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“Issues of Pride in Individual and Couples Counseling”

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ISSUES OF PRIDE IN INDIVIDUAL AND COUPLES COUNSELING

1.5 CEU Credit Hours

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Course Description:

Explore the concept of pride as it relates to social and family interactions; understand pride and shame as motivation for destructive behaviors and emotions, and develop strategies to make healthy change.

Course Objectives:

At the conclusion of this course, the professional will be able to:

1. Explore the concept of pride in mental health counseling.
2. Become familiar with the concepts of pride and shame.
3. Understand how misplaced pride can motivate unhealthy behaviors.
4. Provide interventions to clients to counter misbeliefs and elevate self-esteem in healthy ways.

Purpose of this Course:

The purpose of this course is to provide an understanding of the concept of pride as it relates to the mental health counselor's clients individuals and couples counseling settings.

Course Outline:

Part 1: Course organization, Documentation and Introduction.

Part 2: Reading of the course materials (this document)

Part 3: Administration and Completion of the Evaluation of Learning Quiz

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1.5 Clock Hours = 1.5 CE Credits

If you ever have any questions concerning this course, please do not hesitate to contact **PeachTree at (800) 390-9536.**



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ISSUES OF PRIDE IN INDIVIDUAL AND COUPLES COUNSELING

INTRODUCTION

For thousands of years, those of us with a yearning to understand others have been asking the same question:

Why is it that people do the things that they do?

Why did Eve eat that apple?

Why did my father abandon me?

Why did Jeffrey Dahmer eat people?

Why did his sister quit her job?

Is what we do simply a function of biology, i.e. 'nature'? Or are our behaviors and the emotions that drive them simply symptoms of the way we were raised, i.e. 'nurture'?

No matter the style of psychological training (Freud, Jung, Adler, Fromme, Horney, et al...) the central question one has as a student of psychology is:

Why did you/he/she/I/they/we do that?

It's an axiom that nothing happens (good or bad or indifferent), without something else happening first. It's basic law of cause and effect: one thing leads to another.

Something must motivate - cause, encourage, trigger, push, lead, compel, etc - us to do the things we do. But, what is that something?

What is it that gets any of us out of bed in the morning or the middle of the night, compels us to yell or cry at the words of another, pushes us to cross the finish line, encourages us to steal, or leads us to murder? What is that first thing that leads to the next thing?

Before we attempt to answer this question, let's ask another: Why do we care? Why do we want to know exactly what it is that motivates us to act and/or react the way we do to life's situations - so much so that we've built an entire industry (psychology) around finding the answers?

The answer - to both questions - appears to be that it's simply a matter of... Pride.

pride

1. A sense of one's own proper dignity or value; self-respect.
2. Pleasure or satisfaction taken in an achievement, possession, or association: *parental pride*.
3. Arrogant or disdainful conduct or treatment; haughtiness.
4. a) A cause or source of pleasure or satisfaction; the best of a group or class: *These soldiers were their country's pride*.
b) The most successful or thriving condition; prime: *the pride of youth*.
5. An excessively high opinion of oneself; conceit.
6. Mettle or spirit in horses.
7. A company of lions.

tr.v. prided, priding, prides

1. The quality or state of being proud; inordinate self-esteem; an unreasonable conceit of one's own superiority in talents, beauty, wealth, rank, etc., which manifests itself in lofty airs, distance, reserve, and often in contempt of others.
2. A sense of one's own worth, and abhorrence of what is beneath or unworthy of one; lofty self-respect; noble self-esteem; elevation of character; dignified bearing; proud delight; -- in a good sense.
3. Proud or disdainful behavior or treatment; insolence or arrogance of demeanor; haughty bearing and conduct; insolent exultation; disdain.
4. That of which one is proud; that which excites boasting or self-gratulation; the occasion or ground of self-esteem, or of

arrogant and presumptuous confidence, as beauty, ornament, noble character, children, etc.

5. Show; ostentation; glory.
 6. Highest pitch; elevation reached; loftiness; prime; glory; as, to be in the pride of one's life.
 7. *Consciousness of power; fullness of animal spirits; mettle; wantonness; hence, lust; sexual desire; esp., an excitement of sexual appetite in a female beast. [Obs.]*
- Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary, © 1996, 1998
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Pride is considered by most to be the worst of the "7 Deadly Sins", therefore, we often label pride as being a 'bad thing' to have. But that's black-and-white thinking, for without having a little pride - or a valid sense of self-worth - would we have any drive for individual accomplishment? Would we have a personal need to achieve? Would we feel that internal push to do our best or finish first? Without a little pride, would we be compelled to try to figure out something that we didn't understand? No.

