

THE HATS WE WEAR

GOALS:

- To learn about ourselves and what we are capable of doing.
- To explore ways we can use our homemaking skills in the world of work.

RATIONALE:

This lesson focuses on homemaking talents as well as child-rearing expertise that the participants have. This session will help women to examine roles they have played as homemakers as well as job-related roles. Discussion will help participants think of their "hats" as strengths and see their lives in social context. Participants are helped to identify sources of stress and conflict in a positive way. This lesson is a good esteem builder.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Flipchart, markers.

Warm up: Stand Up If

Tell participants to stand up quickly and then sit down, if the following applies:

- Stand up if you came by a bus today.
- Stand up if you are wearing running shoes.
- Stand up if you ate breakfast (lunch) today.
- Stand up if you like broccoli.
- Stand up if you got eight hours of sleep last night.

Note: Add appropriate items for your group

METHOD:

Exercise I: Roles

Ask the group the following:

What do the roles of homemaker, wife, mother mean to you?

Brainstorm ideas and flipchart responses.

Questions to consider:

- How did you learn your homemaker role?
- How did you feel in the roles of either homemaker, wife, or mother?
- In what ways was your self-esteem affected in these roles?

Theory:

In our daily lives, we may often feel as though we are different people all at once. We behave differently as a mother, neighbour, sister. Think of different roles we play as "The Hats We Wear". For example, I am a: woman, wife, mother, housekeeper, ex-wife, foster parent, friend, tenant, employee, neighbour, nurse, religious instructor. Each of these roles has its own set of rules about how we should behave. As well, they are given a different value by society. All the roles contribute to how we feel about ourselves.

Exercise 2: Hats

Draw a head on the flipchart. Ask the group to brainstorm different hats they wear, starting with the SELF HAT. Examples: gardener, cook, nurse, fix-it person. Draw hats around the head.

Try to identify:

- positive as well as negative feelings about wearing each hat. (Leave time for discussion between hats).
- feelings about these hats that are common to all women.
- how it feels to know that we are not alone with our feelings.

Questions to consider:

- Are any of these hats out of style or too burdensome?
- Which hats would you like to take off or make lighter?
- Which hats would you like to put on?

Exercise 2: My Hat

Tell participants to make their own picture with the hats they wear. Suggest they put hats they would like to take off on the left and on the right put the hats they would like to put on.

Discuss the following questions in dyads or small groups:

- What hats did you put on (example wife, employee)?
- Is your hat heavy to one side with burden? Why is that?
- In what ways has your hat picture changed in the last 6 months?

Ask the following questions in the large group:

- How could you apply the information learned from your personal hat drawings to help you set future career goals?
- How did this make you feel when others had the same responses?
- What did you learn about yourself that you found useful?

REFERENCES:

Filger, Sharon (editor), Browne, Jeanette, McDonald, Valerie. *Preparing for Change*. Opportunity for Advancement Inc. 1989.

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