









Limiting Unhealthy Comparisons

	Objective: To develop an awareness of how envy inhibits happiness.
	Time Requirements: a. Preparation: 5 minutes b. Activity: 10-15 minutes
	Items: a. Limiting Unhealthy Comparisons Handout
	Learning Outcomes: a. Enhanced ability to identify how unhealthy comparisons may inhibit one's happiness (EI Subskill 1: Understanding Own Emotions) b. Enhanced ability to limit unhealthy social comparisons (EI Subskill 2: Managing Own Emotions)
	Key Learning Point: Unhealthy comparisons limit our happiness.
Self-Disclosure: ****	
Difficulty: Intermediate	

Instructions

1. Start the activity by asking participants to interpret the following quote by Benjamin Franklin: "Content makes poor men rich, discontent makes rich men poor." Ask participants to think about how, when, and why they feel contented. Ask participants to contrast these feelings with situations when they feel discontented. Usually, participants make such comparisons in relation to a reference individual. Introduce the concept of social comparison here – that we make comparisons with individuals around us to gauge of how well off or worse off we are.
2. Distribute the Limiting Unhealthy Comparisons Handout to participants. Ask them to think of a few individuals who they compare themselves with. Ask participants why they make these comparisons, and whether these comparisons are making them feel worse off as a result. Give 10 minutes for this activity, before discussing the responses. It will usually be the case that participants will compare themselves with others in areas which they themselves are personally invested in.

	Reflection Questions: a. Which comparisons were making you feel unhappy? Why were these comparisons making you unhappy?
	Further Reading and References: a. Smith, R. H., Diener, E., & Wedell, D. H. (1989). Intrapersonal and social comparison determinants of happiness: A range-frequency analysis. <i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i> , 56(3), 317-325. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.56.3.317
	Note: a. Some comparisons may not elicit envy – these may consist of comparisons with role models, for instance. In fact, the Dutch have a term for such 'benign' envy (<i>benijden</i>), which is different from malicious envy (<i>afgunst</i>). b. A useful follow-up for this activity is the Three Good Things and Self-Compassion Letter activities, both of which helps elicit momentary, state gratitude.