

## INTRODUCTION

The challenge of therapeutic intervention is to help facilitate change. Some clients see counseling as something that “works” or “doesn’t work.” This workbook helps clients take a proactive approach to the therapeutic process. Through use of experiential activities, exercises, self-help worksheets, and educational handouts, individuals can experience change—not just talk about it. Even for the most treatment-resistant client, these T.I.P.S. for your therapeutic toolbox can be life altering.

Why is it often so difficult for people to change? Therapeutic intervention all too often relies on one modality of intervention—talking. Words accompanied by experiential learning can reap benefits exponentially. Creative media tools can unleash powerful insights where talk therapy leaves off. The power of cinematherapy and bibliotherapy hardly have scratched the surface of their potential impact on psychological intervention. Additionally, because so many clients experience decreased short-term memory, confusion, and lack of attentiveness when in crisis, clearly written handouts can aid in reinforcement of learning.

Even with the most treatment-resistant individuals—especially those with characterological issues—tips and tools can teach skills that might break through treatment-resistant features. With experiential, interactive exercises, even the most strongly erected defenses are broken through.

As Confucius said so aptly, “Teach me and I will forget, show me and I will remember, involve me and I will understand.”

This book is designed to help all types of mental health practitioners or those who conduct “mental fitness / mental wellness” workshops and trainings. These 86 tools and T.I.P.S. augment more traditional forms of psychological treatment. Unfortunately, life skills training is rarely a part of formal education, and this workbook attempts to help people learn basic life skills not taught in schools.

This book is designed to be “user friendly”—easy to read and understand, for immediate implementation into your therapeutic practices. My mission is to increase mental health and mental fitness, whether it be in clinical practice, hospitals, outpatient clinics, prisons, residential treatment facilities, or the workplace. I also apply these activities to my work in the corporate setting through *Worksite Insights™*. These T.I.P.S. and tools are designed to enhance the therapeutic experience in any setting by facilitating growth and healing through education, insight, active participation, and involvement.

These 86 “Therapeutic Ideas & Practical Strategies” are broken down further into “working” T.I.P.s for each activity, handout, or strategy. Each T.I.P. is broken down into Theory, Implementation, and Processing—hence the acronym “T.I.P.”

The handouts and worksheets in this book can be copied for personal use in working with individuals or groups. If there is interest in using any of these T.I.P.S. in any type of publication, it is required that permission be granted by the publisher.

## QUOTES FOR GETTING ORGANIZED

*"For every minute spent in organizing, an hour is earned."*

—Unknown

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*"Organizing is what you do before you do something, so that when you do it, it is not all mixed up."*

—A. A. Milne

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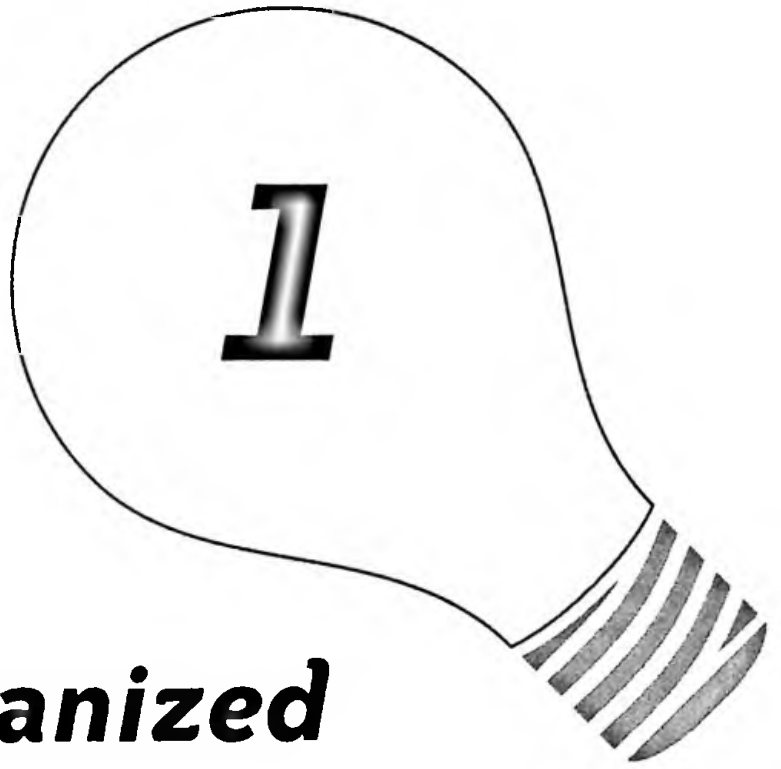
*"There is in the act of preparing, the moment you start caring."*

