A CRITICAL INCIDENTS STUDY OF SELF ESTEEM

by

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ABSTRACT

The intent of this study was twofold. It was designed to evaluate the effectiveness of an experiential program which purportedly enhanced self esteem in gay men. In addition, it aimed to discover what events and human experiences facilitate self esteem. The eight gay male participants who volunteered for the self esteem program were also employed to obtain data which was used to discover factors which facilitate self esteem.

Flanagan's (1954) critical incidents technique was used to discover what facilitates and hinders self esteem in everyday life. A category system of factors facilitating self esteem was induced from critical incidents data obtained in a preliminary interview and from a journal of significant events which participants submitted throughout their involvement in the program.

The program evaluation was based on three sources of information. The participants were compared with a control group of eight gay males on Rosenberg's (1965) Scale of Self Esteem both before and after their involvement in the program. They were also subjects in preliminary and summary, open-ended interviews which were designed to assess changes in self esteem and to discern the degree to which initially stated goals and expectations were fulfilled by their participation in the program. In addition, critical incidents questions in the summary interview assessed how, and the degree to which, the program incorporated the factors which facilitate self esteem in everyday life.

The names given to the eighteen categories of behaviours,
events and/or experiences which were found to facilitate self esteem in everyday life are as follows: appreciation, affiliation, recognition, acceptance, honesty, self acceptance, self support, forgiveness, contributing, performance, confidence, accomplishment, sense of progress, overcoming, self care, belonging, social comparison, and independence. Given the exploratory and descriptive nature of this study, these factors constitute an initial model of what facilitates self esteem that needs to be tested using appropriate methods of verification.

Interview data indicated that the experiential program facilitated the self esteem of seven of the program's eight participants. One participant reported that self esteem remained unchanged from the preliminary interview. Participants described six primary types of change: increased self confidence; increased self acceptance; improved capacity to engage in, strengthen and maintain satisfying interpersonal relationships; increased self knowledge; improved self discipline; and resolutions to existential questions. In addition, summary interview data revealed that participants were able to specify experiences, activities and events occurring within the context of the program which were representative of every facilitative category. Moreover, the relative absence of reported hindering incidents indicates that the hindering effect of the program on self esteem is negligible.

Quantitative results did not corroborate the qualitative evidence for increased self esteem. An analysis of covariance applied to self esteem scores did not produce a significant difference between the participants and a control group.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ........................................................................................................... ii
Table of Contents ............................................................................................ iv
List of Tables .................................................................................................... viii
List of Appendices ............................................................................................ ix
Acknowledgements ........................................................................................... x

Introduction ....................................................................................................... 1
Literature Review ............................................................................................... 6
Methodology ....................................................................................................... 23
  Participants ...................................................................................................... 23
    Selection ......................................................................................................... 23
    Demographic Information .............................................................................. 24
    Control Group ............................................................................................... 25
Data Gathering Methods ................................................................................. 27
  Rosenberg's Scale of Self Esteem ................................................................. 34
  Interviews ...................................................................................................... 36
  Significant Events Journal ........................................................................... 41
Procedure .......................................................................................................... 44
Data Analysis ..................................................................................................... 47
Results One: Individual and Group Improvement ......................................... 53
  A. Quantitative Results .................................................................................. 53
  B. Qualitative Results .................................................................................... 54
    Subject One ................................................................................................... 55
    Subject Two .................................................................................................. 58
    Subject Three ............................................................................................... 59
    Subject Four .................................................................................................. 60
Subject Five.........................................................62
Subject Six.........................................................63
Subject Seven.......................................................65
Subject Eight.........................................................66

Summary of Interview Results And Description of Primary Themes........................................68

Results Two: Facilitators and Hindrances of Self Esteem........................................71

A. The Category System.............................................71
   1. Appreciation....................................................71
   2. Affiliation.......................................................72
   3. Recognition......................................................73
   4. Acceptance........................................................74
   5. Honesty............................................................75
   6. Self Acceptance...................................................76
   7. Self Support.......................................................76
   8. Forgiveness.......................................................77
   9. Contributing......................................................77
  10. Performance......................................................78
  11. Confidence.......................................................79
  12. Accomplishment.................................................80
  13. Sense of Progress...............................................81
  14. Overcoming......................................................82
  15. Self Care.........................................................83
  16. Belonging........................................................83
  17. Social Comparison...............................................84
  18. Independence...................................................85

B. The Category System and the Program..................................................87
   1. Appreciation......................................................87
LIST OF TABLES

I. Self Esteem Scores...................................................53
# LIST OF APPENDICES

## A. The Self Esteem Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session One</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session Two</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session Three</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session Four</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session Five</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session Six</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session Seven</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session Eight</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## B. Instruments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rosenberg's Scale of Self Esteem</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary and Summary Interview Questions</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## C. Forms and Letters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter and Form</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Letter of Introduction: Experimental Group</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Subject Consent Form: Experimental Group</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Letter of Introduction: Control Group</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Subject Consent Form: Control Group</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Advertisement</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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INTRODUCTION

The study of self esteem is one of the oldest and most important themes in psychology. William James identified self esteem as a significant psychological topic as early as 1890. Since that time, the critical role of self esteem in human life has come to almost universal recognition. Much of Alfred Adler's contribution to modern psychology is contained in the notion that what human beings need the most is to feel secure in their self esteem. More recently, Becker(1973) asserts that the struggle to achieve self esteem is the primary motivation of human life. Today there is a large body of research which has established the importance of self esteem to individual and social well being, child rearing and educational practises, personal development and life satisfaction. The philosophical underpinnings for this research are embedded in the major psychological theories which provide a definition of self esteem and suggest a way to enhance it. Before the specific focus of this study is outlined three of the most active theoretical approaches to self esteem will be briefly described.

Coopersmith (1967) is representative of the experimental approach to the study of self esteem. This perspective posits that individuals come to "have" a certain level of self esteem which can be measured through psychological instruments. Experimentally validated techniques and conditioning are purported to increase self esteem. This school emphasizes the behavioural dimension of self esteem.

A cognitive approach to self esteem as propounded by Ellis(1975) and Burns (1980) holds that self esteem is a by-
product or result of cognitive processes. Self esteem is increased by correcting irrational thinking patterns, faulty perceptions or distortions in the way one views the self and the world.

Rogers (1961) views self esteem as an innate human quality possessed by all people at all times. This humanistic approach claims that problems in self esteem occur when the individual loses touch with the inner core of self esteem. Client centered therapy is designed to help the client experience himself at a deeper level so that he can become aware of the true and esteemed self.

According to Mruk (1981), these schools of thought share three basic understandings in regards to self esteem. In order to define it, they include two necessary components: "competence" (the ability to deal with the world effectively) and "worthiness" (a sense of basic decency or integrity). Brandon's (1980) general definition of self esteem captures these two components in one sentence: "Self esteem is our experience of being competent to live and worthy of living." Secondly, Mruk maintains that there is general agreement on the dynamic character of self esteem; that is, self esteem is not a completely fixed psychostructure. Evidence of its openness or fluidity is derived from indications that it fluctuates over the course of an individual's life time. The most important point of agreement is that the scientific study of self esteem should lead to the discovery of tools that would enhance self esteem at the personal and societal levels.

Despite the consensus on the necessity of finding ways to
increase it, there is a paucity of research and literature concerning the human events and experiences which facilitate self esteem. Coopersmith (1961), a leading expert in the psychology of self esteem, recognized this scarcity: "For both psychologists and laymen, "self esteem" has great significance - personally, socially and psychologically. It is, therefore, disconcerting that so little is known about the conditions and experiences that enhance it." (p. 1) More recently, Mruk (1981) bemoaned the same shortfall in self esteem research. Thus, the purpose of the present study is to expand our knowledge of the human experiences which facilitate self esteem. It is an attempt to offer an answer to that question which research has neglected: "What events and human experiences facilitate self esteem?"

Mruk (1981) points out that traditional psychologists, using methods based on natural science, have attempted in dozens of studies to increase our knowledge of self esteem. He claims that the failure of these studies to break through the impasse stems from methodological and theoretical problems which beset the entire field of the psychology of self esteem.

The first problem involves an error in how self esteem is perceived and defined. Traditional natural science psychology investigates self esteem as though it was an actual phenomenon or thing in the world. However, self esteem is an abstract construct with a definition that varies depending on the researcher's theoretical bias. The construct "self esteem" does not actually exist in the world as do the human experiences which enhance one's competence and worthiness. Thus, research has faltered because it has investigated an amorphous construct
rather than the actual experiences which enhance or lessen one's competence and worthiness at living.

The other difficulty is a methodological one. If actual experiences are to become the target of investigation, traditional methods become inadequate because they cannot capture the fullness of meaning of everyday experiences. Moreover, everyday experiences cannot be adequately created, controlled or measured in a laboratory or experimental situation without losing that quality which makes them everyday experiences.

Mruk (1981) maintains that the methodology problem is insurmountable and that a different strategy must be found. In his own research he utilizes a phenomenological approach to study what enhances self esteem. The method employed by the present study is the critical incidents technique (Flanagan; 1954), another qualitative approach which satisfies Mruk's two requirements for research. He specifies that research should be grounded in the actual human experiences which enhance or lessen self esteem. The aim of the critical incidents interview is to elicit these everyday human experiences from respondents. This approach also meets the second requirement for research by specifying an established procedure for collecting, organizing and analyzing the data of human experience according to the basic rules of science. The research and analysis is designed so that other researchers can perceive the logic of all the methodological steps involved. Moreover, the method makes provision for an independent duplication of results, thereby demonstrating the objectivity of the approach.
Another shortcoming in the theory and research on self esteem is their exclusive focus on the development of self esteem in childhood (Erikson, 1963; Coopersmith, 1967) or adolescence (Blos, 1962). This selective attention to childhood reflects the assumption that self esteem is a phenomenon fixed in early life and not subject to significant fluctuations in adulthood. However, Mruk's (1981) results explicate a common human experience which enhances or lessens self esteem throughout adulthood. The present study investigates the experience of self esteem in adults because it views the adult's self esteem as a mutable phenomenon. The recognition that self esteem is subject to fluctuations throughout the human life span has provided a strong incentive for research which aims to discover what enhances self esteem in adulthood. The results of this research may be employed to produce positive changes in self esteem throughout the individual's lifetime.

The purpose of the present study is to evaluate and improve a program designed to enhance self esteem in gay men. The study aims to discover the events and experiences which enhance self esteem in everyday life. These findings will be used to measure the program's effectiveness in providing participants with events and experiences that have enhanced their self esteem. The same results may be used to suggest modifications to the program under investigation. The study is also designed so that its results could lead to the development of instruments that would measure the effectiveness of any intervention which purports to increase self esteem. More importantly, results from this study could lead to the discovery of tools that would enhance self esteem.
LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of the literature failed to produce any research which attempts to discern the facilitating or hindering effects of experiential or "growth" groups on self esteem. However, some theoretical formulations have been offered to explain how self esteem may be increased or decreased; most notably, Rosenberg (1979) has outlined several principles of self esteem change. The intent of this chapter is to delineate my assumptions about how the self esteem program (described in Appendix A) facilitates self esteem. It is an attempt to answer the following question: "What is it about the participants' experience in this particular program which facilitates his self esteem?" For the most part, Rosenberg's (1979) ideas will be utilized to elucidate and supplement the author's views. In addition, Rogers (1980) will be enlisted to support the author's assumptions regarding the beneficial effects on self esteem of several characteristics of person-centered relationships. For the purposes of this review the program is analyzed from a perspective which presumes that it works to enhance self esteem.

Rosenberg (1979) describes the effects of various social contexts on self esteem. The social similarity or dissimilarity of an individual compared to those who surround him may effect his experience and, in consequence, his self esteem. In a dissonant context, for example, certain qualities like race and culture define the individual as different from the majority. In such a context the individual is designated "deviant" and suffers from the punitive effects of prejudice. According to Rosenberg, entering a dissonant context most often damages self esteem. He
provides the example of a culturally and/or racially different immigrant. In his former culture he could view himself as a respected conformist, well-integrated and accepted in his own group. In contrast, in his new, culturally dissonant environment he may be rejected, viewed as abnormal or even despised because of his difference. Even in the total absence of prejudice such people may feel strange or abnormal.

On the other hand, when an individual enters a consonant context he is protected from the deleterious effects of prejudice from the outside world. Acceptance and belonging replace rejection and feelings of isolation. Self esteem is positively affected when an individual enters a context in which he discovers others like himself.

On the basis of these postulations the program under study increases self esteem by providing a consonant context for homosexual men. As the participant enters the consonant context of the program he leaves behind possible prejudice, as well as feelings of isolation and peculiarity, to encounter other homosexual men who provide the opportunity for belonging, acceptance and identification. The structure of the first session maximizes this opportunity by attempting to establish group cohesion. The first exercise (see INTRODUCTION, Appendix A, page 131) solicits the members' commitment to a group contract which specifies ground rules for discussion. When each member contracts with every other member in this fashion, a form of bonding takes place and a context of belonging is created. In the next activity (see PARAPHRASING EXPECTATIONS, Appendix A, page
131) individual goals and expectations are processed into group goals and expectations. Participants become aware that they have similar needs and that they share similar expectations about how the program should address their needs. The development of shared goals and awarenesses engenders an identification with the group based on commonality, thereby facilitating the formation of a consonant context.

This discussion of contextual dissonance rests on the social comparison principle (Rosenberg, 1979), one of the four principles utilized by Rosenberg to explain how self esteem is affected by interpersonal and social structural processes. According to Rosenberg, (1979) people judge and evaluate themselves by comparing themselves to other individuals ("referent individuals") and social categories ("referent groups"). Two types of comparisons can be made. A normative comparison involves an evaluation of one's deviance or conformity: "Am I different from everybody else?" An individual may also judge himself to be better or worse than others in relation to some criteria of merit or value.

For the most part, gay men experience a societal referent group which is likely to foster a negative self evaluation. In a referent group which clearly devalues homosexuality, the gay man's recognition of his difference or "abnormality" becomes a lingering hindrance to self esteem, especially if all his referent groups are comprised of heterosexuals. In contrast, the consonant context created by the program offers a homosexual referent group which maximizes the opportunity for participants to make esteem enhancing normative comparisons. A "gay positive"
value system expressed by the program facilitator and fostered by	he structure of the workshop combined with the participant's
awareness that he shares a crucial identity element with the
others creates a referent group in which gay men can experience-
themselves as the same as others and, hence, as "normal". The
characteristic, which formerly relegated the homosexual to the
esteem damaging status of "abnormal" or "deviant" in the societal
referent group, has now become a positively valued source of
commonality with others.

In addition to sharing a significant personal identity
characteristic, members discover in the first session that they
share the same problems and experiences; for example PERCEPTION
CHECKING (See Appendix A, page 134) examines the "coming out"
experience, the disclosure of one's homosexuality. The
difficulties inherent in coming out are known to every
participant and, therefore, they discover their "sameness"
through sharing a common dilemma. In a context of shared
problems, normative comparisons enhance self esteem.

Opportunities to discover one's "sameness" or normalcy are
also incorporated into exercises which examine universal human
experiences; for example, in the ANGER activity (see Appendix A,
page 155) participants usually discover that they share
difficulties in expressing anger. In realizing that one's
problems are experienced by many others the negative self
evaluation attached to being the only one with a strange problem
is replaced with the esteem enhancing effects of knowing you are
not alone.
The principles of contextual consonance and social comparison are the basis for two program activities which explore how the participant "fits into" the social contexts of his everyday life. The guided fantasy segment of the BELONGING activity (see Appendix A, page 143) allows participants to become aware of how a consonant social context can facilitate self esteem by providing the experiences of belonging, acceptance and identification. In debriefing their fantasies participants are asked to analyze how they could create or choose circumstances which would enable them to feel that they belong in their everyday life.

REJECTION (See Appendix A, page 140) also employs the social comparison principle. When the individual member realizes that every other member has experienced rejection, the experience loses some of its power to hinder self esteem. The participant can no longer view himself as containing some unique quality which sets him apart from the rest and which predisposes him to rejection. In fact, when he discovers the universal nature of the experience he realizes that it connects him with every other human being. In addition, the activity engages participants in joint ventures to explore how they can create social contexts which would minimize rejection and maximize opportunities for belonging.

The effectiveness of the program also rests on the use of self exploration and self awareness. Self awareness is, in itself, not purported to increase self esteem. However, the activities are structured such that the self knowledge acquired through the experiential component is analyzed for its positive
or negative influences on self esteem. When an individual becomes aware of what aspects of himself and his experience hinder or facilitate his self esteem, he is much better equipped to choose situations, behaviours and attitudes which enhance self esteem. The activities focus participants on how they can make choices which would increase their self esteem by utilizing their newly acquired self knowledge.

This approach reflects the workshop's underlying philosophy; that is, the individual occupies the best vantage point from which to discern how his experience of himself and the world determines the level of his self esteem. He is also in the best position to know what kinds of changes are necessary to increase his self esteem and how to make those changes. Thus, the onus is placed on the individual to select the esteem-enhancing directions which have become apparent through the self awareness component of the activities. In this way the program facilitates a movement away from the belief that one's self esteem is determined by factors beyond one's control toward an attitude that self esteem is improved by one's own capacity to make informed choices. By structuring participants' experiences into a series of opportunities to make choices based on self awareness the program encourages them to begin choosing esteem enhancing patterns of behaviour, thought and feeling. As participants reap the benefits of their choices they may begin to see themselves as more effective and competent human beings who have achieved a greater degree of mastery over their own lives. This result strongly resembles what Rosenberg (1979) defines as "self
confidence. It is a self perception which has a very positive effect on self esteem.

An examination of SELF TALK AND FEELING O.K. (See Appendix A page 148) exemplifies how the concepts described above are incorporated into the workshop. In this exercise participants are encouraged to become aware of self-critical thought patterns which lower self esteem. They are then engaged in an exploration of the origins of their own negative self talk. The possibility of choice in determining one's self perceptions arises through an examination of how negative self evaluations result from early childhood "scripting". The participant becomes aware that introjected societal judgements and negative parental messages form the basis of his self critical attitudes. Then, he is given the opportunity to transform these negative self statements into positive ones of his own creation.

This activity clears the pathway to the realm of choice in several ways. Choice is encouraged when the participant becomes aware of the effects of negative or positive self evaluations on self esteem. This discovery suggests that one can choose to think of himself in ways which would facilitate self esteem. Choices of this nature are prompted by the realization that one's negative self perceptions have originated from arbitrary ascriptions imposed from external "authorities". The activity suggests that these esteem damaging introjects may be replaced by an infinite array of positive self evaluations chosen and created by the participant. Finally, participants are given the opportunity to exercise this choice.

Rosenberg(1979: 261) attaches great importance to the role
of choice, or what he terms "selectivity", in determining self esteem. He describes selectivity, "the motivated choice from among available options", as the single most powerful mechanism for self enhancement. Rosenberg assumes that one's choices are motivated by a motive to enhance self esteem. Thus, when faced with alternatives, human beings will always select the one that enhances self esteem. According to Rosenberg, selectivity fails when there are no other available options except for the one that hinders self esteem; for example, we are not free to choose our self perceptions because many are acquired long before we have the opportunity to test them.

The program assists and supplements the selectivity mechanism. As described by Rosenberg, it is largely an unconscious or automatic process. The exercises assist this process by engendering a conscious awareness of the ways one chooses to think and behave and the effects of these thoughts and behaviours on self esteem. Choices which result in low self esteem, once identified, can be replaced with thoughts and actions which facilitate self esteem. The program engages participants in an exploration of ways to think, behave and express emotion which enhance self esteem. At the same time increased self awareness endows the individual with more information about himself so that the selected alternative is more likely to be effective in producing higher self esteem.

Rosenberg indicates that selectivity fails when there are no other available options as in the case of self-perceptions formed in childhood. The SELF TALK exercise described above is an
example of how the program creates an opportunity for choice where none existed before. It enables participants to become aware of deleterious self perceptions and create alternatives which enhance self esteem. A gay male for example, may have acquired a set of punitive and critical self perceptions by introjecting the heterosexist or homophobic values of his environment. There are usually no other available options for homosexual children raised in heterosexual environments. In the absence of insight into the origins and effects of his self-hating attitudes, the gay male remains a victim to long standing, automatic thought patterns. The exercise engages the participant in an exploration of the origins of self-critical, self-hating attitudes. When he discovers that they originate from external sources, he recognizes that he is not inherently worthy of condemnation. In realizing that many of his self attitudes are arbitrary and outdated foreign introjects, the participant is given a powerful rationale to formulate self-attitudes based on his present awareness. Thus, the exercise provides the participant with the opportunity to choose and create his own self perceptions, ones which would enhance self esteem, rather than detract from it.

The program incorporates self-validation exercises (e.g. SHOW YOUR STRENGTHS, see Appendix A, page 146) which allow the participant to identify and appreciate his personal attributes and qualities. By enabling the participant to distinguish and proclaim his positive characteristics, the exercise provides him with a source of positive information which can be used as a personal resource and source of pride. Rosenberg (1979: 27)
states that "there is no verifiable self concept which can be characterized by an objective observer." Abstract qualities of the self cannot be proven or measured. As a result, human beings are prone to chronic bouts of self-doubt that hinder self esteem. When participants decide for themselves that they possess a certain valuable quality or attribute, their overall level of self doubt is diminished and their self confidence increases. Rosenberg (1979: 31) defines self confidence as "the anticipation of successfully mastering challenges or obstacles."

Through the exercise, the participant becomes aware of personal strengths and their value in mastering life's challenges. In addition, Rosenberg (1979: 15) claims that "characteristics serve as standards for self evaluation and affect how the individual comes to perceive, judge and feel about himself". Thus, when participants label themselves with favourable characteristics, they are much more likely to evaluate themselves positively.

The self validation exercise can be seen to derive its beneficial effect by incorporating Rosenberg's principle of psychological centrality. This principle suggests that different self concept components hold different degrees of importance or centrality to the individual. In describing how selectivity operates to enhance self esteem, Rosenberg maintains that we select to focus on our assets while ignoring or minimizing the importance of our defects. On this basis it is reasonable to assume that self esteem is hindered when individuals focus on their defects while minimizing or ignoring their assets. The self validation exercise counteracts this
tendency by encouraging participants to make their positive attributes more central while ignoring negative ones. In this fashion participants obtain practice in creating their own positive self evaluations.

Psychological centrality also underlies the concept of "role engulfment" (Rosenberg, 1979: 19) which denotes the "overwhelming prominence that a deviant social identity can achieve in an individual's self concept." One's self evaluation can become extremely negative when a stigmatized, deviant status like homosexuality becomes the most salient self concept characteristic. The program is designed to significantly reduce the negative salience of the participant's homosexuality, thereby eliminating the harmful impact of role engulfment on self esteem. As described above, the consonant context of the group and the social comparison principle operate to remove the stigma from homosexuality. In addition, the program encourages a transformation of the meanings attached to homosexuality. As participants develop a positive or neutral view of homosexuality, the overblown prominence of this characteristic which was obtained by virtue of its potent negative connotation is deflated. A concomitant increase in self esteem is to be expected when such a major source of shame, guilt and self hatred is removed.

The STROKING EXERCISE (see Appendix A, page 159) is a structured example of how the program attempts to use supportive validation from others in the group as a means to enhance self esteem. Rosenberg's (1979) principle of "reflected appraisals" posits that other people's judgements have a strong
influence on the way the individual sees himself and on his self esteem. In fact, when given a choice people selectively interact with those whose views and communication are favourably biased. Within the group, participants do not have much of a choice in who they will interact with. However, the program's structure captures the salutary effects of "other validation" by facilitating the development of validating interpersonal relationships and through structured exercises like STROKING. When the group acknowledges the strengths and attributes of one of its members, it's power to enhance this member's self esteem is greatly augmented by the impact of consensual validation.

An examination of social support networks (see SUPPORT NETWORKS, Appendix A, page 144) enables participants to assess the degree to which their social contacts facilitate or hinder their self esteem. If the validation received from others is inadequate, the participant can begin to investigate ways of obtaining the kind of support that is missing. If social support is found to be sufficient, the participant receives a self esteem boost in discovering the value of his interpersonal support network.

The exercises which highlight achievement and accomplishment (see ACHIEVEMENT, Appendix A, page 151) and DOING THINGS AND FEELING O.K., Appendix A, page 152) rest on the assumption that competence, or the ability to deal with the world effectively, is a primary contributor to self esteem. In other words, self esteem is to a large extent contingent upon the individual's evaluation of his capacity to perform as an effective agent in
the world. When the individual views himself as an effective agent self esteem is enhanced. This positive self evaluation is, in turn, supported by evidence of personal achievements or effectiveness in meeting life's challenges. These ideas are reflected in Rosenberg's (1979) principle of "self attribution" which posits that an individual comes to conclusions about himself on the basis of observing his own behaviours and their outcomes; for example, a child who observes evidence of his achievement in school is more likely to have a high academic self esteem. Thus, the ACHIEVEMENT exercise elicits memories of past accomplishments to offer participants proof of their competence in the world. The next exercise, DOING THINGS AND FEELING O.K. utilizes cognitive restructuring techniques to enhance participants abilities to engage in competent and effective action. The technique employs a selective attention to one's past achievements in order to increase the likelihood of success in the present. The increased confidence acquired by focusing on proven areas of competence can be enlisted to support one's current efforts to achieve. These activities enhance self esteem by giving participants evidence of their competency and by equipping them with a technique which increases the likelihood of competency in the future. Moreover, the acquisition of the technique is likely to facilitate self esteem by strengthening the expectation of success (i.e. self confidence).

The validation and achievement activities include several opportunities for favourable comparisons on the basis of some standard of merit or value. Thus, the second variety of social comparison, a comparison of better or worse (Rosenberg, 1979)
operates within the program to enhance self esteem. The program's structure makes it more likely that participants will arrive at a comparison that facilitates self esteem. In the self validation exercise, for example, every member creates a different constellation of qualities and every member is quietly acknowledged for his particular array of attributes. This context enables the participant to compare his qualities with others' and observe that he holds valuable characteristics which others do not have. In a similar fashion, the stroking exercise is structured such that compliments received by others are to be accepted and not discounted. The group acknowledges a unique set of laudable characteristics for every member. Therefore, every member can covertly distinguish himself as superior to the rest on the basis of the unique qualities highlighted by the group.

