CHAPTER – IV

METHODOLOGY

The present study aimed at designing Strength Building Program (SBP) to educate youth about the concept and relevance of gratitude and forgiveness in our lives and to enhance existing levels of the above said strengths, which in turn is further expected to spill over its effect and enhance their happiness level as well. For this purpose, pre and post training scores of youth on gratitude, forgiveness and happiness were compared to see the efficacy of the program.

4.1 SAMPLE

4.1.1 Pilot sample

Initially prior to the selection of final sample for the present study, researcher conducted a pilot study in order to assess degree or prevalence of gratitude and forgiveness among youth. Sample comprised of female college students (aged 18 – 21 years) from colleges of Chandigarh. Hundred students were randomly selected and were administered Values in Action Inventory of Strengths. On the basis of scoring of test, which is a likert scale, the obtained scores showed the following trend:

- Out of 100 students, 68 students were found to be low on strengths like gratitude and forgiveness.
- The hierarchy of some of the character strengths from lowest to highest prevalence was:
  1. Gratitude
  2. Forgiveness
  3. Kindness
  4. Hope
  5. Curiosity
The pilot study gave researcher a clue that approximately 65 to 70% of students were low on both the strengths of gratitude and forgiveness; consequently, accordingly final sample was planned out for the present research.

4.1.2 Final sample

A total of 400 students from various colleges of Chandigarh were targeted for the study. The inclusion criterion for the sample of the study was as follows:

- Age would range from 18-22 years
- Sample encompassed females only (unmarried)
- Females from intact families and urban middle class were included
- Students enrolled in bachelor courses only were comprised for the present study (Government and private colleges)

They were administered Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS; Peterson and Seligman, 2003) and their scores were noted down. Out of these 400 students, 160 were found to be low on strength of gratitude and 164 students were found to be low on forgiveness. Finally, 160 students (commonly found to be low on both the character strengths of gratitude and forgiveness) were formed as the participants for administration of Strength Building Program. Further, out of 160 students, 100 students were randomly selected for the formation of experimental or the training group and were also divided into groups of 10 each. Each experimental group was trained on strengths of gratitude and forgiveness for four days (two days to each strength) and follow up was done after a gap of 30 days from administration of Strength Building Program. Also, N= 100 formed the control or no-training group and were also divided into groups of 10 each. Each control group narrated about their lives, shared their earlier memories or just described their living room. Participants shared their experiences and gave weekly feedback through e-mail to the researcher.
Table 2

Description of colleges that were contacted and the number of participants from each

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the college</th>
<th>No. of participants for final study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government college of Chandigarh, Sector 11</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.C.M DAV college, Sector 36</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.D college, Sector 32</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guru Gobind Singh college for Women, Sector 26</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Science college, Sector 11</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government college of Arts, Sector 10</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 RESEARCH PLAN

Figure 11

Flowchart displaying the research plan/design used for the present study:

- **Designing Strength Building Program (SBP)**
- **Sample Selection** (Participants low on both strengths i.e. gratitude & forgiveness)
- **Formation of Sample** for groups i.e. Experimental and Control Group
- **Prior training** - Pre scores on gratitude, forgiveness and happiness
- **Administration** of Strength Building Program (four days)
- **Immediate on fourth day of program** - Post test-1 scores on gratitude, forgiveness and happiness
- **After a gap of thirty days** - Post test-2 scores on gratitude, forgiveness and happiness
4.3 TOOLS

The tools were selected in accordance with the aim of the study. While selecting, the tools, psychometric properties and nature of the sample were taken into consideration. The following standardized tests were used to study gratitude, forgiveness and happiness among youth:

4.3.1 Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA–IS)

The VIA–IS developed by (Peterson and Seligman, 2003) is a 240 item self-report assessment intended to measure the degree to which respondents endorse strength-relevant statement about themselves. The scale measures the following 24 character strengths i.e. 10 items per strength- creativity, curiosity, open mindedness, love of learning, perspective, bravery, persistence, integrity, vitality, love, kindness, social-intelligence, loyalty, fairness, leadership, forgiveness, humility, prudence, self-regulation, appreciation of beauty, gratitude, hope, humour and spirituality.