Having a sense of pride is important. But as with all things - from the physical expression of emotions to the indulgence of chocolate or alcohol - to avoid impairment, pride in moderation would seem to be best.

Take this simple, general example from every day life:

If we see a boy running down the road, we may naturally wonder, "Why is that boy running down the road?" Now, for no other reason than the personal satisfaction of being able to assess the situation and provide an answer - (pride) - we are compelled to discover the reason.

If we see an ice cream truck up ahead of a running boy, we think, "Oh, he's running to get ice cream." We believe we know

the answer to the question, and satisfied with our conclusion, we leave it at that and go back to our life.

If we see a boy running and another boy running behind him, we might think, "Oh, he must be running a race with the other boy, and he's winning." Again, we believe we know the answer to the question, and satisfied with our conclusion, we go back to our life. And, we might even relate the story to a friend or family member later in the day. "I saw these two boys running down the street and for the life of me couldn't figure out why. Then I saw the ice cream truck up ahead. That poor little boy couldn't keep up with the bigger boy. I sure hope he had enough money for ice cream, because he sure ran hard enough to earn it."

If we see that the second boy is not just trailing behind in a race but instead is obviously chasing the first boy, we might think, "I wonder why the second boy is chasing the first boy?" We do not instantly have a definitive or even plausible answer to this question, and so we begin to postulate reasons and/or look for more clues, because we want to know. We have a need to understand. It's a matter of personal satisfaction in knowing the answer. It's a matter of pride.

Maybe the first boy stole something from the second boy? Maybe the second boy thinks the first boy embarrassed him? Maybe the first boy..

If we never find out, what will happen to us? Will we be able to be satisfied and go on about our business, never thinking about the two boys again? Or will our lack of sure understanding cause us to wonder about them a few times throughout the day, or even throughout the next weeks or months? The answer may very well depend on the level of our personal sense of pride.

We are compelled to know the reason behind why these boys are running or why one might be chasing the other because we have a need to understand the actions of people around us. When we do not understand - when we cannot point a finger at the definitive reason - we may become unsatisfied with ourselves. We are shamed, and this causes us to experience frustration, confusion, which may lead to anxiety, depression or anger.

When we believe we know something to be true, but our assertions are questioned by others or shown to be wrong - we must then do one of two things: either change our beliefs, or defend our position. If we are unwilling to change our position because we are firm in our beliefs, our pride may remain intact and we may be comfortable with ourselves, but we may experience tension with others. If we are unable to defend our position (to either ourselves or others), we may see ourselves as weak, incompetent, and unacceptable. Our pride is questioned, and we are shamed.

To borrow a more broad explanation of our need to understand others from the book *Diagnosis: Evil, Identifying Those With No Excuse* (Nongard & Saxon, 2002):

"There are people who act or behave in certain ways which society considers inappropriate, unexplainable, or unfathomable. When this happens, we (society) will attach identifiable labels to these people, such as sick, dysfunctional or crazy. These labels function to simultaneously give society a relieving sense of understanding and/or forgiveness, and the sick, dysfunctional, or spiritually misled an excuse, justifiable or not, for their behaviors.

The underlying assumption, which leads to the application of such labels, is that there must be something involuntarily wrong with these people, or they would not behave the way that they do. The label we apply offers a sense of "Ah ha!" understanding, and thus tells us how to respond when we encounter such people and behaviors."

Driven by pride and fueled by shame, the field of psychology - comprised of individuals known collectively as mental health professionals - has spent over 100 years in search of these "Ah ha" moments - the moments when one may discover or begin to understand why we or someone else has done something, whether good or bad or indifferent.

When we consider the hundreds of different schools of thought on personality development and structure and basic human interactions (Freud, Jung, Fromme, Horney, Adler, et al), we discover that in one way or another, to an extent, they were all correct, as there is a common thread laced between them all. Whether the theory discussed is about ids and egos or the need for achievement or the reaction to childhood traumas, one core theme continues to surface, although perhaps not so concisely as this:

Throughout our life, our attitudes and behaviors are directly influenced by our personal experiences and perceptions of pride and shame.

