



My Brief CBT

for: *Depression*



Patient Workbook 2.3



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How to Use the Patient Workbook

Welcome to the MyBriefCBT program! This workbook will be the primary resource used during your work with your clinician. It is intended to guide the focus of each treatment session, and to serve as a reference that you can use in between sessions.

- The workbook is separated into six sections focused on different skills for improving your mood and well-being.
- Each skill area can be a focus of the work you do during a session.
- You do not have to complete every skill area. Instead, work with your clinician to focus on those areas that will be the most beneficial to you.
- The final section contains extra copies of the worksheets and monitoring forms that will be presented in each skill area.

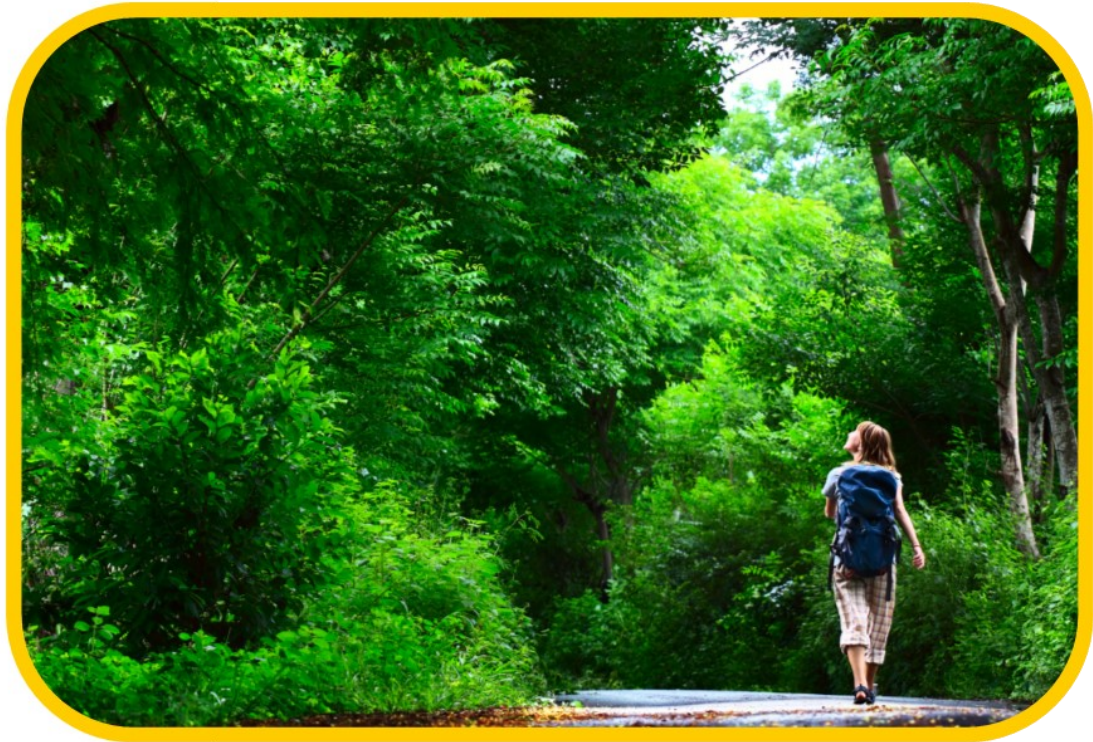
Clinician: _____

Clinician's Phone Number: _____

	Date	Time
Session 1	___/___/___	:
Session 2	___/___/___	:
Session 3	___/___/___	:
Session 4	___/___/___	:
Session 5	___/___/___	:
Session 6	___/___/___	:

Getting Started:

Session 1



What to Expect in this Session

Session Roadmap

1. We will discuss a treatment overview and how we intend to help.
2. We will set an agenda for the session.
3. How are you doing? We will complete a quick mood “check-in.”

Getting Started

4. We will identify areas of your life that you want to improve.
5. We will talk about how your mood relates to what you think and do, and explore ways to help.
6. We will introduce Dave/Danielle, who will be used as an example throughout our workbooks.
7. We will introduce the concept of SMART goals.
8. We will develop an action plan to help you meet your goals.
9. We will review the skill menu and select a skill for next session.



