the effects of distorted thinking, its possible consequence, depression, and the possibilities of optimistic thinking. Some points could include:

- Depression is ten times more prevalent among young people today than before the second world war. There are well proven ways of immunising against depression.
- Reducing distorted thinking and dysfunctional thinking will allow you to achieve more on the sporting field, to study more effectively, to find work more efficiently, to be inoculated against negative effects of being without a job.

Distribute the '4 ways of convincing disputation' sheet (see Appendix 11).

Alternatively, use an OHT of Appendix 11.

(Trainers' input)

Discuss each of the disputation techniques described in Appendix 11.

Distribute the "Disputing and Energizing: The A-B-C-D-E of Rational Thinking" sheet (see Appendix 12).

Alternatively, use an OHT of Appendix 12.

(Trainers' input)

Discuss with participants the examples of disputing distorted thinking and dysfunctional beliefs.

**❖ Exercise 9: Dispute (D) and Energise (E)****Step 1:**

Distribute the “Disputing and Energising Worksheet” (see Appendix 13).

(Trainers’ input)

Divide the white board up into 5 segments. These need not be labelled or even marked off. Use first three segments to generate an A-B-C example. Have the group identify an Adverse event that might occur in the next weeks of job search or during training, indicate what the Consequences might be, and what intervening Beliefs led to the feeling/response Consequences.

**Step 2:**

Now ask participants what they might do in situations where the (a) catch themselves using distorted thinking or dysfunctional beliefs, or (b) catch themselves being distressed. Generate a list of possible solutions in the 4<sup>th</sup> segment on the white board (DISPUTE). The solutions should focus on disputation of the distorted thinking and dysfunctional beliefs. Any responses which fit into the E (ENERGISE) segment should be placed into the 5<sup>th</sup> segment.

Repeat the above process, asking participants to identify more positive and useful thinking or beliefs that could replace the distorted thinking used in the white board examples. Generate this list on the white board.

**Step 3 (*Homework*):**

Distribute the “Disputing and Energizing: The A-B-C-D-E of Rational Thinking” Homework sheet (see Appendix 14), and encourage participants to do at home. Emphasise that practice does improve learning (about self, and about the course) as well as transfer.

**Module: Goal Setting**

Aim: To establish appropriate goals for learning & career development

Time: Approximately 1.5 hours

Skills of trainer:

The trainer/s delivering this module should be familiar with the principles of goal-setting, be able to apply these to participant goals. A list of resources is provided at the end of this training package as an appendix.

Background:

Goals are all about achieving something within a set time. What we intend basically governs what we achieve in life. If we didn't have intentions, most human activity would stop. Even extremely repetitive, automatic, and routine activities (e.g. eating, driving, etc) are influenced by intentions, as at some stage we made conscious decisions to learn how to do these activities. But, people do not always achieve what they intend to and this is where goal setting comes into play. Goal setting is a process where individuals question what they are doing, why they are doing it, what they would like to achieve, and how they can achieve it. Setting goals improves performance and increases confidence in all areas of life. This is especially apparent in sports, where lots of time is spent on setting goals and then striving to achieve them.

Some basic principles of goal setting include:

- Set positive rather than negative goals – i.e. “I will” rather than “I won't”
- Break long-term goals into sub-goals or shorter-term goals - this improves interest, effort, and persistence
- Goals should be challenging but realistic to achieve
- Set performance-based rather than outcome goals
- Set specific and measurable goals – goals such as doing one's best are least effective
- Goals should be set by the individual, 'owned' and committed to
- Develop goal-achievement strategies – how you're going to achieve your goals

**❖ Exercise 10: Where are we now?**

Step 1 (in small groups):

Ask participants to recall a time when they set and achieved a goal. They should be encouraged to reflect on and discuss how they achieved that goal, i.e. what steps they took, what their feelings were on reaching the goal, what sort of things helped them reach the goal.

Step 2:

Ask them to think of a time when they failed to reach a goal they had set. Why do they think they didn't achieve their goal, what were some of the things that made it

difficult for them to reach their goal.

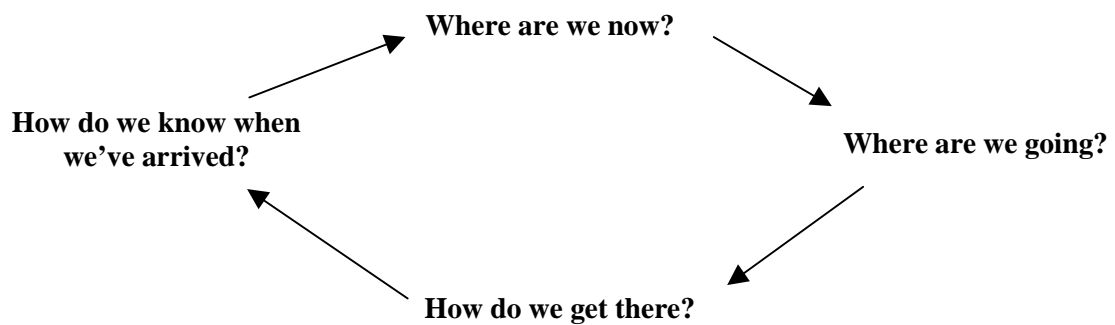
Trainers record themes on the whiteboard, generating principles of goal setting. Provide additional information on principles using sports teams as a framework.