Beginning with communication skills training in the first session the program endeavours to structure interpersonal interactions so that participants can benefit from each other's empathy, caring and honesty. The interpersonal skills and attitudes of "person-centered" relationships are established early and used throughout the program to facilitate self esteem.

Paraphrasing and perception checking (see SESSION ONE, Appendix A, pp 131-135) are taught to cultivate empathy between participants. This form of communication most effectively enables persons to feel understood and accepted by each other. There are at least three qualities inherent in empathic communications which facilitate self esteem. According to Rogers (1980: 159), the non-judgemental acceptance of an empathic
understanding enhances self esteem: "The non-evaluative and acceptant quality of the empathic climate enables persons, as we have seen, to take a prizing, caring attitude toward themselves."

Rogers (1980: 152) also states that empathy communicates an appreciation and caring which benefits the recipient's self esteem:

A second consequence of empathic understanding is that the recipient feels valued, cared for, accepted as the person he or she is... the message comes through that 'this other individual trusts me, thinks I'm worthwhile. Perhaps, I am worth something. Perhaps I could value myself. Perhaps I could care for myself.'

In addition to the appreciation expressed in empathic interactions, the program includes activities (see MASSAGE, Appendix A, page 159 and FACE PAINTING, Appendix, A, page 156) which engage participants in a physical, and perhaps more explicit expression of care and appreciation. The GIFT (see Appendix A, page 160) also incorporates the benefits of appreciation.

Thirdly, the understanding offered by empathic communications facilitates self esteem by dissolving alienation. The harmful effects of experiencing oneself as an isolate, or as separated from all other human beings by virtue of one's differences, have been described above. To be understood effectively attenuates one's experience of isolation by fostering an experience of interpersonal connection. Self esteem is facilitated when alienation is replaced by an awareness of how one belongs to the human race. Rogers (1980: 151) writes,

Another person has understood, understood my feelings even more clearly than I do. If someone else knows what I am talking about, what I mean, then to this degree I
am not so strange, or alien or set apart. I make sense to another human being. So I am in touch with, even in relationship with, others. I am no longer an isolate.

In addition to stimulating a general self acceptance, empathic interactions may also facilitate self esteem by promoting the discovery and integration of formerly disowned and/or denigrated qualities, characteristics or traits. The climate of non-evaluative acceptance enables individuals to acknowledge and accept aspects of themselves that have previously been denied awareness and acceptance. Thus, empathy enhances self esteem by mitigating self-alienation as well as alienation from other human beings.

Finally, empathy engenders a willingness to be open, honest and genuine. These attitudes are also cultivated by the trust exercises (see TRUST WALK, Appendix A, page 137 and TRUST GAMES, Appendix A, page 147) which help to create a "safe" and non-threatening milieu in which participants feel freer to "be themselves", to be honest and disclosing, even about potentially embarassing or painfull material. In the following excerpt Rogers (1980: 117) describes how honesty to self and others results from the self prizing attitude fostered by empathy:

As person's are empathically heard, it becomes possible for them to listen more carefully to the flow of their inner experiencing. But as a person understands and prizes self, the self becomes more congruent with the experiencings. The person becomes more real, more genuine . . . There is a greater freedom to be the true, whole person.

It is evident from this excerpt that Rogers believes that a self prizing attitude fosters honesty. However, the relationship is just as easily reversed; that is, one's capacity to be oneself and to be honest with others can be a source of pride such that
the genuineness of one's communications can contribute to one's self esteem.

In summary, Rosenberg's (1979) four principles of self esteem change (reflected appraisals, social comparison, self attribution, and psychological centrality) and Roger's (1980) attitude of empathy were employed to explain how the characteristics and content of the program facilitate self esteem. A rationale based on these theories was provided for every intervention, activity and program feature examined in the preceding review. It is evident from this discussion that Rosenberg and Rogers offer a satisfactory account of the program's presumed effectiveness.
METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

Selection:

Eight homosexual males were selected to participate in the self esteem program. Two sets of criteria were used to select participants for this group. In order to be chosen, prospective candidates had to meet the basic requirements of both the self esteem program and the research procedures, described below.

The program was designed to facilitate the self esteem of adult (18 years or older) homosexual males. Thus, gay men who reported a deficiency in self esteem and expressed a desire to improve were chosen as the target population. The program was advertised as a "Self Esteem Workshop for Gay Men" in a university student newspaper, and in a local community newspaper with a large gay readership. The advertisement (see Appendix C) contained a description of the issues to be covered and it instructed those interested to phone for further information. All prospective participants were screened in the initial telephone interview for behaviours or characteristics which would have made them inappropriate for an experiential, "growth" group. Candidates whose main concern was not self esteem and/or those who reported or exhibited severe anxiety, clinical depression or inappropriate hostility were disqualified. It was reasoned that these and other manifestations of severe psychiatric disorders (e.g. psychoses) would be better treated in other settings. Moreover, these behaviours and characteristics could impede or thwart group development and other members' progress. The program also required at least a "low average" degree of
intelligence to absorb the didactic component and engage in the experiential activities. These selection decisions were the result of the leader's subjective, clinical impressions which were obtained in the initial telephone interview and in a face to face pre-program interview. Disqualified candidates were referred to the appropriate helping professional. As a result of these selection procedures the group was comprised of gay males of at least average intelligence who were functioning adequately in the community.

Participants were also selected on the basis of their willingness and capacity to engage in the research component of the program. Those who were selected consented to be interviewed regarding their self esteem. The research approach required that the participant have an understanding of his self esteem and an awareness of how it is increased or decreased through his experiences. It was also important for the participant to be able to communicate that understanding and those experiences to the researcher in a detailed interview. These research specifications for articulation and self awareness complemented the program's requirements for at least an average degree of intelligence. Finally, those prospective participants who were receiving counselling or psychotherapy from other mental health professionals were excluded in order to reduce the confounding effects of extraneous influences.

Demographic Information:

It is possible that self esteem is experienced and
manifested differently in different cultures. Consequently, the participants in the program were North Americans or could be described as coming from the "Western Culture". All were residents of a large urban centre in Western Canada.

The program was designed specifically for the gay male population. However, aside from sex and sexual preference, the study was completed without confinement to other demographic variables. Age, occupation and socio-economic status of the eight participants were recorded. The participants' ages were 22, 22, 24, 26, 26, 36, 38, 38. All stated that they were middle class with the exception of one who stated he was lower middle class. All of the participants had obtained at least high school education and a majority were either attending a post secondary institution or had obtained a post secondary education. Two participants were students and two were unemployed during the program. An engineer, a materials analyst, a nurse and a small business manager comprised the rest of the group.

Control Group:

An additional group of eight homosexual males was selected to comprise the control sample. An attempt was made to draw the control sample from the same population that the participants were drawn from. In addition to sex and sexual preference, the control group members were very similar to the participants in terms of their age (a range between 22 and 34), education (all had completed high school) and socio-economic status (middle class). The sample differs from the participant sample in that six out of the eight control group members were students at the
time they were involved in the study. In addition, they were selected from the researcher's circle of acquaintances and friends most of whom are involved in the university context. However, when the educational background of most of the workshop participants is taken into account, the effect of this difference is diminished.

The same requirements for psychological adjustment and average intelligence were used to select the control group members.
DATA GATHERING METHODS

The present study employed data gathering methods representative of two paradigms of empirical investigation: the qualitative and the quantitative. Rosenberg's (1965) Scale of Self Esteem, a standardized measure, was used to assess outcome in terms of changes in self esteem scores. However, the study focused primarily on qualitative evaluation employing what Patton (1980) terms a "standardized open-ended interview" and a journal of significant events. These procedures uncover the unique experiences of individual participants and explore how the program produces the outcomes that it does.

The rationale for using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods stems from the accumulated wisdom of program evaluators (e.g. Patton, 1978). For example, Shapiro (1973) used a standardized achievement test to compare two groups of students. One group received an enriched educational program and the other functioned as a control group. The test results indicated that there were no differences between the groups. However, when observations were made of the children in their classrooms, Shapiro found startling differences between treatment and control groups. The standardized test failed to detect a range of important differences that were uncovered by systematic observations. Shapiro suggests that the quantitative methodology narrowed the questions being asked and predetermined the statistically non-significant results. Shapiro (1973: 527) concluded that "although it is important to explain the negative test results, it is far more important to account for the
disparity between the negative test findings and the clear differences observed in the classroom." In utilizing both quantitative and qualitative approaches, Shapiro discovered that standardized measures are, by themselves, insufficient to conduct a program evaluation. She was also able to discern how the two approaches obtained contrasting results by examining the range and qualities of the phenomena they investigated. The present study also employs the two different kinds of data in order to compare the quality and utility of each in evaluating the program. The method, however, emphasizes qualitative measures which are more likely to reveal how the program works or doesn't work.

Patton compares quantitative and qualitative methods on a number of dimensions. He underscores the advantages of a qualitative approach to program evaluation. He also maintains that it is important to match the evaluation methodology to the phenomenon under study. In discussing these dimensions, the value of the qualitative methodology to the study of the participant's experience in the program will be highlighted.

Objectivity is exemplified by the achievement test described above which is highly reliable, has outcomes that have been replicated in varying populations and has well known statistical properties. An objective measure of self esteem has been included in this study in order to objectively measure participants' outcomes by comparing their improvement in self esteem scores with that of a control group. However, Patton holds that standardized measures are insufficient when the intent
is to understand the meaning of specific outcomes. Understanding requires subjectivity; that is, the researcher must get close enough to one situation to obtain insights into the mental states of the participants. Thus, qualitative interviews have been included in this study in order to understand as fully as possible the unique experience of each participant. The standardized test is only able to tap a very restricted range of this experience while an open-ended questionnaire encourages detail, diversity and breadth.

An objective instrument necessitates distance from the data in order to guarantee its neutrality. In contrast, the qualitative interview requires that the observer get close to the data by employing empathy in a personal encounter with the participant so that his experience can be fully understood. This study is suited to a more personalized evaluation methodology because the researcher in his role as program facilitator quickly develops close and personal relationships with each participant. The qualitative approach takes advantage of the wealth of meaningful data offered by the closeness of the facilitator-participant relationships.

The traditional paradigm employs component analysis to break reality down into small component parts in order to discover the effect of each isolated part on the whole. However, there are serious drawbacks in applying this approach to the study of field settings like the one presently under investigation. To isolate one treatment specification would be to simplify and distort a reality which is far more complex. The program consists of a number of interactive and independent processes. To try to
separate them out for experimental purposes would misrepresent the total treatment process. It is for these reasons that a holistic evaluation is undertaken. The aim of this approach is to discover and understand the unifying principles which facilitate self esteem not only in the context of the whole program but also in the context of the participant's life. This approach reflects Shapiro's (1973) findings that test results could not be interpreted without understanding the larger cultural, institutional context in which the individual was situated.

Experimental designs are well suited to the assessment of programs in which treatments can be isolated and controlled as fixed variables. They assume that program treatments remain constant and unchanging once they are introduced. However, most programs, including the one under study, are not characterized by static treatments. The program is often modified as priorities are changed depending on the needs of the specific group of participants. These changes destroy the necessary conditions for a fixed treatment outcome oriented analysis. In contrast, qualitative procedures acknowledge a dynamic reality. The evaluator aims to document and understand the day to day reality of the settings under study; for example, participants are asked to keep a journal recording daily events affecting self esteem. The data obtained by this procedure is not just outcome information. It also includes the unanticipated consequences of the program as well as an understanding of those patterns of experience and activity (occurring within the program and the
participant's life) which facilitate or hinder self esteem.

The dominant paradigm focuses on **reliability**, the replicability and consistency of scientific findings, whereas the alternative emphasizes **validity**, the meaning and meaningfulness of the data and the instruments employed to collect it. Shapiro (1973), for example, discovered that standardized measures were not valid measures of learning because they failed to apprehend a range of student experiences and behaviours which indicated learning had taken place. The present study is more concerned with obtaining a valid representation of what is happening in the program than with getting outcome results that can be easily replicated.

The dominant paradigm also employs a **deductive** approach which begins with hypotheses and proceeds to test them across situations with an aim to produce generalizations. In evaluation research, this focus on comparisons and generalizations detracts from the identification and explication of important and unique program characteristics. The **inductive** approach gives attention to individual experiences. The procedure employed by this study begins with the idiosyncratic experiences of each participant before attempting to categorize them. Its intent is to fully explore and understand individual cases before they are aggregated to allow for the emergence of generalization.

In *Qualitative Evaluation Methods* Patton (1980) describes several evaluation models, each designed to answer different questions and obtain different kinds of information about the program under investigation. He proposes that the nature and purpose of the evaluation model (as reflected in the question
it asks) should be served by selecting the appropriate evaluation methods. Two of the models Patton describes contain questions and intents which most closely resemble those of the present study. According to Patton, these models are also most suited to qualitative methods.

The intent of the process model of evaluation is to elucidate and understand the internal dynamics of the program. It analyzes the processes whereby the program produces its outcomes by asking questions like "What are the factors that come together to make this program what it is?" and "What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program?". In the present study the critical incidents questions (described below) are designed to uncover the processes (within both the participant's life and the program) that facilitate and hinder self esteem. The understandings obtained from answers to these questions allow the researcher to assess the extent to which the program is operating the way it should be. As well as highlighting the strengths of the program, it is useful for revealing the areas in which the program can be improved.

Qualitative methods are most appropriate for the conduct of process evaluations. The open-ended interview approach permits an understanding of the program's unique internal dynamics by allowing them to emerge from the interview data, rather than from the evaluator's theories. This approach allows the evaluator to find out "what is there, rather than validating, confirming, or rejecting preordained hypotheses about program strengths and weaknesses." (Patton, 1980: 61) In contrast, a standardized test
is not suited to exploring the nature of program processes because they are usually too complex and interdependent to be represented by a unidimensional scale.

The program under study operates under the assumption of individualization which characterizes the individualized outcomes model of evaluation. Individualization assumes that program services are matched to the needs of individual clients. Thus, each participant's outcome will differ not only along specific common dimensions. Different outcomes will also involve qualitatively different dimensions for each participant. The present study attempts to capture the uniqueness of each participant's outcome by incorporating a case study approach. In the first interview each participant will assess his own self esteem and explicate his goals and expectations for the workshop. These will be reviewed in the summary interview thereby enabling the participant to assess his own progress (or lack thereof) and describe how his goals and expectations were met (or not met). Standardized measures are not well suited to this model because they cannot measure qualitatively different individual outcomes.
Rosenberg's Self Esteem Scale

Rosenberg's (1965) Self Esteem Scale was used. Greenberg (1973), Hammersmith and Weinberg (1973), Myrick (1974), and Jacobs and Tedford (1980) also utilized this measure with a homosexual population.

Rosenberg (1979) describes this measure as a ten item Guttman scale which has satisfactory reliability and validity. He cites Silber and Tippett (1965) who found a two week test-re-test reliability of $r = .85$ and $r = .88$, respectively; both used small college samples. According to Rosenberg (1965), the Guttman model can insure that the items on the scale belong to the same dimension. He states that there is little doubt that the items generally deal with a favourable or unfavourable attitude toward oneself, thereby establishing "logical validation" or "face validity". Rosenberg (1979) provides evidence to establish the construct validity of the RSE by offering his findings which indicate that those with low scores on the scale appear depressed to others and express feelings of discouragement and unhappiness, manifest symptoms of "neuroticism" or anxiety, hold a low sociometric status in the group, are described as commanding less respect than others and feel that others have little respect for them.

Rosenberg (1979) again cites Silber and Tippett (1965) and Tippett and Silber (1965) to provide evidence of both convergent and discriminant validity for the RSE. These researchers established convergent validity by correlating RSE scores (obtained from 44 college students) with measures of the same concept based on different methods; for example, the correlations
of RSE to the self ideal discrepancy score was $r = .67$; to the self image questionnaire, $r = .83$ and to psychiatrist's ratings, $r = .56$. Evidence for discriminant validity was obtained by correlating the RSE with measures of constructs which are related to self esteem and which also differ from it to varying degrees; for example, the correlations between self esteem as measures by RSE and self concept stability as assessed by the self-ideal measure, the self image questionnaire and psychiatrist's ratings were $r = .40$, $r = .34$, and $r = .24$, respectively. These correlations are considerably lower than the correlations of self esteem measured by different methods. Discriminant validity was further evidenced by correlations of near zero between RSE and stability of views of other people and stability of perceptual speed. In addition, Crandall's (1973) finding that the correlation of $r = .60$ between the RSE and the Coopersmith Self Esteem Inventory (Coopersmith, 1967) provides further evidence of convergent validity.

All items on the scale have the following response categories: strongly agree, agree, not sure, disagree, strongly disagree. Values of one through five were attached to these categories depending on the direction of the item, so that a higher value indicates higher self esteem. The cumulative value across items represents a person's level of self esteem. "Positive" and "negative" items were presented randomly in order to reduce the effect of respondent set. A copy of the scale is included in Appendix B.
Interviews

As described by Patton (1980) the "standardized open-ended interview" consists of open-ended questions which are written out in advance exactly the way they are to be asked during the interview. Respondents answer the same questions so that data is complete for each person on the topics addressed in the interview. This format was selected because it obtains responses that are easily compared across respondents and, therefore, data analysis and organization is facilitated. The open-ended quality enables participants to respond in their own terms and minimizes the imposition of predetermined responses when gathering data. The interviewing procedure also incorporates probing, reflection and paraphrasing in order to encourage the respondent to elaborate while, at the same time, being very careful not to bias his answers in any direction. This interview approach attempts to capture the uniqueness in each respondent's experience as well as gaining an understanding of the similarities amongst them.

The preliminary and summary interviews were composed of two different kinds of questions which access two different varieties of information. The questions asking what hinders or facilitates self esteem are what Patton (1980) terms "experience/behaviour" questions. Their purpose is to elicit descriptions of respondents' experiences, behaviours, actions or activities. In this case the questions were designed to elicit experiences and behaviours which affect the respondent's self esteem. The exact wording of these questions (and their numerical positions in the
interviews) is as follows:

Preliminary Interview:

3. What facilitates your self esteem?
4. What hinders your self esteem?

Summary Interview:

3. In your significant events journal you have become aware of events, experiences and activities that affect your self esteem in a positive or negative way. Since the time of our first interview what has happened or what have you done or experienced that facilitated your self esteem?

4. Since the time of our first interview what has happened or what have you done or experienced that hindered your self esteem?

If in response to the preliminary interview, critical incidents questions, the participant began by expressing his opinion or theory about self esteem, the researcher explained that he was more interested in concrete events, experiences or actions and activities that facilitated the participant's self esteem. On a few occasions, it was necessary to define the meaning of "facilitate" by offering such synonyms as "enhance", "increase", or "improve".

This variety of "experience/behaviour" question is an example of the "critical incidents technique" pioneered by Flanagan (1954). This technique obtains reports from people who are in the best position to determine the experiences and behaviours which help or hinder the functioning of some aim or process. In this case the respondent is asked to self observe because he is in the best position to observe a subjectively experienced phenomenon like self esteem. In the absence of observable physiological or behavioural indicators, self esteem
can be measured only on the basis of the individual's self evaluative reports. In criticizing certain questionnaires used to measure self esteem, Rosenberg (1979:21) describes the value of the subject's vantage point on the issue:

The subject himself may be as ignorant as the investigator about how this complex synthesis of elements has been achieved, but he is in a unique position to recognize, as a matter of immediate experience, the final result. He alone can experience whether he has a generally favourable or unfavourable, positive or negative, pro or con feeling toward himself as a whole.

In one of the initial studies using a critical incidents approach, combat veterans were asked to report observed incidents of leaders' behaviours which were especially helpful or hindering to the accomplishment of the assigned mission (Flanagan, 1954). In a more recent study which aimed to discover what facilitates or hinders "quality of life", Flanagan (1978) modified the technique to elicit reports of the subjects' experiences as well as behaviours. In addition, the subjects were asked to self observe as opposed to describing the behaviour of others. Flanagan (1978: 138) used the following question: "Think of the last time you did something very important to you or had an experience that was especially satisfying to you. What did you do or what happened that was so satisfying to you?" This critical incidents approach closely resembles that used in the present study. In both studies the goal is to elicit self observations consisting of behaviours and experiences which facilitate or hinder a subjectively experienced phenomenon.

The critical incidents technique was also used by Herzberg (1959) to discover the kinds of situations or factors leading to negative or positive worker attitudes to the job. More recently,
Borgen and Amundson (1984) used the technique to obtain concrete incidents that were either high points or low points in the process of unemployment.

A study of the reliability and validity of the critical incidents technique undertaken by Anderson and Nilsson (1964) aimed to determine the job training requirements of store managers. They discovered that the category system (obtained by classifying the incidents according to their similarities) became apparent after a relatively small number of incidents had been classified. This finding indicates that the technique provides for data collection which is comprehensive enough to include all the factors (or types of incidents) that the method may be expected to cover. They found that the number and structure of the incidents was not significantly affected by the method of collecting the material or by employing different interviewers to collect the data. The reliability of the technique was further supported when it was found that the stability of the category system was maintained when students recategorized the incidents.

In order to determine the validity of the technique the researchers analyzed the contents of the literature used to train store managers. They discovered that the contents of this literature could be fitted into the category system. This analysis of the training literature indicated that the method produced a list of critical factors which covered all the essential requirements of the store manager's job. In summary the authors write: "According to the results of the studies reported here on the reliability and validity aspects of the
critical incidents technique, it would appear justifiable to conclude that the information collected by this method is both reliable and valid." (p. 402)

The interviews also contain what Patton (1980) terms "opinion/value" questions. Answers to these questions reveal what people think or understand about themselves, the world or some specific program. They also uncover people's goals intentions, desires and values.

The first question of the preliminary interview ("What does self esteem mean to you?") focuses on the participant's personal understanding of self esteem. The second question ("Given your understanding of self esteem, how do you feel and/or think about yourself?") requires the expression of a self-evaluative opinion. Together, these two questions encourage the respondent to express a personal understanding of self esteem so that the aim of the subsequent critical incidents questions is clearly defined and easily referred to. Once the meaning of self esteem is established at the onset, the respondent can consistently refer to this same definition while formulating answers to the critical incidents questions. In this way the structure of the interview establishes a measure of consistency so that the respondent's definition of self esteem remains stable throughout the interview.

The last two questions of the preliminary interview are worded in the following manner:

5. With regards to your self esteem, what do you want to get out of this workshop?
6. What are your goals and expectations for this workshop?
These questions attempt to uncover the specific goals or desires that participants expect to obtain or fulfill by virtue of their involvement in the program.

The "opinion/value" questions in the summary interview are listed below:

1. Given your understanding of self esteem, how do you think and/or feel about yourself now?
2. Do you think there's been a change in your self esteem since our first interview? If so, how has it changed?
5. Describe how your goals and expectations for the workshop were fulfilled or not fulfilled.

Questions 1. and 2. require an evaluation of the nature and extent of self esteem change since the first interview. The last question asks for an evaluation of how well the program fulfilled participant's goals and expectations. The goals and expectations collected from the preliminary interview were read back to the participant so that he could assess progress or degree of fulfillment by comparing his present condition with some baseline data. It was expected that answers to this question would contain some data that would express the participant's opinion of the program's value and effectiveness. (For a complete list of preliminary and summary interview questions, see Appendix B.)

**Significant Events Journal**

Critical incidents data may be obtained through several slightly varying procedures. In addition to the interview approach, Flanagan (1954) describes a method requiring subjects to record the details of an incident as they occur on a day to day basis. In the present study participants were asked to keep a personal record of the incidents which hindered or facilitated
self esteem. They were instructed to record the incidents as they occurred during the week and informed that this material would be collected on a weekly basis. The following instructions were given to the participant:

I would like you to keep a record of the significant events related to your self esteem. As you go through your daily life take special notice of the events and experiences which either facilitate or hinder your self esteem. What happens to facilitate your self esteem and what happens to hinder it? Record each facilitating incident on a separate yellow card and each hindering incident on a separate blue card.

Every participant was given a supply of approximately fifteen yellow and fifteen blue cards per week. In order to aid the participant in the task of record keeping it was suggested that the recognition of a significant event could be marked by a brief written note or mental notation until such time as the participant could record the incident on the card. It was also suggested that participants designate a five or ten minute period of every day during which they could reflect on the day’s events and record anything that had a significant or noticeable impact on self esteem.

The interview procedure requires a retrospective view of critical incidents which may be limited by the extent and accuracy of the respondent’s memory. The journal approach overcomes some of the limitations inherent in the interview procedure; in particular, it is far less likely that events or experiences affecting self esteem will be lost to memory when they are being recorded on a daily or weekly basis. The journal also provides a microscopic view of the day to day events and experiences which hinder or facilitate self esteem. The
interview is more likely to engage the respondent in a long range retrospective view which would predispose him to focus on those events which are most easily remembered. Although it may produce the most salient incidents, the interview is probably less likely to obtain the more common everyday experiences which affect self esteem.

Another advantage of the journal procedure is that it increases the likelihood that the experience or event has a true and valid influence on self esteem. In keeping a journal the participant becomes sensitized to the experience of self esteem and to what causes it to fluctuate. The procedure is based on the participant's present or immediate awareness of his self esteem. When an incident occurs the participant can readily determine its significance by referring to his present awareness of self esteem. In contrast, the respondent in an interview must rely on a recollection of an awareness of fluctuation is self esteem. Thus, the validity of the incident is more dependent on what may be a limited capacity to recall an awareness of a subjective experience.
PROCEDURE

After prospective participants were interviewed in the initial telephone conversation to assess their appropriateness for the group, an interview time was arranged. The eight men who were selected were interviewed in the two weeks preceding the first session of the program.