Rate your Mood

Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems?

	Not at all	Several Days	More than half the days	Nearly every-day
1. Little interest or pleasure in doing things.	0	1	2	3
2. Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless.	0	1	2	3
3. Trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, or sleeping too much.	0	1	2	3
4. Feeling tired or having little energy.	0	1	2	3
5. Poor appetite or overeating.	0	1	2	3
6. Feeling bad about yourself—or that you are a failure or have let yourself or your family down.	0	1	2	3
7. Trouble concentrating on things, such as reading the newspaper or watching television.	0	1	2	3
8. Moving or speaking so slowly that other people could have noticed. Or the opposite—being so fidgety or restless that you have been moving around more than usual.	0	1	2	3
9. Thoughts that you would be better off dead, or of hurting yourself in some way.	0	1	2	3

How difficult have these problems made it for you to do your work, take care of things at home, or get along with other people?

Not Difficult at All	Somewhat Difficult	Very Difficult	Extremely Difficult
0	1	2	3

Improving your Well-Being

The following worksheet lists different aspects of your life that we might be able to target as part of our work together. Place a check mark next to the items that you think would make a difference in your quality of life.

Emotional Health

- ☐ Improving self-image and self-esteem
- ☐ Increasing feelings of hopefulness about the future
- ☐ Increasing feelings of being useful and engaged in life
- ☐ Decreasing stress or tension
- ☐ Decreasing feelings of depression

Family, Social, and Spiritual Life

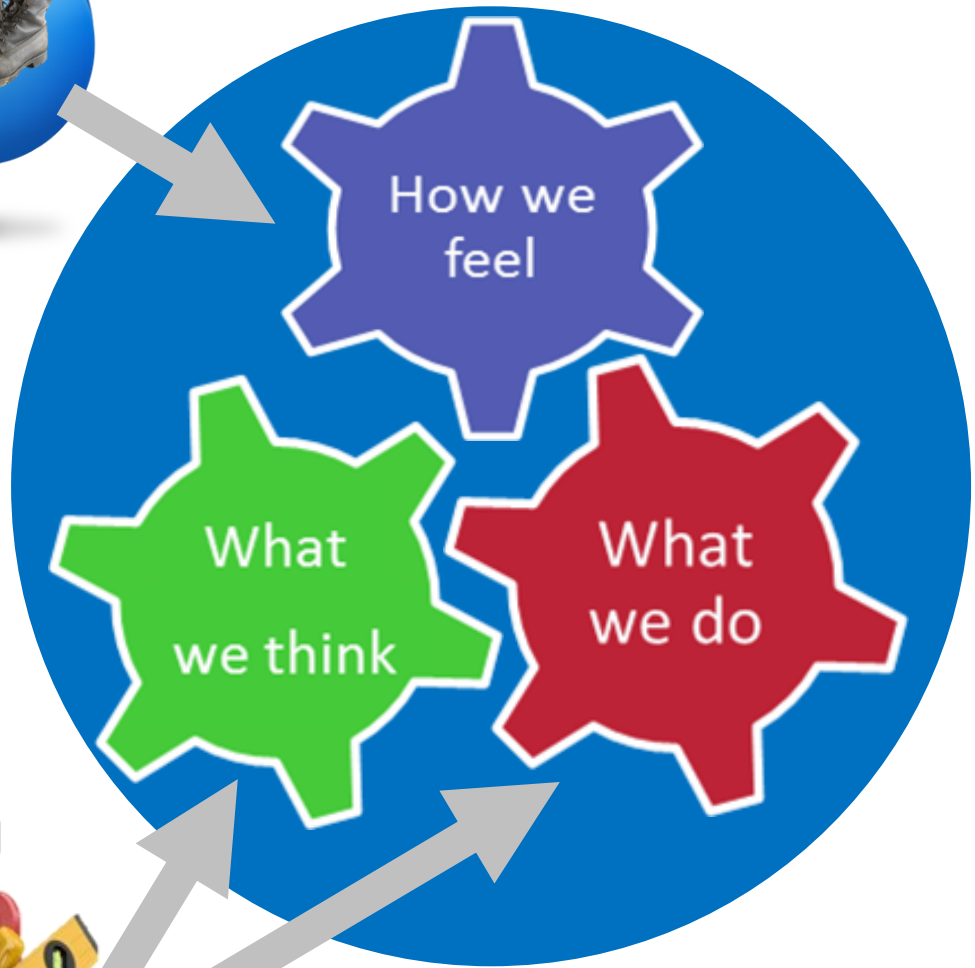
- ☐ Increasing involvement with family and friends
- ☐ Increasing social activities
- ☐ Becoming more active in hobbies
- ☐ Increasing spiritual or religious activities
- ☐ Improving your social support system

