

Power/Control Issues Module

Beliefs Related to SELF: The belief/expectation that you can solve problems and meet challenges. Power is associated with your capacity for self-growth.

Prior Experience

Negative	Positive
<p>If you grew up experiencing inescapable, negative events, you may develop the belief that you cannot control events or solve problems even if they are controllable/solvable. This is called learned helplessness. Later traumatic events may seem to confirm prior beliefs about helplessness.</p>	<p>If you grew up believing that you had control over events and could solve problems (possibly unrealistically positive beliefs), the traumatic event may disrupt those beliefs.</p>

Symptoms Associated With Negative Self-Power/Control Beliefs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Numbing of feelings ➤ Avoidance of emotions ➤ Chronic passivity ➤ Hopelessness and depression ➤ Self-destructive patterns ➤ Outrage when faced with events that are out of your control or people who do not behave as you would like

Resolution

If you previously believed that...	A possible self-statement may be...
<p>...Overcontrol—It is important to understand that no one can have complete control over his emotions or behavior at all times. While you may be able to influence external events, it is impossible to control all external events or the behavior of other people. Neither of these facts is a sign of weakness, but only an understanding that you are human and can admit that you are not in control of everything that happens to you or your reactions.</p>	<p>“I do not have total control over my reactions, other people, or events at all times. I am not powerless, however, to have some control over my reactions to events, or to influence the behavior of others or the outcome of some events.”</p>

<p>Helplessness or powerlessness—In order to regain a sense of control and decrease the accompanying symptoms of depression and loss of self-esteem that often go along with believing you are helpless, you will need to reconsider the ability to control events.</p>	<p>“I cannot control all events outside of myself, but I do have some control over what happens to me and my reactions to events.”</p>
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Beliefs Related to OTHERS: The belief that you can control future outcomes in interpersonal relationships or that you have some power, even in relation to powerful others.

Prior Experience

Negative	Positive
<p>If you had prior experiences with others that led you to believe that you had no control in your relationships with others, or that you had no power in relation to powerful others, the traumatic event will seem to confirm those beliefs.</p>	<p>If you had prior positive experiences in your relationships with others and in relation to powerful others, you may have come to believe that you could influence others. The traumatic event may shatter this belief because you were unable to exert enough control, despite your best efforts, to prevent the event.</p>

Symptoms Associated With Negative Others-Power/Control Beliefs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Passivity ➤ Submissiveness ➤ Lack of assertiveness that can generalize to all relationships ➤ Inability to maintain relationships because you do not allow the person to exert any control in the relationships (including becoming enraged if the other person tries to exert even a minimal amount of control)

Resolution

If you previously believed that ...	Possible self-statements may be ...
<p>...Powerlessness—In order for you to avoid being abused in relationships because you do not exert any control, you will need to learn</p>	<p>“Even though I cannot always get everything I want in a relationship, I do have the ability to influence others by standing up for my rights to</p>

<p>adaptive, balanced beliefs about your influence on other people.</p>	<p>ask for what I want.”</p>
<p>...Overcontrol—It is important to realize that healthy relationships involve sharing power and control. Relationships in which one person has all the power tend to be abusive (even if you are the one with all the power).</p>	<p>“Even though I may not get everything I want or need out of a relationship, I can assert myself and ask for it. A good relationship is one in which power is balanced between both people. If I am not allowed any control, I can exert my control in this relationship by ending it, if necessary.”</p>