The pilot study clearly indicated that gratitude and forgiveness stood out amongst other strengths from lowest to highest hierarchical order of twenty four character strengths. Therefore, the present study utilized only those items from Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA–IS) that pertained to strength of gratitude and forgiveness.

Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (Gratitude)

The character strength of Gratitude i.e. (being aware and thankful for the good things that happen) includes 10 items in the questionnaire. It falls under the virtue of Transcendence. Transcendence can be defined as “strengths that forge connections to the larger universe and thereby provide meaning” (Dahlsgaard, Peterson & Seligman, 2005). This in essence, is the belief in a purpose or meaning beyond oneself. The scale uses a 5-point Likert scale where 1= Very much unlike me to 5= Very much like me. Responses are averaged within scales, with higher numbers reflecting more of the strength. Scoring of the test was done as per the instructions provided in the respective manual/articles.
Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (Forgiveness)

The character strength of Forgiveness i.e. (forgiving those who have done wrong) includes 10 items in the questionnaire. It falls under the virtue of Temperance. Temperance can be defined as “strengths that protect against excess” (Dahlsgaard, Peterson & Seligman, 2005). This is a form of self restraint which ultimately is beneficial to one or others and in practicing it; one is monitoring the intake of the bad and the output of the good. The scale uses a 5–point Likert scale where 1 = Very much unlike me to 5 = Very much like me. Responses are averaged within scales, with higher numbers reflecting more of the strength. Scoring of the test was done as per the instructions provided in the respective manual/articles.

All the scales have satisfactory internal consistency measured by Cronbach’s alpha coefficient (as > .70) and substantial test–retest correlations (rs =.70). Scale scores are negatively skewed (Ms: range from 3.5 to 4.0) but somewhat variable (SDs: range from .5 to .9). Coefficients of variation ranged from 15 to .25, implying acceptable variability (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2001). Cronbach’s alpha for all scales in a research on Indian sample were obtained in the range of as = 0.63-0.86 and 0.97 for overall scale (Singh & Choubisa, 2010). The reliability coefficient for the present study yielded the Cronbach’s coefficient alpha value of 0.71 and 0.74 for gratitude and forgiveness respectively for Indian youth sample that demonstrated strong reliability of the scale.

4.3.2 Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)

In the present research this scale was used to measure the extent to which an individual sees himself/herself as a happy or unhappy person. SHS is given by (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999) and is a 4-item scale of global subjective happiness; two items ask respondents to characterize themselves using both absolute ratings and relative to peers, whereas the other two items offer brief descriptions of happy and unhappy individuals and ask respondents the extent to which each characterization describes them.
Scoring of the test was done as per the instructions provided in the respective manual/articles. The scale uses a 7-point Likert scale where 1 = not a very happy person and not at all to 7 = a very happy person and a great deal. Item 4 is reverse coded. SHS has high internal consistency which has been found to be stable across samples. Test-retest and self-peer correlations have suggested good to excellent reliability i.e. 0.85, and construct validation studies of convergent and discriminant validity have confirmed the use of this scale to measure the construct of subjective happiness. The reliability coefficient for the present study yielded the Cronbach’s coefficient alpha value of 0.78 for Indian youth sample that demonstrated strong reliability of the scale.

4.4 PROCEDURE

The procedure for the study was done in three steps i.e. designing Strength Building Program for character strengths of: (a) Gratitude (b) Forgiveness, administering the program and testing pre and post-test scores on gratitude, forgiveness and happiness and testing the efficacy of the program.

4.4.1 DESIGNING STRENGTH BUILDING PROGRAM (SBP) FOR CHARACTER STRENGTHS OF (a) GRATITUDE and (b) FORGIVENESS

Since the focus of the study was to educate and train youth on gratitude and forgiveness, the researcher made extensive visits to different colleges of Chandigarh, interacted with the teachers and gauged their seminar room and laboratory conditions. After this ground work, some of the successful and most popular exercises used for training and interventions were studied. Keeping in mind the broad framework of the activities and exercises used in West, an initial draft for the present study’s program was framed.