When we do things that we believe are right - make good decisions, do our best, give all we can, take care of our health, meet moral standards, meet personal goals, and so on -

we experience happiness, satisfaction and peace. We have pride in ourselves, and life is good.

When we do things that we believe are not right - make poor decisions, do not do our best or give all we can, don't take care of our health, defy moral codes, fail to reach personal goals, and so on - we experience internal struggle and conflict.

Additionally, this same internal struggle and conflict may occur if others question our judgment or challenge our beliefs and the actions we take based upon them.

However induced, this conflict often brings a sense of shame. Shame creates feelings of anxiety, depression or anger, three closely related emotions having different forms of expression.

If we are unable to manage these emotions or to improve our situations or ourselves, this further detracts from our pride and adds to our shame, and life is not good.

The clients of mental health professionals often struggle with the balance of pride and shame in their lives. They take actions - frequently impulsive actions - motivated by pride or shame, and often suffer great impairment socially, spiritually, psychologically and even physically. Consequently, it is the job of those who are mental health professionals to assess for the extreme or unhealthy presence of pride and shame, to determine if it is causing the client's impairment, and then to implement interventions to curb or eliminate the impairments.

ISSUES OF PRIDE IN INDIVIDUAL AND COUPLES COUNSELING

CASE STUDY

THE PRESENT SCENARIO:

Judy Sinclair, a 46-year-old secretary, is losing control. She struggles to hold it together, but her world is simply coming apart at the seams. Her turmoil is evident in the way she frequently goes out of her way to tell friends and family that her home life is wonderful - in between seemingly uncontrollable bursts of complaints about her husband (Rodney) and her ex-husband (Stuart), and how they both negatively affect her children, who are depressed and failing in school.

One of her current key struggles is between saving her marriage by placating Rodney, and risking her marriage by doing what she knows is best for her children. Her husband is jealous of Stuart for many different reasons: Stuart has a good relationship with his children, Judy asks Stuart for help and gets it when she can't get it from Rodney, Stuart has more money and nicer cars, Stuart appears to be happy with his life, and so on. In short, Rodney feels 'less than' Stuart, and rather than attempt to improve himself, his reaction is to tell Judy that the children shouldn't spend so much time with their father. Consequently, the children do not like their stepfather because they see him as a mean bum, and they feel their mother has betrayed them by always taking Rodney's side, and so they want to spend as much time as possible with their father.

Judy also struggles financially. Several years before she met Rodney, she bought a small but comfortable home in a modest neighborhood. The payment was low, and with a little elbow grease, she fixed it up nicely. Rodney moved in with her when they got married since he had no home of his own (he had been staying with a friend from work for the past year).

Shortly after Stuart found a nice home and moved nearby, Rodney decided that he, Judy, and the kids needed to move to the country, so they would have a nice place for when they retired. They ended up buying a 3,400 square foot house 15 miles outside of town, on highway frontage land.

It may be a retirement showplace, but at ages 46 and 39, Judy and Rodney are far from retirement. Their monthly payment has almost tripled, and the children have no safe place to their ride bikes or scooters. There is no cable TV, and the nearest neighbors are a quarter mile away.

Despite what Judy tells everyone, she and Rodney did not actually buy the house. Their credit was too poor to qualify for a loan that large, so instead they put down a sizable deposit with the cash made by selling Judy's house, and they are now 'renting to own'. In five years, they will have a balloon payment due of 90 percent of the selling price, plus interest. Only after the deal was done did Judy realize that she will have to pay capital gains tax on the deposit money they used from the sale of her house, if they do not sign a mortgage within the next year.

These details only slipped out by accident one day when Judy was complaining to Stuart about Rodney not contributing enough financially to the family, and not having enough money to fix her car or buy another one, because her rental payment is so high.

Additionally, due to their new house payment, Judy can no longer afford to send her children to the private Christian school they have attended since preschool. Stuart has always paid at least half of the tuition, and has offered to pay the full amount so that they can continue going, but Rodney refuses to let him. Consequently, the children have no choice but to change to the public system, in the middle of the semester. This is particularly difficult for the son, who is in his first year of junior high.

