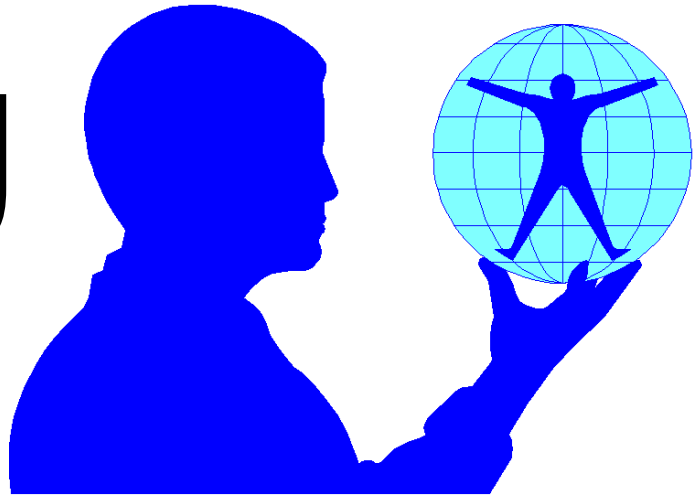


Thinking Traps



A Quick Skills

course designed to help people identify, evaluate, and change the way they think.

Developed by
Jim Tanner, Ph.D. & Mary Anne Tanner, M.S.W.
KBSolutions, Inc. 303.413.1918 www.kbsolutions.com

April 25, 1999

Dear Colleague,

Please note that the material contained in this manual is part of the KBSolutions' *Quick Skills* curriculum and is protected by copyright.

©Copyright 1998 by Jim Tanner, Ph.D.

All rights reserved. No portion of these materials may be reproduced in any form without the express written permission of Dr. Tanner.

Limited Permission Granted to Reproduce Student Handouts

Professionals certified as Skill Building Instructors by KBSolutions, Inc. and employed by agencies which are maintaining a current Agency License from KBSolutions, Inc. are hereby granted permission to reproduce student handouts contained in this manual. Reproduction of student handouts is authorized for the exclusive purpose of distribution to students enrolled in *Quick Skills* courses.



In an effort to help protect our environment, we have printed the entire Skill Building Series on recycled paper stock. Please forgive any minor flaws you may find in the paper.

Thank you for using *Quick Skills*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Tanner".

Jim Tanner, Ph.D.
President
KBSolutions, Inc.

THINKING TRAPS UNIT

TT1 - The TRAP model

1. Learning Objectives

1. Students will understand automatic thoughts ("recordings").
2. Students will be able to articulate the TRAP model.
3. Students will be able to determine when they should identify and evaluate their thoughts.
4. Students will understand how to use a Thinking Report to identify their recordings.
5. Students will recognize the need to understand their recordings in order to control their behavior.

2. Conceptual Matrix

This unit is the companion unit of the Problem Solving Unit. While Problem Solving focuses on the process of thinking, this unit focuses on the content of thinking. Ideally, students will have completed Problem Solving before taking this course.

Our behavior is often guided by automatic thoughts within our cognitive structures. These individualized thoughts (called "recordings" in this unit) happen quickly and without us paying attention to them. These thoughts, however, have a significant effect on the way we perceive situations and, therefore, guide our behavior and emotions.

The purpose of this unit is to help the students take three steps in controlling their cognitive structures:

- A. Identify their person-specific automatic thoughts (their recordings).
- B. Evaluate these recordings for validity and usefulness.
- C. Change their recordings and behavior according to this evaluation.

This first session introduces the students to recordings and how they affect behavior. It also introduces students to a tool which will help them identify

their recordings. This tool, the Thinking Report, will play an important role in the upcoming sessions. Make sure the students fully understand the material and can use the Thinking Report before ending this first session.

3. Materials Needed

1. Flip chart or whiteboard and markers.
2. How Fido Learns Handout (TT1_1.HND).
3. The TRAP Model Handout (TT1_2.HND).
4. Thinking Report Worksheet (TT1_3.HND).

4. Process

NOTE: This material can be evasive for many people. It is important that you take your time in the discussions to ensure the class understands each point before moving on to the next point.

1. Tell the students this course is about thinking. Tell the class that thinking is like breathing, we do it all the time, but don't stop to think about it much. Like breathing, thinking is a part of every experience we have.

Tell the class the Problem Solving Unit focused on HOW we think. This course will focus on WHAT we think. Both are important aspects of thinking.

Tell the class we will begin this session by learning about something called "recordings".

2. Ask the class how many of them have ever trained a dog to "sit" (most should raise their hands). Hold a brief discussion with the class about how they went about training the dog.
3. Distribute the "How Fido Learns Handout" (TT1_1.HND). Go over the handout with the class until they understand the concept of recordings. It is important that they recognize:
 - A. Recordings are LEARNED.
 - B. Recordings are between an external stimulus and action.

4. Ask the class how many of them have driven a car (most). Ask them if they have ever experienced driving somewhere and when they arrive they can't remember part of the trip (when SOBER). This is because driving becomes a recording for us (just like breathing). Once we get used to doing something repeatedly, we don't have to "think" about it to do it.

Hold a brief discussion in which you ask the class to give examples of how they are often acting without having to "think" (running on recordings). Some examples they might offer are:

- A. Doing a repetitive task at work.
 - B. Driving a vehicle.
 - C. Playing a sport (tennis, baseball, golf, etc.).
 - D. Getting dressed in the morning.
5. Explain that having recordings guide us doesn't mean that we aren't paying attention, nor does it mean that if something "unusual" happens that we won't "snap back". But it does mean:

**MUCH OF THE TIME WE ARE ON "AUTOMATIC PILOT".
We are relying on our recordings to guide us along.**

6. Distribute the TRAP model handout (TT1_2.HND). Hold a discussion with the group which explains the TRAP model. When covering Recordings be sure to fully discuss the following:
 - A. They are PRIVATE. We say them to ourselves but seldom say them to anyone else. Often we amplify the things we say to ourselves. For instance, we say things like "This is terrible, it's the worst thing that could possibly happen to me." or "I looked like a real fool, nobody will ever like me again now."
 - B. They are almost INVISIBLE. They happen so quickly we don't even notice we are saying them to ourselves. Part of this 'recorded-ness' is because we believe them to be true.

(more on next page)

- C. They are usually brief. We speak in code to ourselves. We say things like "its over" and understand it to mean:

"This is it. I will lose my job over this. I probably won't be able to get another job this good again. I will probably go to jail for losing my job. How can I pay child support without a job? What am I going to do? This is terrible. I don't think I can handle this. Everyone will hate me."