The process of framing Strength Building Program was based on the guidelines provided by noted psychologists like (Miller, 1995; Krech, 2002; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Baskin & Enright, 2004; Tangney, Boone & Dearing, 2005; Worthington, 2006; Lyubomirsky, 2009) and some adaptation done in form of explanation and relevant examples in order to meet the needs, demands and mindset
of Indian youth. These exercises are not like crash course or antibiotics rather, the people for whom these exercises have a sustained benefit are precisely the people who continue to practice them. These are self guided exercises designed to induce gratitude and forgiveness among youth.

The initial draft of the program was sent to positive psychologists such as Seligman & Peterson via e-mail and; Lyubomirsky in (May, 2010) for their expert comments and suggestions.

The suggestions were:

- Regarding content and number of exercises being delivered in one session.
- To add ice breakers with introductory session.
- Sequence of activities on all days to be made corresponding with the objective.

Also, this draft was shared with local school coordinators of the city such as Dr. Amandeep Banga (Gurukul Global School, Panchkula) and Dr. Roopali Cheema (St. Kabir School, Chandigarh) in (May, 2010) for their comments and suggestions.

The suggestions were:

- Suggestions regarding activities to be added in the program.
- Number of participants in each group.

The final draft after the changes was resent for a review after which it was ready to be administered.

**The final outline of Strength Building Program (SBP) on Gratitude was as follows:**

**DAY 1- Session 1 (45 minutes)**

**Content:**

- Getting to know each other after a brief welcome and round of introduction with the help of ice breaking exercise.
• The information pertaining to the program is provided to participants.

• Expectations of participants from the program are discussed.

*Method:* Group exercise, power point presentation, use of board

**Session 2: (60 minutes)**

*Content:*

• Sharing the scores of gratitude and happiness with participants.
• Understanding the concept of gratitude as character strength.
• Importance of gratitude in our lives.
• Gratitude as related to happiness.
• How to apply gratitude in our life.

*Method:* Power point presentation, group discussion.

**DAY 2 - Session 1 (60-80 minutes)**

*Content:*

• Two different types of exercises to throw light on how to develop grateful reactions in daily life.
• Activities to identify feelings, thoughts and expressions of gratitude.

*Method:* Narration method, Recall, visualization, self reporting thoughts and expressions.

**Session 2 (60-80 minutes)**

*Content:*

• Further two more exercises were explained on how to cultivate gratitude in one’s life.
• Highlighting through activities that a grateful outlook is an interior attitude of thankfulness regardless of life’s circumstances.

*Method:* Empty chair exercise, role play, Recall, visualization.
Session 3 (20 minutes)

Content:
- Task assignments and personal action daily plan is discussed.
- Encourage use of these exercises as a part of their day to day routine.
- Feedback on the exercises and activities performed during the program is taken from the participants.

Method: Group discussion.

The final outline of Strength Building Program (SBP) on Forgiveness was as follows:

DAY 1- Session 1 (60 minutes)

Content:
- Understanding the concept of forgiveness as character strength.
- Importance of forgiveness in our lives.
- Forgiveness as related to happiness.
- How to apply forgiveness in our life.

Method: Power point presentation, group discussion, brain storming exercises.

Session 2 (30 minutes)

Content:
- Sharing the scores of forgiveness with participants.
- Foster the ability to tap into our own self, learn the lesson, and move forward in a more healthy and enlightened manner.
- To take responsibility for the bad act or action and then try to modify it.

Method: Lecture, brain storming exercises.

DAY 2- Session 1 (60-80 minutes)

Content:
- Two different types of exercises to throw light on how to develop forgiving and merciful reactions in daily life.
- Activities emphasizing on recognition of one’ own flaws and shortcomings.
Method: Self report technique, feedback, task assignment, group discussion.

Session 2 (60-80 minutes)

Content:
- Further two more exercises were explained on how to cultivate forgiveness in one’s life.
- Highlighting through activities that forgiveness helps to minimize the consequences of negative events in life.

Method: Self report technique, feedback, task assignment, group discussion.