This disruption and the reasons for it, of course, do not help the children's opinion of either their mother or stepfather. Judy has once again chosen to placate her husband's pride rather than stand up for the needs of her children. Her response is to play up the benefits of the larger public school system to friends and family, and to make disparaging comments about how the private school was going downhill anyway.

With marital problems, children problems, and financial problems, Judy, who is naturally high-strung to begin with, is now in a constant state of distress. But rather than discuss or seek advice for resolving the real issues, she tells anyone who will listen about her failing health (she has Fibromyalgia, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and a few other problems that have yet to be officially diagnosed), and how this causes her so much stress and inhibits her ability to function properly.

Recently, she rambles even more than usual about her personal accomplishments (two wonderful children, she's on the Board at church, she's up for a promotion) to anyone in proximity (coworkers, church members, those in line at the grocery store), and people are starting to say that she's 'losing it'. As one observer stated, "She must feel guilty about

something. No one talks that much except when they're trying to hide something, especially from themselves."

Judy refuses to consider that her own behaviors or attitudes might be a contributing factor to her children's unrest. As people begin to notice that her son is walking around like a zombie and her daughter is talking back to her, which is quite atypical, Judy tells her friends that it's probably just 'adolescent rebellion' and that she's going to find a therapist for her son, because he obviously needs help adjusting to impending manhood. Her children are 10 and 12.

When asked why she doesn't just get divorced, since she and her children are obviously so miserable with Rodney, Judy is shocked and appalled at the idea. She makes it clear that in her eyes, becoming a twice-divorced woman the worst thing that could happen to her. What would the people at church or work say?

Sadly, she may think differently when she loses what's left of the relationship with her children.

HISTORY:

Judy Henderson, born in 1958, is the middle child of three in a lower-middle-class family. Living in the heart of the Bible Belt, she is raised to believe that marriage is forever no matter what, that a family should be parent-centered rather than child-centered, and that what people think of you is more important than who you really are. Her role model is her mother, who divorced her father when he got into legal trouble, and then remarried him when he was released from jail, because being married to an abusive criminal bum was better than being divorced.

Her older brother has lived a life of crime and nothingness, while her younger brother has been a social and

political success. Consequently, she chooses to associate with the older one only when forced at family functions, and spends as much time as possible with her younger brother's family. When the younger brother landed a highly visible job, she changed churches to his.

Judy marries for the first time at age 32. When pressed, she admits that she never had a relationship last for longer than a few months, but says she put off getting married because she was waiting to find the perfect man, as she never wanted to be divorced.

After a three-week courtship, she marries Stuart -because he asked. How could she turn down a fine young man with a Master's degree and a background in religion? Her mother and the church would certainly approve.

Stuart marries Judy because he wants to move out of state and is desperate not to be alone when he gets there, and Judy has said she will go with him if he marries her.

Naturally, a marriage based on desperation by both parties is not likely to last. Stuart stays as long as he can out of obligation to their two children. When his misery has reached its peak, Judy refuses to divorce him, even after Stuart confesses to an affair. Instead, Judy packs up the children and moves home to her parents, two states away, believing she can 'teach him a lesson' and manipulate him into staying married.

Stuart files for divorce, and the behaviors that follow by both parties set the stage for Judy's current misery, 8 years later.

Initially, Judy does her best to keep the children away from Stuart, "because her pastor says it's best for the children". She continually rants and raves to everyone (including the children) about how Stuart has disgraced them and

ruined their lives, and fills their heads with blatant lies about Stuart's character and about Stuart's new wife, who happens to be ten years younger, eight inches taller, and a good 20 pounds lighter than Judy. She vows to find the children 'a new, better daddy.'

Though devastated, Stuart is patient and travels to see his children every moment the court allows. He is kind and loving, and rather than saying bad things about their mother, he simply ignores the nasty comments about him and his wife, and does all the things he is supposed to do to be a good father.

As time goes on, the children mature and begin to see their father for who he is: a man who loves them and, considering the circumstances, has done most everything he could to take care of them and be active in their lives.

Even Judy's 'women scorned' persona fades a little when she discovers that Stuart will still help her out financially in order to benefit his children. She says she accepts the extra money he gives her on top of the monthly court ordered child support, and the cars and private school tuition and other things he provides, only because she feels 'he owes her for his transgressions'.