Physical Health

- ☐ Learning healthy habits to improve sleep
- ☐ Learning strategies to help manage pain
- ☐ Increasing healthy eating habits
- ☐ Increasing physical activity

Supportive Others (*people & animals*)

How Thoughts and Behaviors Relate to Mood



This shows how behaviors (the things we do) and thoughts (the things we tell ourselves) interact and affect mood (how we feel). And in turn, the way we feel can affect what we do and how we think. You can improve your mood by learning skills to help you think and act in new ways.

Meet Dave



Dave is a 65-year-old Army Veteran who suffered a back injury two years ago and is unable to work. He became distant from his family and believed his life has little meaning or purpose.



- *I feel down.*
- *I lack motivation.*
- *I feel unproductive.*
- *I'm tired all the time.*
- *I'm stressed out about finances.*



- *I've stopped talking to friends and family.*
- *I spend a lot of the day watching TV.*
- *I eat junk food to try to make myself feel better.*



- *I can't do anything anymore.*
- *I let my family down.*
- *My life is a failure.*
- *No one can understand me.*

Dave realized his depression was getting in the way of living a life that was meaningful to him. Dave identified the following areas of his life he wants to improve:



1. *I want to become more physically active.*
2. *I want to reconnect with family.*
3. *I want to improve my self-esteem and feel more hopeful about the future.*
4. *I want to eat better and manage my pain.*

Meet Danielle



Danielle is a 32-year-old Navy Veteran who recently separated from the military. She is a single mother who now feels isolated from her family after her last deployment and is struggling financially. She also worries about her health due to sudden weight gain.

How Danielle Feels

- *I feel inadequate.*
- *I'm stressed out about finances.*
- *I feel helpless.*
- *I feel isolated*

What Danielle is Doing

- *I eat more sweets and comfort foods than I used to.*
- *I spend long hours looking for employment.*
- *I often have arguments with friends and family.*

What Danielle Thinks

- *I'm overweight and my health is getting worse.*
- *There's nothing I can do to get out of these money problems.*
- *My friends and family don't understand me.*
- *No one can help me.*