Before beginning the interview, each participant read a letter of introduction to the program written by the sponsoring psychologist and co-facilitator (see Appendix C). Each participant then read and agreed to sign a consent form (see Subject Consent Form, Appendix C) which describes the nature and purpose of the study and outlines the course of the participant's involvement in it. The form also stipulated that an agreement to participate included consent to be tape recorded during the preliminary and summary interviews. After consent was obtained, the self esteem questionnaire was administered. When this form was completed the interviewer introduced the preliminary interview by informing the participant that he would be questioned regarding his self esteem and his goals and expectations for the workshop. The length of time of the preliminary interview ranged from forty-five minutes to one hour. When it was completed the interviewer gave the participant the opportunity to ask questions regarding the interview, the study or the workshop. Then, he explained the critical events record and provided the participant with a supply of blue and yellow cards with which to begin the record in preparation for the first session. These cards were collected every week at the beginning of each session and more were dispensed, if the participant's
supply was exhausted.

The self esteem program was designed by the author who conducted the program on two previous occasions. The program consists of eight sessions, each, three hours in length, which were conducted one evening per week for eight consecutive weeks. The author performed the role of group facilitator. He was assisted by a co-facilitator who functioned as a participant-observer; that is, he participated in the group exercises but he was also available to lead small group discussions and provide the facilitator with feedback regarding issues of group process and the facilitator's performance. In this case the co-facilitator was a registered psychologist under whose auspices the group was being conducted. The facilitators used a client-centered approach during group discussions and in their interactions with clients. Each session consisted of a number of experiential activities designed to explore and enhance the participant's self esteem. The entire program is outlined in Appendix A which contains a session by session description of each of the experiential activities.

All the participants were interviewed in the fourth week following the last session of the program. Before the interview began the self esteem questionnaire was again administered to each participant and the last set of significant events cards was collected. The summary interviews, like the preliminary ones, were tape recorded. Each interview lasted between sixty and ninety minutes.

The self esteem questionnaire was individually administered
for the first time to the eight control group participants during the same week that the preliminary interviews were being conducted with the program participants. Before answering the questionnaire, the control group subjects also read a letter of introduction from the sponsoring psychologist and a consent form (See Appendix C). The questionnaire was administered for the second and final time during the week that summary interviews were being conducted with the program participants, approximately twelve weeks following the first administration.
DATA ANALYSIS

Critical incidents data was divided into two major groups. The first collection of data consisted of those experiences and events which hindered or enhance self esteem in everyday life. The data for this group was collected from transcripts of the preliminary interview and from the journal. The second collection of critical incidents consisted of those events or experiences which occurred within the context of the program. Virtually all of the incidents collected from transcripts of the summary interview fell into this category. A small number of journal incidents described program experiences which affected self esteem. This data was also used to form the second major group of incidents.

The next task in data analysis was to induce a set of categories from the facilitating incidents of the first major group such that the incidents within each category were representative of a distinct and well defined experience or event which facilitates self esteem in everyday life. Thus, the facilitating incidents were categorized into groups on the basis of their similarities. The aim was to obtain groups of concrete incidents which referred to the same event, activity or experience. A category was formed on the basis of grouping two or more similar events or experiences collected from at least two participants.

Classification was made easier by making an initial assessment of whether or not the incident responded to the question: "What happened"? This question elicits descriptions
of concrete events and experiences. If the incident answered the question, it was included. Incidents which did not address this question were likely to consist of an expressed opinion or an abstract theory. This information was discarded because it describes the respondent's theory of self esteem rather than what actually happens to influence self esteem. When these responses are eliminated, respondent's theories do not influence the form that the categories will take. Similarly, the researcher was careful not to impose his own theoretical presuppositions on the data. The aim was to adhere to the event's details to allow them to suggest the categories. Patton (1980: 40-41) describes this inductive approach:

A qualitative research strategy is inductive in that the researcher attempts to make sense of the situation without imposing preexisting expectations on the research setting. Qualitative designs begin with specific observations and build toward general patterns. Categories or dimensions of analysis emerge from open-ended observations as the researcher comes to understand organizing patterns that exist in the empirical world under study . . . The strategy . . . is to allow the important dimensions to emerge from analysis of cases under study without presupposing in advance what those important dimensions will be.

Categorization was facilitated by initially focusing on the clearest incidents, those most easily distinguished from the others. These incidents became prototypes in that they captured the key features of a category and they were, therefore, the key instances of it. In contrast, most incidents contained only some of the features of a particular category and many contained features of more than one category. Hence, there were no rigid boundaries between categories because the incidents contained within them held features that made them eligible for other
categories. The decision to include an incident in a category was based on the extent to which it resembled the prototype of one category as opposed to the prototype of another.

During categorization the researcher encountered "borderline incidents" which could easily fall into more than one category. These instances were set aside until the rest were classified. After a set of tentative categories had been established they were checked for incidents which did not fit and reviewed to discern whether or not the incidents shared a common resemblance to the prototype. This review prompted modifications of the category system. Some categories were redefined. Some were collapsed to form one category and others were split apart to form two categories. These modifications were also encouraged by attempts to classify the borderline cases.

After review and modifications, each category was defined by formulating a description of the category's features. In addition, a label that captured the essence of the category was also attached.

Once the categories were established for the facilitating incidents, the hindering incidents of the first major group were classified by locating the facilitative category which best represented its counterpart. The classification of hindering incidents followed the same procedures as were employed to create the initial set of categories beginning with a focus on prototypical incidents. Once the hindering incidents were sorted, the categories were defined in terms of their essential features. These descriptions formed the counterpart or mirror
image of the facilitating category descriptions.

The next step in data analysis was to establish the reliability of the categories. A sample of incidents was selected from each category: two facilitating incidents and two hindering incidents. Borderline cases were not selected because they do not adequately represent any one category. Samples contained incidents which included the key features of the category from which they were drawn.

A rater (in this case, a fellow graduate student) was hired to classify the sample. The researcher described the features of each category to the rater and emphasized the key features which distinguished each category from others to which it held a resemblance. Similar categories were described together in thematic groups so that distinctions between them could be highlighted.

When the rater was engaged in sorting the sample, the researcher observed the process so that the rater could later be questioned regarding her classification decisions. In uncovering the rater's reasonings, it is possible to discover legitimate quandaries, or oversights in the category system. This information may be helpful in improving the category system. It was decided in advance that the correct classification of eighty per cent of the sample would indicate satisfactory reliability.

At this point the participation rates were determined for each category. These were obtained by counting the number of participants who produced at least one incident in the category under scrutiny. Participation rate is an indicator of the validity of the category. If two or more participants describe
experiences which are similar enough such that they can be grouped together to form a category, then the facilitating effect of this experience has acquired a certain objectivity. If the incidents in a category are obtained from only one participant, the category itself is suspect. It should be scrutinized to determine if it makes sense, if it is ambiguous or unclear. These characteristics would encourage the researcher to project his own meanings onto the incidents of the category. In exceptional cases, it is possible to have a category formed by one incident from one subject. The incident would have to contain features that would make it clearly distinguishable from all other categories. For the most part, however, a category's validity is more firmly established by higher participation rates.

The second major group of incidents described experiences, events and activities which occurred within the program and which had a facilitating or hindering effect on self esteem. An attempt was made to classify this data according to the newly devised category system which outlined factors facilitating self esteem in everyday life. Thus, the program's effectiveness was determined by the extent to which participants' experiences within the program reflected the factors facilitating self esteem in everyday life. It was reasoned that if the program enabled participants to experience facilitative events and activities which represented all of the categories, then its value in enhancing self esteem would be strongly indicated. This method assesses the extent to which the program provides a comprehensive
range of facilitating experiences. It also outlines and describes the nature of those experiences. In addition, participation rates were obtained in order to determine how many participants were able to experience the facilitating effects of each individual category. This analysis is an indication of the program's capacity to provide a range of facilitative experiences to a diverse group of participants who manifest a spectrum of individual needs and characteristics.
RESULTS ONE: INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP IMPROVEMENT

A. QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

Table I presents the raw scores on the scale of self esteem obtained at time one (pre-program) and time two (post-program) for both the experimental and control groups. Despite the difference in mean scores at time one between the two groups, a t-test for independent means produced non-significant results, indicating that the two groups are roughly comparable on self esteem.

When an analysis of covariance was applied to this data the program did not produce significantly different results on the scale of self esteem.

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<td>$\bar{X}$</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>328</td>
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B. QUALITATIVE RESULTS

Recorded responses to the opinion/value questions were used to compile the following case studies. Each of the eight case studies begins with the participant's summary interview assessment of the direction and degree of change in self esteem since the time of the preliminary interview.

The case studies also describe what changes occurred by presenting each participant's assessment of the extent to which his initially stated goals were fulfilled by his participation in the program. Initially stated goals are indicated by the lower case, Roman Numeral (i). These excerpts from the preliminary interview are followed by the participant's summary interview assessment of the degree to which the goal was fulfilled by his involvement in the program. These responses are indicated by the lower case, Roman Numeral (ii). As well as describing what changes took place, these excerpts also often express what happened to facilitate the change, or how it (the process) occurred. The changes for each participant are numbered and labelled with a more succinct description of the change.
SUBJECT ONE

Change in self esteem: "Yes, I believe there is a change. I think I have improved my self esteem in conjunction with taking your course. I feel very positive and upbeat about myself and my own self image. My self image has improved over the last twelve weeks, so I'm on a "high" right now. I'm going to try to push to even greater heights in the new year."

1. Overcoming Ambivalence to Obtain Focus, Clarity, Direction

(i) "I'm abivalent. I'm not sure. Partly because I've been going through a period of self analysis. I'm kind of in a quandary because I'm a universalist. I believe everything is possible in this life. Therefore, what do I believe in? What am I doing? Is it positive or negative? What is the meaning or purpose of life?"

(ii) "It's a real struggle finding meaning and purpose in life. Coping with that is a struggle for me because I tend to get very philosophical. What the workshop has helped me to do is to nail it down into concrete terms; that is, you're here and now, you've got these problems, you've got these goals, what are you going to do about them? How are you going about them? Let's not discuss the philosophies of it. Let's just get on with the day to day living. If anything, it was like a kick off with something I was already struggling to achieve but never really put into concrete terms. Like, what to do specifically. What I think the workshop provided was some ways of expediting my search. It gave me the direction and the techniques."

2. Discovering a Guideline or Standard to Live By

(i) "My only problem is not having something to latch onto like a religion or a belief. I know I have felt better about myself when I have something to believe in, a guideline."

(ii) "To sum up, it said self esteem is a very important part of my life and if I don't address it and look after it, it's going to affect all the other things I want to do. It's going to affect me, my perception of others and their perception of me."

3. Overcoming Procrastination

(i) "I feel kind of in the middle. I know that there are things I could be doing, should be doing, but don't get around to doing and I'm mad at myself for not doing them."

(ii) "I've got myself to the point where I can see if I'm making progress and if I'm not I have a mental whip which says 'Get into shape. Do that page today. Don't slough it off till tomorrow because this is one of your bad habits you don't like about yourself. So, do it!' That's probably the two biggest words the therapy group presented: 'Do it! Don't wait for tomorrow. Do it now!'"
4. Acquiring Techniques

(i) Hopefully you can lend some light in helping me improve my self esteem. I'm not saying I'm looking for a miracle. I'm looking for your interpretation. Hopefully you can offer some techniques as an alternative to help improve my self esteem."

(ii) "I have been able to use some of the techniques your workshop has provided in improving and enhancing my self image. In conjunction with the workshop and the techniques I have moved and advanced in a positive direction from where I was and I have continued to move. It's not just ended after twelve weeks. It's a continuing process of growth."

5. Objectivity

(i) "The course may lend a certain objectivity that I can't maybe see in trying to cope with these situations. So, by having someone else make suggestions, or provide alternatives may help."

(ii) "I think the observations of others were very important. Through the therapy I obsorbed them and used them to improve myself . . . I look at myself as having gained personal experience in being able to look at myself objectively."

6. Discovering Commonality with Others

(i) "I want to participate in order to get the experience of working with other people who are also developing their self esteem and whom I believe have many of the same problems that I'm experiencing. I'm probably not the only person in these dilemmas. I want to see how other people are working through. I want to see how its affecting them too, to see whether I'm making strides in comparison with them."

(ii) "It seemed like everyone had problems at some point in their lives. By seeing that I was not the only one struggling with my self image or what I'm doing with my life made me feel like one of the group rather than an isolated case. They shared with me some of the problems that were hindering their progression and I felt that some of my problems were very small by comparison."

7. Obtaining Information About a Possible Career

(i) "I'm looking at it in terms of a future career as well because I feel that it's an area I'd like to study because I'm fascinated by people."

(ii) "It gave me sort of a preview of what I could see in my own career aspirations. If Randy could do this as part of his career goals, then that is something I would look very favourably on for myself."
8. Sensitivity to Others

(i) "Also, to find a technique where I may become more conscious of others' problems and needs too, before I get to the point where I insult them or hurt their feelings. In other words, to be more sensitive."

(ii) "At the same time as being part of that group I felt an empathy or sympathy with the other people and their problems and how perhaps I could help them... I've learned about helping others maintain their self esteem by being more aware of my own. I can be more aware of how I affect them and their self esteem and I'll be more careful to ensure that I'm not hurting them and their self esteem."

9. Improving Interpersonal Relationships

(i) "Maybe I can also learn how to better relate with some of the people I live with and work with."

(ii) "I'm letting myself be myself and I'm not holding back as much as I was before due to low self esteem. Now I'm more relaxed. Instead of being uptight and worrying about how I come across, I simply let myself be myself and react to people in a positive way. The group gave you more of a strength to try to deal with a stranger because you have the success pattern of being able to relate to a number of other people in the group. By being able to feel more relaxed with a group of people it sort of softens you up for any one individual."

10. Fulfillment of Initially Unstated Goals

(ii) "I think I had a lot of goals fulfilled as a result of the workshop that weren't necessarily there to begin with."

Self Understanding: "I didn't know what self esteem was when I first started. What is this ethereal image? I had no idea. Now I know. If anything, that's what your workshop provided, an image I could relate to, or an understanding of my own self esteem and others' and how it interacts and interferes with others."

Self Acceptance: "I'm also being more realistic with myself. I'm not afraid to know what my limitations are anymore. It's not like, 'my God, I can't do this because I'm a dodo.' If I am a dodo, I will be a very happy one. I'll have other talents I can enjoy and create."

Overcoming Bad Habits: "Physically speaking, too, my desire was to become healthier and stop the smoking atmosphere, drinking, coffee and tea. These were all part of it but reinforced and encouraged and promoted by going to the workshop."
SUBJECT TWO

Change In Self Esteem: "It [the program] really boosted my self esteem because I felt like I had something to offer and what I was contributing was O.K. It really made me feel that it was O.K. to be myself . . . It helped my self esteem because I know I was able to listen . . . It really helped a lot in my relationship, in the way I communicate with T___."

1. Better Communication

(i) "Number one: communication. I'd like to be able to try to realize . . . how to go about different ways of communicating with people."

(ii) "Oh yeah, I've learned how to communicate better. I can't exactly pinpoint it but probably through listening, participating and probing more. I guess just being in that situation of sharing. I talk to you; you talk to me. That was a tool or exercise."

2. Becoming More Understanding and Less Judgmental

(i) "Instead of being selfish by saying to myself, 'you don't relate to the way I think', I would like to learn to feel a little more for other people and perhaps understand them better."

(ii) "Yes, by feeling more secure about myself . . . The more secure I feel about myself the more I don't have to find the negative points about the other person or judge and criticize them. Because you feel good about yourself you want to say, 'hey, you feel good about yourself too. You have good qualities.'"

3. Dealing With Criticism More Effectively

(i) "I want to learn to take good criticism and look at criticism in a positive way, if I feel its just. But immediately now when someone, T__, criticizes or nags me I'll become very defensive. I'd like to learn to recognize that and not take it so hard."

(ii) "Yeah, I have been able to accept criticism in a way . What it [the group] did was when I went home and T__ started criticizing me I didn't get defensive. I started listening to what he was saying and realized he was just giving me possibilities, instead of immediately thinking that what he's saying is against me."

4. Reassurance

(i) "I'd like some direction. I'd like to know that what I've chosen is right for me."

(ii) "Definitely, through the final exercise where everybody said, 'hey, you're O.K.'"
5. Overcoming Fear of Speaking in Groups

(i) "I've always had this terror of speaking in front of groups of people. I'd like to overcome that."

(ii) "I'm still not comfortable. Maybe I'll always be a one to one person but it's not so terrible not being able to speak in front of crowds ... I used to feel that because I'm not talkative in groups I'm going to lose out. I just learned that that's the way I am. You can learn a lot by listening. You don't put your foot in your mouth as much either."

SUBJECT THREE

Change in Self Esteem: "It has changed because I'm more rational. Now I'm feeling a lot more confident that I can control my emotions and my actions so that it doesn't affect my self esteem, so that I'm not such a yoyo in terms of fluctuations ... I think I have more validation to say why I feel better about myself. The self esteem before the workshop was kind of cocky and conceited ... Now, I have self esteem for very personal reasons; for instance, for 'me'. I feel a lot better about 'me', just who I am. It doesn't have to do with my career. I'm O.K."

1. Living Authentically in Relationship to Others

(i) "Having to deal with these people in my everyday world with the facade of being straight is not real, not honest. It's phoney. I don't like to do it. What I'd like from the workshop is to be myself as much as I can."

(ii) "After coming out to my parents which was my objective at the beginning of the workshop, I just felt such an inner peace and I felt really good. I didn't have to hide anymore. There were no more underlying statements like, 'If you only knew ...' In that way I feel really good about myself."

2. Self Acceptance (Sexuality)

(i) "My goals are at least to raise my self esteem related to my sexuality by getting to know other people, just by talking to them."

(ii) "My goal was to facilitate my self esteem in terms of being a gay man. They've done it just by being there because they are all gay men. I could identify and share."

3. Fulfillment of Initially Unstated Goals

Acquisition of Communication Skills: "I have the skills now, better use of communication skills. I have an asset in my personal life. It's a goal I didn't realize I was having but now
I'm prepared to use those skills when I have to."

**Increased Confidence:**  "Now I'm feeling a lot more confident that I can control my emotions and my actions so it doesn't affect my self esteem, so that I'm not such a yoyo in terms of fluctuation. That's something I learned from the other people in the group, that it's important to keep on an even keel."

**Independence:**  "I have more security about who and what I am and what I want to do. Before I felt weird about myself. Now I feel very special about myself and I don't have to prove to anybody else that I'm special rather than weird.

**Increased Enjoyment of Self and Life:**  "I can have fun now, instead of holding back. There's a new world open to me and I can have fun. It brings out that part of me that wants to have fun and be frisky. That's something that really has changed, that I can be so open."

**Life Planning:**  "Basically confidence and help to plan each step. In terms of the group, planning my life, period. . . Support and new goals and new ways to approach immediate and far reaching goals.

**Self Awareness and Self Caring:**  "Keeping myself in my mind. What are the repercussions going to be on my 'feeling self' rather than what's going to happen on other levels. Now there's the 'inner me'. I'm more conscious of how that's going to affect me inside. Now I'm thinking more about my self esteem and how it's going to affect it."

**SUBJECT FOUR**

**Change in Self Esteem:**  "Oh definitely. The self esteem part is, the way I see it, if you love yourself. I'm feeling better about myself. If I didn't, I couldn't pursue the things that I have, so I am definitely feeling better about 'me'."

1. **Obtaining Motivation, Direction, a Career Goal**

(i) "When you have problems you're self esteem lowers. If I can get myself going, work out these problems and get them behind me, my self esteem will automatically come up . . . Getting myself going like I said."

(ii) "I feel a lot better about myself because the main reason I came to this program was to get myself a goal in life and now I've been going stronger and stronger towards nursing. . . I do feel better about myself now because of the goal I have. When I came to the workshop I didn't have any career goal. . . I feel that my career direction is going now."
2. Self Acceptance Through Discovering Commonality With Others

(i) "Realizing that I'm not the only one out there that maybe has, not exactly the same problems, but problems to work out.

(ii) "When you feel more comfortable being gay as I do now, obviously your self esteem is going to boost too. If you feel bad about being gay, how can you feel good about yourself? Now I don't feel guilty anymore. I realize that what I'm doing or feeling is natural. There are hundreds of other people, or millions, like me. I'm not the only one. There's a sense of community now."

3. Self Acceptance Through Comparison and Helpful Interaction

(i) "Hopefully I'll get to know some people, get to know what brings them up or down . . . Maybe I'll be able to work on it with somebody else instead of always working on it by myself. I think that this would be a lot better: to sit around and talk with a few people . . . I can compare myself with the other people in the group about the way they think about themselves."

(ii) "One of my main goals was to meet gay people and to see if gay people are really normal people. I didn't really know how other gay people functioned and lived on a daily basis. Just hearing and talking with them I realized, 'hey, we're like everybody else'. There's only one slight difference. By seeing that I've been able to accept myself so much more being gay and that was one of my main goals in the group and it does help."

4. Fulfillment of Initially Unstated Goals

(ii) "Everything I got from the group was much more than I thought I would get. I can't say there wasn't any goal that wasn't met because the goals I had were not all that high anyway."

Learning How to Trust Others: "Trusting people was a goal. You had to trust people in the group because all of the exercises required it. If you don't really trust people you couldn't have done that.

Acquiring Capacity to Discriminate According to One's Values: "I'm realizing now what I don't like in the gay community. I go out and I see some of these people are really putting on an act and they make all of us look pretty bad. It [the program] clarified that I like people who are themselves . . . I can now pick and choose people I want to be with. I don't necessarily have to be with people I don't like."

Learning the Value of Action: "I guess you have to go out and do things like I have been to see whether its right or not right for you. That's with everything. It doesn't matter what you do just go out and do it. By not doing anything you're not going to get very far. A lot of this stuff resurfaced in the group."
Learning the Value of Genuineness In Self and Others: "When I was in Medicine Hat I wasn’t myself there but I’m realizing, ‘Be yourself!’ That’s what the group did. Everybody in the group was themself. They weren’t putting on no front or anything. That’s what I gained from the group too. Just because you’re gay doesn’t mean you have to change your whole being. You’re still yourself."

SUBJECT FIVE

Change in Self Esteem: "There has been a change in my self esteem. It has definitely increased and it’s become much more natural for me to think well of myself and to be kind to myself than I was before."

1. Emotional Maturity: Independence in Relationship

(i) "I see this workshop as a new thing focused specifically on what’s concerning me at this point, emotional maturity in a gay relationship. What I hope to achieve is a greater emotional maturity . . . When it gets right down to it emotional maturity is being in a relationship and feeling good without feeling scared all the time that you are fucking up. It means that I can be an effective lover, that I won’t be a childlike lover were I want to cling and think that this is my prince charming. I want to be on a level where I can see myself in a really positive viewpoint in a relationship."

(ii) "They [my goals] were met. Definitely. What I consider emotionally immature and what I was having such a dreadfull time dealing with was this life time habit of placing my happiness with other people, making them responsible for my happiness. I knew I couldn’t expect a miracle cure, but I received so much support, affection and confirmation to be 'F____, the individual' that I was able to achieve my goal of 'F____ the individual whose happiness is affected daily by other people but it is dependent on F____'. I felt more worthy in that group than I ever felt before and it’s a lasting worthiness so there was a development of myself in that group. I lie here now and I say I’ve got the maturity that I’ve wanted. I got out of it exactly what I wanted and that set the graph of self esteem much higher."

2. Acquiring New Perspectives and Insights

(i) "I'm really interested in learning how other people feel about things . . . Through group discussion and group dynamics learning new ideas about how to see myself, a new and probably refreshing outlook on improving my self esteem."

(ii) "I was given a lot of challenging ideas on how to deal with various things that I’ve had trouble with; that is, anger and how it affects my self esteem, self flagellation and how it affects my self esteem, self love and how it affects my self esteem."
3. Fulfillment of Initially Unstated Goals

Self Acceptance: Accepting One's Attributes: "I used to get bothered that I was so sincere. I used to think you had to be cool. I was able to accept my trait towards sincerity more fully because in that group my sensitivity was appreciated and talked about in such a positive way. It just helped to throw out another old quirk about men are not supposed to be sensitive."

Self Acceptance: Sexuality: "Learning how not to make being gay an issue makes being gay more natural. I'm much easier with my sexuality. It isn't as difficult to disclose as it used to be. I'm just F__. I'm not 'F____ the gay' or 'F____ the fag'. I'm just 'F____'. I've finally seen being gay as just one aspect of a person's character. Therefore, it's no longer an issue.

Developing a Self Caring Attitude: "My self esteem has definitely increased. . . It has become more natural for me to treat myself more emotionally; that is, not flagellate myself whereas before I started the course it was a concerted effort not to flagellate myself . . . Before, I would always catch myself putting myself down whereas now I am much kinder to myself."

Acquisition of Communication Skills: "On a practical level I got a lot of experience in communicating my ideas . . . I developed a much better style of basic communication with people. I find it much easier to express my thoughts and feelings without being overcome with shyness or without thinking that other people are going to think I'm stupid or talking through my hat."

SUBJECT SIX

Change in Self Esteem: "Yeah, I would say 'yes'. I would think that a greater awareness of having similar problems, similar feelings, has taken away the feeling of isolation. I think it's an increase in self esteem."

1. Recovering from a Broken Relationship

(i) "I'm hoping that it will help to resolve some of the patchy feelings that I have as a result of the last relationship, and that it will snap me back into a plateau of more relaxedness with myself so I can start moving ahead without feeling that every action is an effort which has been the case."

(ii) "It did because I was able to express some of my feelings to the group in some of the sessions. What they gave me back was understanding. Ultimately I was able to rebuild my self esteem on ground that had become shaky. This relationship had really shattered my values but getting the validation back from the group, that I am a valid person and really valuable in a
relationship really helped."

2. Learning How to Increase Capacity For Physical Stress

(i) "Some of my circuits jammed too generally because of my break-up with J . . . There's also that underlying question about the family disease. It's a spook that keeps coming up to rear its ugly head whenever you're performing a new task. You're under a lot of stress. You never really have enough recovery energy. Increasing my self esteem will increase my recovery energy."

(ii) "I was pissed off with myself that I was becoming a worm ball in terms of my energy level. What I've done is the opposite. I've said, 'Fine, you're tired. Relax and enjoy it!' The ultimate effect will increase my energy again."

3. Obtaining Awareness of Resources in the Gay Community

(i) "I think there's more that I could do to accept the resources that are available in the gay community."

(ii) "There's been an awareness of the resources and what they stand for and what they don't stand for. It may not be one hundred percent of what you want but it's there. People are getting something out of the community."