Eventually, Judy remarries. Her new husband Rodney is the children's Sunday school teacher from her church. Judy ignores Rodney's own past failed marriage and practically non-existent relationship with his children, believing that all he needs is a woman who will love, honor and cherish him as God intended, and everything will be fine. Rodney is looking to start life over with his new family, and tries to assume the 'father' role.

When this happens, Stuart cuts off most of Judy's additional financial support. When Judy wrecks her car and calls Stuart for help getting another one, Stuart declines, stating

that Judy's husband should be the one to provide her with functional transportation and other family needs.

Apparently having learned nothing from her previous 'desperate not to be alone marriage', Judy is in shock that her current marriage is failing, and that her relationship with her now ten and twelve year old children is tentative at best.

When both children begin failing at school and the oldest is so miserable he can't hardly get out of bed, Stuart drastically alters his life and moves to their city. Judy is so desperate now that for a short time she stops berating him for leaving her eight years earlier, and accepts his help with the children. Stuart now picks them up from school every day and keeps them until Judy is done at work, rather than Judy having to pay for a sitter.

While the children's grades begin slowly to improve, Judy's faltering marital and parent/child relationships continue to accelerate in a downward spiral of doom.

ANALYSIS / ASSESSMENT:

Judy and her husband are experiencing life difficulties, both as a couple and individually, in direct response to their perceptions of personal pride and shame.

They both have an external locus of control; someone or something outside of themselves controls their status and position in life. They believe it's the cop's fault, the judge's fault, the neighbor's fault, the coworker's fault, the parent's fault - but never their own fault that something goes wrong for them.

If they believed something was their own fault, they would have to assume responsibility by admitting that they had made a mistake and failed, and then take action to make things better.

If they cannot accept that they have failed, or if they do not know how to make things better, and if they have too much pride to ask anyone else for help, they have no alternative but to blame others, in order to preserve their perception of pride and reduce the potential for shame.

If Judy's daughter is failing at school, it must either be because the teacher does a poor job, or the child's father upset her. To acknowledge that she might have any part in the child's troubles would be for Judy to admit that she had failed as a parent, and she believes that others would look this at as shameful.

Rather than standing on their own merit and simply being happy with who they are or working to improve themselves, they believe that other people's actions, successes and failures make them look bad or good. If Stuart has a nicer car, house, or shirt than Rodney, then Rodney believes he must present as a failure.

They are not proactive but reactive, and respond impulsively to their perceptions of other's perceptions of them, rather than simply living life as best they can and as they feel is right. If a lady at work looks at Judy's dress twice, Judy assumes that the lady must think poorly of it, and begins defending the dress as a present given to her by her mother, and says she feels obligated to wear it, since she's meeting her mother for dinner after work, even if this is not true.

Judy and Rodney have nothing in common but the church they attend, and they disagree on everything from how to arrange the house to what to fix for dinner. In order to avoid conflict, Rodney spends every weekend possible out of town hunting or fishing with friends, and comes home from work as late as possible.

If one of Rodney's children has a ballgame, he insists that Judy and her children go with him to watch. However, since Stuart moved to town a year ago, Rodney has not once attended any of Judy's children's functions. This is apparently simply to avoid any perceived opportunity for comparison between him and Stuart.

Judy, desperate to preserve the appearance of her relationship with Rodney, and has made several decisions that were hurtful and disrespectful to her children. Consequently, considering the hurt and severe breach of trust she has caused, Judy's relationship with them will be quite difficult to repair, unless swift and significant action is taken.

INTERVENTIONS

COUPLES COUNSELING:

As no two couples are the same, even if their situations are similar, interventions should always be developed on a case-by-case basis.

This is a successive marriage, with no common children. The main reason this couple stays together appears to be that they fear others will look at them negatively; they simply do not want to suffer the shame they perceive will come from being known as 'twice divorced'.

Subsequently, they claim to have come for 'couples counseling', but they have really come for 'pre-divorce mediation'. In short, they do want to get divorced, but due to their external locus of control, they feel a need to receive permission - or even promotion of the idea - from a third party with perceived authority, in order to justify the decision.

Understanding that strong personal religious beliefs against divorce are in play, the counselor will want to broach the task of advocating divorce carefully but concisely. Preserving the sanctity of marriage is of course the general ideal for everyone, but in some cases, there may come a point when preserving the sanctity of the individual - and of the children involved - is truly more important.

