

MOVING ON

A Program for At-Risk Women

REVISED AND EXPANDED



MODULE 4 
FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Expressing Emotions

Marilyn Van Dieten, Ph.D.

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Hazelden®

Hazelden
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Editor's note

The names, details, and circumstances may have been changed to protect the privacy of those mentioned in this publication.

This publication is not intended as a substitute for the advice of health care professionals.

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MOVING ON

A Program for At-Risk Women

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Moving On is made up of the following components:



← ***Modules 1 and 6 Facilitator's Guide: Transitions***

Module 1 is designed to engage the women and motivate them to participate. Module 6 prepares the women to transition out of the program.



← ***Module 2 Facilitator's Guide: Listening and Being Heard***

Module 2 provides effective communication skills to help women initiate and maintain healthy relationships.



← ***Module 3 Facilitator's Guide: Building Healthy Relationships***

Module 3 explores the impact of unhealthy relationships and domestic violence.



← ***Module 4 Facilitator's Guide: Expressing Emotions***

Module 4 focuses on expressing and celebrating emotions.



← ***Module 5 Facilitator's Guide:
Making Connections and Staying Healthy***

Module 5 addresses real-life challenges regarding women's relationships with themselves and their connections with others.



← ***CD-ROM and DVD***

The CD-ROM includes participant handouts and facilitator supplements. The DVD features the *Moving On* lead trainer as she demonstrates six activities with female participants from the Iowa Correctional Institution for Women.




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How to Access the Resources on the *Moving On* CD-ROM

The *Moving On* CD-ROM contains electronic versions of the participant handouts and facilitator supplements that you'll need for this module. All of these resources are in PDF format and can be accessed using Adobe Reader. If you do not have Adobe Reader, you can download it for free at www.adobe.com.

The "Materials Needed" list at the beginning of each session indicates which facilitator supplements and participant handouts will be needed from the CD-ROM. Whenever you see this icon  in this guide, this means a handout or supplement will be used in the exercise or activity.

To access these resources, put the disk in your computer's CD-ROM player. Open your version of Adobe Reader. Then open the documents by finding them on your CD-ROM drive. These resources cannot be modified, but they may be printed for use without concern for copyright infringement.





Module 4: Expressing Emotions

Module 4
contains these
sessions →

Session 1: Exploring Feelings

Session 2: Reacting to the Outside World

Session 3: Listening to My Inner Messages

Session 4: Challenging Harmful Self-Talk

Session 5: Celebrating Emotions

Emotions play a vital role not only for survival but also for enhancing overall life satisfaction. Unfortunately, many women learn to ignore or suppress their emotions in an effort to avoid social conflict or to protect themselves from others. Women also learn to detach from their emotions as a survival strategy because at times it is just too painful, scary, or unacceptable to feel them. By disregarding our emotions, we fail to recognize important signals from our bodies and, if we do not learn how to manage our emotions, then we never really learn to understand and appreciate them. The end result is that when emotions become too painful, we are more likely to lash out or to respond in harmful or unproductive ways.

In module 4, the women are encouraged to feel comfortable experiencing an array of emotions and to learn to celebrate them rather than fear or suppress them. The question inevitably encountered in discussing this concept is: “If all emotions are natural and normal and you want us to respect them, then why should we try to change them?”

Maria’s story, presented during module 4, illustrates this point. It is normal, natural, and arguably life-saving for Maria to feel fear and anger when Jose behaved abusively toward her. Her experience of anger and fear is not wrong. After she

left Jose, she continued to feel anger and fear. At some point, however, Maria recognized that she was transferring that anger to her children. She acknowledged that the experience of anger was normal, but she realized it was contributing to negative interactions with her children. She eventually made the decision to deliberately move from feeling intense levels of anger to a different feeling that permitted her to address the real problem: her anxiety about supporting her children by herself.

Emotions may be natural and normal, but for many women they can become far too intense and painful. The *Moving On* program seeks to help women feel comfortable experiencing emotions and talking about them. It also seeks to introduce the skills and resources necessary to intentionally change an emotion that causes hurt and pain.

Module 4 provides information, increases awareness, and gives women the tools to strategically change emotions that they feel are no longer useful. The tools and strategies, such as the *Reflection Diary*, can be used to address a variety of emotions including anger, anxiety, fear, and depression.

Participation in this module should not be used in place of other therapeutic interventions. Given the importance of biology and genetics in determining the propensity of some emotional disorders (e.g., schizophrenia, obsessive-compulsive disorder, bipolar disorder), medication may be necessary for stabilization and recovery.

What Are Emotions?

Module 4 continually emphasizes the primary characteristics of emotions.

Body

Emotions involve a total bodily reaction and the body is both the receiver and the sender of emotions. The answering machine provides a simple metaphor to explain these processes.