4. Recognition of One's Assets (Support Network)

(i) "I would be much happier in an environment that gave me more of a sense of family, and belonging and long term support. This difficulty in finding this kind of support has an adverse effect on my self esteem."

(ii) "The exercise we did with diagramming out support network: again, it really came through very strong that I have a lot of support network. I was saying, 'why do you feel so deprived? Look at everybody else's. Your's is ten times more. It was very good' ."

5. Self Acceptance, Better Communication, and Less Negativism

(i) "I hope at the end of eight weeks I'll feel much more relaxed with myself, that I'll have learned more about being able to communicate in a healthier fashion, that I'll have less negativism and more energy to accomplish the other things I have to accomplish."

(ii) Self Acceptance: "Yeah, I think that ultimately is the result too. Again, just recognizing through the validation that we went through about relaxing with yourself, be yourself, don't put too many expectations on yourself and don't expect as much from other people."
Communication: "Yeah, that's the result because we have this gamut of experience to talk about and it generalizes to your relationships in the community."

Less Negativism: "Yeah, again it was the result of feedback I got from other people, the validation again about who I am, what I am, what I have to offer. And being less uptight about myself and being less threatened there's less reason to be negative about others. You can be more generous."

**SUBJECT SEVEN**

Change in Self Esteem: "I don't know if it's really changed. I sometimes feel really high in self esteem. I feel really good about myself and then I go right back into a bit of depression. It's hard to say, 'yeah, it's changed'. I think it's stayed the same."

1. **Self Knowledge and Self Expression in Relationship**

   (i) "There are still a number of things I'd like to do. One of them is to get closer to myself so I can understand me, so I could relate better to other people, partially for my job, partially for my self esteem."

   (ii) "I think I became a little clearer on who I was in a small way by experiencing all those things with all those people. I feel that I've improved some. Within the course I think I participated and I communicated some interesting ideas and expressions of me. I guess I improved in that area . . . My friend has been expressing to me for the last month or so how easy I am to talk to, how more considerate I am."

2. **Self Discipline: Improving Health and Exercise Habits**

   (i) "The main thing I want to do is to build my discipline . . . When I talk about discipline I think of my health. You know I smoke too much. I have a bit of a gut. I don't do any exercise. It's not very good for my self esteem."

   (ii) "I am on the right track and I feel strongly that it's going to pick up better and better. Unfortunately, there are setbacks from time to time."

3. **Self Acceptance: Sexuality**

   (i) "I'm not one hundred per cent comfortable with being gay. I didn't realize it until about two or three months ago when the issue came up. It sort of put me on the spot. I react with embarrassment. I'm not happy with that. I'd rather have it out in the open and live with it."

   (ii) "I don't think I've come to full grips with it. I guess I'm still a little shy about it, a little nervous. I guess I
picked up a little from the group, just talking to other people and their situations. I really don't feel as guilty as I used to about being gay. Sometimes there are setbacks but they don't happen that often."

4. Overcoming Interpersonal Anxiety

(i) "I want to let more people into my life. I have a real hard time with that. Even when I go into the bars I can't really deal with it. When I go in there I feel naked. I feel really self conscious."

(ii) "I never really had much opportunity to experience that one lately. I don't really know because I haven't experienced any new people other than those in the group."

SUBJECT EIGHT

Change in Self Esteem: "I think my self esteem has grown or improved and so has my self confidence. I think generally I just feel more positive about myself compared to when I started the group.

1. Self Confidence/Independence

(i) "The key thing I'd like to do is to increase my overall level of self confidence . . . so that it can't be knocked down so easily. If I'm rejected or if I don't conform to someone else's expectations, not to feel so bad about myself."

(ii) "Maybe that's a bit of a change . . . It was much more important to me what other people thought. . . Now I don't care what they think. I made a decision. It was a worthwhile decision and I'm glad I made it. I don't feel as much a need to make everything that's desirable to me, desirable to everyone else.

2. Discovering One's Value as a Useful Person

(i) "I like to help other people a lot and I like to get involved in groups for that."

(ii) "I guess I know I am a useful person and have positive things to offer people but you can sort of get lost and need to hear it again. That's what the group provided."

3. Utilizing Criticism in a Positive Manner

(i) "I want to be in a situation where I don't take negative feedback such that I automatically think that I'm wrong."

(ii) "There's sort of positive criticism and negative criticism and before I tended to give myself negative criticism. . . Now if I get some feedback from somebody about the way I act in a
situation and I don't like it I recognize, 'yeah, I don't like that about myself either, I want to get rid of that,' but I don't approach it like I'm not a good person . . . . I listen to what I don't like about myself and try to provide a positive room for change as opposed to just putting myself down."

4. Global Self Acceptance

(i) "My main goal would be to pick myself up and gain a little more self respect, self acceptance."

(ii) "I guess I just sort of accept myself more. I'm not so concerned with what other people think about me. . . . I know I got a fair bit out of the group in terms of inner strength or a sense of well being. It went in and filled a lot of the cracks where self worth had flown out and gone dry."

5. Self Acceptance: Sexuality

(i) "I think it's really important, too, when dealing with my sexuality to be able to accept myself."

(ii) "Other than the repercussions, I almost have no qualms about telling my parents I'm gay. I feel like, at least I've accepted it. That's the key thing. At least I've accepted it to the point where it's not a trauma anymore. I don't have this great self doubt about it anymore. I think right now if I was put in a group and some straight guy asked me to talk about being gay, I would. I wouldn't feel all shaky and worried about it."

6. Fulfillment of Initially Unstated Goals

Learning from Others' Ideas, Perspectives: "Other people throwing out all those various ideas and stuff opened up different perspectives and exposed me to different situations which I would never have come to so easily or thought of in that particular way."

Self Knowledge: "I think I wanted to find out more about myself and that was definitely fulfilled. We talked quite a lot about situations and emotions. Other people talked about the way they thought and acted and that made me think about the way I thought and acted."
Summary of Interview Results and Description of Primary Themes

All but one of the participants unequivocally indicated a significant increase in self esteem due to their participation in the program. Subject seven reported that his self esteem remained unchanged from the time of the preliminary interview. The seven participants who indicated an increase also reported that initially specified goals and expectations for personal growth or change were fulfilled through their experiences in the program. These participants were able to specify in detail the nature of the changes which had taken place and how they facilitated self esteem. Moreover, a majority described unexpected changes which also enhanced self esteem. Again, subject seven is the exception to this trend. Of the four goals which he initially specified, two remained unfulfilled and the remainder were only partially fulfilled. What follows is a description of six primary types of change as described by the participants in the summary interview.

Participants experienced an increase in **self acceptance**. This trend was revealed in responses which expressed enhanced self appreciation, self respect and self caring behaviours and attitudes. At the same time, participants reported decreases in self hate and self flagellating behaviours and attitudes. Self acceptance was also reflected in participants' improved capacity not to expect too much from themselves. In addition to "global self acceptance", several participants indicated that they achieved a much greater acceptance of their sexuality and other formerly denied or denigrated characteristics.

Enhanced **Self Confidence** was another strong theme. It was
manifested in reports of diminished self doubt concomitant with heightened anticipation of success in managing life's challenges. Self confidence was also shown in an increased independence of thought and action. Participants reported that they relied less on others for approval, for personal happiness or for determining how they should think, feel or act. Consequently, participants noticed an increased capacity to withstand others' criticisms and utilize them in ways which could facilitate self esteem rather than hinder it.

Participants reported marked improvement in their capacities to engage in, strengthen and maintain satisfying interpersonal relationships. According to their responses, this result was obtained through the acquisition and/or enhancement of a variety of skills and attitudes necessary for successful relationships. Several members remarked on the benefits of improved communication skills and the value of a more understanding and sensitive (less critical and judgemental) attitude toward the other. In addition to these changes, participants stated that they acquired a greater capacity to trust others and to express themselves in a genuine and unguarded fashion; that is, to "be themselves" with others. Finally, members described that their experience of isolation or alienation was supplanted by an experience of belonging, identification and community with others.

The acquisition of Self Knowledge surfaced as an important theme. Participants mentioned that they discovered, often through their interaction with others in the group, formerly
obscured qualities, characteristics and personal strengths. The valuable contribution of the others' ideas, suggestions and objectivity was underscored as a means to validate and acquire self knowledge.

The behavioural changes which were reported contained a unifying theme of improved Self Discipline. Unhealthy patterns of behaviour (e.g. smoking, drinking) were discontinued or mitigated and replaced with healthful activities like exercise. Participants also reported increased motivation and a diminished tendency to procrastinate.

A few participants indicated that the program helped them find some Answers to Existential Questions; for example, some obtained direction through the establishment of career objectives while others clarified or altered personal values or belief systems.
RESULTS TWO: FACILITATORS AND HINDRANCES OF SELF ESTEEM

A. THE CATEGORY SYSTEM

Three-hundred-sixty-one facilitating incidents and two-hundred-eighty three hindering incidents were collected from the significant events journal and the preliminary interview to induce a system of eighteen categories describing experiences, events, behaviours and activities which affect self esteem in everyday life. What follows is a presentation of the eighteen categories. Each category is titled and defined first in terms of its facilitating effect. The number of incidents comprising the category and the participation rate (as indicated by a number out of eight and its corresponding percentage conversion) are provided. The category's range is delineated and it is illustrated by providing a sample incident from the collected data. In addition, number, participation rate, definition and illustration are presented for each counterpart hindrance to self esteem.

1. APPRECIATION

Experiencing oneself as desired, wanted, loved or cared for, usually by significant others; receiving evidence of others' love, caring or desire; discovering or having a relationship of reciprocal appreciation. (Number: 21, Participation Rate: 7 or 88%)

Range: Appreciation occurs most often in the context of intimate relationships or relationships of special significance (involving significant others). The effect of the experience on self esteem
increases with the magnitude of the appreciation that the experiencer has for the significant other and with the magnitude of appreciation expressed by the other. In order to qualify as appreciation, the experiencer must be aware of, or receive some evidence of the other's love, caring or desire. The evidence is manifested in a great diversity of forms including verbal expressions, physical affection and tokens or gifts.

Illustration: "I guess the biggest thing was meeting S. because it was one of the first times that I really liked someone and I really thought they were special and I got the feedback that he thought the same of me. It really gave me the feeling that I was desirable. It really built my self esteem."

Hindrance: Experiencing oneself as undesired, unwanted, unloved, or uncared for, especially by significant others; receiving evidence of others' lack or absence of appreciation; experiencing a relationship in which one's appreciation is unrequited.

(Number: 9, Participation Rate: 5 or 63%)

Illustration: "I would sort of feel unloved or undesired. I'd come home from work and I would want someone to want to do something with me. I'd phone around and no one's home and I'd think no one wants to be with me."

2. AFFILIATION:

Experiencing a mutual trust, understanding or knowledge of another person; the enjoyment of being with another; feeling physically and/or emotionally close to another; a mutually satisfying exchange of affection, trust and understanding.

(Number: 25, Participation Rate: 8 or 100%)

Range: Affiliation is an experience which, like appreciation, occurs only in the context of a relationship. However, reciprocity is much more integral to the definition of affiliation than that of appreciation. The incidents in this
category take many forms but all of them express an awareness of one's bonds or "connectedness" with other human beings. Thus, incidents range from statements describing the enjoyment of sharing fun activities with a companion to the perhaps more intense experiencing of mutual understanding and trust in a meaningful conversation with a close friend.

_Illustration:_ "I have this one friend back in C. His name is M. We can talk just about everything. We hadn't seen each other for two years and this year we went out for a couple of drinks. It was just like yesterday. It felt really good to be with probably the closest person in my life."

_Hindrance:_ Experiencing distrust, misunderstanding and distance from others; lacking or missing the company of others; loneliness: not having anyone to be with or to do things with. (Number: 20, Participation Rate: 8 or 100%)

_Illustration:_ "This girl I was really close to has moved away. She doesn't have a telephone so I sort of miss that. She really had a good sense of humour. Our personalities really clicked. There's really nobody now who provides that sense of humour."

3. **RECOGNITION:**

Receiving compliments, positive acknowledgements and praise from others. (Number: 34, Participation Rate: 8 or 100%)

_Range:_ Incidents in this category include descriptions of compliments from others and acknowledgements like awards and positive evaluations. Recognition differs from appreciation in that the other expresses a positive evaluation of the experiencer's specific qualities, traits attributes, performances or achievements while appreciation expresses a feeling of attraction, desire or love toward the whole person. In other words, appreciation is much more similar to unconditional
positive regard while recognition is contingent upon the experiencer's traits or capacity to manifest particular merits.

Illustration: "I received a compliment from a supervisor at work. He told me to keep up the good work that I've been doing in the department."

Hindrance: Receiving criticism, ridicule, condemnation or punishment from others; being overlooked or discounted. (Number: 8, Participation Rate: 8 or 100%)

Illustration: "I got negative reactions to some of the things I do at work; for example, if I introduce something new at work, I can hear people grumbling in the background. It makes me feel a little bad."

4. ACCEPTANCE:

Receiving understanding and acceptance, support or assistance from others. (Number: 25, Participation Rate: 7 or 88%)

Range: Incidents depict experiences in which the experiencer becomes aware that the other understands and accepts his key characteristics. The potency of this factor increases with the other's significance and with the significance of the characteristic to the experiencer. Acceptance differs from recognition in that the approval it offers does not have a specifically complimentary nature. It differs from appreciation in that it consists primarily of the other's attitude rather than his expression of feeling. It's key feature is that the experiencer is aware that the other's attitude toward him is one of "I understand you and I think you're O.K." Another, less central, feature consists of receiving the kind of support or assistance from others that would indicate their understanding and approval. Incidents range from the report of the other's acceptance of one's homosexuality to the description of the
support offered by a friend in times of need.

Illustration:  "I wrote to one of my closest friends to tell him I was gay. He phoned me today from Toronto and we talked for forty-five minutes. He accepts my homosexuality. He offered me support and a place to stay in Toronto if things got too heated here in Vancouver."

Hindrance:  Experiencing rejection, a lack of understanding, a lack of support or assistance. (Number: 13, Participation Rate: 6 or 75%).

Illustration:  "My mom said that my uncles and aunts would not understand my homosexuality. She said that she didn't understand it. She said that she may never understand it."

5. HONESTY:

Being honest or genuine with others and oneself ("being oneself"); the act of self disclosure or sharing. (Number: 28, Participation Rate: 6 or 75%)

Range:  The key feature in this category is experiencing oneself as genuine in relationship to others. This characteristic manifests itself in descriptions of a capacity to be oneself with others; that is, a willingness to freely express one's thoughts and feelings. Other incidents described the actual experience of sharing information about oneself to others; for example, disclosing one's gay identity.

Illustration:  "Coming out was very good for my self esteem. Telling my sister and my straight friends that I really cared about. I look back on it and feel good. It's an ongoing positive contribution to my self esteem."

Hindrance:  Lying, being phoney, not being oneself, or covering up; holding back or withholding meaningful information about oneself. (Number: 16, Participation Rate: 6 or 75%)

Illustration:  "Other times I can't be myself. I guess at work, for example. I get a lot of questions about family, my social
life. I feel very awkward because I don't like to lie."

6. **SELF ACCEPTANCE:**

Acknowledging or approving of oneself or one's attributes, traits or characteristics; knowing one's limitations and not expecting too much of oneself. (Number: 12, Participation Rate: 6 or 75%)

**Range:** Self acceptance differs from acceptance in that the attitude of approval originates from oneself rather than from an external source. Participants described the acceptance of a range of characteristics including homosexuality, sensitivity, attractiveness and naivety. This category also includes an attitude of acceptance toward one's own limitations, downfalls and shortcomings.

**Illustration:** "I slowly accepted being gay. I came to terms with myself, almost like releasing a burden, throwing it away. I felt really positive about myself."

**Hindrance:** Disapproval of one's own characteristics, traits; failing to meet the expectations one sets for oneself. (Number: 16, Participation Rate: 8 or 100%)

**Illustration:** "I looked into some store window and saw my reflection. I remind myself of a Neanderthal sometimes. At least my profile does look 'apish' at times."

7. **SELF SUPPORT:**

Encouraging or supporting oneself through self praise or positive self-talk. (Number: 3, Participation Rate: 2 or 25%)

**Range:** Incidents in this category differ from those in self acceptance in that they describe an experience of self talk or subvocal verbalizations. In addition, the key feature of this category is that these self statements consist of compliments, praise, and encouragement rather than approval.
Illustration: "I facilitate my own self esteem by letting myself know I'm doing a good job. I say 'Hey, you're doing fine. Don't let anybody get you down'."

Hindrance: Self talk or an attitude toward oneself which expresses self hatred, self criticism, self persecution or self punishment. (Number: 12, Participation Rate: 5 or 63%)

Illustration: "I'm looking at my personal self now finally at the old age of 22 and I'm saying, 'look at yourself, you're a mess'."

8. FORGIVENESS:
Accepting or forgiving others; being non-judgemental. (Number: 2, Participation Rate: 2 or 25%)

Range: The act or attitude of accepting or forgiving others was reported to facilitate self esteem. The incidents in this category differed primarily in terms of who was reported to be the recipient of forgiveness (e.g. a friend, significant other or other people in general).

Illustration: "When I look at my parents with compassion rather than, 'how could you do this?'"

Hindrance: Being judgemental, punitive or critical of others. (Number: 2, Participation Rate: 2 or 25%)

Illustration: "When I make judgements about other people I feel bad about myself."

9. CONTRIBUTING:
Supporting, caring for or helping other people; knowing or discovering that you are useful, that you have a lot to offer, that you can contribute to the welfare of others. (Number: 18, Participation Rate: 7 or 88%)

Range: This category's key feature consists of one's awareness
of, or experience of, being useful or capable of making a contribution. Incidents include descriptions of the experiencer obtaining evidence of his usefulness, the experiencer's helpful acts or activities and his discoveries of how much he has to offer.

Illustration: "What really makes me feel good is when I do things that help other people, especially when they don't know that it's me. I just feel good about that."

Hindrance: Not helping; not contributing to others' welfare; not knowing how to help or support others; experiencing oneself as useless to others. (Number: 4, Participation Rate: 3 or 38%)

Illustration: "I didn't say much at the meeting because I feel so inexperienced, like a baby again, just learning to walk. I feel so helpless to myself and to the group."

10. PERFORMANCE:

Doing things well or correctly; experiencing satisfaction or pride from a particular action, activity or behaviour. (Number: 34, Participation Rate: 7 or 88%)

Range: In order to qualify for this category the incident must contain two key elements. It must describe an activity, task, performance or behaviour executed by the experiencer. Secondly, these actions must be described in a positive fashion; for example an adjective indicating effectiveness, satisfaction or approval must be attached to the performance. Many of the incidents described the experiencer's pride in response to his performance. Many different types of activities were described; for instance, work (doing well on the job), physical and leisure activities (e.g. sports, hobbies, play), social interaction (doing the right thing in relationship to others) and decision
making. A few incidents evaluated the activity in terms of whether it was "right" or "wrong" on the basis of the experiencer's moral or ethical standards. Incidents depicting a positive ethical evaluation facilitated self esteem and those which concluded a negative evaluation hindered self esteem.

Illustration: "I'm involved in a number of physical things and performing them well gives me satisfaction."

Hindrance: Doing things poorly or incorrectly; doing something that causes guilt or shame. (Number: 46, Participation Rate: 8 or 100%)

Illustration: "I had a good looking 19 year old student in for his first vocal lesson: much touching and close physical contact during the breathing exercises. I was becoming aroused and I'm not happy with myself. I can't control my sexual thoughts and feelings while teaching him."

11. CONFIDENCE:
Knowing how or being able to perform a skill, task or behaviour; approaching a task, challenge or performance anticipating success or with an attitude of self assurance; looking to the future with hope, anticipating success. (Number: 19, Participation Rate: 6 or 75%)

Range: Confidence differs from performance in that it's key feature expresses the knowledge or ability to do something rather than the actual "doing" itself. It is the experiencer's knowledge how to do something, or his self assurance about his own capacities, which enables him to approach a task or the future anticipating success. Confidence also differs from performance in that it depicts an optimistic attitude toward a prospective activity rather than describing the activity itself.
However, one's confidence in relation to a particular activity can be based on prior success in performing that activity. Incidents depicted confidence about respondents' diverse work and leisure activities, their relationships with others and their personal "life challenges". In addition, other incidents reflected the respondent's optimism for the future.

Illustration: "1985 will be filled with excitement, love and new and wonderful things. I feel as if I'm going to be doing things I never dreamt of doing this year. I really feel good about myself and what I can do. All the years of working so hard are really paying off."

Hindrance: Not knowing how to do something or being unable to perform a skill, task or behaviour; experiencing self doubt or self consciousness; anticipating failure (or a fear of failure).

Illustration: "I feel that my co-ordination is very low. Someone will talk me into playing football and I'll have this fear the whole time and I'll try to make some excuse not to go to the game. Or when I get out in the field I have this total lack of confidence that if the ball comes, I'm not going to be able to catch it and everyone's going to be looking at me."

12. ACCOMPLISHMENT:

Reaching a goal; obtaining a desired status, position, result, object or reward either through one's own efforts or through fortuitous circumstances which work in one's favour. (Number: 57, Participation Rate: 8 or 100 %)

Range: Accomplishment differs from performance in that it's key feature emphasizes results, the final goal or a successful end as opposed to the activities which may have led up to that desired endpoint. In fact, one can derive an increase in self esteem from performing the activities in pursuit of an accomplishment.
(the means) and, then, suffer a decrease in self esteem when the end is not obtained. A varied array of accomplishments was depicted; for example, landing a job, getting a promotion, finishing school, passing exams, completing a difficult, challenging or arduous task, resolving personal and interpersonal problems.

Illustration: "When I really like myself is when I'm achieving my goals, like when I finished college in April I felt the best I ever felt in my life."

Hindrance: Not reaching a goal; not obtaining a desired status, position, result, object or reward through either personal failure or unfavourable external conditions. (Number: 19, Participation Rate: 5 or 63%)

Illustration: "I got a letter from the restaurant saying, 'thanks but the job has been filled'."

13. SENSE OF PROGRESS:

Seeing achievements from a retrospective view; becoming aware of personal progress over time; seeing movement in a positive direction toward some desired goal or state. (Number: 10, Participation Rate: 4 or 50%)

Range: Sense of progress differs from accomplishment in that its key feature consists of the experiencer's assessment, awareness or discovery of whether or not he has accomplished enough or progressed enough. In this category it is not the accomplishment which facilitates self esteem but, rather, it is the individual's awareness or discovery from a retrospective view that he has accomplished a lot or made significant progress. Participants reported progress in their psychological and/or emotional well being, their capacities to be effective in relationships and
other skills involving work, leisure and recreation.

**Illustration:** "I'm realizing how far I've come emotionally, mentally and intellectually in the past two years. I look at the way I lived two years ago and I can't believe it in terms of the way I live right now and that's very encouraging. That makes me feel very good."

**Hindrance:** Seeing an absence of progress from a retrospective view; seeing little or no movement toward self-improvement or desired goals (especially due to procrastination). (Number: 23, Participation Rate: 7 or 88%)

**Illustration:** "In my emotional maturity I am behind. My adolescence was a period of stagnation and I'm still at a point where I'm unsatisfied with my emotional development."

14. **OVERCOMING:**

Overcoming a personal deficit, bad habit or problem. (Number: 14, Participation Rate: 5 or 63%)

**Range:** Incidents in this category are special cases of accomplishments in that the goal is obtained specifically by overcoming a personal deficit or problem. The category has two key features: the incident must describe a personal deficit or problem and it must indicate that the experiencer has overcome them (or is in the process of overcoming). Participants described overcoming a variety of problems or self-destructive habits including promiscuity, drinking and smoking. Other incidents described overcoming fears and personal insecurities.

**Illustration:** "I have overcome my fear about my drinking habits. I haven't had any booze or coffee for one week and two days."

**Hindrance:** Being unable to overcome a personal deficit, bad habit or problem. (Number: 5, Participation Rate: 3 or 38%)

**Illustration:** "I felt a sense of inadequacy when I was unable to overcome my anxiety and phoned my doctor for help."
15. **SELF CARE:**

Performing healthy routines, disciplines or self care habits; taking care of oneself; performing an action that fulfills one's needs, protects or enhances oneself. (Number: 31, Participation Rate: 6 or 75%)

**Range:** Self care's key feature consists of actions, activities or behaviours which enhance or nurture one's physical and emotional self. In this way it is distinguished from self support which consists of nurturing self talk (thoughts) and from self acceptance which is an attitude of approval toward oneself. Incidents included healthy routines or habits (e.g. regular exercise and relaxation, taking vitamins), performing domestic chores on a regular basis, establishing a more productive or positive lifestyle by becoming better organized or more disciplined and taking actions which fulfill one's needs (e.g. being assertive with others).

**Illustration:** "Getting my hair cut, getting a tooth ache taken care of, cleaning my nails, keeping my apartment clean, keeping my socks washed, keeping good food in the fridge, going for walks . . . they all make me feel better about myself."

**Hindrance:** Engaging in unhealthy routines, bad habits or self defeating behaviour; lack of self discipline; not taking care of oneself. (Number: 18, Participation Rate: 5 or 68%)

**Illustration:** "I don't like my drinking and I don't like what happens when I get drunk. I'm not a very nice person. I'd rather not do that because it's not helping me any way at all."

16. **BELONGING:**

Discovering similarities with others; experiencing oneself as part of a pair, group, community; experiencing oneself as not
alone, as normal or as fitting in. (Number: 9, Participation Rate: 6 or 75%)  

Range: The incidents within this category were distinct making it one of the more circumscribed categories. It's key feature is the experiencer's discovery of important similarities or commonalities with others. This identification most often results in a change of self perception from seeing oneself as alone or outside the range of normalcy to seeing oneself as normal and as part of a group or community. Incidents depicted the discovery of similarities in sexual orientation, problems and feelings (e.g. feeling anxious and lonely).  

Illustration: "I found that talking to other gay people who have similar problems is a big help. I feel like, 'wow! I'm not the only one in the world who has these kind of problems'. I guess you get this feeling like you're not alone. It doesn't solve your problem but on the other hand it gives you a feeling of reassurance."  

