**Guidelines For Rating Words**

The purpose of this chapter is to establish guidelines for rating (or coding) words using the categories or dimensions of emotion, cognition, and contract. For further elaboration on these dimensions, see Canfield, 1985; Canfield, 1990; and Canfield, Walker, and Brown, 1991.

*General Rating Scheme*

This rating system uses an integer scale of ‑8 to 0 to +8. All of the words rated have an integer assigned to each of the dimensions. This includes zero as a legitimate rating. This chapter describes three of the eight dimensions used by the system. The three dimensions discussed in this chapter are emotion, cognition, and contract.

Words are rated using any combination of the eight dimensions. For instance, "thinking" is rated high on cognition (information) and 0 on the remaining constructs. "Resentment" is rated on emotion and contract while "notify" is rated on cognition, contract and performance. Words in the system can have only one set of ratings. Since many words have more than one meaning, ratings were given to the meanings that were most likely to be used in a psychotherapy session.

Ratings are based on the following questions. Which dimension or dimensions contain the greatest part of the meaning? What is the purpose of the word? What is the general sense of the word? How is this word likely to be used in a psychotherapy session? For example, the purpose of the word "kind" can be to describe "compassion in a relationship between people" or to indicate "type" or "ilk." If it is assumed that the word is most likely to be used as "compassion" (as is true in this rating example), then the meaning is primarily that of relationship or contract. "Kind" has some positive emotion when it is used as "considerate."

A word receives a cognition rating only when the word is used to convey or impart information. "Kind" contains information, however, the purpose of this word is not to exchange information. Therefore, "kind" would not be rated on cognition.

*Emotion*

The Latin term emovere means to stir up or agitate. Several words are associated with emotion: "amorous," "animosity," "outrage," "joy," "pleasure" and "despair." Each of these words is rated high on this scale. Some of these words do not rate positively on the scale. A word such as "despair" might rate ‑7 or ‑8 . A word such as "feel" could be associated with an emotional issue, but it could be either positive or negative. Consequently, "feel" is not rated on emotion.

Words are rated as positive emotion when the word indicates "pleasure," "comfort," "desirability," or "joy." Words are rated as negative emotion when the word indicates "dissatisfaction," "discomfort," "undesirability," or "depression." In addition, motivation or need states are identifiable with words such as "hunger," "pain," and "sexual urge." Each rating may vary in its intensity. For example, emotion words such as "bliss," "amorous," "pleasure," and "delight" have high positive ratings while "rest," "tender," and "smile" have moderate to low ratings on positive emotion. Words such as "despair," "abhor," and "outrage" have high ratings on negative emotion, while "uneasy," "yearn," "boring," and "weary" have low ratings on negative emotion.

The following are anchor words (or examples) of words with ratings on the emotion dimension. The numbers in the left column indicate the rating given to the word. An asterisk indicates that the word is also rated on another dimension.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| POSITIVE EMOTION: | | |  |
| 8 | cherish | ecstasy | passion |
| 7 | bliss | amorous | comfort |
| 6 | delight | pleasure | joy |
| 5 | kind | cheerful | tender |
| 4 | eat | smile | optimistic |
| 3 | vacation | amused | theater |
| 2 | permit | colleague | okay |
| 1 | assist | explore | acquaintance |
| NEGATIVE EMOTION: | | |  |
| 1 | uneasiness | ache | sting |
| 2 | distrustful | yearn | sore |
| 3 | weary | boring | tiresome |
| 4 | blue | cringe | discouraged |
| 5 | rude | grudge | spite |
| 6 | pain | hunger | resentment |
| 7 | outrage | fume | animosity |
| 8 | loathe | abhor | despair |

*Cognition*

Cognition involves perceptions (which may be true or false), information (which may be true or false), and constructs (hypotheses, designs, plans and maps). This is a difficult dimension to rate as cognition is associated with each of the other dimensions. To be in despair, one must think. However, "sad" is rated zero on cognition because (a) the greatest part of its meaning is emotional, and (b) it does not have the purpose of providing information. Since all words contain information, ratings of cognition were given only when it was the *purpose* of the word to (a) convey information, (b) present a perception, or (c) present a construct. Words that are rated high on cognition include: "math," "logic," "sign," "map," "listen," "science," and "idea."

Words are rated as *positive cognition* when they indicate presence of information, contemplation, solving problems, or making predictions of events. Words that are rated as *negative cognition* indicate the absence of information, asking questions, forgetting, making errors in logic, or making faulty predictions. Words such as "conversing" and "teaching" are rated as positive cognition. Words indicating the absence of information, making an error in logic, solving problems, or making a faulty prediction are rated as negative cognition. Words that request information imply that one is without information, therefore, are rated as negative cognition. The positive or negative valences indicate the amount or degree of complexity in the information. A word such as "hypothesis" would receive a high rating on positive cognition while a word such as "supposition" would receive a lower rating on positive cognition. The words "report," "information," and "implicit" receive moderate ratings on positive cognition. Words such as "ask," "forget," and "don't know" receive high ratings on negative cognition, while "surmise" and "guess" receive low ratings on negative cognition.