Session 3 (20 minutes)

Content:
- Task assignments and Personal action daily plan is discussed.
- Encourage use of these exercises as a part of their day to day routine.
- Feedback on the program is taken from the participants.

Method: Group discussion.

4.4.2 ADMINISTRATION OF STRENGTH BUILDING PROGRAM (SBP) OF GRATITUDE AND FORGIVENESS

The program was carried out in seminar and conference rooms of different colleges. Regular refreshment breaks were arranged for the participants during their sessions to ensure continued interest and avoid overload. Following four questions were asked from participants after performing each exercise in the program:

- New discoveries about oneself?
- Exploring feelings during the exercise?
- Noticing any change in feelings before, during and after the exercise?
- Temporal context i.e. change from past that can be carried to future?

Following was the flow of the program that spanned over four days:
Detailed Day Wise Description on Gratitude:

DAY-1, Session 1

Introduction of researcher

Before beginning the session, the facilitator introduced herself (name, area, topic and aim of research). She also informed the participants that she will meet them for four days consecutively for training on gratitude and forgiveness. Exercises will be done and activities will also be performed. Participants will have discussions, act out different role plays, and write down personal stories. The researcher will also ask participants if they have any queries.

Introduction by participants (shoe game exercise)

When entering, every participant took off one shoe and left it in a pile at the door. They kept the other shoe on. After everyone was in, the trainer distributed the shoes to people not wearing the same shoe. When instructed, everyone must find the mix and find the person who belonged to the shoe and get some information about them. They then introduce their new friend to the group.

Session 2

Introduction of the concept of Gratitude

Here, participants were informed about their scores on gratitude and happiness and were introduced to the concept, meaning and relevance of gratitude. Pictorial presentation of the strength of gratitude, its importance in day to day life, examples from daily life to illustrate the importance of being grateful and its impact on happiness and well being. The characteristics of individuals high on gratitude were also highlighted.

DAY-2, Session 1

To start and keep it simple, the session began with performing the first exercise of SBP i.e. “Following Four Step Approach” which is primarily a cognitive-behavioural approach to cultivate gratitude which comprises of practicing four steps - identification of non-grateful thoughts; followed by formulating thoughts which
support gratitude; substituting gratitude supporting thoughts for the non-grateful thoughts and finally implementing this inner feeling and attitude to our outward behavioural lifestyle. The exercise focussed on to make participants practice these steps so as to change their thought patterns, affect their sense of noticing positive and grateful thoughts and that which also even reflects in their daily ways of functioning.

This exercise was tag along in form of *Appreciation and Gratitude activity* (refer to hand-outs in appendix) in which participants at the beginning rated happiness on a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being miserable and 10 being ecstatic. They made a list of two or three good things that they were grateful for. Every day during a quiet time, they read the list aloud and rated themselves on the scale of happiness. They also paid attention to any positive feelings that were experienced while reading. If, at any time of the day, they thought of something else to be grateful for, they added it to the list and again checked them on happiness index. If the list got longer they were to remove some of them. When participants reflected on the things of their list, they smiled and knew that this is good. This was done again at the end of the week and the list of good things and rating of their happiness level increased.

It aimed at helping participants to identify personal experiences with feeling grateful. Also it guided them to substitute gratitude supporting thoughts for the non grateful thoughts. It demanded their self reporting thoughts and expression of appreciation and gratitude to come to form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HIGHLIGHTS OF DAY 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With the shoe game exercise the group was seen as loosening up. Also it facilitated self description.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was strongly felt as if number of participants were aware of the fact that such strengths of character are at everyone’s disposal but never thought and realized how they can be used and affect our lifestyle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the sessions, there were many instances where participants confused paying gratitude i.e. the selection of people from their life with new found romantic love. The researcher had to very delicately bring them back to the strength building situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group members found the sessions of the program interesting as they it gave them a chance to feel subtle positive emotions like peace and joy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Further, the session aimed at throwing light on how to cultivate gratitude and facilitate change in terms of spreading warmth, joy and radiating positive energy to the people around us.

