

## Social Skills Orientation for Clients

### **What is Social Skills Training?**

Social skills training teaches people how they can better communicate their feelings, thoughts, and needs to others. It also teaches them how they can better respond to other people's feelings, thoughts, and needs. Social skills help people to get what they want more often and help them to avoid doing things that they do not want to do.

### **How is Social Skills Training Different from Other Groups?**

Social skills training is different from other forms of therapy groups. Group members do not sit around and talk about their problems. Instead, members spend group time trying out ways to actually solve their problems. They do this by practicing different skills during the group and then trying out these skills in real-life situations.

### **What is Expected of Group Members?**

Group members must be willing to keep an open mind. They must be willing to try new techniques designed to communicate with one other. Group members will learn about new skills and discuss how to use them in their lives. When they are ready, they will practice the skills in group and in real-life situations.

### **How Do Group Members Learn and Practice a New Skill?**

Group members practice a new skill through role playing, initially with the group leaders and then with each other. Role playing is similar to rehearsing for a play but is more relaxed and fun. Group members are first given a handout that has the skill being taught broken down into a few easy steps. Next they watch the group leaders role play the skill with each other. (Role playing is acting in a pretend situation.) When members are feeling comfortable, they get to role play the skill. They will also be asked to do "homework," whereby they will practice the skill outside the group. Nobody is ever forced to role play or to do homework if he or she does not feel comfortable.

### **How Can Social Skills Training Help Me?**

Social skills can help you communicate better with your friends, relatives, and employers. They can help you talk to people you are interested in dating. You can focus on skills that will allow you to become more independent. Social skills training can help you improve the skills you need to achieve almost any goal you choose. Before the first session, each group member meets with a group leader. The leader helps the group member identify his or her own personal goals to work on in group.