

**ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**  
**Continuing Education Session**  
**Springfield, Missouri**  
**July 26-30, 2004**

**MSSE 639 POLISHING OUR INTERPERSONAL SKILL ESSENTIALS (POISE)**  
**(3 Credits)**

**Nathan Davis, MA**  
E-mail: [ndavis@ag.org](mailto:ndavis@ag.org)

**Summer 2004**

**COURSE SYLLABUS**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The **Polishing Our Interpersonal Skill Essentials (POISE)** course includes a study of interpersonal techniques and practices for enhancing relationships with God, others, and self. This is an interpersonal skills course designed for clergy and missionaries. This course integrates cognitive-behavioral skills, biblical practices, and personality theory to enhance interpersonal relationships. This course is designed for missionary care-facilitators who will be providing the initial on-site pastoral counseling and pastoral care services to foreign missionaries who are still located in their foreign environment.

**OBJECTIVES**

Upon completion of this course, each student should be able to:

1. Identify danger signs in interpersonal relationships.
2. Recognize distorted thoughts and assess how each distortion affects personal relationships.
3. Apply cognitive-behavioral skills to reduce the impact of thought distortions.
4. Identify common environmental and cultural influences that undermine the self-concept of clergy and missionaries.
5. Apply cognitive skills and Biblical practices to enhance one's self-concept.
6. Evaluate the impact of personality on interpersonal skills, self-concept, and spiritual growth.
7. Implement specific spiritual disciplines.

**TEXTBOOKS**

**A. Pre-session readings**

Burns, David D., *The Feeling Good Handbook*, New York: Plume, 1999. (700 pages)

## **B. Post-session readings**

Markman, Howard J, Stanley, Scott, and Blumberg, Susan L., *A Lasting Promise*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000. (200 pages)

Schiraldi, Glenn R., *Conquer Anxiety, Worry, and Nervous Fatigue*. Ellicott City, MD: Chevron Publishing, 1997. (200 pages)

Willard, Dallas. *The Spirit of the Disciplines*. San Francisco: Harper, 2001. (250 pages)

## **BASIC OUTLINE**

### Course Objectives and expected outcomes

#### Danger signs in relationships

- Pursuit-withdrawal
- Invalidation
- Negative Interpretation
- Escalation

#### Cognitive-behavioral skills

Skill # 1: The Speaker/Listener Technique

Skill # 2: Disarming

Skill # 3: Disagree By Using The XYZ Technique

Skill # 4: Time Out

Skill # 5: Managing Communication Filters

Skill #6: Identifying Distorted Thought Patterns

Skill # 7: Identifying Hidden Issues

Skill #8: Assertive Communication

Skill # 9: Ground Rules for Conflict

Skill # 10: Problem Solving

#### Breaking *Interpersonal* Dysfunctions With Truth

Step 1: Describe facts

Step 2: Rate Your Feelings About the Events

Step 3: Identify Your Negative Thoughts

Step 4: Identify the Distortion for Each Negative Thought

Step 5: Examine the Alternatives

#### Five Elements of Self-Care

Stress Resistance Self Assessment

Symptoms of Depression

Coping Skills

Strategies for Thriving

–Faith

–Hope

– Assessing Optimism

Goal Exercise:

Faith In Accomplishing Your Goals

Building Faith  
Improving Your Goals  
Goals That Build Self-Esteem  
Developing Goals For Stress Resistance  
The Psychological Relationship Between Goals, Hope, and Faith  
The Primary Function of Faith and Hope  
Social Support Self-Assessment:  
Why A Support Network Is Important  
The Downward Spiral  
Building a Network of Friends  
Self-Esteem  
Step 1: Identify Goals  
Step 2: Identify Untruthful Sources of Self-Esteem  
Step 3: Identify Negative Thoughts and Distortions  
Step 4: Identify False Beliefs  
Step 5: Substitute Truths  
The Nevertheless Skill  
Seven Rules For Getting Honest About Your Core Self  
Exercise- A Beautiful Day  
Love of God: Life's greatest challenge  
Two Fundamental Truths That Hinder Personality Change  
The Spiritual Growth of the Average Christian  
Nathan's Law (*from Nathan Brody*)  
Meditative Prayer  
The Purpose of Listening Prayer  
The First Fundamental Truth Of Spiritual Change:  
The Second Fundamental Truth Of Spiritual Change  
Spiritual Disciplines  
Getting Started In Listening Prayer  
Practical Tips For Listening Prayer  
Getting Started In Fasting

## **METHODOLOGY**

1. Text readings
2. Written assignments and self-assessments
3. Class lectures
4. Small group cultural application exercises
5. Video clips

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Written Assignments** - minimum six double-spaced typewritten pages/essay. Each essay is described in the POISE workbook

1. Application of behavioral-cognitive skills, due 7 days after the final class (August 6)
2. Application of cognitive skills, due 14 days after the final class (August 13)
3. Application of social support skills, due 21 days after the final class (August 20)
4. Application of self-esteem skills, due 28 days after the final class (August 27)
5. Application of spiritual growth skills, due 35 days after the final class (September 3)

## **GRADING PROCEDURE**

Grades will be based on six written assignments, a minimum of five pages each, 100 points each for a total of 500 points. Papers should be e-mailed to [ndavis@ag.org](mailto:ndavis@ag.org). One point will be deducted for each day each assignment is late.

## **SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

McMinn, M., *Cognitive Therapy Techniques in Christian Counseling*. Dallas TX: Word Publishing, 1991.

Wilcox, B. L., "Social Support, Life Stress, and Psychological Adjustment: A Test of the Buffering Hypothesis." *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 9 (1981); 371-86.

Foster, Richard J., *Celebration of Discipline*. New York: HarperCollins, 1998.

McKay, Matthew and Fanning, Patrick, *Self-Esteem*. New Harbinger, Oakland, CA 2000.

Snyder, C. R., *Handbook of Hope*. Academic Press, San Diego CA, 2000.

Lewinsohn, P., Munoz, R., Youngren, M., and Zeiss, A., *Control Your Depression*. Prentice Hall., NY, NY. 1986.

Snyder, C. R. and Lopez, S. J., *Handbook of Positive Psychology*, Oxford University Press, NY, NY. 2002.

## **SPECIFIC DATA**

Prepared by Nathan Davis, May 12, 2004.