At this point, the couple needs to realize and accept that staying married would just be living a lie for everyone to see. If this couple cannot be true to each other, or themselves, or the children, how can they possibly be true to God? How can they have honest pride in a marriage that is only a weak sham?

When both parties were asked if they would stay in the marriage if one of them abused the other or the children physically, they both answered with "Absolutely not!" The question for them to consider then is why they would choose to stay married if one were abusing the other or the children verbally or emotionally, since that is obviously occurring. There may be no bruises, but the damage is still being done. It's becoming quite severe, and it's showing.

Most interpersonal relationships are important, but in certain situations, they need to be prioritized. In this couple's scenario, the children involved are Judy's; Rodney is the stepfather, and the real father is active in their lives in a positive way. It would seem obvious to most that Judy doing whatever is necessary to preserve her relationship with her children should have the highest priority, especially when the actions necessary to preserve the relationship with her second husband are ultimately damaging to her children. In short, for this woman, now and in the future, the parent-child relationship is more important than the marital union.

Judy needs to be made aware that should she not accept this information as a true potential possibility and take positive healthy action by formally choosing her children over Rodney and her fear of the church, not only will she risk being hated by her children, but she also risks her children growing up to hate her God.

Discharge referral recommendations for individual and/or group therapy should be made for both parties - with or without a final decision by this couple to divorce - to provide healthy support systems and intervention strategies for managing their misplaced feelings of pride and shame.

INDIVIDUAL THERAPY:

As no two individuals are the same, even if their situations are similar, interventions should always be developed on a case-by-case basis.

Judy has obvious life-long problems with her self-esteem; she knows she has personal strengths and abilities, but she allows them to become overshadowed by what she perceives are her faults, or what she perceives other people must think about her in a negative light.

Judy needs to learn to redefine herself by her strengths, to use her strengths to overcome her deficits, and to understand the give-and-take processes of the relationships she has with other people. One way to do this is through journaling.

Initially, Judy should make a list (on paper, in her own handwriting) of her personal positive attributes, and the list should contain at least ten solid ideas or adjectives. This will likely be a challenge for Judy, as it is for so many people. It is often far more difficult for someone to make a comprehensive

list of their positive characteristics than a list of their negative ones. As a starting point for reference, it may be useful to consider the personal attributes discussed in the Boy Scout Law.

SCOUT LAW

A Boy Scout is:

TRUSTWORTHY

A Scout tells the truth. He keeps his promises. Honesty is part of his code of conduct. People can depend on him.

LOYAL

A Scout is true to his family, Scout leaders, friends, school, and nation.

HELPFUL

A Scout is concerned about other people. He does things willingly for others without pay or reward.

FRIENDLY

A Scout is a friend to all. He is a brother to other Scouts. He seeks to understand others. He respects those with ideas and customs other than his own.

COURTEOUS

A Scout is polite to everyone regardless of age or position. He knows good manners make it easier for people to get along together.

KIND

A Scout understands there is strength in being gentle. He treats others as he wants to be treated. He does not hurt or kill harmless things without reason.

OBEDIENT

A Scout follows the rules of his family, school, and troop. He obeys the laws of his community and country. If he thinks these rules and laws are unfair, he tries to have them changed in an orderly manner rather than disobey them.

CHEERFUL

A Scout looks for the bright side of things. He cheerfully does tasks that come his way. He tries to make others happy.

THRIFTY

A Scout works to pay his way and to help others. He saves for unforeseen needs. He protects and conserves natural resources. He carefully uses time and property.

BRAVE

A Scout can face danger even if he is afraid. He has the courage to stand for what he thinks is right even if others laugh at or threaten him.

CLEAN

A Scout keeps his body and mind fit and clean. He goes around with those who believe in living by these same ideals. He helps keep his home and community clean.

REVERENT

A Scout is reverent toward God. He is faithful in his religious duties. He respects the beliefs of others.

Judy is likely, or once was, all of these things, as most people are. However, her perception of herself has changed over the years, and therefore her behaviors have changed. We are who we believe we are, and Judy has come to believe she is less than a good Boy Scout.

Other personal positive qualities for her list might include: creative, resourceful, detailed, generous, social, decisive, neat and tidy, able to multi-task, supportive of others, a good mother, responsible, punctual, or optimistic.