Hindrance: Experiencing oneself as an outsider, alone, different or set apart from the rest; experiencing oneself as marginal, abnormal. (Number: 11, Participation Rate: 5 or 68%)  

Illustration: "I find that that's hindering my esteem when I feel like I'm not normal. I sort of feel alone in that maybe I should be thinking the way they think."

17. SOCIAL COMPARISON:  
Experiencing oneself as superior by comparing oneself to others on some standard of merit or value. (Number: 8, Participation Rate: 3 or 38%)  

Range: The defining feature consists of an assessment or awareness of oneself as superior to others. The incidents varied in terms of what standard of merit or value was used to make the
comparison. These standards included the ability to perform, work effectively, get the job done. Others described a comparison of life situations, maturity or psychological adjustment. Lastly, a few incidents consisted of a global comparison where the standard was not specified.

Illustration: "I felt fantastic because the first year transfers are such duds while I'm able to sail through the classroom practicum."

Hindrance: Experiencing oneself as inferior by comparing oneself to others on some standard of merit or value." (Number: 5, Participation Rate: 4 or 50%)

Illustration: "I felt inadequate when I compared myself to someone very attractive."

18. INDEPENDENCE:

Acquiring or having independence; obtaining control over one's life or having security. (Number: 11, Participation Rate: 4 or 50%)

Range: This category consists of two related key features: having security and the experience, or acquisition, of control over one's life. In some cases security in the form of a good job or a steady income implied that financial security provided more freedom or greater control over decisions affecting one's life. Other incidents focused on the experiencer's capacity to make his own decisions or to be free from the influence of external agents or those factors over which one has no control (e.g. disease).

Illustration: "Moving here to Vancouver I have greater control over myself. I make my own decisions. No one makes them for me. It makes me feel better about myself."

Hindrance: Experiencing dependence; a lack of, or inability to
control one's life; experiencing insecurity. (Number: 8, Participation Rate: 5 or 63%)

Illustration: "I was down and out and not able to pay the rent. It made me feel inadequate for not being able to support myself."
B. THE CATEGORY SYSTEM AND THE PROGRAM

Three-hundred-seven incidents were collected which described facilitating experiences, events and activities occurring within (or as a result of) the program. These incidents were classified according to the category system outlined in the previous section. What follows is a presentation of how each facilitating factor was manifested in the program. Number of incidents and the participation rate are provided as well as an illustration. The incidents comprising the categories were studied to determine how each facilitating factor was evidenced in the program. For the most part, participants were able to specify specific facilitating experiences, events and activities within each category. Thus, this information was utilized to formulate a brief description of the means whereby each factor facilitated self esteem in the program. It offers an answer to the question: "How does the program work?" or "What happened to make it work?"

It should be noted that eleven hindering incidents were collected from three participants. More than half of these were obtained from one individual who described various ways in which he felt different from the other participants in the group. Testimony to the negligible impact of this small number of hindering experiences is provided by the fact that the three participants who submitted them all reported a definite increase in self esteem.

APPRECIATION

Appreciation was experienced throughout the program in the context of one to one interactions. Participants reported that
the other's concern and caring was evidenced by a willingness to really listen, empathy and compassion. Other participants reported that the exchange of gifts (see THE GIFT, Appendix A, page 160) in the last session showed that the others wanted them to be there and that their presence in the group was appreciated. The physical affection expressed in FACE PAINTING (see Appendix A, page 156) was mentioned as a sign of the other's appreciation. Finally, the exchange of compliments in the STROKING exercise (see Appendix A, page 159) was described as revealing others' appreciation. (Number: 12, Participation Rate: 7 or 88%)

Illustration: "The night where we gave a lot of gifts. That was a real boost in terms of self esteem. I really felt like the group wanted me to be there, that I was appreciated."

2. AFFILIATION:

According to the data, the key features of affiliation were experienced in a number of program activities. Respondents reported that FACE PAINTING (see Appendix A, page 156) allowed a mutually satisfying expression of affection and enabled participants to feel close to one another. This activity also engendered a trust by virtue of its physical closeness and risk taking component. Communication skills were depicted as fostering trust by facilitating reciprocal sharing of thoughts, feelings and personal information. TRUST GAMES (See Appendix A, Page 147) engaged participants in a physical closeness which was described as opening up the channels of communication and encouraging trust. Exercises like the TRUST WALK (See Appendix A, page 137) which required participants to take risks by becoming physically dependent fostered trust. Respondents
indicated that the several opportunities for one to one interactions made it easier to share personal information and get to know the other members. The SUPPORT NETWORK analysis (See Appendix A, page 144) was mentioned as being helpful in analyzing patterns of affiliation in everyday life. (Number: 20, Participation Rate: 8 or 100%)

Illustration: "I really enjoyed the face painting. After I did it I felt very close to the person I did it with, much closer than I would have ever felt. There was that basic trust in having someone run their fingers over your face and talk to you in a very soothing voice. I will always feel very warm toward that person and always think of him as a friend. I felt very good about that."

3. RECOGNITION

The validation received by individual participants from other group members in one to one interactions and in group activities was reported to be a significant self esteem facilitator. Several incidents described how praise, compliments and acknowledgements received in the program enabled participants to discover or reaffirm a host of talents, strengths, attributes, capacities and skills. The potency of the recognition was augmented by virute of the consensual validation offered in the group; that is, the effect was strengthened by the combined recognition of several or all of the participants. In some cases an initial ambivalence about one's strengths and attributes was supplanted by a certainty obtained when other participants acknowledged and confirmed those same strengths and attributes. This reinforcement from others also counteracted a tendency toward discounting or minimizing personal strengths and attributes. The STROKING exercise (see Appendix A, page 159) and
the GIFT (see Appendix A, page 160) were described to be particularly potent sources of recognition. Several incidents noted that the activity's instructions to avoid discounting others' compliments enhanced the effect of received recognition. (Number: 19, Participation Rate: 8 or 100%)

Illustration: "When you have a whole lot of people almost simultaneously telling you the same thing, that you're basically the kind person you thought you were, a good person, it's hard not to believe it. That validation reinforced my feelings in a very positive and powerful way."

4. ACCEPTANCE:

Several participants described the positive effects of receiving other members' acceptance, understanding and assistance. The receipt of constructive criticism and helpful suggestions from other members surfaced as a strong theme in the incidents of this category. Members depicted specific instances of receiving acceptance or help in working out a problem or personal issue. The comfortable surrounding of the group and it's climate of "safety" were identified as fostering an attitude of acceptance. In addition, participants noted that the diversity of members' backgrounds and personalities created the opportunity to experience acceptance from a variety of different individuals thereby strengthening the overall effect. This same diversity enhanced the effect of the obtained assistance because it allowed for the acquisition of a variety of unique approaches or perspectives on personal problems or issues. It was noted that the facilitator's instructions assured that every member worked with every other member thereby maximizing the potential benefits of diversity. (Number: 17, Participation Rate: 7 or 88%)
Illustration: "I was able to express some of my feelings to the group. What they gave me back was understanding and support. Ultimately, I was able to rebuild my self esteem on ground that had become shaky."

5. HONESTY

Several incidents described the self disclosure of personal information, thoughts and feelings to other participants. They emphasized the benefits derived from disclosing one's weaknesses and potentially embarrassing information. The positive, accepting responses of other members facilitated self disclosure both within the group and in everyday life. Incidents revealed that members' capacities to be disclosing and genuine with each other generalized to interpersonal relations outside the group. Members reported that they were encouraged to be genuine in response to other members' self disclosures and sincerity of expression which established a group norm to "be yourself".

Illustration: "When I was in M. I wasn't myself but I'm realizing: "Be yourself!" That's what the group did. Everybody in the group was themself. They weren't putting on a front or anything. Just because you're gay doesn't mean you have to change your whole image of yourself. That's what I gained from the group."

6. SELF ACCEPTANCE

Participants reported that the group enabled them to accept a variety of positive and negative characteristics, physical traits and key identity elements like sexual orientation. They also noted an increased measure of patience in regard to themselves and a diminished tendency to expect too much of themselves. Incidents indicated that these changes resulted from activities which afforded the opportunity for self examination while, at the same time, fostering a non-judgemental attitude of
acceptance toward oneself. Members described discovering or examining personal traits from a perspective which discouraged criticism and encouraged acceptance. (Number: 31, Participation Rate: 8 or 100%)

Illustration: "I accepted myself by looking at myself and just accepting what I saw. Don't argue with it, run it down, dispute it or disclaim it, as you suggested. Here I am. This is the way I am. That acceptance was a major step."

7. **SELF SUPPORT**

Participants described a transition from negative self talk characterized by self criticism and self denigration to positive self talk characterized by self praise and self encouragement. They suggested that messages to replace self criticism with positive thinking obtained in exercises like SELF TALK AND FEELING O.K. (see Appendix A, page 148) were responsible for this change. Others conceived the program as a tool to organize one's thoughts in a positive, creative and productive fashion; for example, in keeping track of positive and negative reactions on a daily basis participants could also monitor their self talk and intervene to replace negative self talk with positive self talk. (Number: 21, Participation Rate: 6 or 75%)

Illustration: "It's helped me to look within myself and to recognize my good points and to say 'You're not such a bad fellow after all. You do have some good points'."

8. **FORGIVENESS**

Instances depicted participants accepting or forgiving other participants and their perceived weaknesses. According to participant reports, these experiences were fostered by the guidelines for interpersonal communication within the group; for
example, incidents described the use of listening skills, probing for further information and feelings and constructive suggestions as opposed to critical judgements. (Number: 7, Participation Rate: 4 or 50%)

Illustration: "After awhile instead of being critical right away and snubbing him I learned to accept him more and probe a bit more and try to get at what he feels. It made me feel good about myself that I allowed that to happen. Things like that helped my self esteem."

9. CONTRIBUTING

The program was described as offering a context in which one could contribute to the welfare of the group or individual members. One to one interactions were particularly conducive to this experience, especially those in which the participants were involved in a mutual effort to work on personal issues or problems. These experiences enabled participants to perceive themselves as worthwhile and useful because they were able to help other members through suggestions, encouragement, empathy, advice or information. The experience was reinforced by other members' acknowledgements of one's contribution. (Number: 9, Participation Rate: 5 or 63%)

Illustration: "It's nice to be in an environment where everybody puts their little piece into something. I was a part, a piece of the puzzle. It really boosted my self esteem because I felt I had something to offer and that what I was contributing was O.K."

10. PERFORMANCE:

The program manifests the performance factor in two ways. Firstly, participants obtained satisfaction and pride by executing the program's tasks and activities in an effective or efficient fashion. They described the performance of a variety
of communication skills and took satisfaction in their enhanced capacities for listening to and perceiving others in the group. In addition, participants described the satisfaction obtained when they used the program's self image enhancing techniques (e.g. accentuating positive characteristics and transforming self-talk). Moreover, the acquisition of these skills, a greater self awareness and a positive attitude toward self and others combined to enhance a variety of performances in everyday life; for example, the use of communication skills in the program facilitated interactions with others outside the group. (Number: 38, Participation Rate: 8 or 100%)

Illustration: "After each course I practised the skill during the week and I was refreshed every Tuesday. When I came back I'd start practising it again with the people in the group. The practise was sensational. It was a very positive feeling for me."

11. CONFIDENCE

Participants reported that the program facilitated self confidence by equipping them with tools, techniques and strategies which better prepared them to deal with life's tasks and challenges. Some of the strategies were obtained in the form of advice from other members and some of them were incorporated into the program (see DOING THINGS AND FEELING O.K., Appendix A, page 152). What was learned in the program enhanced participants' self confidence by contributing to their knowledge of how to deal with a particular life situation (e.g. how to deal with anger: see ANGER, Appendix A, page 155). An accurate awareness of strengths, capacities and attributes (see SHOW YOUR STRENGTHS, Appendix A, page 146) further equipped participants to
deal with the world in an effective fashion and, consequently, heightened their expectations for success. Finally, the group provided the opportunity for members to obtain a history of success in utilizing some of the newly acquired strategies; for example, some members indicated an increase in self confidence regarding interpersonal interactions as a result of their satisfying and successful interactions with a variety of individuals in the group. (Number: 29, Participation Rate: 8 or 100%)

Illustration: "It [the program] gave you a better sense of being able to deal with someone else even outside of the group because you have this experience in dealing with so many other people with a wide scattering of personalities and life problems. It gave you more of a strength to deal with a stranger or someone you don't know very well because you have the success pattern of being able to relate with a number of other people.

12. ACCOMPLISHMENT

Accomplishment was obtained in the context of the program when participants reached the goals they had established for themselves at the beginning of the program. Participants described obtaining such desired ends as emotional maturity, a goal or direction in life, and a greater self understanding and awareness. (Number 14, Participation Rate: 5 or 63%)

Illustration: "I got out of it exactly what I wanted and that sent the graph of self esteem much higher. I realized I'm a pretty healthy person emotionally because I worked so hard to get where I am."

13. SENSE OF PROGRESS

The program enabled participants to obtain a sense of progress by providing the opportunity to take stock of past achievements. The ACHIEVEMENT exercise (see Appendix A, page 151)
was highlighted as fostering a heightened awareness of one's accomplishments. Other members indicated that their significant events journal enabled them to recognize gains in self esteem over the course of the program. (Number: 14, Participation Rate: 5 or 63%)

Illustration: "Every so often you stop to take stock of what you've done, how far you've come. I made these realizations because the group heightened my awareness of how good I'm doing. It's kind of like the group gave me an opportunity to realize how hard I'm working and how well I'm doing. It's an awareness of my achievements."

14. OVERCOMING

The program helped members overcome self defeating behaviours by giving them the opportunity to identify and examine them in exercises like SELF ESTEEM ANALYSIS (see Appendix A, page 138). In discovering their negative impact on self esteem participants noted that they were given an incentive to change these behaviours. They were assisted by the encouragement and support of other participants. Moreover, others offered suggestions on how to overcome bad habits and functioned as models by giving personal accounts of how they overcame self destructive or self defeating behaviours like excessive drinking or procrastination. (Number: 6, Participation Rate: 5 or 63%)

Illustration: "I learned a lot from everybody else. It's starting to make me feel a little better about myself to think of things now that I used to pass off and ignore a few months ago. I was the biggest procrastinator. Now I'm not so much anymore. That helps my self esteem."

15. SELF CARE

Participants reported that the program afforded them the opportunity to analyze their behaviour patterns and discover the
beneficial effects of healthy routines and activities on self esteem as well as the harmful influences of self destructive habits. These realizations surfaced in activities like SELF ESTEEM ANALYSIS (See Appendix A, page 138) and in the significant events journal. A few members indicated that they learned about the advantages of various forms of self care through the personal accounts and examples of other members. Participants reported that they began to implement patterns of self care in their everyday lives on the basis of the instructive awareness they obtained from the program. Examples and suggestions from other participants facilitated this implementation. (Number: 12, Participation Rate: 3 or 38%)

Illustration: "Taking stock, setting a timetable, forming realistic goals. I think that's one part of the therapy that I really have bitten into and made a part of my life. Keeping a diary is good, getting my birthdays and anniversaries on a calendar so I don't forget them. Things like that. I know if I don't do them my self esteem will drop."

16. BELONGING

Shared sexual orientation was reported more often by more participants to be the key factor which fostered the experience of belonging in the group. They noted that because they shared this pivotal identity element with the rest of the group they felt that they were "normal", that they were accepted and that they could genuinely participate as part of the group. Participants often contrasted the group experience with situations in which they were the only homosexual in a group. These circumstances were associated with a feeling of isolation, a fear of rejection and a self perception as abnormal or
anomalous. A few participants reported that their involvement in the group eliminated their isolation, reduced their fear of rejection and transformed their self perception from "abnormal" to "normal". In addition to sexual orientation, many participants reported discovering similarities of thoughts, feelings and personal difficulties with other participants. Again, these discoveries ameliorated the negative effect of being abnormal or being the "only one with a strange problem." A few incidents indicated that some participants' overall sense of belonging was heightened by the BELONGING GUIDED FANTASY (see Appendix A, page 143) and by the social support analysis in SUPPORT NETWORKS (see Appendix A, page 144). In both activities, individuals either experienced or became aware of a flourishing sense of belonging maintained by their present involvement with other people and other social contexts. (Number: 26, Participation Rate: 8 or 100%)

Illustration: "I found that the things that are bothering them are the things that are bothering me and that it's normal to think that way, that it's not only myself that feels this way but it's everybody else. It's like I'm normal. I'm not so different from anyone else. That helped my self esteem."

17. SOCIAL COMPARISON

Throughout the program there were a multitude of opportunities for participants to compare themselves to other participants on the basis of some standard or dimension of experience. Several participants described themselves as superior to (or more fortunate than) others on the basis of discovering that their problems, challenges or deficits were less severe than those of others. A few participants recounted
discovering a greater awareness, capability, maturity or mastery of life's challenges relative to other participants. (Number: 8, Participation Rate: 6 or 75%)

Illustration: "I was saying to myself, 'why do you feel so deprived? Look at everybody else's diagram. Your social support network is ten times greater'. That was very good for my self esteem."

18. INDEPENDENCE

Participants reported that the program gave them the opportunity and encouraged them to make their own decisions regarding personal goals, values and life directions. They noted that decisions made in the context of the program originated from personal wants and values as opposed to the dictates or influences of external forces. Some mentioned that they began to see themselves as capable of controlling their own lives because the program engendered a fuller awareness of themselves, their strengths and their capacities. One participant, for example, discovered that it was possible for him to grow and develop as a single individual without the support of a lover. (Number: 5, Participation Rate: 4 or 50%)

Illustration: "Through the group my self esteem developed to a much greater extent so that I could see that F. the individual was really blossoming without a lover. I was surpassing who I had ever been and I was doing it single. I was doing it on my own. It just means that my growth doesn't depend on a long term relationship because I grew so much more through that group as a single man."
RESULTS THREE: RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF THE CATEGORY SYSTEM

Reliability

Once the categories were established their reliability was tested by obtaining the co-operation of a fellow graduate student who was given the task of classifying a representative sample of incidents according to the given category system. Two facilitating and two hindering incidents were selected from each category so that the sample was comprised of a total of seventy-two incidents. (For a further elaboration of this procedure, see Data Analysis, page 47.) The rater correctly sorted all seventy-two incidents thereby obtaining one hundred per cent agreement with the category system. This result is a strong indication of the reliability of the category system. The fact that an objective observer could easily place the incidents in the category system suggests that it is an obvious one and that factors like researcher's subjectivity, arbitrariness and chance have been effectively minimized.

Complementary Facilitating and Hindering Effects

It is logical to assume that if a particular variety of experience or behaviour facilitates self esteem, then the absence of, the opposite of, or the counterpart to that experience or behaviour will hinder self esteem. If a counterpart hindering experience cannot be induced from the data or, if the counterpart experience is found to be neutral or even facilitating, then the validity of the experience's effect on self esteem is called into question. In this study a system of
eighteen facilitating categories of experience and/or behaviour were induced from the data. The validity of these categories was strongly indicated by the discovery of counterpart hindering experiences or behaviours for each of the eighteen categories.

**Participation Rate**

As described in Data Analysis (see page 50), participation rate is another indication of the category's validity. Of the eighteen categories induced from the first major group of incidents, ten (affiliation, recognition, acceptance, honesty, self acceptance, contributing, performance, confidence, accomplishment and sense of progress) obtained a participation rate of 100 per cent; that is, all eight participants produced at least one facilitating or hindering incident in each of these ten categories. In seven of the remaining eight categories between five and seven participants were represented; that is, these categories manifested participation rates between 63 and 88 per cent. These categories and the corresponding number of participants in each are as follows: appreciation (7), self care (7), independence (7), belonging (6), overcoming (6), self support (5), social comparison (5). Only one category obtained a participation rate of lower than 50 per cent: forgiveness was based on incidents collected from three participants (38%).

Thus, the validity of the category system is strongly supported on the basis of 100% participation rates for more than half of the categories and very high (greater than 60 per cent) participation rates for nearly all of the remaining categories.

The validity of the category system was further
Exhaustiveness

Exhaustiveness refers to whether or not the data collection has been sufficiently comprehensive to include all the varieties of behaviour and/or experience that the critical incidents technique may be expected to cover. In this study the category system was induced from the first major group of incidents (see Data Analysis, page 47). Exhaustiveness was assessed by attempting to classify the incidents of the second major group according to the category system. It was found that all of the incidents from the second grouping could be placed in the categories which had already been established. No new categories
were required. This result provides evidence for the exhaustiveness of the category system obtained in this study.

Support From Prior Research

Of the eighteen factors influencing self esteem only one of these, overcoming, has been scrutinized in prior research. Mruk (1981: 141) selected for study the experience of "coming to break through a longstanding personal difficulty, limitation or obstacle." He identified the converse of this experience to be "failing to break through". These definitions bear a remarkable resemblance to those of the facilitating and hindering effects of the category overcoming. Mruk employed twenty-five subjects to provide descriptions of this experience. Each of these personal accounts or stories was submitted to phenomenological analysis. In this manner he was able to provide a detailed articulation of two general structures; one articulates what it is and means to break through a personal limitation and the other captures what happens when an individual is faced with such an opportunity and fails. Mruk outlined a six step process for each structure which clearly showed one way to increase or decrease self esteem. Utilizing these results Mruk developed an empirically based, three-step, intervention strategy designed to assist the individual to overcome, or break through, his personal limitations. He described the intervention as a tool which could be applied to such experiences with the overall goal of enhancing self esteem.

Mruk's research findings support the validity of the category overcoming by using empirical data to construct a
detailed delineation of the structure of this experience. Such research evidence for the remaining seventeen factors does not yet exist.

**Content Validity**

The eighteen categories and their definitions were studied to determine their credibility as facilitators and hindrances of self esteem. On the basis of this review the effect of each factor on self esteem was clearly plausible. Thus, support for the content validity of the category system has been established.

In addition, the category system was presented to the psychologist who sponsored the program to obtain an evaluation of its credibility from a clinical viewpoint; that is, from the perspective of a mental health professional whose clinical expertise includes the treatment of low self esteem. The psychologist was instructed to determine for each category whether or not its presence would facilitate self esteem and whether or not its absence or counterpart would hinder self esteem. He concluded that the presence of each factor would facilitate self esteem and that their counterparts and/or absences would hinder self esteem. Thus, a measure of judgemental validity has been provided for the category system.
DISCUSSION

Summary of Results

Results from qualitative data show that the self esteem program facilitated beneficial changes in seven of the program's eight participants. Seven participants indicated an increase in self esteem while one reported that level of self esteem remained unchanged from the preliminary interview. Those participants indicating increases were able to specify in detail the nature of the changes which facilitated self esteem. A synthesis of this information resulted in the description of six primary types of change: increased self confidence; increased self acceptance; improved capacity to engage in, strengthen and maintain satisfying interpersonal relationships; increased self knowledge; improved self discipline; and resolutions to existential questions.

Quantitative results did not corroborate the qualitative evidence for increased self esteem. A scale of self esteem was applied to experimental and control groups before and after the program. An analysis of covariance applied to this data did not yield significant results.

A system of eighteen categories was developed such that each category defined a behaviour, activity and/or experience which facilitated self esteem. It was also discovered that the absence or opposite of each facilitating factor hindered self esteem. Evidence for the reliability and validity of the category system was provided. In addition, participants were able to specify experiences, activities and events occurring within the context
of the program which were representative of every facilitative category. This result allowed for the identification of aspects of the program which were particularly facilitative of self esteem. The facilitating effect of the program was further substantiated by the relative absence of reported hindering experiences. This result indicates that the hindering effect of the program on self esteem is negligible.

Limitations

The significance and generalizability of these results is limited by several factors related to the composition of the experimental and control groups. The study was conducted using only eight participants in each group. Although the data collected from individuals in the experimental group was detailed and extensive, it may not be representative of the general (North American) population because it was obtained from a sample which was quite small. In addition, the sample was composed entirely of gay men. It is possible that experiences affecting self esteem may differ slightly depending on one's sex and/or sexual orientation. It is conceivable, for example, that due to differing patterns of socialization the relationship factors may be much more salient effects on self esteem for women while the performance/activity categories may be more important for men. Therefore, the category system may not generalize to heterosexual male or female populations.

Several other variables have made the sample in this study distinctive and, consequently, have limited the generalizability of its findings. Several of the participants were students and,
in terms of their age, they may all be described as "young adults". The sample was also distinctive in terms of its socio-economic status (exclusively middle class), and education (at least high school). One must be particularly careful not to assume that the category system would apply to individuals from cultural backgrounds outside of the mainstream North American culture. The self esteem of the oriental individual, for example, may be much more influenced by the worthiness or the performance of his family and community than by his own experience of success. In contrast, the category system obtained in this study is influenced by a typically North American emphasis on individuality and the self as an independent agent in a competitive social context.

In addition to the limitations described above, the quantitative component of the program evaluation was hampered by the difficulties in obtaining a comparative control group. A valid comparison would be based on two samples drawn from the same population. However, in this study the control group was comprised primarily of a better educated student population whereas the experimental group was slightly less educated and more varied in terms of participants' occupations. More importantly, members of the control group volunteered for the study while experimental group participants were involved in a selection process in which one of the criteria was reported problems in self esteem. This criteria for selection was not applied to the control group. As a result, there is a strong likelihood that the two samples were drawn from different populations.
The significance of the findings is somewhat diminished by the discrepancy between qualitative and quantitative results. In searching for the origins of this discrepancy one may point to the relative inability of the Rosenberg Scale of Self Esteem to measure subtle variations in self esteem. Since the scale consists of only ten items, it taps a range of experience which is limited in terms of number and content. The test was also limited by a "ceiling effect". Half of the subjects employed in the experimental group scored at least in the upper quartile when the test was first administered. Thus, the possibility of the test showing a significant increase upon second administration was diminished because several participants had already obtained scores which approached the maximum value for the test in the first administration. Finally, the fact that individuals who reported low self esteem scored so high before treatment provides good cause to question the test's validity.

In contrast to the standardized test, responses to the open-ended questionnaire reflected subtle as well as gross changes in self esteem because it encouraged detail, diversity and breadth; for example, the reported increases in self esteem were substantiated by lengthy, in depth descriptions of what aspects of the participant's experience changed and how they changed.