Another exercise of SBP i.e. “Writing a letter: expressing thanks” can be well understood by an experiential activity of Labelling an Important Person (refer to hand-outs in appendix) targeted those touchy corners of participants lives that they had talked little about it initially but these were the very issues which could bind them in strong and successful relationships and to cope up with the challenges that life throws up.

In this exercise participants were asked to write the names of at least five people who had positively influenced their life. They might be relatives, friends, teachers or somebody they have met for a short time or they have never met. Then they rated their gratitude for the person’s influence (from 1 to 5; with 1 being a little grateful and 5 being extremely grateful). Further they were told to rate how fully they had communicated their appreciation/gratitude to that person (again 1 to 5: with 1 being not communicated and 5 being fully communicated). Lastly, they put a U to indicate the person with whom they had unfinished business (such as an important communication of appreciation/gratitude that they had not yet sent).

Now finally they selected the person with U besides their name and wrote a gratitude letter i.e. the exercise “Writing a letter: expressing thanks”. They were told to express love, tenderness and joy they feel towards them. Also how they have helped change their life and how grateful they were that they did. For example, gratitude expressed to their mother, father, grandparents, siblings or any significant others and they were told that they still have a chance to deliver this message to that important hero in their life, so do it right now.

Further, participants were asked what do they intend to do with this letter?

- Keep it with you.
- Give to the person for whom you are grateful.
- Read the letter in person face to face.
- E-mail the letter.
- Paste it on facebook.
Hence talking openly about it led them to focus on expressing grateful emotions which can make them attract and open the door to gratitude and happiness.

**Session 2**

Third exercise delivered to group members of SBP was “*Counting blessings versus burdens*”. There are many things in our lives, both large and small, that we might be grateful about. Counting your blessings means thinking about the time in a day when you were at your best and that was very satisfying to you. Example might be- “to God for giving me determination”, “for wonderful parents”, “to the Lord for just another day”. Burdens are things that annoy or bother you which occur in various domains of life. Also write down the burdens present in your life such as “doing a favour for friend who didn’t appreciate it”, “finances depleting quickly”.

Now, they were told to compare blessings with burdens. It made them realize that blessings are many but misfortunes are some. Therefore one should be grateful for the blessings present in our life. Participants were told to create a habit of becoming aware and paying attention to gratitude-inspiring events.

- Every night before going to bed, think about three good things that went well that day.
- Write down the three things that went well (it is important that you have a physical record of what you wrote).
- Then write down why each thing went well.

Another exercise of SBP which aimed to foster gratitude was “*Practice Downward Comparisons*” that was acted on in which participants were asked to think about how things could be worse, or are worse for someone else. They can also use downward comparison by remembering their own times of adversity. Example might be- you met with an accident and when you picked up yourself, you were very grateful to have only a deep bruise on your thigh, no broken bones.

Later the exercise was followed by an activity in form of *Gratitude Worksheets* (refer to hand-outs in appendix) where participants filled the worksheets via sentence completion via-a-vis questions such as things I am grateful for today, I
am grateful to my parents for, I am grateful to God for and I am grateful to my friends for. These small exercises pinpointed at an imperative piece of evidence that when we consciously choose to be grateful, even in our difficult circumstances, our ability to see the good in life is strengthened. The session eventually ended as “seeing your cup half full” becomes a mental habit.

Session 3

Participants were given feedback about their interest and performances in the above exercises and were also made to practice and create a habit of becoming aware and paying attention to gratitude-inspiring events.

Participants were asked: Take a moment to think about each of the following questions:

- How do you feel after performing the exercise? (Comparison of your feelings before and after the exercises).
- Do you think the exercises or activities holds relevance in your life? If yes, then how?
- What was the most important thing you gained from being in this group?
- How can these exercises become a part of your day to day routine?