Once the list is made, Judy needs to keep it with her at all times. She should also make a few copies and tape them to her bathroom mirror, the refrigerator, and anywhere else she spends a lot of time, such as perhaps her desk at work. The idea is that the more she sees these good qualities, the more she will begin to accept and believe them about herself again. As her confidence and self-esteem grows, she will begin to act more consistently as the qualities suggest, without fear of failure or halting thoughts of shame.

Then, when she feels bad about herself for some reason or dwells on a particular fault, she has a resource list handy that she can refer to for help. She can take review her "positives" list, and see what personal strength qualities she possesses that she can use to overcome her perceived deficits.

For example, she can use her 'creative' and 'loyal' traits to overcome her 'perpetual lateness' problem. Or, she can use her 'kindness' and 'generosity' to overcome a situation where she might have been 'passive-aggressive'.

Everyone does have faults, or weaknesses or deficits. The key is in learning to maximize our existing strengths to overcome these less desirable qualities.

To supplement the list, she should also write down some mantras or self-talk statements. These might include such thoughts as, "To Thine Own Self Be True", or "I am responsible for my own success", or "What I think of myself is more important than what others might think", or "I am a good person" or "I can be happy even if I'm not married".

While these concepts may be self-evident and even clichéd, as with the list of personal qualities, the more Judy sees these statements written in her own hand, the more they will become ingrained into her everyday thoughts and actions.

Another effective journaling assignment is to keep a notebook of daily relationship interactions. The point is for Judy to understand how she interacts with others, and the intrinsic value of those relationships - not what you can get from each other, but how you give a part of yourself to each other. Each day, Judy should write down information about her interactions with three different people, and include points about how they were of value to each other.

For example:

TUESDAY

Sharon, the administrator at work, baked cookies for the secretaries like me at the office. This was a kind, generous thing for her to do, and it made me feel appreciated and a part of something. I thanked Sharon in person for her hospitality, and then I wrote her a little Thank-You card and slipped it under her office door.

After work, I saw a coworker across the parking lot

struggling to fit a large box into his trunk. I went over and held the lid for him. Tom was quite grateful and thanked me for being so nice. I felt useful and helpful.

This evening after dinner, I helped my son with his homework. I enjoyed the one-on-one time with him. He said, "Thanks for taking the time, Mom. I really needed the help." I told him that I loved him, and that I wanted to help him learn and succeed. I felt proud of my son and thankful that such a wonderful boy is in my life.

Over time, Judy will begin to understand not only the value of the people in her life, but also her own personal value to other people. And, on days when she is feeling down about herself, she can refer to the notebook and see the positive importance of the relationships she has with other people, from friends to family to passersby that she may interact with.

GROUP THERAPY:

As no two groups are the same, even if their situations are similar, interventions should always be developed on a case-by-case basis.

This group assignment will focus on recognizing and promoting the individual strengths and needs of each group member, balancing valid pride and shame. The 'strengths' identified and discussed will help to define the person's key positive personality characteristics. The goal is for each member to be confronted with their strengths, and learn to develop a realistic, valid perception of themselves. The 'needs' (rather than 'deficits' or 'weaknesses') will provide a positive way to introduce constructive confrontation and support for any trouble areas the group might recognize.

Fair warning: This kind of project can take a while if the group members are allowed to stretch things out. If this happens, patience thins quickly, so the group facilitator should be careful to keep the participants moving along at a reasonable pace.

The group will need some simple supplies. First is a blank slip of paper for each member of the group, including himself or herself - and the facilitator, if they are participating in the assignment. If there are 12 group members, then you will need 144 pieces of paper - 12 papers for each of the 12 members. The paper need be only large enough to hold a list of four words or very short sentences. They will also each need a pen or pencil, and something to support their writing if they don't have a table, like a book.

The assignment begins with one group member being "it". You may ask for a volunteer, or you might just want to start to the left of the facilitator, and go around from there. All group members - including the "it" member - will take just a few minutes (you may need to use a stop watch, depending on the size and functionality of the group) and write down the name of the person at the top of the paper. Below the name, they will then write down three adjectives or short descriptive sentences about the "it" person's positive qualities. These will likely include characteristics such as the attribute examples listed above in the Individual Therapy session (kind, courteous, clean, generous, resourceful, brave, creative, reverent, loyal, punctual, etc).

After the three positives are written, each member will also write down one 'need' they see in the person who is "it". Examples of needs might be "needs attention" or "she seems to need reassurance".