The limbic system in the brain is the seat of all emotions. It generates split-second decisions based on incoming stimuli that alert the brain of danger, pleasure, or pain. The amygdala (tiny structure in the limbic system) is like a telephone answering machine, except it registers all calls. It cannot screen out calls, but records everything. This is an involuntary reaction—you cannot control it because it is instinctual. If something happens in your environment and you perceive it to be threatening, a message is sent and recorded. This in turn activates the central

nervous system. If the perceived threat is not quickly eliminated, the adrenal glands are activated and they secrete epinephrine and norepinephrine to strengthen and sustain the central nervous system response. The person is then prepared to fight, flee, or freeze, and the body immediately reacts.

By listening closely to our bodies and becoming aware of the physical cues, we can get in touch with our feelings. In fact, the body will signal when we are starting to feel an emotion intensely. This is important because most people can cope with emotions when felt at a slight or moderate level. However, when the physical sensation becomes too intense, we have difficulty maintaining control, we can't concentrate or problem-solve, and we elevate the risk of reacting in a way that we or others regret.

Mind

Emotions are linked to what we think. Thoughts involve internal language or self-talk that can serve both descriptive and prescriptive functions. As we experience events, we are both defining what we see and creating what we feel. Each of us labels or gives the content to our feelings based on how we view the external world.

Behavior

Our emotional state affects how we respond to an event. Sadness and to a greater extent depression often lead to inactivity or withdrawal from events that were important and satisfying in the past. In contrast, strong feelings of anger may lead to negative reactions such as verbal or physical aggression.

Experience

Feelings involve the mind, body, and behavior, and the interaction of all three components is influenced by past experience. The messages we received in childhood can influence how we interpret events around us and subsequently how our bodies respond. Though it is difficult to alter the impact of history, it is also important to realize that we can alter the environment and our life conditions to create new experiences. By focusing on the things over which we do have control, we can in fact influence how we feel, think, and behave.

Calming Techniques

Each session in module 4 introduces the women to a different calming technique. Scripts are provided for facilitators to use in teaching these techniques. The techniques are portable; that is, they can be used wherever the women might be experiencing difficult emotions. As the women become skilled in these methods,

they also become increasingly more effective in decreasing the intensity of negative emotions or painful triggers.

Remember to use the Resource Board and Successful Strategies Board in the sessions throughout this module. See pages 18–19 in the program manual for instructions on using these boards.





SESSION 1

Exploring Feelings

In this session, the women label and define a wide range of emotions. They are encouraged to explore the origin of emotions and the mind-body connection.



GOALS

- Begin to define emotions and explore the role that emotions play in enhancing life satisfaction.
- Help the women to identify and label emotions.
- Focus on the importance of experiencing emotions and intentionally changing painful or hurtful emotions.
- Introduce a calming technique: Emotional S.O.S. Scale.



MATERIALS NEEDED

Facilitator Supplements:

- The Mai Color Glossary
- Script: Emotional S.O.S. Scale

Participant Handouts:

- 1A: What Are Emotions?
- 1B: The Mai Color Glossary
- Personal Change Plan
- How I Am Doing

Other Materials:

- Set of six colored markers, crayons, pens, or pencils (one set for each participant)
- Flip chart
- Balloon or bottle filled with liquid
- Blank sheets of paper

continued

SESSION 1

Exploring Feelings

continued

- Successful Strategies Board
- Resource Board
- Index cards or sticky notes (for the Successful Strategies Board and Resource Board)



PREPARATION NEEDED

Prepare the following flip charts:

- Flip chart with title Emotions and two columns: Like and Dislike (see page 11)
- Flip chart with four columns: 1. Emotion; 2. Intensity; 3. Physical Cues; 4. Thoughts (see page 13)
- Flip chart with the outline of a woman's body (see page 16 and the participant handout for session 2)
- Flip chart with table Six Core Emotions (see page 17)
- Flip chart with example of handout 1B: The Mai Color Glossary (see page 19 and facilitator copy)
- Flip chart with the Emotional S.O.S. Scale (see page 21 and facilitator script)



OUTLINE

Part 1: Reviewing (30 minutes)

- Welcome (*optional*)
- Review Personal Change Plan

Part 2: Discovering (75 minutes)

- Emotions: What They Are and Where They Come From (20 minutes)
- Six Core Feelings (20 minutes)
- What Happens When You Feel? (25 minutes)
- Emotional S.O.S. Scale (10 minutes)

Part 3: Reflecting (15 minutes)

- Building My Portfolio

REVIEWING



Reviewing is an introductory part of each session and requires about 30 minutes to complete. (Additional time will be needed if there are new participants to welcome to the group.) It is designed to provide the women with the opportunity to process new information, to enhance skill transfer, and to assist in building self-efficacy. Instructions for part 1 are in chapter 4 of the program manual (see page 31).

