**Relationship Ladder Activity**

**(adapted from The Geese Theatre Handbook)**

Create a Relationship Ladder. Use green frog tape and have the group create an image of a simple stepladder on the floor. Describe the very first rung of the stepladder as the very start of a new relationship. Ask clients to describe the details of the start of a new relationship. Who is meeting? What are their ages? Where do they meet? What are they talking about? What type of physical contact is there between them? Etc.

Continue to process for each rung up the ladder. Clinicians have a choice to have clients create two different types of relationship ladders. It is recommended that clinicians have clients do both ladders. Clinicians should have enough time given that there are 2 weeks provided for this activity.

Relationship Ladders

1. A Relationship Ladder where the top rung of the ladder represents a non-sexual intimate relationship between 2 very good friends.
2. A Relationship Ladder where the top rung of the ladder represents two people having a sexually intimate relationship and being committed to each other in some way.

At each rung of the ladder, ask the group to talk about how the move to the next rung is negotiated. Who directs the move? Is it mutual? What are the 2 people doing to continue to increase intimacy in their relationship? What types of intimacy are appropriate at the current level? At what point does the individual share their sexual offending history? What are the hallmarks that occur that represent a healthy relationship? Remind clients to look back over the material from the last 10 weeks of the module.

If the Relationship Ladder represents a sexual relationship, where does sexual touching begin in the relationship? Where does sexual intercourse occur in the relationship? How are the sexual boundaries discussed?

Encourage group discussion at each rung of the ladder. Does everyone agree on the level of intimacy at each level or is there disagreement. Have group members state their arguments as to why they want or don’t want some aspect of intimacy at each rung on the ladder.

Have a volunteer record each aspect of the various ladder rungs on the whiteboard so clients can see the progression on the whiteboard. .

After the group has completed discussing each rung of the ladder, use the ladder as a continuum. Ask clients to stand by the rung that represents where they have been in their closest intimate relationship. How far did the relationship get up the ladder? Be sure to tell the group that if they feel like they have never had an intimate relationship, it is ok to stand away from the first rung of the ladder.