Once everyone is finished making their lists, the reading of the lists can begin to the left of the "it" member. Each person takes their turn reading aloud what they have written. Short discussions can take place, if necessary, to emphasize a point, or to more fully explain what was meant by a certain strength or need. Points may also be made about how they can use their positive strengths to overcome or alter the effects of their need deficiencies. The intention is to reduce the inclination for feelings of shame over perceived personal deficits.

When all the members have read their lists aloud, the papers are all passed to the "it" person for them to keep. It should be suggested that they keep the papers visually handy. Since there are likely quite a few list papers (depending on the size of the group, of course), they can be spread out and taped to mirrors, the refrigerator, their car dashboard, in their purse or pocket, on their desk at work, etc. These will be useful daily reminders of their personal qualities that they possess which can be maximized and/or improved upon.

These lists are written proof that other people believe good things about them, so it's okay for them to believe good things about themselves. They are also proof that while we strive for progress, we cannot expect perfection, because everyone has some personal areas to work on. You can have pride in progress without shame for lack of perfection.

If the group size is small - say 6 people or less - the facilitator may wish to raise the number of strengths and possibly even the number of needs to be written down on the lists. If the group is particularly large, the facilitator may need to shorten the list number, or even extend the assignment over two sessions. These options will simply need to be

determined based on practicality: the amount of time allotted for the meeting, the size of the group, and the functionality of the individual group members.

CONCLUSION:

The specific concept of pride and its motivating effects on a client's behaviors is often overlooked in clinical settings. We often look for factors that are more tangible, or those that sound more clinical, or those that might be impacted by medications, rather than exploring the most base elements of human nature.

The list of "7 Deadly Sins" was formed from these core mortal elements. We are all at one time or another influenced or driven by lust, greed, pride, envy, sloth, wrath and gluttony, just as we are all influenced and driven by the virtues of faith, hope, charity, fortitude, justice, temperance and prudence.

The presence of pride when we have done something good and right and the presence of shame when we have done something wrong or bad can be considered natural and normal. However, when these emotional concepts begin to motivate destructive behaviors or generate destructive levels of emotions such as anger, anxiety and depression, therapeutic intervention is warranted.

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Richard K. Nongard, LMFT, CCH, CPFT
Executive Director

"Issues of Pride in Individual and Couples Counseling"

1.5 Continuing Education Clock Hours

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EVALUATION OF LEARNING QUIZ - PAGE 1 of 3

PRINT & FAX or MAIL THIS PAGE AND THE ANSWERS PAGES TO OUR OFFICE

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EVALUATION OF LEARNING QUIZ - PAGE 2 of 3

Course Title: "ISSUES OF PRIDE"

1.5 Hours of Approved Continuing Education Credit

➔ PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING 15 EVALUATION OF LEARNING QUESTIONS.

- T F** 1.) I have read the required reading materials for this course.
- T F** 2.) Pride is considered by most to be the worst of the "7 Deadly Sins".
- T F** 3.) Having a sense of pride is important.
- T F** 4.) When we believe we know something to be true, but our assertions are questioned by others or shown to be wrong - we must then do one of two things: either change our beliefs, or defend our position.
- T F** 5.) "Ah ha" moments are the moments people cherish as important memories in life.
- T F** 6.) Throughout our life, our attitudes and behaviors are directly influenced by our personal experiences and perceptions of pride and shame.
- T F** 7.) We experience internal struggle and conflict when we make right choices in difficult situations.
- T F** 8.) Shame creates feelings of anxiety, depression or anger.
- T F** 9.) A marriage based on desperation by both parties is not likely to last.
- T F** 10.) The real motivation for counseling in our case study was they have really come for 'pre-divorce mediation'.
- T F** 11.) Preserving the sanctity of marriage should come above anything else in the counseling process.
- T F** 12.) Interventions should always be developed on a case-by-case basis.
- T F** 13.) Judy needs to learn to redefine herself by her strengths.
- T F** 14.) An effective journaling assignment is to keep a notebook of daily relationship interactions.
- T F** 15.) The specific concept of pride and its motivating effects on a client's behaviors is often overlooked in clinical settings

GRADE THIS ONLINE COURSE! – Page 3

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with your Quiz and Payment. Thank-you!*

Participant Assessment of Home Study CEU Course

ISSUES OF PRIDE

1.5 Credit Hours

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