Welcome (Optional)

Moving On offers a continuous intake so it is possible that new participants will join the group at the beginning of each module. Safety and support are a critical component of the program. Therefore, new members should be welcomed, introduced, and provided with the opportunity to review and add comments to the group guidelines. (See chapter 4, pages 33–37, in the program manual.)

Review Personal Change Plan

During module 1, participants developed collages that characterized their vision of success and established personal goals for one or more of the four major domains: family, career/vocational, community/peers, and personal. Participants review the progress they have made toward these goals and update their ***Personal Change Plans*** during the first and last session of this module. See chapter 2 (pages 17–18) of the program manual for additional information about the ***Personal Change Plan*** and chapter 4 (pages 39–41) of the program manual for step-by-step instructions on how to review the ***Personal Change Plan***.



• • • PART 2 (75 MINUTES) • • •

DISCOVERING

Discovering is the largest part of each session and is designed to introduce information and provide opportunities for skill acquisition.

Note: The primary agenda for this session is to demonstrate that emotions should be honored and celebrated. When we learn to experience our feelings and to understand them, our lives become enriched and we gain a sense of freedom and purpose.

EMOTIONS: WHAT THEY ARE AND WHERE THEY COME FROM (20 minutes)
Step 1:

Begin by making the point that feelings are beneficial for survival and energy.

One of the biggest challenges of the Moving On program is to learn to know and celebrate your emotions.

Our emotions can help us to survive. They signal us when things are going well and when we need to pay attention. They can also energize and motivate us. But to get these benefits, we have to be comfortable with our emotions.

Step 2:

Ask the women to identify the emotions they enjoy and the emotions they dislike or try to push away or ignore. Record emotions they like on the left side of the flip chart you prepared and emotions that they ignore or dislike on the right.

Emotions

Like	Dislike

Ask the women:

What emotions do you enjoy feeling?

Are there any emotions that you try to ignore or push away or that you really dislike?

Why do we do this?

Step 3:

Make the point that many of us have learned to fear and deny unpleasant emotions.

The dilemma is that many of us were taught to hide our emotions—to push them aside. As children you may have received the message that being upset—crying, being sad, angry, or frustrated—is not appropriate. Some of us may have learned to push our emotions away or to ignore them.

The problem is that when we deny or pretend that our emotions don't exist, we become flat and we start to believe that we have no purpose. Then something can happen around us, and we find ourselves exploding without warning.

Step 4:

Use the metaphor of weeds in a garden. Ask them:

Feelings are like weeds that have runners under the ground. What happens if you pull out the weed in one area of the garden?

Right . . . if we pull out the weed in one place, the weed is likely to show up somewhere else. We may try to suppress our feelings, but they tend to pop up when we least expect them. We may try to ignore our frustration with someone's behavior, and then one day the slightest thing that person does can cause us to explode. Not only do we lose a sense of control but also, when we stuff our feelings away into our bodies and ignore them, we leave ourselves open to health problems.

In order to get the full benefit from your emotions, you have to be in touch with them. You also have to learn what to do with feelings you dislike—the unpleasant ones—when they are uncovered.

In this session, we will start to explore emotions and their many benefits. We will also look at how you can get in touch with your feelings and be in control of them.

Step 5:

Distribute handout *1A: What Are Emotions?*



Let's spend a few minutes describing emotions, what they are, and where they come from. I am going to read you a story. As I read the story, try to put yourself in the shoes of the main character. Picture how you would react if you were in the same situation. After I read the story, indicate your responses on the handout.

Step 6:

Read the scenario:

You have been working two jobs over the last year so that you can put money aside to complete the requirements to be a dental hygienist. Your goal is to pay off all of your debts and then save enough for tuition, six months' rent, and living expenses. You plan to enter school right after the holidays, and you feel as if this is the start of a new life.

Earlier today you received a phone call from an old friend who wanted to meet with you. Despite your busy schedule, you managed to meet her for coffee before the night shift. She informed you that she is really sick and that she needs money for an operation. You felt devastated for her and obliged to help her. She did not hesitate to accept your offer, and you made arrangements to give her the money.

You wrote her a check, and a week later you learned from a friend that she is not really ill but is using again.

Step 7:

Give participants a few minutes to indicate their responses on the handout. Ask them to share their reactions. Record their responses on the flip chart you prepared:

1. Emotion	2. Intensity	3. Physical Cues	4. Thoughts

Let's use your reactions to this situation to describe what we know about feelings. First, who wants to start? Tell us what emotions you circled.

Make the point that often we experience more than one emotion. In fact, we can be angry and hurt at the same time.

How many of you experienced more than one emotion? This is not unusual. Now what emotion was strongest for you? Record the primary emotion under column 1.