Given the limitations described above, the following implications for theory, practise and research should be considered.
Theoretical Implications

The results obtained in the present study provide a more comprehensive and specific understanding of the factors affecting self esteem than that contained in the theories of either Rosenberg (1979) or Rogers (1980). While confirming the facilitating effects on self esteem of Rosenberg's four principles and Rogers' attitude of empathy, the eighteen factors delineated in Results Two encompass a greater range of human experience and behaviour and contain greater specificity regarding the process whereby self esteem is facilitated. What follows is a review of the two theories in light of the present findings.

The essential feature of Rosenberg's (1979: 63) principle of reflected appraisals is that "people, as social animals, are deeply influenced by the attitudes of others toward the self and in the course of time they come to view themselves as others view them." On the basis of this principle Rosenberg proposes that others' attitudes may affect one's self esteem. He expands on this statement somewhat by claiming that self concept and self esteem are largely shaped by the perceived responses and judgements of others. In his chapter on selectivity Rosenberg states that self esteem is enhanced when an individual selects to associate with those who think well of them and avoids those who dislike them. However, the specific content of others' favourable attitudes are not defined or described. The category system expands on Rosenberg's principle of reflected appraisals by presenting a much more specific description of the kinds of attitudes, responses and judgements which facilitate self esteem.
With appreciation self esteem is facilitated by the other's attitude and manifestation of love, caring and desire. In recognition the other's favourable response is communicated by compliments, praise and acknowledgements. Acceptance enhances self esteem by an attitude of approval sometimes revealed by support and assistance. In addition, manifestations of the other's trust, affection and enjoyment are characteristics of affiliation which reveal the other's favourable attitude. The absence or opposite of each of these four categories hinders self esteem. The description of each additional factor expands on Rosenberg's principle of reflected appraisals by defining another process or mechanism through which the principle is manifested.

The impact on self esteem of one's attitude toward oneself is also incorporated in the principle of reflected appraisals. According to Rosenberg, one's attitude toward oneself is actually the internalized attitude of the other. Persons internalize others' views and attitudes and, then, they judge themselves according to introjected standards of this "generalized other." Rosenberg (1979: 278) suggests that self esteem is hindered when an individual does not live up to these standards. Conversely, self esteem is maintained or enhanced by meeting these standards. The ideas in the following excerpt suggest that the way to maintain or enhance self esteem is to obtain the approval of significant others by living in adherence to introjected standards:

At an early age the child learns what is right or wrong, important or unimportant, for him, and these ideas are internalized in his value system. In addition, as he grows up, he finds himself judged by
these criteria, so that if he desires the approval of his group, he must seek to excel in terms of their values, not his own. True, he may momentarily enhance his self esteem by abandoning their values, but this act is likely to call down on him the disapproval of his significant others, which would counterbalance any rise in self esteem.

The findings of the present study depart from Rosenberg's perspective by indicating that one's attitude toward oneself may be independent of the other's attitude toward oneself and that both of these factors may exert an independent influence on self esteem. The category system contains the four factors described above which propose that self esteem may be enhanced by varying manifestations of the other's attitude. However, it also contains factors which expand on, and contradict, Rosenberg's notions by positing that self esteem is increased by one's approval of oneself regardless of the standards of others. The self acceptance category indicates that self esteem is enhanced when one comes to accept or approve of his own characteristics. Several of the incidents in this category described the participant's acceptance of his homosexuality which remains an unacceptable way of life in the eyes of the "generalized other". Thus, in contrast to the ideas expressed in Rosenberg's statement, self esteem may be more than just temporarily enhanced when an individual approves of his own key identity elements, even though such approval transgresses the standards of the generalized other and may elicit others' disapproval. Self acceptance goes further by stating that self esteem is facilitated when the individual accepts his own limitations and downfalls. This proposal contains the idea that self esteem is increased when the individual establishes his own standards and
capacity to approve of himself. These ideas are also reflected in the category independence which proposes that self esteem is increased when one obtains control over one's life.

In addition to positing a process of self approval, the category system includes another factor which describes how encouraging or supporting oneself through positive self-talk enhances self esteem. Self support adds to Rosenberg's theory in a fashion similar to that of self acceptance; that is, regardless of the support or recognition obtained from others, the individual can increase his own self esteem by supporting and praising himself.

The category forgiveness defines another experience facilitating self esteem which is not found in Rosenberg's theory. In addition to one's attitude toward oneself and the other's attitude toward the self, this category proposes that self esteem may be facilitated by one's attitude toward others. In particular, it was found that if one expressed or experienced an attitude of approval, acceptance or forgiveness toward another person, one experienced a concomitant increase in self esteem. Rosenberg's principle of reflected appraisals holds that self esteem is influenced only by the other's attitude toward the self. In contrast to the present findings, it does not incorporate the independent effects on self esteem of one's attitude toward oneself and one's attitude toward others.

Of the four principles described by Rosenberg, the social comparison principle was most fully substantiated by the results of the present study. Rosenberg outlined two forms of social
comparison which could facilitate or hinder self esteem. The definition of the social comparison category is virtually identical to Rosenberg's statement that people judge themselves as superior or inferior to others as a result of a comparison on some criteria of merit or value. The definition of the belonging factor is a reflection of the second type of social comparison described by Rosenberg. Both the principle and the category define a normative comparison in which individuals compare themselves with others to discover whether they are the same or different; that is, whether they deviate or conform.

The principle of self attribution states that the individual comes to conclusions about himself on the basis of observing his own behaviour and its outcomes. Rosenberg maintains that self esteem is either enhanced or hindered depending on how the individual interprets, evaluated or labels his behaviour. Essentially, Rosenberg differentiates this principle into four cognitive processes each describing a different way in which behaviour and its outcomes may be evaluated to maintain or enhance self esteem. The category system offers substantial support for the effect of behaviour and its outcomes on self esteem. However, it augments Rosenberg's theoretical structure by differentiating not only in terms of the kinds of evaluation applied to behaviour and outcome but also in terms of the varieties of behaviour and outcome themselves. The category system manifests greater specificity and detail by making distinctions on the basis of certain definitive features of various types of behaviours and outcome experiences.

In the category system evaluation is differentiated in terms
of its experiential result and its object. It is the positive or negative (favourable or unfavourable) quality of the evaluation which determines whether the resulting experience will be a facilitating or hindering factor. In the performance category, for example, behaviours, actions and activities are the objects of evaluation. A favourable evaluation produces an experience of pride or satisfaction while a negative one elicits guilt or shame. Sense of progress entails a different kind of evaluation. In this case outcomes or accomplishments are the objects of assessment and self esteem is facilitated when the evaluation results in an awareness of improvement or progress over time. Confidence is a third category which obtains its effect from an evaluation of behaviour and outcome: the positive appraisal of past performances and outcomes results in an optimistic attitude and/or anticipation of success.

Rosenberg's theory of self attribution supplements and compliments the category system by delineating a set of cognitive processes whereby positive and negative evaluations are obtained. He defines, for example, selective attention to facts as the "human being's propensity to search for items of evidence leading to congenial conclusions about the self, attempting at the same time to overlook or ignore those items of evidence which do not." (1979: 271) This process supplements the category system by offering an explanation for how positive and negative evaluations occur to produce results like confidence. When this process is applied to sense of progress, for example, one may deduce that a positive evaluation results from a search for past achievements
while failures are overlooked.

While Rosenberg adds to our understanding by defining certain cognitive processes which facilitate a positive self evaluation, the category system's contribution lies in its discrimination of behaviours and outcomes which facilitate self esteem. At the same time, the evaluation component is integral to the definition of the three categories described above (performance, sense of progress and confidence). However, while sense of progress and confidence obtain their effect from an evaluation of outcomes, the effects of the categories accomplishment and overcoming are obtained by virtue of the outcomes themselves. It is the experiencer's awareness, rather than his evaluation, of having obtained a desired result or of overcoming a personal difficulty which produces the enhanced self esteem.

Similarly, although performance derives its facilitative effect from an evaluation of behaviour, several other categories have been differentiated on the basis of the facilitative effects of the behaviour itself. Behaviours or activities consisting of forgiveness, honesty, contributing and self care were easily distinguishable from one another and were all found to enhance self esteem.

The principle of psychological centrality holds that certain identity elements obtain a greater significance than others. Rosenberg maintains that each person can judge himself favourably as long as he selects his own criteria for judgement; that is, as long as he focuses on the qualities at which he excels he is superior to the rest. As described above, the capacity to select
one's own standards is implicit in the self acceptance category. Moreover, features of the independence category substantiate this capacity by suggesting that self esteem is facilitated when individuals make their own decisions. Finally, the social comparison category (or principle) is an integral component of psychological centrality: certain qualities receive more attention because they allow the individual to perceive himself as superior compared to others. Thus, although the principle was not substantiated by a particular category, it is quite consistent with a combination of features from three categories. However, the category self acceptance contains features which also contradict the principle of psychological centrality. Self acceptance indicates the self esteem may be enhanced when the individual fully acknowledges and accepts his own limitations, downfalls and shortcomings. The principle, on the other hand, holds that self esteem is enhanced only when such identity elements are denied, minimized or relegated to the periphery of awareness so that positive characteristics are always maintained in the foreground of consciousness.

The results of the present study strongly support the facilitating effects of empathy on self esteem. Rogers (1980) outlines three qualities inherent in an empathic attitude which facilitate self esteem. Each of these three qualities was found to be a definitive feature of three categories which incorporated the facilitative effects of the other's attitude. The non-judgemental acceptance of an empathic understanding was found to be a definitive feature of the category acceptance.
Appreciation and caring are characteristics intrinsic to empathy which were found to be the essential qualities of the category appreciation. As described in Chapter Five affiliation consists primarily of the experience of "interpersonal connectedness" resulting from being fully understood by another human being. Thus, affiliation is defined by the third feature of empathy: an understanding which dissolves the recipient's alienation.

Rogers' theory of empathy also proposes that its qualities enhance self esteem by engendering self acceptance and by fostering openness, honesty or genuineness. The category system does define the facilitating effects of self acceptance and honesty. Thus, although it agrees with Rogers' contention that self acceptance and honesty facilitate self esteem, the system does not show that these two categories are caused by the presence of the categories which embody the three qualities of empathy.

In summary, while the category system incorporates the theoretical principles propounded by Rogers and Rosenberg, it differentiates these principles and proposes additional ones. The system's comprehensiveness is evidenced by the range of experiences and events reflected in its categories. They incorporate behaviours (e.g. self care), cognitions (e.g. self support), attitudes toward the other (e.g. forgiveness), attitudes toward the self (e.g. self acceptance), attitudes of the other (e.g. acceptance), self-evaluations (e.g. sense of progress), others' evaluations (e.g. recognition) and the experience of positive outcomes (e.g. accomplishment). In contrast, in his exclusive focus on empathy Rogers looks only to
the attitude of the other to explain what facilitates self esteem. Rosenberg's theory does include more of the above listed experiences, events and conditions. However, in his discussion of reflected appraisals he underscores the other's attitude while not addressing the effect of one's attitude toward oneself or toward others. Moreover, this same principle was differentiated into four categories each one representing a different manifestation of the other's attitude or evaluation. Similarly, self attribution emphasizes the individual's evaluation of his own behaviour and its outcomes but it does not acknowledge the effect of the behaviour or outcome experiences themselves. The category system adds to the theory of self esteem by describing two classes of positive outcomes and four classes of behaviour which facilitate self esteem. Finally the category system identifies a specific class of cognitions (self support) not found by the other theories.

The value of the category system discovered and delineated in the present study is that it offers a comprehensive set of experiences and behaviours which constitute a testable theory of what facilitates and hinders self esteem. Thus, it offers a detailed answer to the question posed by Coopersmith (1961) and Mruk (1981) in the Introduction: "What events and human experiences enhance self esteem?" In addition, the program evaluation component of the study provided evidence for the validity of the category system. These findings indicate that the program was successful in facilitating self esteem because it incorporated experiences and events from each of the eighteen
categories. Every one of the facilitating events or conditions experienced by the participants in the context of the program was representative of at least one of the eighteen factors. This finding substantiates not only the facilitating effect of each of the categories but it also indicates that as a theory of what facilitates self esteem the category system is comprehensive enough to explain and account for the wide range and great volume of experiential data provided by the participants.

Practical Implications

The practical implications of this study's findings are revealed through an examination of participants' accounts regarding the facilitating aspects of the self esteem program. Close scrutiny of this data indicates that the program's effectiveness rests on its capacity to effect positive change in three fundamental and interrelated realms of human experience. The program provided the means and the structure in which participants modified thoughts and behaviour in order to enhance self esteem. It also utilized facilitating experiences which occur only in the context of human relationships or interpersonal interactions.

The facilitative effects of certain kinds of interpersonal interactions were generated by the manner in which these interactions were structured within the program. In the first session the establishment of guidelines for effective communication and the instruction in person-centered skills allowed for the facilitative effects of empathy (i.e. affiliation, acceptance and appreciation) to be experienced
throughout the program. Most of the activities within the program incorporated one to one interactions within which participants could experience the appreciation, affiliation, acceptance and recognition of every other participant. Moreover, it was within these dyads that the participant was most likely to experience the salutary effects of honesty because the activities most often asked for a significant degree of self disclosure. The attitude of non-judgemental acceptance fostered by the establishment of a person-centered approach to communication often manifested itself in accounts of forgiveness also occurring primarily in the dyads. The dyads and small task groups also created a context for contribution which was stimulated by activities requiring participants to work together and assist each other toward some goal or possible solution.

Participants also reported that they experienced these facilitating effects in relation to the group as a whole. Activities like TRUST GAMES and MASSAGE increased the individual member's trust in the group thereby contributing to his experience of affiliation. The TRUST WALK, on the other hand, was effective because it fostered trust development between individuals. Similarly, THE GIFT and STROKING allowed participants to experience the appreciation, recognition and acceptance of the group as a whole while FACE PAINTING engendered these experiences on a one to one level. All of these activities contributed to the program's effectiveness by providing participants with the experience of the above-mentioned aspects of human relationships which facilitate self esteem.
The program was also effective because it created the conditions for the experience of belonging. The composition of the group provided a consonant context for gay men in which they could experience an important and fundamental identification with each other and with the group. This experience of belonging was further enhanced by activities which underscored commonalities amongst members (e.g. PARAPHRASING EXPECTATIONS and the BELONGING FANTASY).

Another important source of the program's effectiveness is based on its cognitive component as manifested in activities which required analysis and evaluation of thought and behaviour patterns. These activities provided the opportunity for self examination which often led to an expanded self awareness and positive changes in one's self perceptions. A few examples should clarify this point. SELF TALK engaged participants in a examination of internal thought processes, especially those related to key identity elements. In analyzing how they thought about these elements participants became aware that a positive attitude toward self and an acceptance of one's characteristics facilitates self esteem. As a result this activity engendered a great deal of self acceptance. In addition, it provided the tools whereby negative self talk could be transformed into positive self talk and, thus, was a primary source or another category: self support. The expanded awareness of one's strengths, attributes and talents provided by SHOW YOUR STRENGTHS fostered the development of a positive attitude toward one's ability to master life's tasks and challenges (i.e. confidence). DOING THINGS also enhanced confidence by analyzing the thoughts
and attitudes one experiences when approaching a task. The activity aimed toward transforming negative thought patterns into ones which would increase the anticipation of success. Similarly, ACHIEVEMENT offered a sense of progress by facilitating an awareness of one's past accomplishments. It is also probable that the expanded awareness of oneself and one's strengths enabled participants to see themselves as capable of making their own decisions (i.e. independence). Moreover, the heightened awareness of one's merits, talents and achievements would enable participants to see themselves as superior to the others at some time during the workshop (i.e. social comparison). These examples illustrate that specific activities incorporated or produced cognitive transformations and effects which facilitate self esteem.

The third fundamental source of the program's effectiveness consists of its focus on the impact of behaviour on self esteem. Several activities included a performance component providing the opportunity for participants to experience pride or satisfaction in association with behaviours which occurred during the sessions. In addition, the new skills and behaviours acquired in the program (e.g. communication skills) were used to improve performances in everyday life. Behaviours were analyzed in a variety of activities (e.g. SELF ESTEEM ANALYSIS, ANGER, DOING THINGS) to determine their influences on self esteem. The analysis identified self defeating behaviours and provided a rationale for making changes. Equipped with this new awareness and motivated by the support and examples of other participants
some members altered their behaviour by overcoming self defeating habits (overcoming) and others initiated healthy ones (self care).

Although the results do not indicate which specific activities or program features were most facilitative, it is possible to conclude that the program's effectiveness rests on its ability to create the kinds of interpersonal interactions and cognitive or behavioural changes described above. Thus, it is recommended that self esteem programs be designed with the aim of creating the conditions for these kinds of interpersonal interactions and cognitive-behavioural changes. The features and activities described above were found to produce these facilitative conditions and they are offered as a combination of appropriate and effective interventions to enhance self esteem in a group context. It is recommended that the guidelines for communication and the overall structure of interactions within each exercise be maintained regardless of the setting or population because these allow for facilitative interactions. However, flexibility in terms of activity selection is possible. One activity may be replaced with another as long as the new activity fosters the same kind of experience or change; for example, several different kinds of trust exercises could be utilized instead of the TRUST WALK or TRUST GAMES as long as the new activity facilitates the experience of trust (and affiliation). It is also expected that the content of certain activities be modified depending on the client population; for example, those activities incorporating references or tasks relevant to a gay population should be revised according to the
needs and characteristics of the population for which the program is being adapted.

The results of the present study have a wider application in that the category system constitutes a comprehensive approach to facilitating self esteem across a wide variety of therapeutic or educational contexts from the classroom to the group home. An individual in any of these settings may be assessed in terms of which hindering and facilitating factors are predominant in his life. The resulting profile of self esteem strengths and deficits would indicate treatment plans and goals. The profile could direct the practitioner to focus on mitigating the hindering factors while strengthening the facilitating ones. In effect, the category system could easily be transformed into a diagnostic tool which would offer an individualized prescription or blueprint for facilitating self esteem.

Presently available measures can only offer a global self esteem score. Their value as diagnostic tools for the practitioner is limited because a single score can only indicate whether or not there is an overall self esteem deficit. It says nothing about what has created that deficit or how to treat it. In contrast, the category system, if transformed into a diagnostic tool, could conceivably produce thirty-six different scores each one representing the extent to which the respondent experiences either the hindering or the facilitating effect of a particular category. Thus, this information would not only provide a detailed analysis of what has created the self esteem deficit, but it would also be capable of targeting for treatment
the specific conditions, experiences, thoughts and behaviours which have produced the deficit. If it was discovered, for example, that an individual commonly experiences both the hindering and facilitating components of self care, the practitioner would be directed toward interventions which would identify and diminish the self-defeating behaviour while, at the same time, she could work to identify, acknowledge and support the already existing healthy behaviour. In this way the category system may be a particularly useful instrument because it is capable of specifying client strengths (as well as weaknesses) so that they may be incorporated into the treatment plan.

**Research Implications**

Several possibilities for future research are generated by the present study. In terms of evaluating the effectiveness of the self esteem program the study could be replicated using a control group drawn from a waiting list of individuals seeking treatment for low self esteem. In this way the control and experimental groups would be comparable in terms of reported self esteem deficits thereby overcoming the discrepancies between groups apparent in the present study. The program could be easily adapted to other populations (e.g. adolescents, women) and evaluated by the procedures outlined in the present study to assess the effectiveness of its characteristics and content across contexts and groups. In addition, alternative measures of self esteem could be utilized in future experimental designs.

To determine the validity of the category system the critical incidents component of the study could be applied to a
much larger number of people (i.e. at least twenty respondents) who are representative of the general (North American) population. The study could be replicated utilizing different populations to determine if the same pattern of factors operates to influence self esteem across varying categories of race, culture, socio-economic status, age, sex and mental health status.

Mruk's (1981) research provides a prototype for further investigation into each of the eighteen categories. He used a phenomenological approach to delineate the structure of an experience virtually identical to overcoming. An intervention strategy which facilitated this "break through" process was readily obtained from these results. It is suggested that phenomenological research of this nature could be conducted on each of the categories to establish their validity through further explication based on empirical data. Such research would also aim to derive intervention strategies designed to assist the facilitative process of each category. These strategies could, in turn, become the objects of study and evaluation.

Another significant realm of further endeavour and research consists of transforming the category system into a diagnostic instrument. Presumably each of the factors could be translated into a series of stimulus statements reflecting the experience, event or condition of that particular factor. In this way a quantitative, standardized measure could be constructed such that a certain numerical value would be obtained for each category depending on the way in which the test taker responded to the
In developing this instrument each of the factors would have to be tested to determine its usefulness as a diagnostic tool. A series of correlations between individual factors and an overall self esteem score could be obtained to determine the predictive validity of each factor. In addition, each factor could be correlated with every other factor to obtain a greater understanding of the relationships between factors.

Summary

The intent of this study was twofold. It was designed to evaluate the effectiveness of an experiential program which purportedly enhanced self esteem in gay men. In addition, it aimed to discover what events and human experiences facilitate self esteem. The eight gay male participants who volunteered for the self esteem program were also employed to obtain data which was used to discover factors which facilitate self esteem.

Flanagan's (1954) critical incidents technique was used to discover what facilitates and hinders self esteem in everyday life. A category system of factors facilitating self esteem was induced from critical incidents data obtained in a preliminary interview and from a journal of significant events which participants submitted throughout their involvement in the program.

The program evaluation was based on three sources of information. The participants were compared with a control group
of eight gay men on Rosenberg's (1965) Scale of Self Esteem both before and after their involvement in the program. They were also subjects in preliminary and summary, open-ended interviews which were designed to assess changes in self esteem and to discern the degree to which initially stated goals and expectations were fulfilled by their participation in the program. In addition, critical incidents questions in the summary interview assessed how, and the degree to which the program incorporated the factors which facilitate self esteem in everyday life.

Eighteen categories of behaviours events and/or experiences were found to facilitate self esteem in everyday life. These factors constitute an initial model of what facilitates self esteem that needs to be tested and explored in further research. The self esteem program was found to enhance self esteem in seven of the program's eight participants and to produce six different types of beneficial changes. However, an analysis of covariance applied to self esteem scores did not show a significant difference between a control group and the program participants.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A: THE SELF ESTEEM PROGRAM

SESSION # ONE

1. INTRODUCTION (40 mins.)

Administrative Procedures

a/ When all members are seated in a circle, the leader can begin with the following remarks: "I'd like to welcome you here tonight. Some or maybe all of you are probably feeling a little nervous right now. I'm a little nervous myself. This is a natural response to being in a new situation with people you don't know. Perhaps it took you a lot of time to gather the courage to make the decision to come here tonight. The best way to deal with first night nervousness is to find out more about who you're with. So, we'll begin by doing that."

b/ Divide the group into pairs on a random basis and instruct the pairs to find a vacant area of the room.

c/ Give the following instructions: "Now I'd like you to spend a few minutes getting to know each other. Share whatever you feel comfortable sharing. Try to listen to your partner as best as you can because when we reconvene in the larger group you're going to be introducing him to the rest of the group. Make sure that just before returning you check with your partner to see if it's O.K. to tell the rest of the group what he's told you. He may only want you to tell some of what he's told you. That is up to him." Ask for questions and repeat instructions. (15 mins.)

d/ Pairs are called back into the group and one pair is selected to begin the introductions. After all the participants have been introduced the co-leaders introduce each other. (15 mins.)

e/ The group contract is described in the following manner: "One of the guidelines for that introduction exercise involved your partner's right not to let the whole group know something that he told you in your dyad. This is one of the ground rules or norms that work most effectively in groups. It is similar to a contract that every member has to make with every other member of the group so that we can get the most out of this experience. Now I'll go over the other ground rules for the group. If you don't understand them, or if you want to talk about them, then feel free to bring it to my attention:

(i) When I first spoke to each of you individually I mentioned the importance of attending every session. If, after this first session and after knowing a bit more about the group, you decide that it is not right for you right now, then you can let me know in private. However, if I don't hear from you, I will assume that you'll do your best to attend all the sessions.

(ii) Everything that the members of the group say here in this room is to be kept confidential and the membership of the group
will be known only to us. You can talk about the skills that you will be learning here to "outsiders" but nothing can be said about the content of our exchanges.

(iii) All the members have the right not to speak if you don't want to speak and this includes the right not to finish what you started to say.

(iv) Every member has the right to finish what he started to say without interruption from other members.

(v) Lastly, there will be no smoking during the session, except during breaks.

Before we move into our next activity I would like to encourage you to bring up anything about these ground rules that you are not clear on or don't understand." (10 mins.)

Rationale

- listening/attending skills: members will be able to compare how effectively they communicated in this exercise with their effectiveness in the next activity which incorporates paraphrasing.
- some self disclosure and risk taking is required.
- member's curiosity about each other is satisfied and anxiety is decreased.
- contributes to Schutz's (1973) first stage of group development, inclusion, in that members risk self disclosure in the group and know more about each other.
- discussion of contract establishes ground rules and norms for the group (e.g. confidentiality)
- norms establish a "safe" climate in which members are allowed to take risks at their own pace.
- norms increase members' commitment to the group: decision to belong is made easier knowing that you are not going to be pressured to take risks (allows members to build trust on their own time).

2. **PARAPHRASING EXPECTATIONS** (60 mins.)