Trainers should introduce the “Where are we now” cycle as a useful tool for goal setting often used by coaches. Using an example offered by participants or from own experience, trainer/s should work through the cycle on the whiteboard.

### ❖ Exercise 11

Distribute the "Setting goals for your learning and career development" sheet (Appendix 15).

In small groups: Have participants work together to set goals for their learning and career development. Trainers move around groups checking goals being set fall in line with principles developed.



**Module: Overcoming Barriers to Success: Stress Inoculation Training****Background:**

Stress inoculation training was developed by Irving Janis and Leon Mann, and was elaborated on by Donald Meichenbaum to be used in counselling individuals to stick to difficult decisions. It is also called Relapse Prevention (RP) training which was developed to improve the likelihood that people recovering from addictive behaviours would be able to anticipate and effectively deal with difficult situations without relapsing into their former addictive behaviours (Marlatt & Gordon, 1985). The focus of RP training was to develop high levels of self-efficacy for identifying problematic situations and exercising control over one's behaviour using appropriate coping strategies.

The typical job-seeker can expect to encounter many disappointments, difficulties and setbacks in the form of rejections. Additionally, he or she may feel unable to act because of personal or environmental barriers. For example, fear of rejection may prevent job-seekers from making the phone calls they planned. In Stress Inoculation Training, clients first identify the sources of their frustration, and then begin to see the problem as normal and potentially changeable, so that ultimately they develop high self-efficacy expectations for adopting a strategy to solve the problem. The process has been used successfully with people trying to change their behaviours or stick to difficult decisions, such as: lose weight, give up smoking, change extremely passive or aggressive behaviours, cope with stressful work situations or change destructive behaviours in relationships.

In a group setting, the steps through which the trainer leads the participants are:

1. Anticipate any potential setbacks, difficulties or barriers that may occur.
2. Identify as many approaches or strategies as possible to overcoming the problem.
3. Weigh the alternative approaches or strategies. Encourage the participants to commit to at least one of the suggested strategies.
4. Implement strategy (the last two steps usually occur out of class, on the participants' own time.)
5. Reevaluate the chosen course of action in light of the experience gained from trying, and begin the process again.

**❖ Exercise 12**

Step 1 - Defining a problem (individually):

Distribute the "Anticipate Barriers and Problems in achieving your goals" sheet (Appendix 16).

(Trainers' Input)

Building on the last goal setting exercise, participants are asked to complete the handout. Examples could be offered, to help explain the activity and to keep

problems realistic (e.g. example offered by the trainer of a simple problem of their own). State that it is important to be clear and concise about what the problem is, because it is easier to work on.

The 'problem sheets' are handed back to the trainer. Each problem sheet is attached to a large sheet of butcher's paper, which is titled: 'What are your options?' (see Appendix 17). These sheets are spread around the room. A 'Problem Solving' leaflet is put beside each sheet. Two or more coloured textas are also put beside each sheet.

Step 2 (plenary):

The problem solving method is discussed, and the main steps of the method written on the white board:

1. What is the problem? done
2. What are your options? – brainstorm
3. Weigh the alternatives - What is the best option?
4. What steps need to be taken, to do the best option?

Explain how it is often difficult to brainstorm our own problems, and it is helpful to get input from others when looking for way of solving our problems. For this reason the group is going on to brainstorm each other's problems. Each person starts with their own problem, and is instructed to write down as many solutions as they can think of for solving the problem: there are no restrictions at this stage as to what these solutions could be – some may be unrealistic and humorous. Each participant spends approximately 5 minutes brainstorming ideas for their own problem. Trainers may need to model this if participants are reluctant. After 5 minutes, participants (including trainers) rotate, writing ideas on each sheet around the room.

Step 3 - picking the best option (in pairs):

Once the 'What are your options?' sheets are full of suggestions, the group is then broken into pairs, to help each other work through the options and pick the best one. Participants may do additional brainstorming here, if they are not happy with any solution suggested. Once a solution is chosen, each pair then discusses, the steps needed in order to achieve the solution chosen. – Action plan!