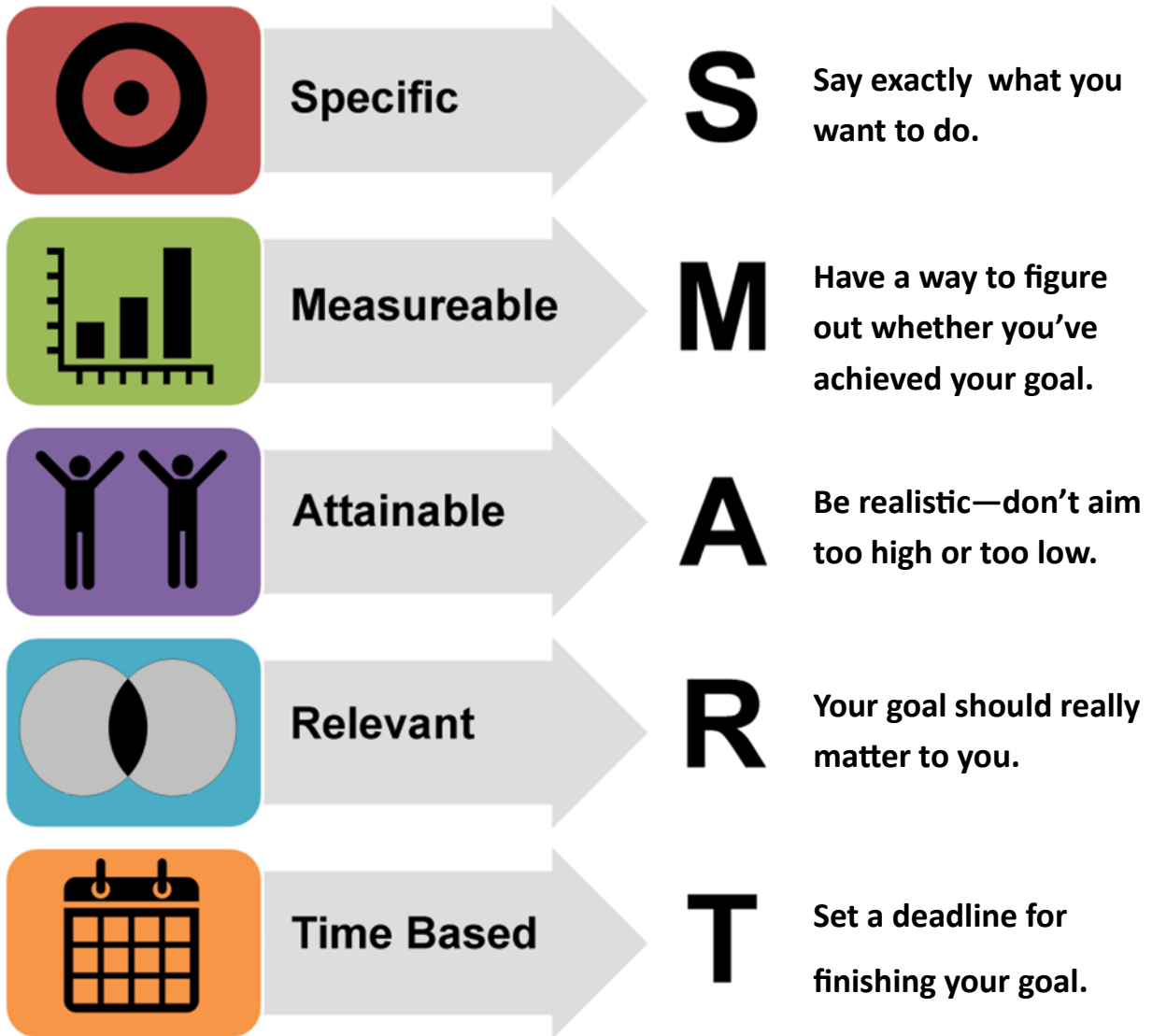
Danielle realized that her depression was getting in the way of her goal of providing the best life for herself and her daughter. She identified the following areas of her life that she wants to improve:



1. *I want a better relationship with my daughter.*
2. *I want to manage my finances better.*
3. *I want to lose weight and improve my physical health.*
4. *I want to manage my migraines better.*

Setting Smart Goals

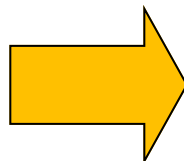
Now that you've selected the areas you want to focus on, you're ready to begin setting some goals. Your goals should be SMART!



Example:

Original Goal

Exercise more



SMART Goal

I will take a 15 minute walk around the neighborhood three mornings a week.

Initial Action Plan

The specific goal or activity I plan to work on:

Timeline for completing goal:

Steps to help me accomplish my goal:

Possible barriers and ways to overcome them:

How important is this goal to you?

Not Very Important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Important

How likely are you to complete these steps?

Not Very Likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Likely

Tracking your progress:

What progress did you make towards your goal this week?

☐ Exceeded ☐ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Did Not Attempt

What went well?

What challenges came up?