—Winston Churchill

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*"Information is a source of learning. But unless it is organized, processed, and available to the right people in a format for decision making, it is a burden, not a benefit."*

—William Pollard (CEO, Servicemaster)



# ***Getting Organized***

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## **T.I.P. #2**

### **WHY HANDOUTS ARE HANDY!**

**THEORY:** Handouts are invaluable aids not only in helping clients and therapists, but virtually anyone (e.g., those attending a psycho-educational training group session, such as a workplace wellness seminar). Handouts serve as powerful reinforcements and reminders of learning during the session, and help crystallize important therapeutic concepts. Handouts educate in a concise manner. One does not need to sift through an entire book to gain important knowledge to apply to one's life. Handouts are the epitome of practicality—they are targeted to highlight major points in a timely and clear manner.

**IMPLEMENTATION:** My clients love to get handouts! I knew handouts were a good idea when I witnessed my clients toting them back and forth, circling items, or making notes in the text. I advise that handouts be given out frequently. This workbook provides handouts on a number of topics, or at the very least serves as a basis for clinicians to develop their own handouts. Some handouts simply offer a concise overview of important therapeutic concepts, whereas others require more active participation on the part of the client, entailing responses to questions. The latter are more process-oriented worksheets designed to help the individual tailor the learning to personal thoughts and feelings. These two types of handouts—informational and participatory—work well together to provide opportunities for skill building.

**PROCESSING:** Handouts help individuals discover for themselves truths that might not be readily apparent. In addition, handouts limit the defensiveness of a client who can use this method of learning to discover for himself/herself faulty habits of thinking and behavior. When used as a vehicle for developing insight, handouts can be powerful aids! Handouts are great reminders that clients often keep on the family refrigerator, mirror, or glove compartment, or even in their wallets or purses. They are light and portable, and can provide structure, guidance, and assistance on an “as needed” basis.



## COMMUNICATION QUOTES

*"The greatest compliment that was ever paid me was when someone asked me what I thought, and attended to my answer."*

—Henry David Thoreau

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*"The most important thing in communication is to hear what isn't being said."*

—Peter F. Drucker

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*"To effectively communicate, we must realize that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others."*

—Anthony Robbins

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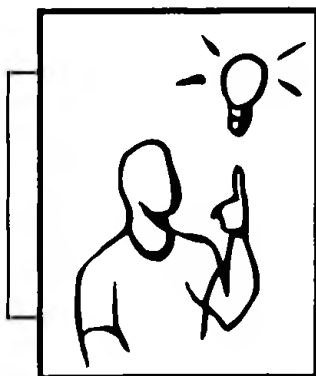
*"You cannot shake hands with a clenched fist."*

—Indira Gandhi

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*"Kind words can be short and easy to speak but their echoes are truly endless."*

—Mother Theresa



## **T.I.P.s #3 & #4**

### **COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

**THEORY:** Despite the fact that communication underlies almost everything we do, it is not uncommon for people to be sorely lacking in knowledge of communication basics. This results in miscommunication, and the fallout results in unhealthy relationships. All too often there is a lack of commonly understood guidelines of what is indeed effective communication. These handouts provide easy to understand differentiation between the three major types of communication. Without this basic knowledge, individuals have limited insight about how they really come across to others, and also lack the tools to make their communication more effective.

#### **T.I.P. #3 Handout: The Three Types of Communication**

#### **T.I.P. #4 Handout: Effective Versus Ineffective Communication**

**IMPLEMENTATION:** These two handouts can be used independently or together when dealing with individuals, couples, or groups. They have proven to be enlightening for my clients who have been confused about how their communication can go awry. In addition, these handouts shed insight into how to change unhealthy patterns into more assertive patterns. This is a particularly powerful tool in marriage counseling, as this provides an objective way for individuals to assess their communication styles. It never fails to amaze me that the most non-assertive or aggressive, defensive spouses will correctly identify themselves as either non-assertive or aggressive when seeing it on paper, despite the fact that before presentation of the handout, they deny having major communication problems. It becomes a “no brainer!” These handouts not only demonstrate what is maladaptive but also give clear ideas of healthier messages to replace unhealthy ones.