- D. Because they are brief, in code, and almost invisible, **THEY ARE VERY DIFFICULT TO STOP.**

7. Continue the discussion and point out to the class that people's behavior is a result of responding to the recordings rather than the situation. Be sure to include the following points:

- A. Our recordings affect our perception of situations. (Example: two people walking down a street and both see a cop.)
- B. Our perceptions, in turn, drive our response to a situation. **They give us permission to act the way we do.**
- C. This means that our recordings - not the situation - are more responsible for CAUSING our behavior.
- D. It is what we say to ourselves in the recording that has the greatest impact on how we will act in any given situation.

This is a central issue. Make sure the students understand this point fully.

8. Point out to the class that if they want to be in control of their behavior, they must learn to identify what recordings are playing in their head. This is a difficult task. Fortunately, however, everyone can learn to hear the recordings by simply listening for them.

"Either we identify, evaluate, and control our recordings or they will control us". "Our goal is to 'trap' the traps".

- Have each student think about the last time (s)he was in a difficult situation. Have them tell you how they knew the situation was problematic for them. Write their comments on the flip chart or board in two unlabeled columns. Some examples of the two columns are below:

BODY CUES (somatic states)

Tense muscles
Heart pounding
Sweaty palms
Breathing accelerated
Stomach "jumpy"
Sudden Headache
Feeling "out of control"

ACTIONS (behaviors)

Voice raised
Staring at other person
Hitting or slamming things
Waving arms
Point or poking finger
Pacing or moving quickly
Aggressive Behavior

- Hold a discussion with the class about the biological response to arousal.

When we are in difficult situations, our body tenses, giving us indicators of the stress we are under. In reality, our body prepares for flight/fight. This is a biological remnant from our early days of survival in the wild. As the situations gets worse, our muscle tension increases and adrenaline pumps into our bodies which speeds up our heart rate and breathing.

Often we are becoming aroused without even knowing it. Our bodies are often more clued into our general level of arousal than our heads. This makes them a good "early warning system" for anger.

- Label the two columns on the flip chart or board:

BODY CUES

ACTIONS

Continue the discussion of body cues as an early warning system by pointing out the students were aware of these cues when they reported being in a difficult situation.

- Point out to the student that ANYTIME they feel strong negative emotions, they should try to identify the recording that has just played in their head.
- Distribute the Thinking Record handout (TT1_3.HND).

Walk the class through its use until you are sure they are able to use it appropriately. Be sure to stress the following:

- A. The Situation column should contain a BRIEF OBJECTIVE description of the situation. It should be like a Video Camera. It should contain a description of:
 - 1. Where it happened.
 - 2. When it happened.
 - 3. Who was present.
 - 4. What was said or done.

- B. The Thought column should list all the thoughts you can remember having before, during, and after the situation. The students should strive to recall the EXACT thoughts they were thinking...like a TAPE RECORDING. Students should try to answer the question "What was going through your mind at the time?".

5. HOMEWORK

Instruct the students to identify three to six situations during the next few days that were difficult for them. Tell them to fill out the thinking report and bring it to class next time.

HOW FIDO LEARNS [Handout]

First few times
(depending on how dumb Fido is)

Talk	Response	Action	Payment
You say "Sit"	Fido says "huh"?	You push Fido's butt down.	When Fido "sits" you say "good dog" and give Fido a treat.

After a while....

Talk	Response	Action	Payment
You say "Sit"	Fido thinks "butt down equals a treat"	Fido's puts butt on floor and waits for treat.	You say "good dog" and give Fido a treat.

After many repetitions Fido doesn't really "think" anymore, when the word "sit" strikes Fido's ear, the sit response is almost "automatic".

Talk	Recording	Action	Payment
You say "Sit"	(butt down=treat thought happens so fast that Fido doesn't notice it)	Fido's puts butt on floor.	You say "good dog" and give Fido a treat.

You have successfully placed an automatic thought in Fido's head. We call this a **RECORDING**.

THE TRAP MODEL [Handout]

Every day of our lives we have to make many decisions and take many actions. Most of these daily chores are done without really thinking about them (such as walking, breathing, driving, smoking, etc.).

Since we are on "autopilot" in much of what we do, it is important that we understand HOW this process works. The process can be remembered by the word TRAP.

Trigger	Recording	Action	Payment
<p>Anything external to us (we can't control). This includes:</p> <p>How people act toward us.</p> <p>What people say to or about us.</p> <p>Things that happen in the world around us.</p> <p>Pressures at work or home (deadlines, duties, etc).</p>	<p>What we "say" to ourselves about the external trigger (self talk).</p> <p>But these self-talk statements happen so fast we hardly notice them.</p>	<p>We take some action in response to the recording and the external trigger.</p>	<p>We either receive a "payment" in the form of getting something we want, or we make a "payment" in the form of losing something we didn't want to lose.</p> <p>Sometimes there can be both forms of payment.</p>

An Example

<p>Your boss tells you to do something that you haven't done before and don't know how to do.</p>	<p>You think:</p> <p>"I don't know how to do this..he knows that...he must want me to blow it so he can fire me. He must be out to get me."</p>	<p>You get angry and start loudly talking about how unfair the boss is.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You are very stressed. 2. You may lose you job because of what you say. 3. You make work more difficult for your coworkers.
---	---	---	--

THINKING REPORT [Handout]

For the next few days, pay attention to situations where you found yourself experiencing strong negative emotion. Please write down the what the situation was and the thoughts you had at the time. Bring this sheet to the next session.

Date	Situation (like a camera)	Thoughts (like a recording) "What was going through your mind at the time"

THINKING TRAPS UNIT
TT2 - Thinking about Thinking

1. Learning Objectives

1. Students learn to differentiate Beliefs, Attitudes, and Recordings.
2. Students learn how Beliefs and Attitudes lead to behavior through Recordings.
3. Students learn the three ways Recordings can affect an individual.

2. Conceptual Matrix

This session is designed to expand on the TRAP model. The instructor's task is to help the student understand how Recordings are a function of Core Beliefs and Attitudes (intermediate beliefs). Moreover, the students should be guided to an understanding of how Beliefs and Attitudes operate through Recordings to affect the behavior of the individual.

Recording produce three types of effects in an individual:

- A. Emotions.
- B. Action (outward behaviors).
- C. Body States.

The purpose of this session is to prepare the students for the next session wherein they learn to identify their belief system by an examination of their Recordings. As in every session in this unit,

THE FACILITATOR SHOULD PACE THE CLASS SLOW ENOUGH THAT THE STUDENTS CAN FULLY ACQUIRE THE CONCEPTS AS THE CLASS PROGRESSES.

3. Materials Required

1. Flip chart or whiteboard and markers.
2. Expanded TRAP Model Handout (TT2_1.HND).
3. Expanded Thinking Report (TT2_2.HND) - TWO for each student).