**Administrative Procedures**

a/ Introduction: "A lot of you have expectations for this group. Some of them may be the same as those of other members and some of them may not be the same. Now you are going to have the opportunity to discuss these expectations with a partner and learn a new communication skill while you're doing so."

b/ Explain paraphrasing and provide one or two examples. Ask for questions. (5 mins.)

c/ Divide group into dyads.

d/ Instruct one person in each pair to talk about his expectations by describing two or three of them while the other listens and paraphrases until his partner feels that he's been
understood. Then the roles are to be reversed.

e/ Repeat instructions (e.g. what are two things you hope to get out of coming to this group?) and solicit questions. Inform members that they are to make the reversal when they are ready to and that they will have about fifteen minutes for the task. (15 mins.)

f/ The group is reconvened for debriefing. Questions to facilitate discussion:
- Did you feel comfortable paraphrasing?
- Were you understood?
- How did it differ from the first exercise when you were just asked to listen?
- Were your expectations the same or different from your partner's? (Allow 10 mins. for this discussion)

g/ Ask each individual member what he expects to get out of the group. Paraphrase each participant's expectations and highlight common themes.

h/ Use a chalk board or large paper to list the five or six most common goals or expectations making sure that at least one of every member's expectations is represented. This can be accomplished by asking: "What were some of the expectations we just discussed?" and "Is there anything else that you would like to get from this group?"

i/ After the list is produced the leader must talk about the group's expectations/goals in terms of his own and what he knows about what the group experience can provide. Refinements to the list may be necessary. At this point the leader also prioritizes the list by asking the group to show which goals are most important with a show of hands after each goal is read aloud.

j/ To enhance a feeling of inclusion the leader can ask the members if they feel that they have something in common; that is, share similar goals with at least one other member. ("Without having to say who it is, do you feel that you share something in common with at least one other person here?")

k/ At this point the leader can again leave open the option of not returning to the group: "If you feel that you don't have anything in common with anyone else in the group or that you don't share any of the same goals or expectations, then, perhaps you should think about your decision to commit yourself to the group. You may decide not to come back next week. If you feel that way you can approach me after the session or get in touch with me between now and next week."

l/ "Is there anything anyone would like to say about being in the group at this point?" (Allow 30 mins. for parts "g" to "l" inclusive).
Rationale

This exercise contributes to the development of inclusion in several ways:
- New data is generated about members, increasing potential for trust development.
- Self-disclosure and risk-taking involved in sharing goals and expectations also contributes to trust development.
- Answers members' questions: "Do I belong?"; "Am I needed?"; Do I share the same goals and expectations as the others?"; and "Do I fit in?" (The exercise provides the maximum potential for members to obtain affirmative responses to these questions.)
- Sense of belonging established through members' perception that they share something in common with others and that the group will meet some of their needs.
- Establishes emotional commitment and involvement.
- Decreases anxiety by highlighting commonality amongst members.
- Builds the norm that people can speak in the group and take some risk at self-disclosure: they can speak on their own authority.

PERCEPTION CHECKING (60 mins.)

Administrative Procedures

a/ Provide a brief lecturette on risk taking (self-disclosure) and trust development and how these underly understanding and intimacy. The primary point of the lecturette is that effective communication facilitates trust development, understanding and intimacy. Communication skills make it easier to understand the other person and help the other to understand you.

b/ Ask for questions and comments to allow for discussion of these ideas. (Allow 15 mins. for "a" and "b")

c/ Explain that today we are learning skills which help you to understand another person. One of them, paraphrasing, has already been practised. It helps you understand the ideas, information and suggestions of another person. The other skill, perception checking, will be introduced now. It consists of making sure one understands the feelings of others. Give an explanation of perception checking utilizing examples. Ask for questions (5 mins.)

d/ Divide the group into pairs making sure that the pairs are different from those of the previous exercise. Disperse the pairs throughout the room.

e/ Instructions: One person (partner #1) will begin by responding to the question: "How did you feel when you told your parents or someone very close to you that you were gay?" Alternatively: "What do you imagine yourself feeling at that time?" You can describe the circumstances or situation but focus on the way you were or would be feeling. The other partner (partner #2) will use perception checks to make sure that he
understands these feelings. When partner # 1 feels understood the roles will be reversed so that partner # 2 has a chance to respond to the same question and partner # 1 has a chance to do some perception checking. Advise the members that they will have about 20 minutes for the whole activity. Repeat instructions and ask for questions. (20 mins.)

f/ Group is reconvened for debriefing: Questions for discussion:
- What did it feel like to engage in this kind of communication?
- How did it differ from your more everyday style of talking about feelings?
- Do you feel differently now about your partner than before the exercise?
- Did you find that you shared similar feelings with your partner?
- What did you discover about yourself in this exercise which you hadn't previously known?

Rationale
- members become aware of how trust develops through risk taking (self disclosure); the connection between intimacy, understanding and effective communication skills
- to become aware of the range of possible emotions and results arising from a self disclosure which all gay men have either experienced or imagined.
- a more personal self disclosure of emotional content contributes to trust development.
- discussing an important, possibly a pivotal, self disclosure which all members have faced or contemplated facing facilitates a feeling of belonging (inclusion).
- awareness of commonality decreases members' anxiety.
- lecturette on communication skills and the activity's relevance to the personal, everyday lives of members increases their commitment to skills acquisition.
- debriefing questions and discussion consolidate learning and awareness and decrease anxiety by revealing commonality amongst members.

4. SUM UP AND EVALUATION (15 mins.)

Administrative Procedures

a/ Summary/Evaluation discussion facilitated by the following questions:
- Is there anything that you became aware of or learned this evening that you were not aware of or didn't know before?
- Was it valuable or relevant to you?
- Were your expectations for what would happen in the group different from what actually happened?
- Were they the same or just partially the same?
- Are there things about the activities that you liked or enjoyed?
- Are there things that you would have liked to have done differently?
After a ten minute discussion the session can be closed with the following homework assignment: "In the previous exercise we became aware of the importance of self disclosure and how it relates to trust, understanding and intimacy. We focused on a self disclosure which is very important to us as gay people; that is, to tell another that we're gay. To prepare for next week's session I would like you to think about all the times you made that self disclosure and ask yourself the following questions: How did it affect your relationship with those you disclosed to? Did it increase or decrease your level of trust and intimacy? Was communication between you better or worse? Did you understand each other better? If you have yet to make such a disclosure imaging how you think you would answer these questions; for example, what do you think would happen to your communication?"

c/ Go over the homework instructions again and ask for questions. Suggest to the members that when they are thinking back over their self disclosures they may want to write a few things down.

**Rationale**

- members are required to summarize and evaluate learning, conceptualize and communicate new awareness or insight, and express their evaluations in the group.
- homework requires members to transfer learning/awareness to their lives outside the group: ability to make the connection between what was learned to everyday life.
- establishes norm that participation provides information to the leader which can influence the direction of the group.
- gives members opportunity to assert some influence on the group (begins to answer Schutz's (1973) control phase question: How much influence do I have?)
- this opportunity increases commitment and sense of belonging.
- homework facilitates continuity and cohesiveness from one session to the next by preparing members for the next session and providing a meaningful task allowing them to focus on the group during the week.
SESSION TWO

1. REACTIONS (20 mins.)

Administrative Procedures

a/ Open the session by asking participants what they felt and thought in response to the first session. What experiences, activities or events stood out the most for them? What did they think and feel about their experiences during the week? What do they think about them now? Spend some time responding to each reaction and try to solicit a response from every participant.

Rationale

-the first session is a pivotal one, often evoking strong emotional reactions and experiences - these must be aired, debriefed and processed before the program can proceed.
-the sharing contributes to trust level, increases participants' knowledge of each other.
-provides opportunity for participants to affirm their commitment to the group, increases group cohesion.
-consolidates learning and awareness acquired from the first session.

2. TRUST WALK (40 mins.)

Administrative Procedures

a/ Form dyads by asking members to pair off with someone they have not worked with before.

b/Distribute one blindfold to each pair and provide the following instructions: "One member of each pair should volunteer to be blindfolded. You are about to go on a trust walk. The member who is not blindfolded will lead his partner around the room. Try to lead your partner over, under and around things and let him explore the area. It is important that there be a lot of interaction between you during the walk. The partner who is leading may help the blindfolded partner by giving helpful instructions and answering any of his questions. The blindfolded partner should ask questions. Feel free to share your feelings with each other as you go through the experience. After ten minutes I will ask you to exchange roles." Ask for questions and repeat instructions. (25 mins.)

c/ Reconvene the group for discussion:
-What did you learn from the experience?
-How did you feel about your partner while he was leading you?
-How did you feel about being led?
-Did you find being led or leading the most meaningful to you?
-How does the issue of who leads and who follows have relevance
in a group such as this one?
-How does this activity relate to the development of trust in your own lives? (15 mins.)

Rationale

-to develop an awareness of what it feels like to be vulnerable, dependent as well as what it feels like to be in control, leading and in some way responsible for another person.
-to be aware of the necessity for trust in a relationship.
-to be aware of one's capacity to trust ("How readily do I trust another person?")
-to be aware of one's level of comfort and feelings when taking the role of follower or leader.
-to facilitate self disclosure and non-verbal (physical) risk taking (physical risk taking may generalize to psychological risk taking, i.e. self disclosure).
-to enhance member relationships by making the level of trust amongst members more explicit and by demonstrating members' capacity to trust.
-leads to a discussion of control phase issues involving influenceability: "How much power and control do I have in my relationships?" "Do I prefer to lead or to follow?"
-movement, activity, sense of adventure and fun raise the level of energy, involvement and participation.

3. SELF ESTEEM ANALYSIS (105 mins.)

Administrative Procedures

a/ Instructions: "Self esteem fluctuates dramatically, even during the course of the same day. These fluctuations are due to a great number of factors many of which you were able to describe in our first interview. What I'd like you to do now is to focus on two different states of self esteem. I'd like you to take the piece of paper which I will distribute and split it down the middle. On one side write about the way you think, feel and act when your self esteem is at a peak, when you're really feeling good about yourself. On the other side write about the way you think, feel and act when your self esteem is low. When you are finished writing examine what you have written and try to conceptualize these two self esteem moods as two parts of yourself. Use your imagination to attach a name to each personality, one which summarizes or symbolizes them." (20 mins.)

b/ Divide the group into two smaller groups of four or five. Each subgroup will be facilitated by one of the co-leaders who will request that each member share what they have written. (20 mins.)

c/ After each member has had the opportunity to share, the leaders can provide the following instructions: "Now I'd like you to study the significant events cards which you brought in this week. What situations, experiences, events or activities
contribute to your low self esteem mood? What do your yellow cards say about the events which contribute to your high self esteem mood?" On the basis of what each participant has just discovered the facilitators can begin a brainstorming session on ways for each person to increase his self esteem. (45 mins.)

d/ Group Debriefing:
-What did you discover about yourself that you didn't know before?
-What were the most common incidents which increased or decreased self esteem?
-Did you discover anything that was particularly helpful or useful to you? (20 mins.)

Rationale
-to help participants become aware of the fluctuating nature of self esteem.
-to enable participants to identify their own moods of high and low self esteem.
-to identify triggers or causative circumstances which tend to bring on moods of high or low self esteem.
-contributes to trust and cohesion as members engage in self disclosure and work together to assist each other in a common endeavour.

4. SUM UP AND EVALUATION (15 mins.)

See Exercise 1., SESSION # ONE for Administrative Procedures and Rationale.

Homework Assignment:
"In preparation for next week I'd like you to think about the times when you have been rejected. What were the circumstances? How did you know you were rejected? What did it feel like? What effect did the rejection have on your self esteem? You may want to briefly write something about one or two of these experiences."
SESSION THREE

1. HOW ARE YOU? (15 mins.)

Administrative Procedures

a/ To introduce this activity: "Every one of us brings our tensions, concerns, moods and feelings from the day into these sessions. It is often helpful at the beginning of the session for each of us to let the group know what's happening for us at the moment and in the past day or week. So I would like to take some time now to request that each of us ask one other member how they are feeling or what they bring with them to the group tonight." This process will be complete when every member has had a chance to respond to the question. (15 mins.)

Rationale

-to prepare for what happens in the session by allowing members to express their present concerns and preoccupations.
-acknowledgement of members' concerns by other members fosters a feeling of being valued, accepted by the group.
-recognizes that one's concerns and state of being are important and deserve expression/recognition.
-contributes to here and now focus, members' involvement and cohesion.

2. REJECTION/KILLER STATEMENTS (100 mins.)

Administrative Procedures

a/ Introduce the activity with a brief talk on rejection. Establish it's universal nature and describe it's myriad forms. Give examples (e.g. turned down from a job, rejection by other people, lovers, friends). Explain that the tools of rejection are the judgements and evaluations that we all make of each other. These killer statements, or put downs are experienced as attacks and can have a very negative impact on our self esteem. (5 mins.)

b/ Enlist the group's help to make a list of common killer statements. (Use a chalkboard or display on a large piece of paper.) Stimulate ideas with the following questions:
-What are some of the killer statements used against gay people?
-What are some of the put downs gays use against other gays?
-What killer statements do we use to invalidate a person for a new idea, an innovation, or attempt to do something new?
-What put downs do we use to invalidate someone for risking a personal statement or for displaying an emotion? (10 mins.)

c/ Form dyads by instructing participants to find a partner they
have not yet worked with.

d/ "I'd like you to take turns discussing a time when you used any or all of these put downs against someone else. In particular, focus on how you felt when using them and how the putdown affected your self esteem." (15 mins.)

e/ "Now take turns discussing a time when any of these put downs were used against you. Again, focus on how you felt and how it affected your self esteem? (15 mins.)

f/ Form groups of four or five. "Discuss some of the killer statements and gestures you experienced during your growing up years, childhood, and adolescence. What effects did these have on you, on the way you thought and felt about yourself?" (20 mins.)

g/ "Discuss or brainstorm ways of dealing with rejection or killer statements. What would be some of the ways to handle rejection so that self esteem could be maintained or enhanced? (20 mins.)

h/ Large Group Debriefing:
- New insights? awarenesses? experiences?
- What did you discover about yourself that you didn't know before?
- Do you think you will be able to use what you learned from this activity in your everyday life? How do you think you will go about doing that? (20 mins.)

Rationale

- to instil the awareness that the participant is both a user and a victim of putdowns/rejection.
- to assess impact of putdowns/rejection on self esteem
- to conceptualize and analyze rejection and to relate this understanding to one's own life experiences with rejection.
- to learn ways of coping with rejection.
- to discover the universality of rejection.
- sharing a common painful experience contributes to belonging and identification with the group.

3. CONTROL EXERCISE (45 mins.)

Administrative Procedures

a/ Instruct members to pair off with someone approximately the same size and/or weight.

b/ Find an area of the room which is clear of furniture.

c/ Inform members that they will be engaging in a physical activity with their partners; one in which the object is to throw
the other partner off balance. Demonstrate the activity with the co-leader or another participant as you explain it. Stand side by side with your partner facing in the opposite direction. Join hands in between. By moving your partner's arm try to throw him off balance. (15 mins.)

d/ Debriefing in pairs:
- Did you use all your power?
- How did you use it: directly? with cunning?
- What was your experience of your partner during the task?
- Has your experience of him changed?
- What feelings did you experience?
- What was it like for you to win/lose?
- What is your everyday response to winning/being beaten? Do you feel better or worse about yourself? More or less self confident? (15 mins.)

e/ Questions for debriefing in the group:
- How is power or influence manifested in our group?
- How do you respond to power in this group?
- How do you respond to power in everyday life?
- Suggest ways in which these issues of power/control/influence affect the way you feel about your self or your self esteem.

Rationale
- to engender an awareness of one's response to power, force and attempts to control.
- to highlight the effects of these issues on the member's self confidence and self esteem.
- to develop an awareness of how one typically uses power and influence in attempts to control and get what one wants in everyday life and in the group.
- to make explicit and to discuss the members perception of how power and influence is shared in the group.
- thus, this activity directly addresses the control phase issues of who has the most/least influence in the group and in what way do they control.

SUM UP AND HOMEWORK (10 mins.)

For Administrative Procedures and Rationale See SESSION # ONE

Homework

"To prepare for next week's session I would like you to think about times you felt a sense of belonging, times when you really felt a part of something or some group, times when you knew you belonged and were accepted. Perhaps it was belonging to a group, a circle of friends, a cause, your family. Think about where you belong now as well as in the past. Focus on the feelings you have when you know you belong. How has belonging affected your self esteem?"
SESSION FOUR

1. GUIDED FANTASY - BELONGING (50 mins.)

Administrative Procedures

a/ Once members are seated in a circle request that they take comfortable positions in their chairs and close their eyes to prepare for a guided fantasy or relaxation exercise. Have the members focus on or imaginge the following:
-sounds from outside the building
-sounds from inside the building
-sounds from within the room
-if your attention wanders, just let it go, it will come back when you are ready
-become aware of the sound of your breathing
-become aware of the support you have for your body from the chair
-support for your feet from the floor
-become aware of how your body feels
-locate any area of tension in your body and just notice how your body feels in that area
-now go back to the time just before you arrived here this evening
-just as you were entering the building
-imagine your approach to the door
-what did you see as you approached the door . . . what were you feeling . . . thinking?
-this time as you go toward the door you see a large garbage bin
-you can now relieve yourself of all of the day's worries, concerns and tensions
-just empty them into the bin
-it will hold the cares and tensions and anything that you don't need while you are here
-you can retrieve them when you leave but for now just deposit them in the bin
-right beside this bin there is an even larger treasure chest
-it contains all the things you need to have for your time here
-you may want to replenish yourself with energy
-you may want to obtain some calm relaxation
- whatever it is that you need, reach into the chest and take it
-now return to the door and enter the building
-as you step inside enter into a time and a place when you felt a deep-sense of belonging
-a time when you felt very much a part of things, part of a group perhaps, or a cause
-it can be a recent time, or a time long ago, any time you want
-recreate the circumstances of belonging
-where does it occur?
-who are the people who provide this feeling of belonging?
-maybe something happened which made you feel like you belonged
-what does it feel like to belong?
-when you have this situation clearly imagined slowly return to the room
-you may want to count backwards from ten or imagine the people
in the room as you prepare to come back to the room
-take your time and return when you are ready. (10 mins.)

b/ Divide the group into pairs by asking members to choose someone they have not yet worked with.

c/ Disperse pairs throughout the room and instruct them to share what they imagined and felt about belonging during the relaxation: What was the situation and what kind of feelings were experienced? How does belonging affect your self esteem? (20 mins.)

d/ Reconvene the group to discuss the following questions:
-What did you discover about yourself that you didn't know before?
-How do we feel about ourselves when we feel accepted and a sense of belonging?
-What are the obstacles to obtaining these feelings in our lives?
-Are there any obstacles making it particularly difficult for gay men to obtain this feeling of belonging?
-What circumstances can we choose or create that will allow us to feel that we belong? (20 mins.)

Rationale

-relaxation decreases anxiety.
-focuses the members on the "here and now".
-leads into the first discussion.
-provides continuity between sessions and highlights relevance of homework assignment from SESSION THREE.
-fosters body awareness, capacity to relax and obtain proprioceptive feedback.
-requires use of imagination and imaging capacity.
-self disclosure of feelings and significant events increases a sense of belonging (inclusion).
-fosters awareness of the contrasting effects of belonging and acceptance versus rejection on self esteem.
-awareness of one's feelings of belonging, in what context do they occur, and what can one do to minimize obstacles to belonging and maximize circumstances which produce belonging.

2. SUPPORT NETWORKS (60 mins.)

Administrative Procedures

a/ A brief lecturette on how groups function to provide a context for belonging and acceptance. Underline the notion that belonging is a function of interaction between group and individual. Thus, it is dependent on one's behaviour in the group (e.g. withdrawn, over social, dependent, counterdependent, following, leading). Introduce the idea of the Support Network. Define and provide examples. (10 mins.)
b/ Distribute a sheet of blank paper and a pen to every member.

c/ Instruct the members in the following manner while demonstrating with a diagram on the blackboard:
- write your name in the center of the paper.
- draw spokes outward from your name.
- at the end of each spoke write the name of a friend, social group or any other important relationship in your life.
- draw as many spokes as you like.
- on one side of the spoke write in the kind of support you give to that group/friend/social setting.
- on the other side write in the kind of support you receive from that source. (10 mins.)

d/ Find a partner and share your external support networks. (10 mins.)

e/ Write the following question on the blackboard: "Does your external support network include people who will support you in the following ways?"
  A. to depend on in a crisis?
  B. with whom to feel close to?
  C. from whom you can borrow money?
  D. who make you feel competent and valued?
  E. who can give you important information?
  F. with whom you can share fun times, celebrations?
  G. with whom you can share good news and feelings?

f/ Instruct the members to discuss the question listed above with their partner.

g/ Reconvene Group. Possible questions for debriefing:
  - Did you find that you seem to be giving more support than receiving?
  - Are you satisfied with your support network as it now exists?
  - Were there any forms of support that you would like to receive that were noticeably missing from your diagram?
  - How do you think you can obtain the support you would like to receive?
  - How do you think that your typical way of belonging in a group affects the quality and kind of support you receive? (20 mins.)

Rationale
  - To instill the awareness of the importance of support networks in fostering self acceptance and self esteem.
  - To provide information about how one's typical style of behaving in a group affects the support obtained from the group and degree of belonging/acceptance in the group.
  - To develop an awareness of one's own support network, its advantages, deficiencies, what it consists of, contributions to self esteem.
  - This analysis/understanding will suggest possibilities for improvement and/or revision (e.g. filling in the gaps).
  - Further self disclosure increases group cohesion and trust.
3. **SHOW YOUR STRENGTHS** (60 mins.)

**Administrative Procedures**

a/ Distribute a large sheet of newsprint (2' X 4') and a felt pen to every member.

b/ Instructions: "The object of this activity is to write out a list of your attributes, talents or positive qualities. In large printed letters write out the first ten qualities that you can think of. (20 mins.)

c/ Distribute masking tape. Instructions: "Tape the lists to the front of your bodies so that they hang down from your shoulders. Now mill around and read each other's lists. Try to observe the qualities, strengths and attributes in the person's face as you read his list. (10 mins.)

d/ Debriefing with a partner:
- Did you find it easy or difficult to come up with your list?
- How did you feel during the observation stage?
- What was the experience like for you?
- Describe your list in more detail. (15 mins.)

e/ Debriefing in the group:
- What do you know about yourself now that you didn't know before?
- Did anyone discover new strengths or talents?
- Why do you suppose some of us find it so difficult to talk about, reveal or realize our own positive attributes and talents? (15 mins.)

**Rationale**

- to help participants make an assessment of their strengths and recognize their capabilities and talents.
- to encourage participants to validate themselves publicly.
- to obtain the deserved esteem of others.
- to sharpen one's perspective on his own positive qualities.
- to build self confidence.
- to develop an awareness of how and why we depreciate, avoid or overlook our own strengths, attributes.
- to become aware of the positive results to self esteem achieved through an accurate perception of one's strengths and internal resources.

4. **SUM UP AND EVALUATION** (10 mins.)

See Exercise 4., SESSION ONE for administrative procedures and rationale.
SESSION FIVE

1. HOW ARE YOU (15 mins.)

For administrative procedures and rationale, see Exercise 1, SESSION THREE.

2. TRUST GAMES (40 mins.)

Administrative Procedures

a/ Inform members that they are going to be engaging in a nonverbal trust experience. Remind them that even if they have performed these exercises before they will derive a different experience now because they are in another setting, another time and with a different group.

b/ Have members form a circle (including the co-facilitators) facing inward toward each other.

c/ Explain that the member who volunteers will step inside the circle, close his eyes and be passed around the inside perimeter of the circle by the other members. Inform the members that participation is voluntary and everyone will have an opportunity to be the focus person. Also, the participant can choose to discontinue at any time. Ask for the first volunteer. (15 mins.)

d/ After all the volunteers have participated inform the members that the next exercise requires that the group become tighter by moving closer toward the centre.

e/ Explain that the person who volunteers will stand in the centre of the circle, close his eyes and fall backward or forward to be supported by the members of the circle. The statements regarding participation can be repeated. (10 mins.)

f/ Reconvene the group for debriefing:
-What was your experience of the trust exercises?
-What role did you find most enjoyable or comfortable: participating? guiding in the first exercise? supporting in the second?
-Any new awarenesses about what it feels like to be physically vulnerable? about your capacity to trust others? about what it is like to guide or support another?
-In what ways are these trust exercises relevant to our discussions on relationships? (15 mins.)

Rationale

-the physical activity, sense of adventure and shared fun raise the level of energy, increase involvement and participation, build cohesiveness amongst the members.
-requires non-verbal (physical) risk taking which may generalize to psychological risk taking (e.g. self disclosure)
-to develop an awareness of what it feels like to be supported, guided, by the group and in some way vulnerable to the group.
-to develop an awareness of what it feels like to support, guide.
-the exercises contribute to the development of intimacy (Schutz, 1973) by making the level of trust in the group more explicit and by demonstrating members' capacity to trust the group.
-provides another example of the importance of trust in relationships.

3. SELF TALK AND FEELING O.K. (115 mins.)

Administrative Procedures

a/ Provide a brief lecturette on transactional analysis concepts of parental injunctions, early decisions, life scripts and how these influence self perception as O.K. or NOT O.K. Explain how these influences are manifested in the things we tell ourselves. Use the example of the socio-cultural script for homosexuality: how it is possible to develop a NOT O.K. self perception based on societal and parental scripting for homosexuality which transmits the message, "Homosexuals are sick, perverted, evil, or immoral". The message is internalized and it appears in the things we tell ourselves (self talk); for example, "I can never have a meaningful, intimate relationship because all gay people are inherently neurotic." (15 mins.)

b/ Distribute small note cards and pencils.

c/ Form two small groups of four or five.

d/ Instruct the members to think about the things that they tell themselves which make them feel that they are NOT O.K.: "Write two of these in a statement form on the card". The leader can provide a personal example: "For instance, I don't feel O.K. when I tell myself that I'm unattractive because I'm short".

e/ "Share your statements in the group and discuss where they originated from. Parents? Society? Peers? For example, in my case, our culture values tallness in men and this idea was transmitted to me as a child when my elders and peers highlighted and devalued my short stature. Adults would show concern about my lack of growth and peers would single me out as the 'smallest in the class!'". (Repeat instructions and allow 30 mins. for parts "d" and "e").

f/ As an introduction to the next part of this task explain the arbitrary nature of cultural scripts: how they vary from one culture to the next so that what is devalued or condemned in our culture is accepted or celebrated in another (e.g. homosexuality). Explain that most characteristics or traits (e.g. smallness, homosexuality) are not inherently good or bad. They do not produce the NOT O.K. self perception. It is what people, our
culture, our parents say about the trait which leads to a NOT O.K. self perception. But we have the power to accept or reject what people say about the trait. For example, it is not the fact that I'm short which makes me feel NOT O.K. It is what I have learned and internalized from the culture about what it means to be short. The same holds true for being gay. We can accept the cultural meaning attached to being gay or we can reject it.

g/ Instructions: "Now I would like you to take each of the two statements and decide whether or not the meaning attached to whatever it is that makes you feel NOT O.K. is yours. Or does it belong to someone or something else? If it's not yours you can reject it and substitute a statement about yourself that reflects your own self-created meaning and makes you feel O.K.