**PROCESSING:** With the help of these practical handouts, clients can identify their patterns and identify their style of communication. Often these patterns are learned early on and often are a product of socialization (e.g., women are more rewarded in some societies for being non-assertive, men for being more aggressive). Once the basics of communication are understood, one can readily differentiate between the aggressive “you” versus the assertive “I” focus. In no time, healthier patterns are put into practice, and the results are almost immediate!

## THE THREE TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

### Non-Assertive Behavior

#### **Characteristics**

Ignores, does not express own rights, needs, desires  
Permits others to infringe on his/her rights  
Indirect, inhibited  
Self-denying

#### **Feelings That Result**

Hurt, anxious, disappointed  
In self at the time and possibly angry later

#### **Effects**

Avoids unpleasant and risky situations, avoids conflict, feels "used," accumulates anger, feels non-valued

### Assertive Behavior

#### **Characteristics**

"I" statements  
Expresses and asserts own rights, needs, desires  
Stands up for legitimate rights in a way that rights of others are not violated  
Emotionally honest, direct, expressive  
Self-enhancing

#### **Feelings That Result**

Confident, self-respecting, feels good about self at the time and later

#### **Effects**

Feels good, valued by self and others, feels better about self, improves self-confidence, needs are met, relationships are freer and more honest

### Aggressive Behavior

#### **Characteristics**

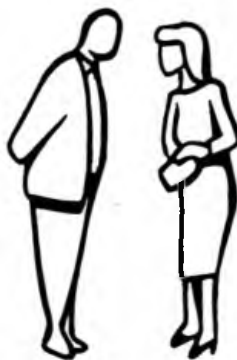
"You" statements  
Expresses own rights at expense of others  
Inappropriate outburst or hostile overreaction, intent to humiliate or to "get even," puts others down  
Emotionally honest, direct, expressive at other's expense  
Self-enhancing

#### **Feelings That Result**

Angry, then righteous, superior, resentful, possibly guilty later

#### **Effects**

Saving up anger, resentment justifies a blow-up or an emotional outburst, "getting even"



## EFFECTIVE VERSUS INEFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Effective Communication	Ineffective Communication
<p><b><i>“I” Statements</i></b> Excuse me, I would like to finish my statement.</p>	<p><b><i>“You” Statements</i></b> You’re interrupting me again!</p>
<p><b><i>Objective/Descriptive Statements</i></b> You don’t seem to be grasping my point.</p>	<p><b><i>Inferential Statements</i></b> You’re not listening to me!</p>
<p><b><i>Non-Evaluative Statements</i></b> I have the impression that you view women to be not as capable as men.</p>	<p><b><i>Evaluative/Judgmental Statements</i></b> You sound like a male chauvinist!</p>
<p><b><i>Specific Statements</i></b> I’m concerned that you’ve been late to work the last few days.</p>	<p><b><i>Over-Catastrophizing Statements</i></b> You’re always coming in late to work!</p>
<p><b><i>Taking Responsibility</i></b> I think we’re going off the issue.</p>	<p><b><i>Blaming/Giving “Shoulds”</i></b> You’re taking me off the issue!</p>
<p><b><i>Tactful Statements</i></b> I don’t agree with that.</p>	<p><b><i>Tactless Statements</i></b> That was a stupid thing to say!</p>
<p><b><i>Asking/Requesting</i></b> I got the coffee last meeting, so I’d prefer someone else got it today.</p>	<p><b><i>Demanding</i></b> I got the coffee last time. Someone else should get it today!</p>
<p><b><i>Honest Statements</i></b> I won’t be able to make it at that time for the meeting, so I’d like to see if we could agree on another time.</p>	<p><b><i>Dishonest Statement</i></b> I wouldn’t be able to make it at that time for the meeting, but it really doesn’t matter to me, as long as it’s convenient for everyone else.</p>
<p><b><i>Praising Specifically</i></b> You were very considerate to help me on the problem I was having with the proposal.</p>	<p><b><i>Praising Generally</i></b> You’re a considerate person.</p>
<p><b><i>Showing Empathy</i></b> I can understand why you’re concerned about that, but I don’t personally feel that will cause a problem.</p>	<p><b><i>Minimizing/Devaluing</i></b> Don’t worry! It’s not worth it!</p>



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**Communication Enhancers**

**Communication Stoppers**

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I don't see it that way.

That's ridiculous!

I don't think that it will work.

That will never work!

I don't feel you have grasped my point.