4. Process

1. Hold a discussion with the class in which the TRAP model is reviewed. Be sure to include the following:
 - A. We have thoughts called Recordings which we don't notice.
 - B. Recordings influence our behavior (more than the situation).
 - C. Recordings are difficult to identify.
 - D. The first step to identifying Recordings is to write down what was going through our minds during a situation.

2. Inform the class that today's session will expand on the TRAP model.

Write the following words on the flipchart or board:

BELIEF

ATTITUDE

RECORDING

3. Ask the class to define what a **RECORDING** is. Write their answers on the board. Be sure they include the following:
 - A. A pattern of quick thoughts that come up in our mind frequently.
 - B. It gives us permission to act the way we do.
4. Ask the class what they think a **BELIEF** is. Guide a discussion which results in a definition of Belief which includes the following:
 - A. Statements we regard as "true".
 - B. Explains things the way they "really are".
 - C. They are normally unquestioned.
 - D. They are generally learned from others.
 - E. They answer the "What does that mean ABOUT me" question.
5. Ask the class what they think an **ATTITUDE** is. Guide a discussion which results in a definition of attitude which includes the following:
 - A. A stand we take toward something.
 - B. The way we regard something or someone.
 - C. A set of "rules" or "expectations" which guide our lives (they often have the words "should", "must", or "ought" in them).
 - D. They answer the "What does that mean TO me" question.
6. Distribute the Expanded Thinking TRAP Model Handout (TT2_1.HND).

Hold a thorough and careful discussion in which the model is fully developed for the students. Be sure to include the following:

- A. Our Beliefs drive our Attitudes and ultimately our Recordings.
 - B. As our Recordings affect our behavior, our Beliefs and Attitudes do as well.
 - C. Our Beliefs/Attitudes/Recordings affect us three ways:
 - 1. Our emotions (the way we feel).
 - 2. Our behavior (the way we act).
 - 3. Our body (our body states).
 - D. Our emotions are, in part, a set of body states we have assigned a "name".
 - E. **THE PROCESS IS NOT LINEAR.** Our emotions, behavior, or body states can act like an "external trigger" and the whole thing recycles.
 - F. Payments (both positive and negative) reinforce our recordings and act as external triggers.
 - G. **To change our behavior, we must identify and deal with our belief systems.**
7. Distribute the Expanded Thinking Report (TT2_2.HND).

Using the homework the students have brought to class (TT1_3.HND), walk the students through the Expanded Thinking Report Worksheet. Have each student share a thought (s)he had and have the class help him/her try to identify the underlying belief.

DO NOT FORCE THE STUDENTS TO SHARE. STUDENTS SHOULD BE GENTLY COAXED INTO SHARING, BUT SOME THOUGHTS WRITTEN ON THEIR SHEET MIGHT BE UNCOMFORTABLE FOR THEM TO SHARE IN THE GROUP.

5. Review

Briefly review the following for the students:

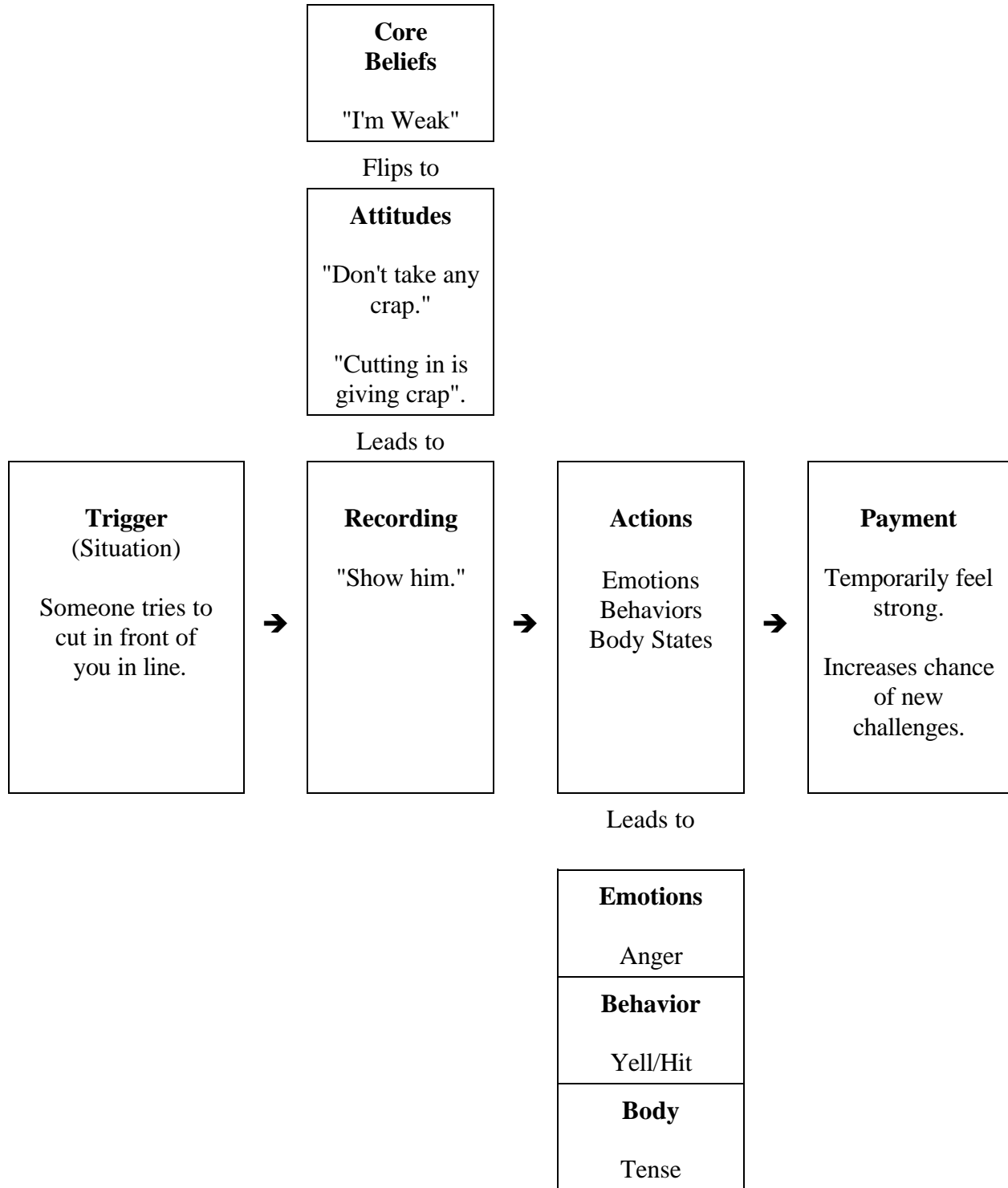
- A. Our Beliefs drive our Attitudes and ultimately our Recordings.
- B. As our Recordings affect our behavior, our Beliefs and Attitudes do as well.
- C. Our Beliefs/Attitudes/Recordings affect us three ways:
 - 1. Our emotions (the way we feel).
 - 2. Our behavior (the way we act).
 - 3. Our body (our body states).
- D. Our emotions are, in part, a set of body states we have assigned a "name".
- E. **THE PROCESS IS NOT LINEAR.** Our emotions, behavior, or body states can act like an "external trigger" and the whole thing recycles.
- F. Payments (both positive and negative) reinforce our recordings and act as external triggers.
- G. **To change our behavior, we must identify and deal with our belief systems.**

6. Homework

Distribute a second Expanded Thinking Report (TT2_2.HND) to each student. Have them try to identify at least two Recording/Beliefs for next session.