This use of the concept of cognition borrows from social learning theorists such as Mischel (1982), personality theorist Kelly (1955), and Tolman (1948). Other components of this construct were derived from the theories of Beck (1984) and Bandura (1977).

When rating words for cognition, it is helpful to consider whether or not the purpose of the word is to provide information, e.g. "report," "notify," and "converse." Other considerations in rating words for cognition include whether the word gives information, exchanges information, tells about information, or implies information gathering. Negative cognition implies distortion or loss or lack of information, e.g. "deceive" and "forget." If the word does not fall into one of these categories, it may not be appropriate to rate the word as cognition.

The following are anchor words (or examples) of words with ratings on the cognition dimension. The numbers in the left column indicate the rating given to the word. An asterisk indicates that the word is also rated on another dimension.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| POSITIVE COGNITION: | | |  |
| 8 | information | teach | science |
| 7 | report | notify | prediction |
| 6 | hypothesis | discern | express |
| 5 | converse | expect | clear |
| 4 | implicit | listen | aim |
| 3 | position | location | tacit |
| 2 | endeavor | mission | surroundings |
| 1 | allow | terse | happen |
| NEGATIVE COGNITION: | | |  |
| 1 | search | quizzical | concede |
| 2 | elude | conjecture | surmise |
| 3 | inhibit | indirect | nebulous |
| 4 | unclear | speculate | covert |
| 5 | deficient | suppress | guess |
| 6 | mysterious | inquiry | ask |
| 7 | ignorant | unknown | error |
| 8 | oblivious | deceive | forgotten |

*Contract*

This category is not as well developed in the psychological literature as the previous dimensions. Pratt and Tooley (1966, 1967, 1969) define contract as follows: "Contracts are defined as '...reciprocal agreements, promises, expectancies, commitments, covenants‑‑from a new year's resolution to the United Nation's 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights.' Contracts are the instrumentalities for the creation of exchange of values" (Pratt and Tooley, 1967). Contracts can be clear or unclear, truthful or fraudulent (a contract may be made by a person who does not intend to fulfill it.) Contracts have the following characteristics: (a) acts to be performed by the participants are specified, (b) reinforcements to be obtained by the participants are specified, and (c) sanctions for nonperformance are specified. These concepts include relationships and values (Canfield, 1990).

Words rated as positive contracts are those which indicate benefit to all parties of the contract (or that all parties desire fulfillment of the contract) in varying degrees. Words rated as high positive contracts imply benefit to humankind (e.g., Kant's "categorical imperative") such as loyalty to an oath, arrangement, relationship, value, or law (includes laws of nature). For example, when the word "loyal" is rated, non‑violation of "loyal" is the expected outcome, therefore, "loyal" receives a high rating on positive contract. However, "disloyal" would rate as negative contract. Words that involve: (a) values, (b) relationships, (c) arrangements with implied acts to be performed, and (d) reinforcements or sanctions to be given or received, have a rating on the contract dimension.

An implicit or explicit expectation exists in contract words. Words relating to values are rated as positive contract. Words rated as negative contract are those that violate other contracts (particularly value contracts) or indicate non‑performance of contracts. A contract cannot be positive if someone in the contract is hurt, loses in some way, or is negatively affected by it. Words such as "oath," "administer," "arrangement," "friend," and "reliable" are rated high on positive contract, while "elude," "contest" and "acquiescent" are rated low on negative contract. Words such as "torture," "deceive," "forsake," and "slay" are rated high on negative contract, while "badger," "envious," and "distrustful" are rated moderate to low on contract.

The following are anchor words (or examples) of words with ratings on the contract dimension. The numbers in the left column indicate the rating given to the word. An asterisk indicates that the word is also rated on another dimension.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| POSITIVE CONTRACT: | | |  |
| 8 | oath | covenant | integrity |
| 7 | matrimony | values | friendship |
| 6 | expect | administer | arrangement |
| 5 | reliable | teach | cherish |
| 4 | kind | tender | ask |
| 3 | school | smile | listen |
| 2 | appreciative | search | express |
| 1 | identify | recognize | approach |
| NEGATIVE CONTRACT: | | |  |
| 1 | concede | acquiescent | bashful |
| 2 | elude | uneasiness | contest |
| 3 | rude | envious | distrustful |
| 4 | disturb | resentment | interfere |
| 5 | denounce | refuse | humiliate |
| 6 | appalling | estrangement | alienate |
| 7 | disloyal | outrage | prejudice |
| 8 | forsake | torture | slay |