Name:

Date:

Assignment: Interpersonal Development Assignment #3 Making Small Talk

Class: CEP 300 V Human Relations Training

Instructor: Kerstin L. Miller

**Making Small Talk: Time to Practice**

**Enhancing your ability to make “small talk” or causal conversation with others can enhance your personal and professional relationships. Making small talk is an especially valuable skill to have in social situations where you are unfamiliar with the setting and people. The key is finding a connection and building a relationship with the other person.** **Use the following worksheet to document and monitor your progress.**

**\*\*\*Your safety is most important. If you live with someone or are regularly around someone, please try to practice this skill in-person. However, given the recent self-quarantines, feel free to complete this via virtual communication (i.e. phone call, written chat, video chat). Please contact the instructor if you are still having difficulty completing this assignment due to the recent developments regarding COVID-19 or technology limitations.**

**Make A Plan To Practice**

**Make a list of at least 5 potential situations or people that you can practice making small talk with over the next week:**

**1. Online Game Teammates**

**2. People in Zoom Classes**

**3. Delivery Workers**

**4. Cashier**

**5. People at my Apartment**

**Keep Track of Your Progress**

**Practice Session 1:**

1. Time, location, person I practiced with: Saturday 3pm, my apartment complex, stranger walking their dog

2. Rate how effectively you were at making small talk in this situation (See worksheet for numerical ratings and type the number that expresses your honest reflection): 4

3. No matter how effective this practice session was use the following space to reflect on how it went. What was effective? What could have been more effective?: (minimum response 100 words): This small talk session went really well. I was walking my dog at my apartment complex and I met a fellow dog walker along the way. I thought a good common ground to start the conversation was to complement their dog and ask about the breed. I also asked how they were doing with the stay at home orders that are in effect and other open-ended questions about their dog. They responded well and the conversation lasted about 5 minutes. I think next time I need to take more notice of my nonverbal behaviors. I didn’t pay attention to my smile or any other movements I was working. Overall it was good small talk and I don’t think the other person felt annoyed or bothered.

**Practice Session 2:**

1. Time, location, person I practiced with: Sunday 10:30am, my apartment, my roommate

2. Rate how effectively you were at making small talk in this situation (See worksheet for numerical ratings and type the number that expresses your honest reflection): 4

3. No matter how effective this practice session was use the following space to reflect on how it went. What was effective? What could have been more effective?: (minimum response 100 words): This small talk session went really well today. I engaged in small talk with my roommate. Even though I live with him he works from 11am to 1am, so I really don’t see him when I’m away. But today he had a day off, so I decided to chat. I started off with “how was work?”, and it took off from there. We discussed how the pandemic was affecting him and his work. We also play similar video games, and we talked about those as well. We seemed to have a lot in common, so it was easy to ask opened ended questions. This time, I paid attention to my nonverbal behavior, and noticed I was smiling most of the time, which I think was due to us liking the same games.

**Practice Session 3:**

1. Time, location, person I practiced with: Monday 1am, online chat, group member

2. Rate how effectively you were at making small talk in this situation (See worksheet for numerical ratings and type the number that expresses your honest reflection): 4

3. No matter how effective this practice session was use the following space to reflect on how it went. What was effective? What could have been more effective?: (minimum response 100 words): This session really put my skills to the test. I was assigned to a group for my web programming class and am in a group with people I don’t know, nor can I see. We began to work on our project, so I decided to make small talk with someone. Usually I can count on fellow CS students to play video games, so I asked if anyone played Apex Legends. A groupmate said he did, so I continued asking who his favorite character was, favorite weapon, and other questions to the game. This approach worked well as he seemed to loosen up and enjoy the conversation. This interaction led to us playing the game together later that night. Sadly, this was voice chat only, so my nonverbal behaviors did not have an impact on the interaction.

**Practice Session 4:**

1. Time, location, person I practiced with: Tuesday 12pm, my apartment, online game teammate

2. Rate how effectively you were at making small talk in this situation (See worksheet for numerical ratings and type the number that expresses your honest reflection): 2

3. No matter how effective this practice session was use the following space to reflect on how it went. What was effective? What could have been more effective?: (minimum response 100 words): This session was an interesting one. I usually play Apex Legends with my friends only as there are 2 people to a squad. None of my friends wanted to play today, so I decided to play with a random teammate. I knew nothing about this person, so I tried to start off with how the quarantine was going for them, to which they replied, “It’s stupid”. So, I figured maybe that wasn’t a good question, so I asked them who their favorite legend was, but I got another short answer. I tried a few more open-ended questions but to no avail. My guess is that maybe this wasn’t an appropriate time to try to make small talk. Apex can get intense, but there’s a lot of time you don’t spend fighting, but this person just might not like to talk while playing, which is fair. Overall this was not one of my best interactions.

**Practice Session 5:**

1. Time, location, person I practiced with: Wednesday 10am, my apartment, classmate

2. Rate how effectively you were at making small talk in this situation (See worksheet for numerical ratings and type the number that expresses your honest reflection): 5

3. No matter how effective this practice session was use the following space to reflect on how it went. What was effective? What could have been more effective?: (minimum response 100 words): This session went much better than the last one. Today I was chatting online with a bunch of my classmates I haven’t seen since school was closed. Most everybody went on mute to attend class, which left me and one of my classmates I know, but not very well. I decided to start this one by asking how their classes were going with the online switch. We shared the same views, so I kept the conversation going by asking how the pandemic changed other aspects of their life. They opened up and it sounded like they really needed to talk, and I was glad to listen. This small talk session ended up being a full-blown conversation that lasted an hour and was by far my best practice session out of them all. Unfortunately, this was an online voice chat so they couldn’t react to my nonverbal behaviors.