EXPANDED TRAP MODEL [Handout]

Recordings in the TRAP sequence are often driven by hidden beliefs and attitudes. These can be direct attitudes or reversed attitudes. These hidden beliefs and attitudes only serve to reinforce the Recordings and make them harder to discover.



EXPANDED THINKING REPORT [Handout]

For the next few days note situations in which you experienced negative emotion. For these situations, please describe the situation, thoughts you had, and your best estimate of your underlying beliefs. Bring this sheet to the next session.

Date	Situation (Like a Camera)	Thoughts (Like a Recording) "What was going through your mind at the time"	Belief System "What does this mean about you?"

THINKING TRAPS UNIT

TT3 - Identifying Recordings

1. Learning Objectives

1. Students will be able to identify their recordings.
2. Students will be able to classify their recordings into one of five categories commonly found to be at the root of thinking errors.

2. Conceptual Matrix

Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy (REBT) and Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) both indicate that while there is an infinite number of automatic thoughts (recordings) a person might have, there are only a handful of categories into which dysfunctional recordings fall. By learning to identify these categories we are better prepared to stop the dysfunctional recordings before they result in illicit or problematic behavior. These categories are found in the TT3_1.HND handout. The five categories are generally agreed upon by both REBT and CBT therapists as the key target areas for treatment.

The purpose of this session is to teach this simple taxonomy of dysfunctional recordings to the students. Students will be asked to use this simple classification system to examine their own recordings.

3. Materials Required

1. Flip chart or whiteboard and markers.
2. Bad TAPES Handout (TT3_1.HND).
3. Identifying our Recordings Handout (TT3_2.HND).
4. Expanded Thinking Report from last session (TT2_2.HND).

4. Process

1. Using the TT2_1.HND from the last session, hold a brief discussion with the class that reviews the Expanded TRAP model. This review should cover at a minimum the following:
 - A. Recordings are "automatic thoughts" which happen so fast we hardly notice them.
 - B. Recordings are derived from Beliefs and Attitudes.
 - C. Recordings result in changes in our emotions, behavior, and body state.
 - D. Recordings are reinforced by "payments" (both positive and negative).
 - E. The goal of this course is to help us take three steps:
 1. Identify the recordings.
 2. Evaluate the recordings.
 3. Change the recordings so we can change our actions.
2. Tell the class that today we will be focusing on identifying our recordings.
3. Hold a brief discussion with the class about the ease/difficulty they had in doing their homework. Many may have found it difficult to write down what was going through their minds during stressful situations. Have the class each share their successes in detecting their recordings (not necessarily the content, but the process of detecting the content).
4. Distribute the Bad Tapes Handout (TT3_1.HND) to the class. Hold a discussion with the class in which you cover the material in the handout.

ENSURE THE CLASS UNDERSTANDS EACH OF THE "TAPES" CATEGORIES BEFORE MOVING ON TO THE NEXT ONE. HAVE THE CLASS GIVE EXAMPLES AND PACE THE DISCUSSION SLOWLY TO HELP THEM LEARN.

Bad TAPES Material (on handout)

Tolerance: When our recordings cause us to be rigid or intolerant of ourselves or others it is a problem. Some examples are:

- A. Demanding the world be a certain way.
Being unwilling to "go with the flow" of situations.
Wanting everyone (including ourselves) to behave a certain way.
Setting rigid expectations for ourselves and others.
Thinking in rigid ways.
- B. Saying "I can't stand it if..." or "I won't be able to survive if...". This leads to the action of giving up or the feeling of overwhelmed.
- C. Blaming others when bad things happen.
Failing to take responsibility for our behavior.

Awfulizing: When our recordings make us look at everything in a negative way. Expecting the worst. Some examples are:

- A. Exaggerating how bad a situation actually is.
Amplifying (or magnifying) the bad effects of a situation.
- B. Thinking only bad things will happen.
Never expecting anything good to happen.
Having a negative outlook in general.
- C. Overlooking or ignoring positive aspects of situations.
Focusing on and seeing only the bad side of a situation.

Putdowns: When our recordings contain putdowns of ourselves or others. Using words that trigger strong emotions or disrespect toward ourselves or others.

- A. Name calling (calling ourselves or others things like "Jerk", "Asshole", "Idiot", "Fool", "Stupid", etc.).
- B. Racial or ethnic slurs.

Extrêmes: When our recordings contain absolutes or they overgeneralize. Using rigid or extreme words in our recordings.

- A. Thinking about time as "always" or "never" when it isn't true. "He always treats me like that" or "I never lie to anyone".
- B. Thinking there is only ONE solution to a problem (ours, of course). Seeing your way as being the only way to do things (related to tolerance above).
- C. Thinking you never make mistakes or that someone else always does.
- D. Stereotyping people based on limited behavior or characteristics. Generalizing from one incident to the whole of a person's life.

Shoulds: When our recordings indicate demands when it is actually a preference or alternative. In reality most things in life are not absolute. We all have preferences as to how things get done, but very few things in life are "carved in stone".

This thinking error amounts to us forgetting we have preferences and thinking we have absolutes. In short, we believe we or others "have" to be, act, or think a certain way. This relates to Extremes and Tolerance above.

- A. "Should" in our recordings.
- B. "Ought" in our recordings.
- C. "Must" in our recordings.
- D. "Have to" in our recordings.
- E. "Need to" in our recordings.

5. When the class has a firm grasp on the TAPES categories, distribute the Identifying our Recordings Handout (TT3_2.HND).