Tell us how intensely you felt that emotion. On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being very strong, how strong was it?

What physical cues did you experience?

Repeat this sequence for a few more of the women. Leave the column under “thoughts” blank at this point.

Emphasize that emotions involve a bodily reaction. Point to the responses that they provided on the flip chart and say:

One of the things about emotions is that we feel them in our bodies. When we get excited or upset, our bodies react. What happens in your body when you feel angry? Right . . . you might notice that your jaws are clenched, that your heart races, and so forth. The same holds true for other emotions.

Discuss why it is important to listen to our bodies.

The fact is that when we are “emotionally” excited, our bodies react. Can you think of some reasons why it might be important to be aware of how your body reacts?

Right! If you are aware of what is going on in your body, then you can use these physical cues as a signal. A strong signal suggests that you had better pay attention. If we listen closely to our bodies, the signals we receive can act like an “instant messenger” telling us to prepare for action.

What do you think might happen if you ignore your body? That’s right. Feelings actually get stored in the body. People who continually ignore these signals find themselves blowing up unexpectedly or experiencing all kinds of health-related problems.

Step 8:

At this point, demonstrate how emotions build and then explode or overflow by doing one of the following: (1) fill a balloon with air until it bursts or (2) take a bottle that is full of liquid and add more to it.

Step 9:

Move on to the final column on the flip chart. At this point, you are going to illustrate that emotions not only involve the body, they also involve the mind.

Okay, there is one more thing that we need to discuss to understand our emotions. Earlier I read you the story and asked you what you felt and how your body reacted. I want to go back to the chart and fill in the final column.

[Name of woman], you said earlier that you felt [emotion]. What were you telling yourself that led you to feel [emotion]?

Step 10:

Repeat this process for the remaining women who responded earlier. Make the point that even though everyone was faced with the same situation, they had different thoughts and emotions in reacting to it.

It's interesting that all of you were asked to react to the same situation, and yet there are different emotional reactions from different people. Why do you think that is? (Some expected responses: we are all different; it's how you look at the situation; it tells what you really care about; it shows how close you are to the other woman.)

Right, even though all of you were presented with the same scenario, you felt and experienced different things because emotions come from how we view the situation.

The fact is, feelings don't just pop up out of the blue. You give your feelings meaning by how you view the situation. They arise from what we tell ourselves about the situation. Those of you who felt angry told yourself, "My friend had no right to do this to me." Those of you who felt hurt told yourself, "Wow, I can't believe she could betray me this way. This is really awful." Those of you who felt sad told yourself, "I guess she is in really rough shape or she would never have hurt me this way."

Step 11:

Further illustrate the importance of *what we think* with this brief story:

An old tale from India tells of a woman who encounters a snake while walking on a dimly lit road at dusk. She is frozen with fear until someone comes along and points out that the "snake" is only a coiled rope left by the roadside. In an instant, the woman's panic turns to relief. This story is told to teach an important principle: the world is as you see it.

Emotions emerge from our thoughts, our beliefs, and our own imaginings. We often say that so-and-so made us angry, sad, and so forth, but the truth is that no one and no thing outside of us can make us feel anything. Our feelings arise from how we view what is happening around us.



"We've been using *Moving On* for a little more than ten years now. It has been one of the best programs, if not the best program, we have used. *Moving On* works for us. It's female oriented, it's gender responsive, and it addresses all the needs that the women have."

— Patti Wachtendorf, Warden, Iowa Correctional Institution for Women



According to the United States Bureau of Justice Statistics, the total number of female state and federal prison inmates has grown 5 percent each year since 1995, compared to 3.3 percent average annual growth for male prisoners. Considering that women often serve as family caregivers and that their incarceration affects the entire household, this disturbing statistic carries widespread implications for society.

To address this important issue, Hazelden has created *Moving On: A Program for At-Risk Women*. This gender-specific, manualized program provides women with alternatives to criminal activity by helping them identify and mobilize personal and community resources.

Moving On is organized around four main themes: encouraging personal responsibility and enhancing motivation for change; expanding connections and building healthy relationships; skill enhancement, development, and maintenance; and relaxation and stress management. The complete program is delivered in five facilitator's guides (*Transitions*, *Listening and Being Heard*, *Building Healthy Relationships*, *Expressing Emotions*, and *Making Connections and Staying Healthy*), a CD-ROM that contains the program manual and reproducible handouts, and a powerful DVD that features real women in the process of going through the program.

This dynamic program is flexible and open-ended to allow continuous intake of new participants and draws on the evidence-based treatment models of relational theory, motivational interviewing, and cognitive-behavioral therapy. It has been successfully administered to adult women in a number of correctional settings, including community corrections as well as state- and federal-level institutions.

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