You're not listening to me!

I don't feel like it's practical.

It's just not practical.

I'd be surprised if that happened.

It's impossible.

There are times I feel as though you aren't there when I need you.

You're never available!

That happens quite often.

That always happens!

It would be difficult to do that.

There's no way that can be done!

I get angry when you say that.

You make me so mad!

I would appreciate it if you didn't do that.

You shouldn't do that.

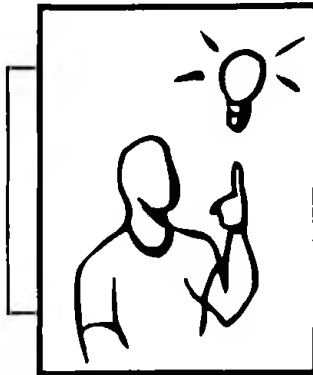
That sounds unrealistic to me.

Let's go back to reality.

I don't agree with you.

That's wrong!





## **T.I.P. #5**

### **COMMUNICATION MADE EVEN SIMPLER . . . FOR KIDS OF ALL AGES**

**THEORY:** The importance of communication cannot be overstated. So much that goes awry in human relationships is a byproduct of unhealthy and problematic communication. Teaching communication skills in a simple way that even children can understand can set up lifelong patterns of healthy relationships and positive “self-talk.” Too often the aggressive or non-assertive messages toward others also reverberate in our own inner self-evaluations, leading to extreme perfectionism and low self-esteem.

#### **T.I.P. #5 Handout: Communication Skills Made Easy!**

**IMPLEMENTATION:** This handout can be used even with young children, whether in mental health settings or in a classroom environment. This is especially easy for the less verbal individual or younger client to comprehend and can be used as a supplement to the more informative, detailed T.I.P.s #3 and #4.

**PROCESSING:** Even the very young client can grasp the lessons of the owl, lion, and turtle. In very simple terms, clients can identify characteristics of healthy and unhealthy communication. This handout can serve as a springboard for discussion of how to understand and deal with various encounters, whether with bullies or with one’s closest friends.



## COMMUNICATION SKILLS MADE EASY!

### Assertive

Wise Communicator

"I" Statements: "I think . . ." "I feel . . ." "It is important to me . . ."

Respects self and others

"I'm O.K., you're O.K."



### Non-Assertive

Passive

"You're O.K., I stink!"

"I need your approval."

"I can't stand conflict."

"Don't make waves."

Indirect, beats around the bush

### Aggressive

"I'm O.K., but not too sure about you!"

"Because I said so!"

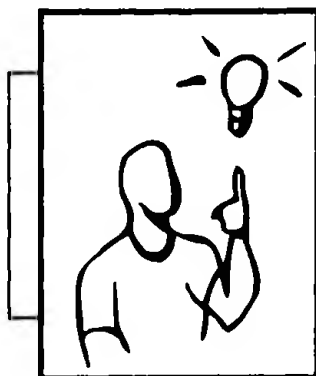
"I've kept things in too long so no wonder why I explode!"

Might makes right!

"You" statements!

"You make me so mad!"





## **T.I.P.s #6 & #7**

### **BEHIND THE SCENES OF NON-ASSERTIVENESS AND AGGRESSIVENESS**

**THEORY:** After identifying the three types of communication, insight into the reasons, payoffs, and effects of non-assertive and aggressive behavior are invaluable in understanding what goes on “behind the scenes.” These handouts give insight into the “whys” behind maladaptive communication styles.

#### **T.I.P. #6 Handout: Non-Assertive Behavior—Reasons and Payoffs**

#### **T.I.P. #7 Handout: Aggressive Behavior—Reasons and Payoffs**

**IMPLEMENTATION:** After the introduction to the three communication types, offer a more in-depth view of what makes such individuals tick. Ask clients if they can identify with any of these characteristics in themselves or others. These handouts are particularly helpful in offering a client a “behind the scenes” view of why one would act either non-assertively or aggressively. I warn my clients that non-assertive behavior leads to eventual aggressiveness, as anger, tension, and stress build inside to a boiling point.

**PROCESSING:** I point out to clients that the payoffs of non-assertive and aggressive behavior are limited and work only for the short term. In the long run, dysfunctional ways of communication lead to alienation, isolation, conflict, and distress. In viewing these objective handouts, clients can readily see why non-assertive and aggressive behaviors have limited potential and can lead to much disappointment and heartache.