Give the class a few minutes (5-10) to go over their homework. Have them do the following for each difficult situation they have written on their homework sheet:
 - A. Examine what thoughts were going through their mind. These are their recordings.
 - B. Decide the TAPES category of their recordings. If the recording was not problematic, have them write on the back of the page how it was helpful to them.
 - C. Write the key words of their recording in the space provided for the appropriate TAPES category.
6. When most of them have finished, ask them to look at their sheets. Ask them to consider the following questions (give them 2-3 minutes):
 - A. Are all of their recordings in ONE or TWO TAPES categories?
 - B. Is there a pattern in the recordings (what they are "saying")?
7. Hold a group discussion in which you lead the group in working with each student to do the following:
 - A. Review the Identifying our Recordings Handout for "errors" (wrong classifications).
 - B. Have each student share a problematic situation and the recordings (thoughts) that were going on in his/her mind.
 - C. Have the class discuss which of the TAPES categories the recording would fall into.

NOTE TO INSTRUCTORS

Review the points made in the box on the following page and include them in your discussion of the students' work.

1. Link what they think to how they behave (TRAP model).
2. Common elements of "procriminal" thinking:
 - A. Expressions about the law, violations and violators.
 - B. Expressions about institutions, values, rules, procedures, and authority.
 - C. Expressions about criminal and noncriminal others and activities.
 - D. Expressions about self-management.
 - E. Attitudes toward self and ability to achieve through acceptable means.
 - F. Lack of empathy and ability to "take role of the other".
3. Help them get to a meaningful statement of their Recordings, Attitudes, and Beliefs.
4. The questions you need to ask to get to the various levels of thought are:
 - A. To get to recordings you ask: "What was going through your mind then?"
 - B. To get to attitudes you ask: "What does that mean **TO** you?"
 - C. To get to Beliefs you ask: "What does that mean **ABOUT** you?"

Use the class discussion to assist the students in understanding how the recordings fall into the five TAPES categories.

Limit the discussion to understanding and classifying the recordings. We will "solve" or "refute" them in the next class session.

5. Review

Remind the class of the following:

1. We have learned that our behavior is a result of our thinking.
2. We have learned that we have "recordings" which affect our actions.
3. We have learned the TRAP model of thinking:

Trigger 6 Recording 6 Action 6 Payment

4. We have learned that "Bad Recordings" fall into 5 categories we can remember by the word "TAPES":

Tolerance: When our recordings indicate we are being rigid or intolerant of ourselves or others it is a problem.

Awfulizing: When our recordings make us look at everything in a negative way. Expecting the worst.

Putdowns: When our recordings contain putdowns of ourselves or others. Using words that trigger strong emotions or disrespect toward ourself or others.

Extrêmes: When our recordings contain absolutes or they overgeneralize. Using rigid or extreme words in our recordings.

Shoulds: When our recordings indicate demands when it is actually a preference or alternative.

6. Homework

A. Distribute new (clean) copies of the following handouts:

1. Expanded Thinking Report (TT2_2.HND)
2. Identifying our Recordings (TT3_2.HND)

B. Instruct the class to find several problematic situations before the next class and complete a row in the Expanded Thinking Report for each one.

Tell the class after they have identified the recordings in each situation, they should write the key words down in the appropriate space in the Identifying our Recordings sheet.

The class should bring these materials to the next session.

Looking For Bad **TAPES** In Our Recordings [Handout]

We all have recordings. Most are not problematic. However, certain kinds of recordings can cause us trouble. There are five basic types of recordings that can cause us trouble. These five types of recordings can be easily remembered by the word "**TAPES**".

Tolerance: When our recordings cause us to be rigid or intolerant of ourselves or others it is a problem. Some examples of this are:

- A. Demanding the world be a certain way. Wanting everyone (including ourselves) to behave a certain way. Setting rigid expectations for ourselves and others.
- B. Saying "I can't stand it if..." or "I won't be able to survive if..."
- C. Blaming others when bad things happen.
- D. Thinking in rigid ways.

Awfulizing: When our recordings make us look at everything in a negative way. Expecting the worst. Some examples of this are:

- A. Exaggerating how bad a situation actually is.
- B. Thinking only bad things will happen. Never expecting anything good to happen.
- C. Overlooking or ignoring positive aspects of situations. Seeing only the bad.

Putdowns: When our recordings contain putdowns of ourselves or others. Using words that trigger strong emotions or disrespect toward ourselves or others.

- A. Name calling ("Jerk", "Asshole", "Idiot", "Fool", etc.)
- B. Racial or ethnic slurs.

Extrêmes: When our recordings contain absolutes or they overgeneralize. Using rigid or extreme words in our recordings.

- A. Thinking about time as "always" or "never" when it isn't true.
- B. Thinking there is only ONE solution to a problem (ours, of course).
- C. Thinking you never make a mistake or that someone else always does.
- D. Stereotyping people based on limited behavior or characteristics.

Shoulds: When our recordings indicate demands when it is actually a preference or alternative. Examples are:

- A. "Should"
- B. "Ought"
- C. "Must"
- D. "Have to"
- E. "Need to"

Identifying our Recordings [Handout]

Using your homework, examine the recordings you wrote down. Write the key words in the appropriate space in the table below.

TAPES Category	Key Words of my Thoughts
<p style="text-align: center;">Tolerance</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demanding the world be a certain way. 2. Saying "I can't Stand it" 3. Blaming others when bad things happen. 	
<p style="text-align: center;">Awfulizing</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exaggerating how bad something is. 2. Thinking only bad things will happen. 3. Overlooking positive aspects of a situation. 	
<p style="text-align: center;">Putdowns</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Using words that trigger emotion. 2. Using words that degrade self or others. 	
<p style="text-align: center;">Extremes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stereotyping others or self. 2. Using words like "never" "always" 3. Thinking there is only one solution. 4. Thinking you never make mistakes. 	
<p style="text-align: center;">Shoulds</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Using "Should", "Must", "Need to" or "Have to" when not appropriate. 	

Instructor Resource, Do Not Distribute To Students

Systems of Beliefs

In general there are two basic categories of belief systems that cause our clients trouble. Your task of helping them assess their recordings can be made easier if you can grasp the underlying category of the core belief.

You must decide if it is appropriate or safe for the student to pursue the core belief in class or alone. It may be beyond the purpose of this course for you to disclose, or guide the student to discovering, the underlying core belief or its category. The examples of core beliefs in the two primary categories are provided as a tool to help you in guiding the class discussion.

Not all core beliefs fall cleanly in one or the other category. Some core beliefs may tap into both domains.

PRIMARY CATEGORIES OF CORE BELIEFS	
WEAKNESS	UNWANTED
1. I am weak.	1. I am unlovable.
2. I am out of control.	2. I am ugly.
3. I am powerless.	3. I am not liked.
4. I am a failure.	4. I am a "bad" person.
5. I am less than others.	5. I am not like other people.
6. I am vulnerable.	6. I have no value.
7. I am helpless.	7. I have defects.
8. I can't get out of this.	8. I have no worth.

These core beliefs can be linked to attitudes either directly or indirectly (flipped). Example of both are found below:

CORE BELIEF

ATTITUDE

I am weak.

"I can't control myself." (Direct Link)

I am weak.

"Don't take any shit." (Indirect Link - Flipped)

Thinking Traps Unit

TT4 - Evaluating and Changing our Recordings

1. Learning Objectives

1. Students are able to evaluate their recordings across three dimensions:
 - A. Is the thought truthful?
 - B. Is the conclusion reached logical?
 - C. Is the thought helpful or constructive?
2. Students are able to construct person-specific refutations (talk-back) to alter their recordings.

2. Theoretical Matrix

The three steps in cognitive behavioral treatment are:

1. Identify the recordings.
2. Evaluate the recordings.
3. Change the recordings as appropriate.

The previous three units have established a foundation for step one to occur. This session focuses on helping the students evaluate their recordings using the Truth, Logical, and Helpful questions posed by REBT and CBT.

Each student will develop person-specific responses (talk-back) for his/her common recordings. It is important that the student create his/her own talk-back statements and that these statements be BRIEF.

This session must be paced so that no student gets left behind in the process. Some students may have some difficulty in assimilating this material. The instructor should pay particular attention to each student's progress and not move forward until the entire class is together. As always, instructors are encouraged to use the group as a teaching tool.

3. Materials Required

1. Flip Chart or whiteboard and markers.
2. Evaluating our Recordings Handout (TT4_1.HND).
3. Erasing Bad TAPES Worksheet (TT4_2.HND).

4. Process

1. Hold a brief discussion in which the class reviews what we have learned so far:
 - A. Recordings are "automatic thoughts" which happen so fast we hardly notice them.
 - B. Recordings are derived from Beliefs and Attitudes.
 - C. Recordings result in changes in our emotions, behavior, and body state.
 - D. Recordings are reinforced by "payments" (both positive and negative).
 - E. The goal of this course is to help us take three steps:
 1. Identify the recordings.
 2. Evaluate the recordings.
 3. Change the recordings so we can change our actions.
 - F. Not all recordings are bad. However, some types of recordings can be bad for us. These "Bad" recordings are remembered by the word "TAPES".

Tolerance: Being intolerant of ourselves or others is a problem.

Awfulizing: Looking at everything in a negative way or expecting the worst.

Putdowns: Putdowns of ourself or others. Using words that trigger strong emotions or disrespect toward ourself or others.

Extrêmes: Thinking in absolutes or they overgeneralize or are rigid or extreme.

Shoulds: Making demands when it is actually a preference or alternative.

2. Tell the class that today's session will focus on evaluating our recordings. In general there are three simple questions we can ask ourselves to help us assess if the recordings are good or bad:
 - A. Is the recording truthful?
 - B. Is the conclusion reached logical?
 - C. Is the recording helpful or constructive?
3. Distribute the Evaluating our Recordings Handout (TT4_1.HND).

Hold a discussion in which you cover the material on the handout. Ensure each student understands the depth and nature of each of the three questions.

1. Is the recording **TRUE**?

Is the thought valid?

Does it reflect the world accurately?

- A. What is the **EVIDENCE** that supports this idea?
What **FACTS** are there that lead you to this belief?
(Examine stage of Problem Solving - "BAC up and take a PEA".)
- B. Is it a fair and accurate representation of the situation or does it bias the situation one way or another?
- C. Is it a statement of **FACT** or **OPINION**? Separate your opinions from the facts of the situation.
- D. Are there **ASSUMPTIONS** involved? Have you made assumptions about other's motives, ideas, or actions?
- E. Are there **DISTORTIONS** involved in the thought? Would others see the same situation you do? Have you checked with others?

2. Is the recording **LOGICAL**?

While the thought may accurately reflect the situation, is the conclusion drawn in error?

A. Does the conclusion follow from the situation?

1. "I failed the test, so I am a failure in life." (no, you just failed a test, not life).
2. "He looked at me funny. He must want to fight." (maybe he thought he knew you or perhaps he has indigestion).

B. Is there any evidence to the contrary?

1. Have you passed other tests before? (Do you fail at everything? NO, obviously.)
2. Have you ever looked at someone funny but not wanted to fight? (Yes probably. Why?)

C. What is the most **REALISTIC** outcome?

1. Can you take the test/course over? (of course you can).
2. He isn't even aware he is looking funny at you (highly likely).

3. Is the recording **HELPFUL**?

The thought may be accurate, but does it help us to think it?
By dwelling on it are we helping or hurting ourselves?

1. "This is really tough to understand. I will struggle to get it." (That may be true, but wasting time telling yourself this keeps you from focusing on the task at hand - learning the material).
2. "It is very hard for me to keep from getting angry." (It may be, but telling yourself that you will get angry will only increase the chances you will actually get angry).

You should ask yourself the two following questions (do a quick decisional balance):

A. What is the effect of believing my recording?

(I get angry... I have more trouble understanding the material...etc.)

B. What could be the effect of changing my recording?

(I may not get angry...I will be able to concentrate better on the material and may learn it quicker...etc.)

4. Distribute the Erasing Bad Tapes Worksheet (TT4_2.HND).

Have the students refer to their homework assignments. Ask them to complete the first **THREE** left-most columns of the worksheet. **Tell them not to write anything in the RIGHT column (talking back) until you indicate they should.**

They should indicate the key words of their recordings in the first column. In the second column they should write the TAPES category. In the third column they should indicate whether the recording is True, Logical, and Helpful by writing a "Y" or "N" for yes or no.

5. Share with the class that there is hope about changing our recordings. We can learn to "Talk Back" to our recordings. Hold a discussion with the class which covers the five ways of talking back listed below. Have the class suggest other ways to talk back for each category. **Talk-back statements should be short** so they can be said quickly (like recordings). [The "Talk Back" category suggests things the clients can "say" to themselves in response to the recordings.]

Tell the class to look at their Erasing Bad Tapes Handout as you discuss each type of talk back. They should write in the **RIGHT HAND COLUMN** key words or phrases that make sense to them as things they could say back to their recordings.

A. Tolerance.

Recording: In our heads we carry a set of "rules" we expect others to follow. These rules play inside our heads like a tape in a boom box. When others don't follow these taped "rules", we can become angry.

Approach: Listen for the recording that is playing in your head. Do an EBS (PS Unit) on the recording. Question the rules contained in that recording. Where did they come from? Think about them and ask yourself if you agree with them (we often don't - they are more habit than well thought out).

Talk-back: "Get a grip"
"Be flexible"
"What's the harm?"
"Do an EBS" (PS Unit)
(client suggestions)

B. Awfulizing.

Recording: When disturbing things happen, we tend to make them seem more significant than they really are. We do this by focusing on the bad consequences that may occur.

Approach: Take a realistic view of the situation. Do a PMI and decide what the realistic odds are that this will result in disaster. Stop using words like "terrible, disaster, awful, worst thing...".