For example, I know that it is our cultural value for bigness and tallness which makes me feel NOT O.K. about being short. So, I can reject that meaning or value and substitute my own value or meaning in being short. I can say 'I feel O.K. about being short because small people are usually better proportioned, live longer, use less energy and always fit into small sports cars.'

If you can't think of a way to attach a positive meaning to whatever it is that makes you feel NOT O.K. then substitute something else which is related to it that does make you feel O.K. For example, I can say 'I feel O.K. about the way I look because I have beautiful blue eyes. Both being short and the colour of my eyes have something to do with the way I look and physical attractiveness. Now I would like you to transform your own negative self statements in the same manner and then share these with your group. Discuss the alternatives with them." (Allow 40 mins for "f" and "g")

h/ Reconvene group for discussion (20 mins)
-What did you learn about yourself as a result of this exercise?
-How difficult or easy was it for you to come up with and transform your NOT O.K. self statements?
-Do you think that you can use this process to recognize and transform your negative self talk outside of this group in everyday life?
-In what situations or in what context can you see yourself using it?

Rationale

-to be aware of how introjected parental/societal values pertaining to homosexuality can hinder the development of a positive self image.
-to be aware of how other parental/societal injunctions, attitudes and values are internalized and how these can also diminish self esteem.
-to understand how these attitudes and values manifest themselves in self concept through "self talk."
-to be able to identify and disclose private self perceptions which may be painful, or perceived as a weakness, foible, defect or fault.
-to be able to analyze these self perceptions to discern their origin, development and meaning.
-to be aware of one's choice in accepting or rejecting an external meaning or label as part of one's self perception.
-to be able to identify introjected self perceptions which contribute to a global "I'm NOT O.K." self concept.
-to be able to reject and transform these self perceptions so that they enhance self concept.
-to be able to share these positive self perceptions with the group.
-disclosure of potentially painful or embarrassing information fosters trust development, cohesion.
-discussion of the socio-cultural script for homosexuality is especially relevant to gay men, providing a focus for members' identification with the group and enhancing a sense of belonging.
-engage in a task to improve self perceptions provides a common goal and focus for the group fostering cohesion and co-operation.
-disclosure of transformed positive self perceptions increases commitment to the group and involvement by communicating the achievement (success) of a group effort.

4. SUM UP AND EVALUATION (10 mins.)

See Exercise 4., SESSION ONE for Administration and Rationale.

Homework Assignment

"In the last exercise we worked with the thoughts we have about ourselves which make us feel NOT O.K. During the week as preparation for the next session I would like you to think about the things that you do which make you feel NOT O.K. You could even write two of these down in a statement form (e.g. Whenever I do such and such I feel NOT O.K.). Then, I would like you to list at least twice as many things which you do which make you feel good about yourself."
1. **HOW ARE YOU?** (15 mins.)

See Exercise 1., SESSION FOUR

2. **GUIDED FANTASY - ACHIEVEMENT** (45 mins.)

**Administrative Procedures**

a/ Instruct members to get into comfortable positions, close their eyes in preparation for a guided fantasy.

b/ In a slow, even paced, somewhat sonorous tone read out the following:
- become aware of the support you have for your body, from the chair, from the floor
- become aware of your breathing, if you need more air, take it
- notice the rhythm of your breathing
- notice how your body feels
- you may notice sounds and your awareness may drift away - that's O.K., just let it go - it will come back when you are ready
- you don't even have to listen to the sound of my voice
- now take some time to remember something pleasant - a time when you really felt that you achieved something
- maybe you felt very good about yourself because of something you were able to do, or able to accomplish
- maybe it was something you were able to be
- let that memory come to you
- perhaps it happened 5, 10 or 15 years ago
- perhaps it was a special occasion
- imagine that time - the sights and sounds associated with it
- recreate how you were feeling at that time
- you may want to learn from that experience
- perhaps you can use your experience in the present - apply that learning to your life now
- go over your experience and finish it
- give yourself some appreciation for that time
- know that it was your accomplishment, your achievement
- use it to do something worthwhile for yourself
- and when you feel that it is time to return to this room you can do that in your own way
- take all the time you need
- as you come back you can take the things you want from the experience
- you can feel even more refreshed, relaxed and confident.

(15 mins.)

b/Debriefing in pairs:
- Share your experience with a partner.
- What was the accomplishment that you imagined?
- What were the most salient details?
- How did it make you feel?
- How did it make you feel about yourself in terms of your level
of self confidence and self esteem? (15 mins.)

c/ Debriefing in the group:
- New discoveries, awarenesses, information, or experiences?
- How can we use our past accomplishments to help us to do the things we want to do now or to meet the challenges of the present?
- Are you able to acknowledge your past achievements and use them to bolster your self confidence? (20 mins.)

Rationale
-to engender a perception of self as one who can achieve or be successful.
-to develop an appreciation for oneself through a recognition and sharing of one's achievements.
-to underscore the positive effects of achievements on self confidence and self esteem.
-sharing achievements in the group elicits validation from the others and provides positive reinforcement for past achievements and the perception of self as an achiever.
-to instill the notion that the confidence gained and the learnings obtained from past achievements can be utilized to achieve now.
-sharing accomplishments augments the group's morale, cohesiveness.

3. DOING THINGS AND FEELING O.K. (100 mins.)

Administrative Procedures

a/ A brief lecturette on how one can utilize one's internal support system (e.g. known strengths, personal resources, positive self statements) to accomplish or perform the things we need to do when we are faced with a goal, challenge, obstacle, problem. Point out the common tendency to ignore one's past successes, strengths and potentials while getting stuck on one's weaknesses, past failures; that is, "short circuiting" the internal support system, through self criticism or "negative self talk". When confronted with an unfulfilled need or challenge which requires some action, attitude may be more important than the actual approach. A shift in attitude from self criticism to supportive self talk can maximize the probability of successful action and goal attainment. Thus, when engaging in an action which will bring us closer to our goals we can enlist the support of our past achievements and known strengths/talents/abilities via supportive self talk.

These ideas will be further expanded and an example will be used to translate the theory into a concrete situation relevant to the participants; for example, many of the members expressed an unfulfilled need for a companion/lover. My example will focus on how this technique can be used to support one's efforts in obtaining such a relationship. (15 mins.)
b/ Request questions on the lecturette from members. Is it clear? Does it make sense to you? (5 mins.)

c/ Pass out note cards and pens.

d/ Instruct members to write at least two items on the cards. These items can be:
- a challenge you presently face
- an unfulfilled need
- an obstacle or problem
- a goal you want to achieve
(write this list on the blackboard)
(10 mins.)

e/ Instructions: "Find a partner and share the items with your partner. Then, discuss the things that you can do to meet the challenge, fulfill the need etc. Try to think of actions or approaches that you have not already taken. (15 mins.)

f/ Now think of the self criticisms you engage in as part of your attitude to these issues in your life. What are some of the things you tell yourself which prevent you from being effective in your approach. Write these on the note cards and share them with your partner. (15 mins.)

g/ Now discuss with your partner the strengths and past successes which relate to the things that you can do to accomplish your goal. Phrase these strengths and successes into supportive self statements. Try to come up with at least two statements per item. A collaborative effort will probably be quite helpfull". (20 mins.)

h/ Questions for group debriefing:
- Were you able to perform the tasks of this exercise? Difficulties?
- What are some of the benefits to using this technique to your self esteem?
- Can you think of any problems or difficulties involved in using this approach in real life?
- Can you see yourself using this technique in everyday life?
- In what situations? How? (20 mins.)

Rationale

- to learn a simple cognitive restructuring technique which can be applied in a wide variety of situations to facilitate successful behaviour and foster the development of a more positive self image.
- to become aware of one's self defeating attitudes, self criticisms and internalized obstacles to achievement.
- to become aware of how one's strengths and resources can be used as part of one's internal support system to increase the chances of successful action and goal attainment.
- to have the opportunity to practise with this technique, test it on one's real life issues.
--to become aware that one has untapped resources and potentials which can be used to obtain what one wants.
--to instil an awareness of the degree to which one chooses a particular attitude toward oneself and life's challenges (i.e. to highlight the notion that the self image is to a large extent self-created and the we have the power to change it.).
--engaging the members in a common task fosters cohesion and cooperation.
--disclosure of self-supportive statements enhances development of group intimacy through shared success and reinforces the individual member for success in this particular task.

4. **SUM UP AND EVALUATION** (10 mins.)

See Exercise 4., SESSION ONE for administration and rationale.

**Homework:**

"For next week I would like you to think of a common human emotion, anger. I would like you to think of times when you are angry. What are the circumstances? How do you express your anger? How does your anger and the way you express it affect your self esteem? You may want to notice what happens to make you angry in the upcoming week, what happens when you express it or don't express it and how you feel about yourself afterwards."
SESSION SEVEN

1. HOW ARE YOU? (15 mins.)

See Exercise 1., SESSION FOUR.

2. ANGER (85 mins.)

Administrative Procedures

a/ To introduce this discussion of anger begin with an exercise in "naming" anger: "Anger comes disguised in a variety of forms. An indication of this diversity is the number of different names we have for anger. What names do we give for anger?"
Write the names on the blackboard. (10 mins.)

b/ Instructions: "Pick a partner. Work with someone you haven't worked with before. Discuss the last time you felt angry. Describe the circumstances and/or the people involved. What happened? Also, discuss what you did with your anger. Did you express it? How? What was the end result of this experience in terms of the way you felt about yourself, your self esteem?" (20 mins.)

c/Reconvene the group to discuss how we treat anger. Ask the members what they did with their anger and write their responses on the board. Provide a conceptual framework for what we do with our anger:
- swallow it (Produces self hated, self blame)
- put it off ("gunny sacking")
- dump it (on someone who its not intended for)
- project it (blame someone else)
- dilute it ("oh, its allright, it doesn't matter")
- work it off (jogging, scrubbing the floor) (20 mins.)

d/ Provide a short explanation of certain helpful ways to deal with anger:
- "Own" your anger, that is, recognize that its yours instead of diverting it through projection, swallowing, avoiding etc.
- verbalize your anger and take responsibility for it: instead of saying "YOU make me angry". You can say: "I am angry because you..." (fill in the blank with the anger producing behaviour)
- by saying "I" you accept that you are responsible for your own emotion and behaviour, not someone else (you control your own anger).
- secondly, by declaring that you are angry at someone's behaviour and not the person, you've let the person know in a more specific way what you are angry about.
- they are then in a much better position to do something about it. (15 mins.)

e/ Debriefing Questions:
- How does the way you deal with your anger affect the way you
feel about yourself, your self esteem?
-What do you think would be the best way to deal with your anger so that your self esteem and the self esteem of others would be maximized
-Does the method of dealing with anger that I just described make sense to you?
-Do you think you could use it?
(25 mins.)

Rationale

-to develop an awareness of the different manifestations of anger and different ways of dealing with anger/
-to understand how one deals with one's own anger.
-to know how one's own preferred method and other methods of handling anger enhance or diminish self acceptance and self esteem.
-to offer the choice of a method of expression which maximizes the potential to preserve or enhance self esteem.

3. FACE PAINTING (60 mins.)

Administrative Procedures

a/ Introduce this activity with the following comments: "Now I'd like you to engage in an activity which may be appropriate for you to get to know each other in another way."

b/This activity requires a demonstration. Demonstrate by gently tracing out some of the features of the co-leader's face while describing what you are doing: "Now I'm painting your nose . . ."

c/ Instruct the members to form pairs and request that they decide how they're going to go about this activity. First of all decide who is going to do the painting and who will be painted. Inform the participants that they should reverse their roles after about ten minutes. (20 mins.)

d/Debriefing in the Group: 
-What did you discover about yourself that you didn't know before? 
-New awarenesses, insights?
-What implications does this activity have for self esteem?
-How does your ability to give and receive affection affect the way you feel about yourself?
(20 mins.)

Rationale

-to contribute to the development of intimacy amongst the members through a risk taking activity and exchange of physical affection.
-to discover how one responds to a more intimate kind of touching and close interpersonal proximity.
-non-verbal risk taking may generalize to more intimate
"personal") self disclosures.
-to introduce the exploration of another factor which may influence self esteem: one's ability to give and receive physical affection and appreciation.

4. SUM UP AND EVALUATION (15 mins.)

See Exercise 4., SESSION ONE.

Homework

a/ "Next week will be your last chance to speak to the group as it now exists. So, over the next week you may think of things that you wanted to say to the group but didn't for whatever reason. If you have any of this "unfinished business", keep track of it and you will have the opportunity next week to inform us about it."

b/ "Since it is our last session next week, I would like you to think of a "going away gift" for each participant in this group. The gift can be anything at all: something concrete or symbolic, tangible or intangible, but in some way related to what you know about the person its intended for. You may want to write out a list to help you remember what you've chosen as gifts."
SESSION EIGHT

1. UNFINISHED BUSINESS (15 mins.)

Administrative Procedures

a/ Give members the opportunity to disclose something that they have been keeping from the group, or have not had a chance to express.

b/ If a member has no unfinished business request that they let the group know what they are bringing with them to the session. (e.g. mood, concerns, new awarenesses etc.)

Rationale

-to begin the process of leaving the group by first dealing with issues which have been collected and buried over the last seven weeks.
-to provide an opportunity for an unstructured form of self disclosure.
-to prepare for the session by dealing with left over concerns which may hinder the process of saying good-bye.

2. WISE OLD PERSON FANTASY (30 mins.)

Administrative Procedures

a/ Facilitator explains that this exercise is a guided fantasy in which participants will be able to call upon their own higher wisdom.

b/ Ask participants to sit back, relax, take a few deep breaths to center within themselves, and close their eyes. Facilitator then instructs the members to picture themselves in their imagination to be in a large, open beautiful meadow: "Look around the meadow and see the trees and grass and flowers. Smell the aroma of the meadow. Now walk toward a mountain beyond the meadow, and slowly ascend the mountain. At the top you see a building in which there is a large elevated throne with a wise old person sitting on it. Slowly you approach the wise old person and ask this question: What do I need to raise my self esteem? (Pause for a few minutes for participants to hear their response). When you have heard your reply, turn around, realizing that you can always return, walk down the mountain, back through the meadow, and when you are ready, come back to this room and open your eyes." (5 mins.)

c/ "Share in small groups of four the answers given by the wise old person." (15 mins.)

d/ A few volunteers may share their replies with the entire group. (10 mins.)
Rationale

-to enable participants to reach into their inner wisdom, or "higher self", to find ways to raise their self esteem.
-to encourage participants to take responsibility for their own personal growth in the area of self esteem.

3. STROKING (60 mins.)

Administrative Procedures

a/ Explain "stroking" to the group; that is, the rest of the group will compliment the focus person by describing what they have observed of his strengths, attributes, talents throughout the workshop. Everyone is entitled to provide as many compliments as they can think of and they can also follow their hunches about the person's hidden strengths and potentials.

b/ Encourage the focus person to accept the positive feedback; to "drink in" the feedback and to be careful not to deny, discount, minimize or qualify the strokes.

c/ Each person will take his turn to be the focus person: the one to be "stroked". Each person will receive a maximum of five minutes of stroking.

d/ After the five minutes has expired the focus person will be asked to provide a summary of the positive feedback he has received. (Allow 50 mins. for "a" through "d")

e/ Group debriefing:
-Did you discover anything new about yourself?  
-How did you respond to the positive feedback about yourself? 
-Were you able to accept the feedback or did you feel an urge to deny it? (10 mins.)

Rationale

-to help a person recognize his strengths, capabilities and potential.
-to experience deserved positive feedback from the group.
-to help participants become accustomed to accepting praise and compliments, rather than discounting them.
-to practise validating others.
-to experience heightened self esteem through group validation.
-exchange of positive feedback encourages an atmosphere of warmth and affection in the group: Schutz's (1973) stage of intimacy.

4. GROUP MASSAGE (30 mins.)

Administrative Procedures

a/ Divide the group into two smaller groups of four or five.
b/ One focus person will be massaged by the rest of the group. The focus person will choose how he wants to be massaged. He should instruct the rest of the group on where and how he wants to be massaged. Every member will have the opportunity to be massaged for about five minutes. Participation is voluntary. (20 mins.)

c/ Debriefing:
- How did you feel during the massage?
- How are you feeling now?
- How do massage and other forms of physical affection affect the way you feel about yourself? (10 mins.)

Rationale
- to experience group affection, touch and caring.
- to express affection, touch and caring.
- to let oneself be nurtured by the group and to note effects on self esteem.
- to observe effects of massage/physical affection on one's body, self esteem.

5. THE GIFT (45 mins.)

Administrative Procedures

a/ The introduction will describe some of the feelings and thoughts the participants may by having over the prospect of saying good-bye. Introduce the idea of a symbolic gift as a way in which we can validate each other and our experiences here. When we remember the gifts that we received we will be reminded of the people we have come to know, our experience here and our own self worth.

b/ Explain the procedure: "One member will be the focus person who will receive the gifts from the rest of the group. The others will describe their gifts to this person who only has to accept them. Every person will have the opportunity to receive gifts from the rest of the group. Afterwards, they can respond to the group if they so desire." (45 mins.)

Rationale
- to create an opportunity for an appropriate closure.
- to conclude the workshop with an experience related to an important theme in the workshop: the effect of validation on self esteem.
- to provide a context in which the members can say good-bye to one another.
- to leave the members with reminders of their own self worth.
APPENDIX B: INSTRUMENTS

1. Rosenberg's Scale Of Self Esteem:

The questionnaire is a series of ten statements. Each represents a way in which you may view yourself. I am interested in the extent to which you agree or disagree that the statement is a way in which YOU view yourself.

Read each statement. Then, indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree by circling a number UNDER each statement. The numbers and their meaning are indicated below.

If you agree strongly ...............circle 1
If you agree .......................circle 2
If you are not sure ...............circle 3
If you disagree ....................circle 4
If you disagree strongly ...........circle 5

Be sure to answer every statement. If you find that the numbers to be used in answering do not adequately indicate your own view of yourself, use the one which is closest to the way you feel. Please do not discuss your responses with anyone.

(1) I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.
   1  2  3  4  5

(2) I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
   1  2  3  4  5

(3) All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.
   1  2  3  4  5

(4) I am able to do things as well as most other people.
   1  2  3  4  5

(5) I feel I do not have much to be proud of.
   1  2  3  4  5

(6) I take a positive attitude toward myself.
   1  2  3  4  5

(7) On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
   1  2  3  4  5

(8) I wish I could have more respect for myself.
   1  2  3  4  5

(9) I certainly feel useless at times.
   1  2  3  4  5

(10) At times I think I am no good at all.
    1  2  3  4  5
2. **Preliminary and Summary Interview Questions:**

**Preliminary Interview**

1. What does self esteem mean to you?
2. Given your understanding of self esteem, how do you feel and/or think about yourself now?
3. What facilitates your self esteem?
4. What hinders your self esteem?
5. With regards to your self esteem, what do you want to get out of this workshop?
6. What are your goals and expectations for this workshop?

**Summary Interview**

1. Given your understanding of self esteem, how do you think and/or feel about yourself now?
2. Do you think there's been a change in your self esteem since our first interview? If so, how has it changed?
3. In your significant events journal you have become aware of events, experiences and activities that affect your self esteem in a positive or negative way. Since the time of our first interview what has happened or what have you done or experienced that facilitated your self esteem?
4. Since the time of our first interview what has happened or what have you done or experienced that hindered your self esteem?
5. Describe how your goals and expectations for the workshop were fulfilled or not fulfilled.
1. Letter of Introduction: Experimental Group:

Dear ________:

I am writing to inform you of a program which you may be interested in. I am sponsoring a workshop in self esteem to be conducted by Mr. R. Boychuck, M.A. candidate in Counselling Psychology at U.B.C. The program consists of eight weekly seminars of approximately three hours duration. The participants in this program who will comprise a group of between eight and ten members will engage in group discussions and experiential exercises designed to explore and enhance self esteem.

In addition, Mr. Boychuck will be conducting interviews before and after the workshop to assess its effectiveness. He will also request that participants submit an ongoing journal of significant events related to self esteem. The data from the interviews and the journal will be analyzed by Mr. Boychuck for the purposes of his M.A. thesis requirements. The anonymity of those who decide to participate will be assured. The data will be seen only by Mr. Boychuck and his advisor, Dr. L. Cochran, of the U.B.C. Counselling Psychology Department. The data will be coded to protect the identity of participants.

Participation in this workshop is completely voluntary. Those who decide to participate in this workshop are accorded the right to determine the extent of their participation and the right to withdraw at any time. Under no circumstances will withdrawal or refusal to participate jeopardize the individual's perogative to seek further services from me or from any agency with which I am involved.

If you have any questions regarding the contents of this letter and/or you are interested in the workshop please contact me, Richard Dopson, at your convenience. If you should decide to participate, I will then refer you to Mr. Boychuck.

Sincerely Yours,

Richard Dopson, 
Psychologist
2. **Subject Consent Form: Experimental Group:**

**SUBJECT CONSENT FORM**

All individuals who decide to participate in this research project entitled "Discovering Support in Yourself and Others, A Self Esteem Workshop", are required to read and sign this consent form.

Data collected from your involvement in the program will be used by the workshop facilitator, Mr. Randy Boychuck, to meet the requirements of an M.A. thesis. His thesis advisor is Dr. Larry Cochran, Dept. of Counselling Psychology, U.B.C. Mr. Boychuck will also be working under the sponsorship of Richard Dopson, registered psychologist.

The purpose of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of a program designed by Mr. Boychuck to enhance self esteem. By studying participants' responses to the program we hope to discover those characteristics of the design and implementation of the program which contribute to improved self esteem.

If you decide to participate in this program, you will first be interviewed to obtain a description of your personal goals and expectations for the workshop. You will be requested at this time to respond to a short questionnaire.

The workshop itself consists of eight weekly sessions, each approximately three hours in length. During these sessions you will be asked to engage in group discussions and experiential activities designed to explore and enhance self esteem. Throughout the eight weeks you will be asked to keep a record of significant events related to your self esteem. This record will be submitted to Mr. Boychuck to be used as part of his evaluation of the workshop.

A summary interview will be conducted in order to obtain your evaluation of the workshop and to re-administer the questionnaire. The two interviews will be tape recorded. Your consent for this tape recording will be assumed if you decide to sign this consent form.

The total amount of time required of each participant should not exceed thirty hours over a ten week period.

The identity of those who participate in the study will be kept confidential except to the other members of the group also participating in the study. All data from questionnaires, tape recordings and significant events records will be properly coded to ensure anonymity. Participants' names will not be attached to any piece of data. After completing the analysis of the data the tape recordings, written material, and questionnaires will be destroyed.
Participation in this workshop is completely voluntary. Those who decide to participate are accorded the right to determine the extent of their participation and the right to withdraw at any time. 'Under no circumstances will withdrawal or refusal to participate jeopardize the individual's perogative to seek further services from Mr. Dopson or Mr. Boychuck.

If you have any questions regarding the procedures outlined above, please feel free to inquire. Mr. Boychuck will respond to any of your questions and he will also provide an opportunity to debrief you regarding his findings as summarized in his thesis.

I, ____________________________, hereby consent to participate in the above mentioned research project entitled "Discovering Support in Yourself and Others, A Self Esteem Workshop", and I have received one copy of this consent form.
3. **Letter of Introduction: Control Group**

Dear __________:

I am writing to request your participation in a research project with which I am involved. It is a study of self esteem which will be conducted by Mr. Randy Boychuck, M.A. candidate in Counselling Psychology at the University of British Columbia. If you decide to participate you will be requested to complete a ten item questionnaire on two separate occasions. The interim period between administrations will be approximately eight weeks. The test itself will require approximately ten minutes to complete. Those who complete the questionnaire on the two occasions specified will later have the opportunity to be debriefed by Mr. Boychuck regarding the findings of his research on self esteem.

The anonymity of those who decide to participate will be assured. Participation in this study by completing the questionnaire is entirely voluntary. Those who decide to participate have the right to withdraw at any time. Under no circumstances will refusal to participate or withdrawal jeopardize the individual's prerogative to seek further services from me or from any agency with which I am involved.

Should you have any questions regarding the contents of this letter and/or you are interested in participating please contact me, Richard Dopson at your convenience. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely Yours,

Richard Dopson,
Psychologist.
INTRODUCTION TO QUESTIONNAIRE

I would like to request your co-operation in filling out the attached questionnaire. It is part of a research project that I, Randy Boychuck, am conducting to fulfill the requirements for my M.A. thesis in the Department of Counselling Psychology at the University of British Columbia. The purpose of the project is to study the effectiveness of a program designed to explore and enhance self esteem. If you should decide to complete the questionnaire, you will have an opportunity to discuss the results of this research with me after I have completed the thesis write-up.

The questionnaire consists of ten items to which you will be requested to respond. It should take no longer than ten minutes to complete. You will also be asked to respond to this same questionnaire approximately ten weeks from now. Thus, the maximum time required should not exceed one half hour.

If you decide to complete the questionnaire do not write your name on any part of it. If the questionnaire is completed it will be assumed that you have given your consent to use the completed questionnaire as data for the purposes of this present research endeavour. The identity of those who complete the questionnaire will be kept confidential through the use of a coding system. After the research has been completed the questionnaires will be destroyed.

Participation in this study by completing this questionnaire is completely voluntary. Under no circumstances will withdrawal or refusal to participate jeopardize your perogative to seek assistance from either Mr. Boychuck or Mr. Richard Dopson.
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"DISCOVERING SUPPORT IN YOURSELF AND OTHERS"

AN EXPERIENTIAL WORKSHOP FOR GAY MEN

Providing a context to explore issues affecting SELF ESTEEM and SELF CONFIDENCE: Self image, coming out, intimacy, relationships, anger, loneliness, effective communication, support networks, etc. Sponsored by Richard Dopson, registered psychologist. Workshop facilitator, Randy Boychuck, M.A. candidate.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION