

SELF-VALIDATION SKILLS

for use in

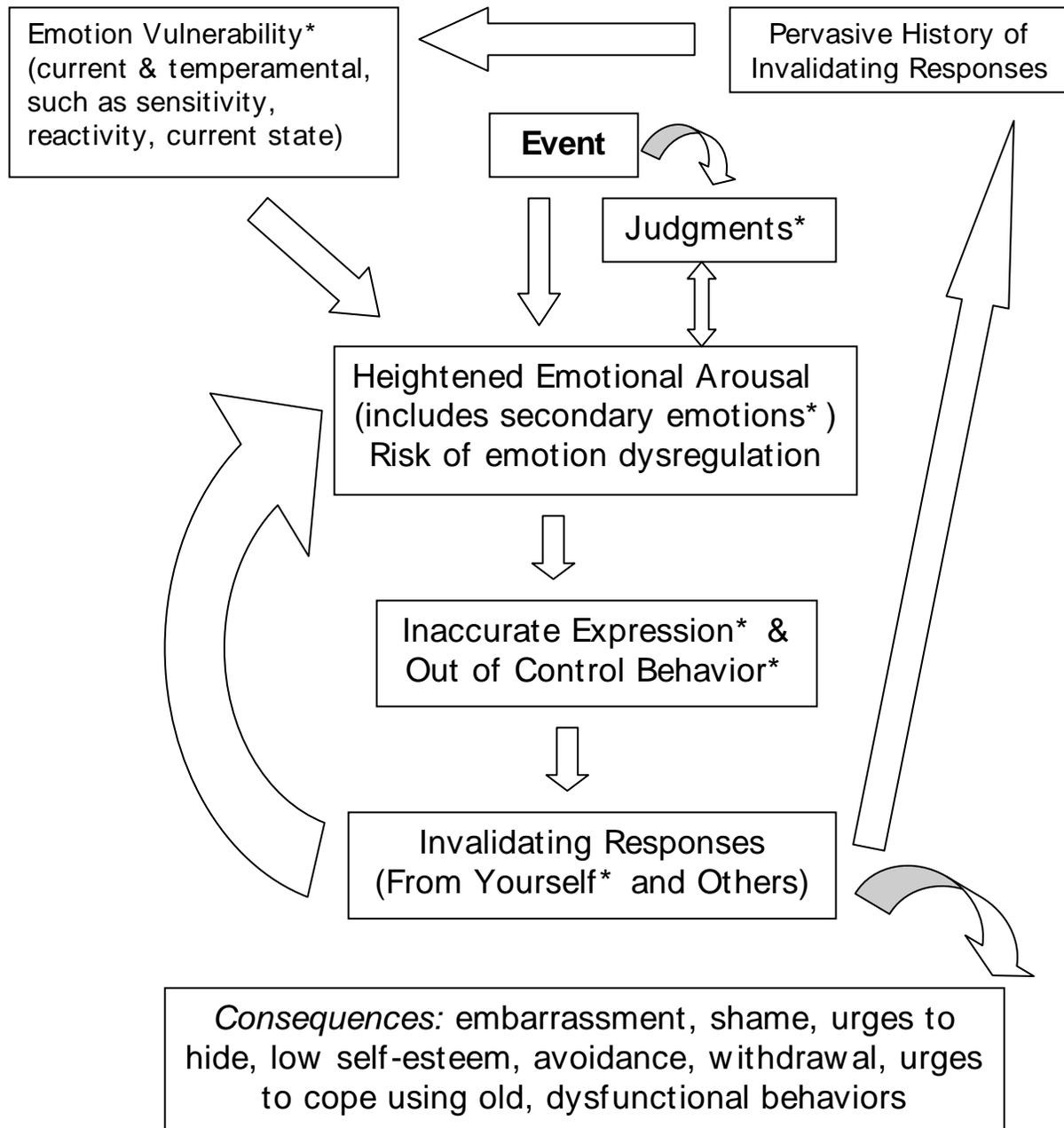
DBT Group Skills Training

**Alan E. Fruzzetti, Ph.D.
University of Nevada, Reno**

For more information, write:

**Alan E. Fruzzetti, Ph.D.
Associate Professor & Director, DBT Program
Department of Psychology 298
University of Nevada
Reno, NV 89557-0062**

email: aef@unr.edu

Figure 1**SELF-INVALIDATING PROCESS****Emotion Dysregulation \leftrightarrow Invalidation**

*easy places to self-invalidate

(Adapted from Fruzzetti, Shenk, & Hoffman, 2005 and Fruzzetti & Worrall, 2010)

Self-Validation

Taking yourself seriously, allowing yourself to feel what you feel (primary emotions), think what you think, want what you want, with acceptance *and* without judgments, second-guessing, self-loathing, or self-contempt.

HOW CAN I VALIDATE MYSELF?

Using Mindfulness:

- Be mindful of my thoughts & feelings: observe, describe, participate, non-judgmentally; just notice (what is, is)
- Notice judgments but do not attach to them...let them go
- Notice my thinking, and observe it (not necessarily participating in the thought, not necessarily taking the thought as “true”)
- Accurately identify my feelings (focus on primary emotions)
- Allow myself to feel my primary emotions: not escape from them with judgments, out-of-control actions, etc, and not numb out from them; instead, allow and manage them skillfully...take my experiences seriously
- Respect my own values

Using Radical Acceptance:

- Search for understanding and legitimacy, honestly & non-judgmentally
- Try radical acceptance of being, of my feelings, of thoughts, of actions
- Practice willingness with respect to my own experience
- Recontextualize the thing(s) I tend to invalidate (broaden and balance the context of the thing I'm invalidating)

Change how I respond to myself:

- Respond in a way (action) that takes myself seriously
- Normalize my normative emotions, rather than criticize or judge them
- Recognize truly problematic behavior and target it for change
- Provide myself nurturance and support, or seek it from another
- Find compassion for myself when I'm suffering, as I would for any human being
- Use my wise mind

**See Emotion Regulation Handout #4 to
Help Identify and Validate Primary Emotions**

Steps In Self-Validating

You can walk this through using Figure 1 (page)

Old Pattern

1. Something happens (event)
2. I beat myself up, criticize myself, or simply feel embarrassed or ashamed when shame is not justified by what I did
3. Retreat, continue feeling bad about myself
4. Get stuck in the old pattern

New Pattern

1. Something happens (event)
2. Catch yourself as you begin to self-invalidate: Notice it earlier and earlier
3. Pay attention to your primary emotion: what happened? What would anyone feel in this situation (if he or she didn't get judgmental)?
4. Notice secondary emotions like shame, but work on trusting your primary emotion.
5. Block yourself from using words like, "jerk" or "idiot" or "stupid" about yourself
6. What do you want? Remember, you get to want whatever it is that you want.
7. What are your vulnerabilities?
8. Doesn't it make sense that you feel what you feel? How would other people feel in this situation?
9. Actively, out loud (!) tell yourself how it makes sense (what your primary emotion is, what the sensations are, what you want or don't want).
10. Soothe yourself
11. Move on with your activities – re-engage your life right now as a whole, valid person (not as a shameful or bad person)
12. Repeat as needed!

Essence of Self-Validation

- Let go of judgments of yourself (which typically lead to shame)
- Notice shame, and (if you haven't truly transgressed against your values), let it go by finding the alternative, primary emotion...and allow that emotion (Emotion Regulation Handout #9)
- Describe situations, acknowledge wants and preferences
- Practice just being who you are, just notice & describe (see homework)
- When in doubt, imagine that someone you care about and respect is in your situation ... how would you respond to her or him? Respond this way to yourself.

Handling Invalidation from Others

- 👍 Remember, judgments are judgments, not facts, no matter who makes them. You do not have to get sucked into them.
- 👍 When others cannot understand us, it does not mean our experiences, the things we feel or want or think, are not valid.
- 👍 If you have acted against your wise-mind values, do a repair (use GIVE).
- 👍 If you have not, no repair is necessary (use FAST skills).
- 👍 You can self-validate how difficult and painful it is to be invalidated by another person, especially someone you count on.

Practice, practice, practice!

“When you understand, you cannot help but love. You cannot get angry. To develop understanding, you have to practice looking ... with eyes of compassion. When you understand, you love. And when you love you naturally act in way that can relieve the suffering of people.”

- Thich Nhat Hanh

Seeking Validation and Support: Homework Sheet

Name: _____

Date: _____

Fill out this sheet during or just after a situation in which you were seeking or wanted to seek validation and/or support. Describe the situation as soon as you can. Use the back of the page if you need more room.

Prompting event: Be specific.

Goals and Objectives: Clarify feelings? Wanting to feel understood? Wanting someone to do something different/new? Wanting the relationship to be different? Wanting to do something different/new for another person? Level of validation targeted? Be specific.

What did you do to be **effective**? What happened after? Be specific.

What did you do to **maintain the relationship**? What happened after? Be specific.

What did you do to **maintain self-respect**? What happened after? Be specific.

What (if anything) got in the way of you being effective?

SELF-VALIDATION PRACTICE 1

Goals:

- 1) Separate *experiences* (e.g., feelings, thoughts, desires, sensations) from:
 - explanations,
 - judgments, and
 - from future events or worries about the future (or behaviors)
- 2) Separate *aspects* of an experience that are valid from those that are not (or may not be) valid:
 - valid in terms of previous experiences but not present ones
 - valid in terms of some previous experiences and not others
 - valid in terms of the past or present, but *not* the future
- 3) Describe...primary emotions, wants, beliefs, facts (no judgments)
- 4) Connect your primary emotions to what happened (if you can): “It makes sense, given that ___ happened, that I feel this way” (see Figure 1)
- 5) Be effective; empower yourself to handle any situation skillfully

Self-Validation may take one of the following forms (and some others):

<u>What</u>	<u>Verb</u>	<u>Modifier/description/referent</u>
I	am.	None (I exist. Period)
	am	physical description (here; not there; 5 ft. tall).
	feel	emotions, temperature, sensations (sad, happy, hot, cold, afraid, ashamed, excited, satisfied).
	want	object of desire or longing (not <i>needs</i> , which require an “in order to ___”)
	think	opinions, beliefs, expectations, ideas, appraisals (not necessarily <i>facts</i>)
	notice	anything that you can observe, describe, etc., non-judgmentally (see, hear, etc.)
	am doing	notice and describe without interpreting or judging

SELF-VALIDATION PRACTICE

Situation: _____

<u>What</u>	<u>Verb</u>	<u>Description</u>
I	am.	
	am	physically: _____
	feel	emotions: _____ _____ _____
		temperature: _____
		sensations: _____
		other: _____
	want	_____ _____ _____
	think	_____ _____
	notice	_____ _____
	am doing	_____ _____

VALIDATING OTHERS

Goals:

- 1) Understand: What is the other person's *experience*? What can you observe?
 - Without explanations or judgments, without "should" or "shouldn'ts"
- 2) Communicate what you understand: Can you acknowledge his or her experience?
 - I know that you ____
 - I can see that you ____
 - It makes sense that you ____
 - Of course you ____ (that makes complete sense – anybody would)
- 3) Or, find out more: Can you ask about his or her experience in a way that shows you genuinely are interested and truly want to understand?
 - I know you ____ but I don't completely understand. Could you tell me more to help me understand?

Validation may take one of the following forms (and many others):

<u>What</u>	<u>Verb</u>	<u>Description</u>
You	are.	none
	are	physical description (here; not there; 5 ft. tall).
	feel	emotions, temperature, sensations (sad, happy, hot, cold, afraid, ashamed, excited, satisfied).
	want	object of desire or longing (not <i>needs</i> , which require an "in order to ____")
	think	opinions, beliefs, expectations, ideas, appraisals (not necessarily <i>facts</i>)
	notice	anything that she or he observes, describes, etc., non-judgmentally
	are	in our relationship (e.g., important to me)
	are doing	notice and describe without interpreting or judging

VALIDATION PRACTICE

Situation: _____

I know that... or, I can see that ... or, It makes sense that...

<u>What</u>	<u>Verb</u>	<u>Description</u>
You	are.	
	are	physically: _____
	feel	emotions: _____

		temperature: _____
		sensations: _____
		other: _____
	want	_____

	think	_____

	notice	_____

	other	_____

	are	relationship: _____
	are doing	_____

SELF-VALIDATION PRACTICE 2

1. What happened? What was the “event” or thing that triggered your emotion?

Be descriptive: _____

2. What was your primary emotion? You might even have noticed it at the time, but can see in retrospect that it was normative, likely. _____

3. What words are in your head? They might be explicit (e.g., “I’m such an idiot”) or more implicit/IMPLIED or even may be automatic. These are the judgments or self-invalidating things. _____

4. Notice your secondary emotion(s). _____

5. Take a look at the situation and your primary emotion(s). Try to “block” using judgmental words or other self-invalidating responses. Try to simply notice what happened (#1) and your primary emotion(s) (#2).

6. Also, notice what vulnerabilities you might have had, leading to what happened.

7. Also consider: what, in your wise mind, in your heart, did you want to happen that in fact *is different* from what actually happened (#1)? Notice that what happened is probably not what you wanted to happen. So, being disappointed makes sense.

8. Does your primary emotion make sense to you? Figure out how it makes sense, why it makes sense. How would others feel in this situation? _____

9. Say it OUT LOUD! “It *does* make sense how I felt” (primary emotion, sensations, or what you wanted or longed for) because _____

10. Now, soothe yourself, and move on to your next activity. Nice work.