Talk-back: "Don't exaggerate"
"Check it out"
"What're the odds?"
"I can deal with it"
(client suggestions)

C. Putdowns.

Recording: Labeling others or calling them names such as "Jerk" or "Asshole" only increases our anger toward them. We judge them by a single incident rather than as a whole person.

Approach: Stop name-calling. Look at the big picture. Analyze the behavior, not the person. Think about times the person was OK.

Talk-back: "What, not who"
"Not always true" (the label)
"Bad act, good person"
"Think Big Picture"
(client suggestions)

D. Extremes.

Recording: Thinking in absolutes (like "never" or "always") tends to overgeneralize situations. It usually leads to awfulizing.

Approach: Think of life as preferences, not absolutes. Try to think of other alternatives or the possibility that things might not be so "cut and dry". Do a PMI on the situation.

Talk-back: "Don't exaggerate"
"Check it out"
"What's the DEAL" (PS Unit)
"Get a grip"
(client suggestions)

E. Shoulds.

Recording: We tell ourselves the world "should" or "ought" to be a certain way. When we or others don't behave in accordance with these rules, we tell ourselves they (or we) are "failures" or are "bad".

Approach: Question the set of "unwritten" rules you have for yourself. Ask yourself where they came from. Realistically look at what happens if you or others violate your rule (does the world really come to an end?).

Talk-back: "Who says?"
"Be flexible"
"Can too (do it this way)"
(client suggestions)

6. Hold a discussion in which each student shares one or two of his/her entries on his/her Erasing Bad Tapes Worksheet. Each student should share the following:
 - A. The situation that brought about the recording.
 - B. The recording's content.
 - C. The TAPES category of the recording.
 - D. Why the recording was Untruthful, Illogical, or Unhelpful.
 - E. What phrase the student selected for his/her Talk-Back.

5. Review

Hold a brief Review of what we have learned so far:

- A. Recordings are "automatic thoughts" which happen so fast we hardly notice them.
- B. Recordings are derived from Beliefs and Attitudes.
- C. Recordings result in changes in our emotions, behavior, and body state.
- D. Recordings are reinforced by "payments" (both positive and negative).
- E. The goal of this course is to help us take three steps:
 1. Identify the recordings.
 2. Evaluate the recordings.
 3. Change the recordings so we can change our actions.

F. Not all recordings are bad. However, some types of recordings can be bad for us. These "Bad" recordings are remembered by the word "TAPES".

Tolerance: Being intolerant of ourselves or others is a problem.

Awfulizing: Looking at everything in a negative way or expecting the worst.

Putdowns: Putdowns of oneself or others. Using words that trigger strong emotions or disrespect toward oneself or others.

Extrêmes: Thinking in absolutes or they overgeneralize or are rigid or extreme.

Shoulds: Making demands when it is actually a preference or alternative.

G. We should evaluate our recordings by using three questions:

1. Is the recording **TRUE**?
2. Is the recording **LOGICAL**?
3. Is the recording **HELPFUL**?

H. We can "program" quick but effective talk-back phrases which will help us offset the bad effects of the recordings.

I. We have thought of some talk-back phrases to use in the future. Now we need to use them and see how well they work. We can always modify them if needed.

6. Homework.

Tell the class to come to the next session with two examples of how they used talk-back to counter recordings. They should be ready to share:

- A. The situation that brought about the recording.
- B. The recording's content.
- C. The TAPES category of the recording.
- D. Why the recording was Untruthful, Illogical, or Unhelpful.
- E. What phrase the student used for his/her Talk-Back.
- F. The effects of the talk-back.

Evaluating our Recordings [Handout]

Once we have identified our recordings, we must evaluate them. There are three questions we must ask ourselves:

1. Is it **TRUE**?

Is the thought valid. Does it reflect the world accurately?

- A. What is the EVIDENCE that supports this idea?
- B. Is it a fair and accurate representation of the situation?
- C. Is it a statement of FACT or OPINION?
- D. Are there ASSUMPTIONS involved?
- E. Are there DISTORTIONS involved in the thought?

2. Is it **LOGICAL**?

While the thought may accurately reflect the situation, is the conclusion drawn in error?

- A. Does the conclusion follow from the situation?
 - 1. "I failed the test, so I am a failure in life".
 - 2. "He looked at me funny. He must want to fight."
- B. Is there any evidence to the contrary?
 - 1. Have you passed other tests before?
 - 2. Have you ever looked at someone funny but not wanted to fight?
- C. What is the most REALISTIC outcome?
 - 1. Can you take the test/course over?
 - 2. He isn't even aware he is looking funny at you.

3. Is it **HELPFUL**?

The thought may be accurate, but but does it help us to think it?

- 1. "This is really tough to understand. I will struggle to get it."
- 2. "It is very hard for me to keep from getting angry."
- A. What is the effect of believing my recording?
- B. What could be the effect of changing my recording?

ERASING BAD TAPES WORKSHEET [Handout]

List five recordings you tend to say to yourself when you face difficulties. Write the key words of the recordings in the spaces in the LEFT column of the chart below. Next, review the five TAPES categories on your handout. Identify which of the TAPES are playing in your recordings and write the category of TAPES in the LEFT-CENTER column. Indicate whether you feel recording is True, Logical, and Helpful in the RIGHT-CENTER column. In the RIGHT column write some TALKING-BACK statements you can make when you decide the recording is not True, Logical, or Helpful.

KEY WORDS OF RECORDING	TAPES CATEGORY	True? Logical? Helpful?	TALKING-BACK
		T L H	
		T L H	
		T L H	
		T L H	
		T L H	

Thinking Traps Unit

TT5 - Special Recordings of Neutralization

1. Learning Objectives

1. Students are able to identify the special neutralization techniques developed by Sykes & Matza.

2. Theoretical Matrix

The previous sessions have focused on the CBT and REBT approach to criminal thinking. The tools learned through these techniques are valuable for our clients in identifying, evaluating, and changing their cognitive structures.

Sykes & Matza (1957) have identified five special recordings which offenders tend to use to "neutralize their guilt". These special recordings are frequently encountered by professionals dealing with offender populations. By discussing these techniques, this session enables the students to identify and refute these special recordings. In some sense, this session is an "awareness raising" session toward these recordings.

Instructors should not be overly concerned if the students are unable to correctly categorize the recording into the five categories identified by Sykes and Matza. If the student realizes the recording is a technique of neutralization, that awareness is sufficient for our purposes.

3. Materials Required

1. Flip chart or whiteboard and markers.
2. Filled in Techniques of Neutralization Handout (TT5_1.HND).
3. Empty Techniques of Neutralization Handout (TT5_2.HND).

