

Outline syllabus: Participants are encouraged to read Man's Search for Meaning

Before the end of each session we will devote time to asking all of the participants how they are doing and get feedback.

Session 1- Summary of concepts and sources of meaning

- Introduction (Nicole and Fran)
- Consents, demographic form, and surveys
- Group introduce themselves
- Go over readings/postings
- Summarize what this is all about- what we hope to achieve—Read p. 112-115 in Man's Search for Meaning
- Discuss syllabus, course content, and assignments
- Frankl and humor p. 43 & 44 in Man's Search for Meaning: Discuss humor as a coping strategy and have group talk about an amusing story.
- Discuss quote from Dr. Wendy Schlessel Harpham
- Assignment: read pages 315-319 from Happiness in a Storm and Jane Brody's article from the NY Times for next week

Session 2- Cancer and meaning

- Jane Brody article in NY Times: Thriving After Life's Bum Rap—August 14, 2007
- Happiness in a Storm by Wendy Schlessel Harpham, MD—P. 315-319 and discuss Personal Happiness list.
- Assignment: read pages 58-79 (target p. 75-79) in The Anatomy of Hope for next week

Session 3- Meaning derived from the historical context of life (Macro)

- Frankl and Man's Search for Meaning
- Other historical challenges
- 9/11/01
- Participants will discuss a timeline with major historical events in their lives
- The Anatomy of Hope p. 58-79
- Assignment: read article, The Gift of Dignity for next week

Session 4- Historical context (Micro)

- Add to timeline from last week—important events in their lives.
- Dignity therapy and legacy projects: brief introduction based on Harvey Max Chochinov's research.
- Generativity vs despair
- Discussion about what to leave behind from article by Kari Bohlke, ScD The Gift of Dignity.
- Assignment: The Anatomy of Hope p. 121-141 and Man's Search for Meaning p. 69-89

Session 5-Meaning derived from attitudinal values

- What is the attitude of one's family?
- Illness, suffering- coping skills? Functional vs. dysfunctional
- Discuss Frankl's view of changing one's attitude if a situation cannot be changed p. 69-89 in Man's Search for Meaning.
- Jerome Groopman: The Anatomy of Hope: pages 121-141
- Assignment: to read Anna Ornstein, MD article, Artistic Creativity and the Healing Process for next week's discussion. Also to read p. 39-43 in Man's Search for Meaning.
- Assignment: to think about a personally meaningful work of art: poem, picture, song on a CD, etc. to discuss next week

Session 6- Meaning derived from creative values

- Discuss Ornstein article
- Frankl and creativity from Man's Search for Meaning p. 39-43
- Discuss poem, picture, art, music, which is meaningful to participants
- No assignments for next week

Session 7- Meaning derived through experiential values

- Living through and with illness
- Experience of diagnosis and treatment- vs. expectations
- Experience of family members?
- How has experience affected coping- will it help in the future?  
How have past experiences helped with this?
- Assignment: Man's Search for Meaning p. 108-111

Session 8- Responsibility

- To whom? For whom? Meaning derived from this?
- Frankl and responsibility from Man's Search for Meaning p.108-111
- Termination
- Feedback
- Surveys