

SELF-STATEMENTS FOR COPING

A. The beginning

- 1) What is it I have to do? (View the developing pain as a problem that you can do something about)
- 2) I can develop a plan to deal with it. (Prepare oneself by making a plan or mental outline of how you will deal with the sensations when they arise)
- 3) Just think about what I have to do. (Focus on what the situation requires).
- 4) Think of the things that I can use to help cope. (Review all the strategies that you know and that may be helpful).
- 5) Don't worry; worrying won't help anything. (Use any anxiety or worry as a cue to remind you to focus on what you have to do).
- 6) Remember, I can shift my attention to anything I want to. (Reassure yourself about your ability to employ various coping strategies).
- 7) When I use mental imagery, I'll see how vivid I can make the scene. (Review various aspects of the different images and strategies that can be used).

B. Confronting the pain.

- 1) I can deal with the pain as a challenge. (View the pain as a challenge rather than as a disaster)
- 2) One step at a time, I can handle the pain. (Don't do everything at once and don't be overwhelmed; rather, use each of the skills you have learned).
- 3) Just relax, breathe deeply, and use one of the strategies.
- 4) I won't think about the pain, just about what I have to do. (Focus your attention on the task at hand and what you can do right now to help you cope).
- 5) I'm feeling tense; that can be an ally, a cue to switch strategies, and to take some slow deep breaths.
- 6) Remember, I can switch back to some strategies that I used before.

C. Coping with thoughts and feelings at critical moments (when you notice that the intensity of the pain seems to be increasing or you think that you can't go on any more). Self-instructions or statements that can be made at this phase include:

- 1) When I feel pain, I just pause and keep focusing on what I have to do. (Keep in mind the task at hand and what you have to do).
- 2) Don't try to eliminate the pain totally, just keep it manageable. Remember, you expected to detect some intense stimulation, but don't overreact and make things worse).
- 3) I knew the sensations would rise; I will just keep them under control. (Don't magnify the intensity of the sensations you experience).
- 4) (You have been taught a number of different strategies that will help you keep the intense stimulation under control).

- 5) Things are going pretty bad; I can't take any more – just pause; don't make things worse. I'll review my plan of strategies to see what I can switch to. (Sometimes you may have unpleasant thoughts or feelings; use those as cues to review the strategies available for you to use).
- 6) My head feels terrible; things are falling apart; I better stop – relax. I can focus my attention on something else; keep things under control. (If you find yourself focusing on unpleasant sensations or thoughts, remember you can choose what you will focus your attention upon).