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## Sanctified and Free of Bondage: Mind, Body and Spirit

The in class team group meeting was very therapeutic in nature. There was a bizarre twist because we all decided to recount real life stories about our own bouts with depression. Each group member was grappling with something that triggered symptoms of depression. It made me feel not alone. I shared how I started a new job. The new job is a blessing but it is highly demanding. Taking on self-criticism has always been a struggle because I dealt with it all my life which shipped away at my self-esteem growing up. The Program Director provided me with constructive criticism which enabled me to be more conscientious while working. I learned that I have to be more detailed and thorough in my writing and documentation when dealing with families at my shelter. I allowed myself to be vulnerable by sharing how documentation is my weakness. It was difficult admitting my weakness, but my group leader encouraged me by stating that it was actually a strength to share my weaknesses. Asking for help is a sign of strength which my Therapist once told me.

The other group members were dealing with health issues, the demands of school and an internship and learning how to drive for the first time. Another group member discussed how it is hard for him to have to do things that he doesn't want to, for the sake of his spouse. The issues ranged in severity. One member disclosed that she lost her hair due to stress. The group member looks lovely with her new hairstyle. I was surprised at the reasoning behind the new hairstyle. One member said she shaved her hair off because it was falling out due to stress. Hearing the stories of my team made me feel empathy. We are all dealing with something which makes us humane. We are all confounded by systems. The ecological theory discusses how we are shaped by our environment. I was affected on a

micro level in dealing with my organization, while some had trouble in their immediate families. One member had an internal battle in which she had a close call with cancer. In this case, she could relate to the medical model in that she was fighting with her own biological system.

The group leader was able to discuss how we have to hold our thoughts captive which added a spiritual twist. Seeing how the group leader was able to apply scripture to our low place, elevated my mind and soul. It gave me hope in the midst of being in a dark place. God's love covers us like a shield. We are all called to be great and to walk in our power and authority. Being led by a powerful leader helped me to see hope in the midst of darkness and showed me how God never leaves or forsakes us. There is an answer to every situation in the Bible. God's word says be anxious for nothing. God's word says casts your cares upon me and I will sustain you. Reflecting on the word of God allows me to rest in his love and peace. The more I focus on God the more my problems seem to fade away. I am joyful to be employed and as I reflect on being grateful it allows stress to subside. I focus on doing what I can do and not what I can't. I am grateful for my education which allows me not to take it for granted. I am grateful for God's love and tender mercies. God knit me in my Mother's womb and knows the hairs on my head. The word comes alive especially in crisis because God said he is close to the broken and contrite spirit. I have reflected on my own health issues and how I am still believing for healing and to learn from my mistakes. I know that God is merciful and forgiving as I learn to forgive myself and be still. God is revealing so much to me and allowing me to navigate life without sin. Jesus was a prime model on how to live a life that is pure and blameless and all I want to do is emulate Christ in every way.