4. Process

1. Hold a discussion in which each student reviews his/her homework. Have the students indicate two situations each where they used talk-back to counter a recording. For each situation the student should indicate:
 - A. The situation that brought about the recording.
 - B. The recording's content.
 - C. The TAPES category of the recording.
 - D. Why the recording was Untruthful, Illogical, or Unhelpful.
 - E. What phrase the student used for his/her Talk-Back.
 - F. The effects of the talk-back.

2. Using the information gathered during the sharing of the students' homework, review the effectiveness of talking back to recordings.

You should be able to use the information given by the students to reinforce the idea that talking back **WORKS**.

3. Tell the class that today we will discuss a special kind of recording called "Techniques of Neutralization".

Give a mini-lecture that covers the following:

- A. Gresham Sykes and David Matza are two sociologists.
 - B. They published an article in 1957 in which they proposed several key thoughts. These thoughts are:
 1. Most people are socialized the same. That is, we are all basically "human" and share the similar sets of ideas.
 2. Offenders are no different than other people. They eat the same way, dress the same way, and generally are undistinguishable from non-offenders if you pass one on the street.
 3. The public asks the question "How could they do that?" when talking about crime. - **This is the wrong question.**
 4. What we should be asking is "If they are like me, how could they do that and not feel terrible?".
 5. Sykes and Matza conducted research and came up with five recordings offenders tend to use to "neutralize the guilt of committing crimes".
 - C. Today we will learn what Sykes and Matza discovered were the five special recordings offenders use to not feel bad about committing crimes.
4. Distribute the filled out Techniques of Neutralization Handout (TT5_1.HND).

Hold a discussion with the class which covers the material in the handout. Ensure the class understands the basic concept behind each of the five techniques. **Properly approached (with some humor), this discussion can be lively and enjoyable for the class.**

5. Distribute the empty Techniques of Neutralization Handout (TT5_2.HND).

Give the class 10 minutes to think about things which they have said or they have heard others say about committing offenses that were techniques of neutralization. They should write these sayings down in the appropriate category on the sheet.

Tell the class that they should try to get at least two statements in each category.

6. Hold a discussion in which the class shares their techniques of neutralization. Go around the room and have a student give a brief background statement for the recording and then share the statement or recording (s)he has written down.

Have the remainder of the class determine:

- A. What category the statement falls into.
- B. Why the statement is "bad".
 1. It is not True.
 2. It is not Logical.
 3. It is not Helpful.

Do not allow the class to begin to debate which category is "correct". Many techniques can fall into several categories depending on the context of the situation and the intent of the "speaker". What is important is that the class recognize the recordings/statements as a technique of neutralization rather than a specific kind of technique.

This discussion can be enjoyable (even raucous at times) if you allow it. Go with the flow of the class and enjoy some of the outrageous stories you are about to hear (.

7. Tell the class to pay attention to their own recordings and the statements of others. They should now be able to quickly identify these special "bad recordings".

5. Review

Review for the class what they have learned in this unit.

- A. Recordings are "automatic thoughts" which happen so fast we hardly notice them.
- B. Recordings are derived from Beliefs and Attitudes.
- C. Recordings result in changes in our emotions, behavior, and body state.
- D. Recordings are reinforced by "payments" (both positive and negative).
- E. The goal of this course is to help us take three steps:
 - 1. Identify the recordings.
 - 2. Evaluate the recordings.
 - 3. Change the recordings so we can change our actions.
- F. Not all recordings are bad. However, some types of recordings can be bad for us. These "Bad" recordings are remembered by the word "TAPES".

Tolerance: Being intolerant of ourselves or others is a problem.

Awfulizing: Looking at everything in a negative way or expecting the worst.

Putdowns: Putdowns of ourself or others. Using words that trigger strong emotions or disrespect toward ourself or others.

Extrêmes: Thinking in absolutes or they overgeneralize or are rigid or extreme.

Shoulds: Making demands when it is actually a preference or alternative.

- G. We should evaluate our recordings by using three questions:

1. Is the recording **TRUE**?
 2. Is the recording **LOGICAL**?
 3. Is the recording **HELPFUL**?
- H. We can "program" quick but effective talk-back phrases which will help us offset the bad effects of the recordings.
- I. We have thought of some talk-back phrases to use in the future. Now we need to use them and see how well they work. We can always modify them if needed.
- J. We have learned five special recordings called Techniques of Neutralization. They are:
1. Denial of Responsibility
 2. Denial of Injury
 3. Denial of Victim
 4. Condemn the Condemners
 5. Appeal to Higher Loyalties
6. Tell the class that they now have a better understanding of their inner thoughts than do many people. They can choose now to let the recordings affect their behavior or choose to talk back to their recordings.

We hope they choose to talk back.

7. Thank the class for their participation.
8. Distribute the Certificates to the Class.
9. Distribute the UNIT EVALUATION to the class and ask them to fill it out.

Techniques of Neutralization (Sykes and Matza, 1957)

1. **Denial of Responsibility**

Actions are due to factors beyond the offender's control, thus the individual is guilt free.

- a. I was drunk.
- b. I was out of control.
- c. My parents used to beat me.
- d. I'm bi-polar.

2. **Denial of Injury**

The offender admits the act but insists there was really "no harm done".

- a. They are insured.
- b. They stole it themselves.
- c. They will claim twice the value to the insurance company.
- d. I didn't hurt anyone ("victimless crimes").

3. **Denial of Victim**

The offender blames the victim. "They had it coming".

- a. They had it coming (he hit me [my brother] first).
- b. He knew that would make me mad.
- c. She was asking for it by the way she was dressed.
- d. The store charges too high prices to begin with.

4. **Condemn the Condemners "System Bashing"**

Those who disapprove of the offenders acts are defined as immoral, hypocritical, or criminal themselves.

- a. Police are corrupt and brutal.
- b. The judge was corrupt.
- c. Teachers always play favorites.
- d. All the cops take drugs themselves.

5. **Appeal to Higher Loyalties**

The rules are broken for a "greater good".

- a. My kid was sick.
- b. I didn't take it for myself, I stole it for a friend.
- c. I was defending my [wife's] [family's] honor.
- d. Abortionists kill babies, so they should die.

Techniques of Neutralization (Sykes and Matza, 1957)

1. **Denial of Responsibility**

Actions are due to factors beyond the offender's control, thus the individual is guilt free.

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

2. **Denial of Injury**

The offender admits the act but insists there was really "no harm done".

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

3. **Denial of Victim**

The offender blames the victim. "They had it coming".

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

4. **Condemn the Condemners "System Bashing"**

Those who disapprove of the offenders acts are defined as immoral, hypocritical, or criminal themselves.

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

5. **Appeal to Higher Loyalties**

The rules are broken for a "greater good".

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.