Skill Menu

Work with your provider to select two to three skills that best meet your needs. Here is a list of the skill areas we offer:

Engaging in Activities to Improve Mood

This module focuses on increasing the number of enjoyable or meaningful activities you engage in, as well as reconnecting with the important people in your life. These exercises will help you to feel better about yourself by becoming more active in the things you like to do.



Managing Unhelpful Thoughts

This module was designed to change the way you think about stressful situations. These exercises help you to challenge negative or pessimistic thinking and learn to use more practical and balanced thinking strategies.

Using Relaxation Skills to Manage Stress and Tension

This module teaches you to use skills such as deep breathing and imagery to relax yourself physically and mentally. These skills are particularly helpful for individuals who experience stress or tension.



Improving Health and Wellness

This module introduces skills to help improve areas such as physical activity, eating habits, sleep, and pain. Special attention will be given to when you should contact a medical provider.

Engaging in Activities to Improve Mood



What to Expect in this Session

Session Roadmap

1. We will set an agenda for the session.
2. How are you doing? We will complete a quick mood “check-in.”
3. We will review the previous session’s assignment and any other skills you are using.

Developing New Skills – Engaging in Activities

4. We will discuss how what we do impacts our mood.
5. We will look at how Dave/Danielle use the Engaging in Activities session to become more active.
6. We will see how your current activities relate to your mood.
7. We will identify activities you want to engage in more regularly.
8. We will develop an action plan to help you meet your goals.



Rate your Mood

Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by any of the

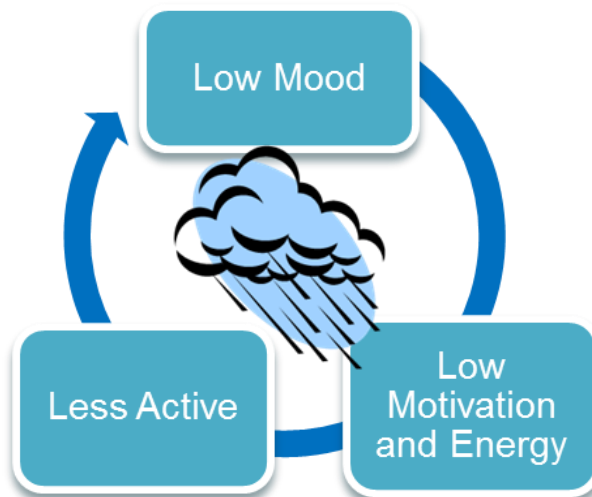
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6. Feeling bad about yourself—or that you are a failure or have let yourself or your family down.	0	1	2	3
7. Trouble concentrating on things, such as reading the newspaper or watching television.	0	1	2	3
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How difficult have these problems made it for you to do your work, take care of things at home, or get along with other people?

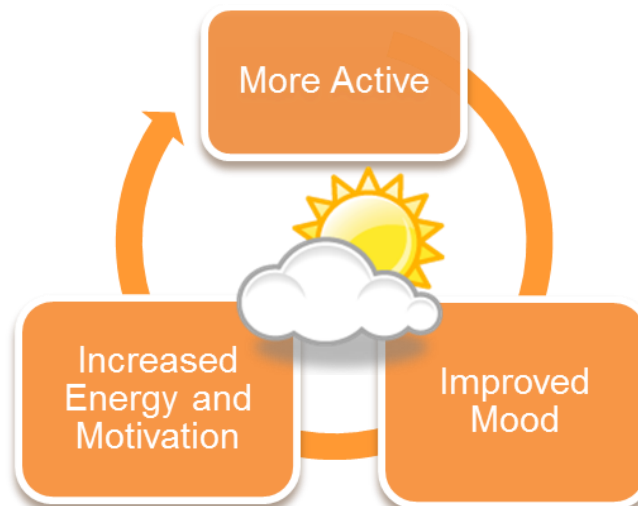
Not Difficult at All	Somewhat Difficult	Very Difficult	Extremely Difficult
0	1	2	3

Behavior and Mood in Depression

As depression or low mood sets in, you may notice a decrease in your energy and motivation to do the things that are important to you. When this happens, you can get into a habit of avoiding activities that may actually help you feel better.