HIGHLIGHTS OF DAY 2

- It was expressed by participants in almost all the groups that writing gratitude letter led to projection of their inner feelings and emotions. Also it gave them a chance to deliver the gracious message to their closed ones.
- Some participants in group reported already practicing “Counting blessings versus burdens” exercise and some stress management strategies. They found change in their thought patterns and behaviour. They reported following these exercises acted as buffer, also helped in promoting positive emotions, repairing relationships, being optimistic about the future and offsetting the toxic effects of revengeful hostility.
- These exercises made them know what kind of strengths and values they have indulged in, and perhaps what came to their minds through group discussion was that majority of youth view life as a competitive journey to attain recognition by whatever means and approach, adding that this skewed outlook towards life has injected many ills in society at micro and macro level.
Detailed Day Wise Description on Forgiveness:

DAY-1, Session 1

This session began with recap of stressing on the need to imbibe ethics and moral values in younger generation that had been discussed the previous day. Also, the session started by a group discussion and feedback about task assignment and daily practices and the current session aimed at transforming negative emotions and bitterness with positive emotions including compassion and benevolence. The experiential activity was preceded by a breathing exercise which formed a natural way of making mind and body feel more calm and relaxed.

Introduction of the concept of Forgiveness:

Pictorial presentation of the strength of forgiveness as a character strength, its importance in day to day life, examples from daily life to illustrate the importance of forgiveness and its impact on happiness and well being. Participants were introduced to the concept of forgiveness i.e. what is forgiveness? What shapes our view of forgiveness? Should we forgive? Would forgiveness lead to personal and inner peace?

Session 2

Here, participants were informed about their scores on forgiveness which prompted a conversation on few essential questions such as who should be forgiven and what keeps us from asking for and giving forgiveness.

HIGHLIGHTS OF DAY 1

- There were many instances where participants argued over practical possibilities of forgiveness (forgiving others and receiving forgiveness) in real life.
- In most of the groups, the participants were initially inflexible in their ability to put themselves in the others shoes.
- An important aspect during the session that was felt was that the NOW moment is the only place where we have control. We must be present, aware and awake in the NOW moment.
SBP’s session started with a cognitive and behavioral exercise of “Forgiving oneself” in which participants were asked to forgive themselves if they want to forgive others as self forgiveness is the starting point. The exercise exposed our deep rooted feelings of resentment toward our own selves of the bad choices we made or we lacked self control in any aspect of life. It led to accept the reality i.e. we need not be perfect and can work to get better and deserve second chances in life as well. Three simple thought and behaviour pattern could bring forgiving oneself:

- Pick an area of your life that you would like to work on. It could be failed relationships, family issues etc.
- Make a list of all of the people you might have hurt along the way. Be honest as this could be the toughest part because we tend to bury stressful memories.
- After you have compiled your list, go through each person on the list and think about the situation, validate the circumstances and forgive yourself for hurting them and think about the situation, validate the circumstances and apologize aloud to yourself, ‘I forgive myself for hurting this person’ and take a deep breath.

Another exercise i.e. “Following five steps of REACH” was carried out with participants in groups which represented five steps towards forgiving a specific harm and those steps were as follows:

- R - Recall the hurt
- E – Empathize with the one who has hurt you
- A – Offer an altruistic gift of forgiveness
- C – Make a commitment to forgive
- H – Hold on the forgiveness

Practising the acronym REACH step by step, keeping its true meaning in mind facilitated forgiveness by way of increasing empathy. It led to live your own forgiveness i.e. we all have experiences where others have forgiven us, realizing that by forgiving them, you aid in their personal experience of forgiveness. Most important in this exercise is developing empathy and emotional understanding for the situation of your offender and do not let your thoughts, emotions and reactions be consumed by
the offense. With practice, forgiveness can become a daily habit, and freedom from
guilt, shame, pain and anger. The prominence of this session was to understand the
importance of both aspects of forgiveness i.e. forgiving others and receiving
forgiveness from others.

The activity of *The Forgiveness Tree* (refer to hand-outs in appendix) emphasized on encouragement of applying what the participants have learned about
forgiveness to their everyday interactions with other people. They were asked to
create a large tree trunk and branches from brown board and label it as The
 Forgiveness Tree and stick at such a place in their room that they get to see it very
often. Then create a stack of green leaves and place them in a secure location. When a
participant forgives someone, she can write his/her name, the date and the forgiven
action on the leaf. When participants get upset with someone in future weeks, the
dull brown tree would remind them that when they resolve their disagreements, they can
add a leaf to the forgiveness tree and make it more greener and greener with less
conflicts and solving of their issues though the process of forgiveness.

**Session 2**

In this session, a self experiencing exercise of “Performing Naikan” was
delivered and executed by participants which involved introspection, and they were
told to ask themselves following three questions:

- First, what did I receive? (such as love, blessings).
- Second, what did I give? (such as providing help to others).
- Third, what troubles or difficulties did I cause to others? (such as hurting
  someone).

This exercise offers an additional help in forgiving and seeking forgiveness
from others and helps us understand ourselves, our relationships and nature of human
existence. Also they were told to forgive the individuals against whom they hold a
grudge. Naikan engaged participants in self confrontation i.e. examine your emotions
and motives. Ask “Is it I?”- be the first to confess and apologize and try and restore
your relationship. It is also important to avoid confessions in which you blame others
or fail to accept responsibility and if cant reach to a solution then self disclosing in terms of sharing your feelings with friends or family members can be of great help.

An activity named *Letting go of grudges* was performed (refer to hand-outs in appendix) that called for a thought towards the misunderstanding that can happen with others due to differences in beliefs and opinions. This activity simply focussed on creating the attentiveness that feeling of revenge, un-forgiveness and blame can linger within us for a long time, filling with negativity and keeping us away from being good and happy. It is important to let these things go because if you don’t, the other person- even if you never see them again- continues to hold power over your emotions and your thoughts.

Another exercise performed by SBP group members was “*Writing an apology: Asking for forgiveness*” where participants were asked to make a list of individuals against whom they have done wrong, then either they were to meet them personally to feel sorry or visualize what wrong they have done. A good apology has three parts i.e.: (a) I am sorry (b) It’s my fault and (c) How can I make it right?

Key points in writing an apology letter:

- Don’t do it out of spite or because you think it will elevate you to higher moral ground.
- Realize that a letter can’t undo the damage but it’s a significant step in the right direction.
- Explain your rationale but do not make excuses for your behaviour. Own up to your actions and take responsibility.
- Offer to fix the situation, or find a way to make it up to the person.

An activity named *Letter of Forgiveness* allowed participants to move closer to a positive resolution on all fronts. The activity accentuated that this letter might not be enough to change their relationship with the recipient but it would surely improve the equation with the recipient.
Session 3

Feedback about the possible effects of Strength Building Program, practice behaviors and monitoring plans for each participant were discussed.

Participants were asked: Take a moment to think about each of the following questions:

- Do you think the exercises can bring a sustainable change in you? If not, then how can it help you in the best possible way? (suggestions)
- How can these exercises become a part of your day to day routine?
- Would you like to express or cultivate this exercise to someone else in a similar manner? Who and why?
- What activities, discussions or topics stood out for you?

HIGHLIGHTS OF DAY 2

- By the end of this session, researcher found a large difference in the group in terms of awareness and attention to the details to yield a full and balanced depiction of human thriving as compared to the one in Following four step approach exercise (Day 2, Session 1).
- While recapitulating and re-affirming tracking of experiences, two participants in the group were grateful to researcher and also gave a “thank you” greeting card and expressed her eagerness and dedication towards the program. She remarked, “Yesterday I learnt that one should appreciate and be grateful so I have begun my journey by doing it from today onwards........”
- These exercises served the motive of creating and understanding among participants that forgiveness is one way of freedom from guilt, shame, pain, anger, and the pain of constantly criticizing other people
- There were few exercises for each aspect of gratitude and forgiveness that were handed over to the members to be regularly done to maintain the effect of the program.
4.4.3 TESTING EFFICACY OF THE PROGRAM

The final step of the study involved testing the efficacy of the program. For this purpose, the following statistical procedures were used:

- To study the levels and extent of gratitude, forgiveness and happiness, Descriptive statistics like means, standard deviations and percentages were computed.

- To test the efficacy of the program, Comparative statistics like ANCOVA was computed on gratitude, forgiveness and happiness scores. The effect size of the program on these variables was also calculated using Cohen’s d method.