You can break out of this depressive cycle by choosing to engage in activities that are important to you, even when you don't feel like it. Engaging in enjoyable or meaningful activities on a regular basis will help improve your mood and increase your energy level and motivation to keep moving forward.



Dave's Activities



Let's check in with Dave, the Army Veteran whose low mood got in the way of doing many activities that are important to him.

How
Dave
Feels

- *I feel down.*
- *I feel alone.*
- *I lack motivation.*
- *I'm ashamed that I'm unproductive.*
- *I feel stressed out about finances.*

What
Dave is
Doing

- *I spend a lot of the day in bed or watching TV.*
- *I avoid social activities and talking with friends and family.*
- *I stopped going to church.*
- *I stopped taking care of things around my home.*

Dave's Desired Activities:



- *Reconnect with friends and family*
- *Go to church regularly*
- *Get my house in order*

Dave's SMART Goals:

This week, Dave set two goals to increase the frequency of activities he is already doing:

1. *Play with dog for 10 minutes five days a week.*
2. *Take shower by 10 AM three days this week.*

The following week, Dave added these new goals:

1. *Do a load of dishes on Tuesday.*
2. *Call my daughter on Thursday.*
3. *Go to church on Sunday with neighbor.*



Danielle's Activities



Let's check in with Danielle, the Navy Veteran whose low mood got in the way of doing many activities that are important to her.

How Danielle Feels

- *I feel inadequate.*
- *I feel helpless.*
- *I'm stressed out about finances.*
- *I feel isolated*

What Danielle is Doing

- *I avoid social activities and meeting new people.*
- *I watch TV most of the day*
- *I eat unhealthy foods when I feel stressed.*

Danielle's Desired Activities:



- *Strengthen my relationship with my daughter.*
- *Meet with dietician about diet and weight loss.*
- *Learn strategies to manage my bills.*

Danielle's SMART Goals:

This week, Danielle set two goals to increase the frequency of activities that she is currently doing:

1. *Set up reminders and automatic payments for bills.*
2. *Take a 30-minute mother-daughter walk 3 times this week.*



















The following week, Danielle added these new goals:

1. *Call or text family members.*
2. *Create/buy a calendar to track deadlines, bills, and social events.*
3. *Schedule a lunch to catch up with family.*



Record of Daily Activities and Mood

Complete the following form for a recent “typical day” (possibly yesterday) to see the connection between your current activity level and your mood. This will help you understand what activities may fit into your day and help your mood.

What were you doing?	How did you feel?	Why did you feel that way?
Morning Activities		
	 <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>	
	 <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>	
Afternoon Activities		
	 <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>	
	 <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>	
Evening Activities		
	 <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>	
	 <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>	

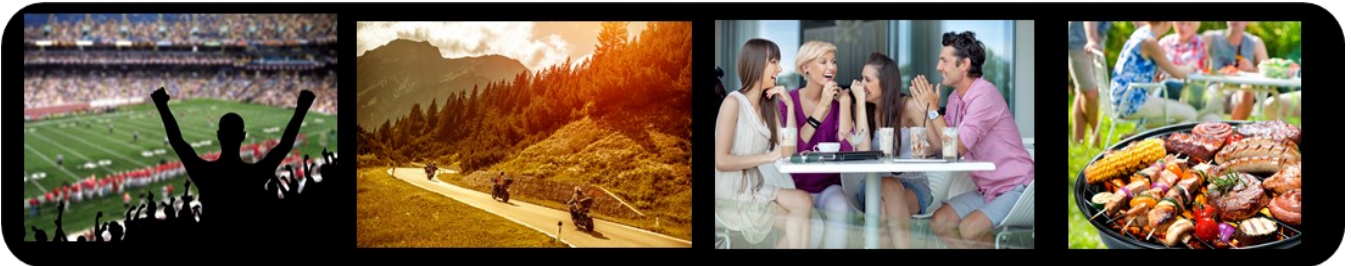
Enjoyable and Meaningful Activities

Each person has his or her own ideas about activities that are important.

Doing what you like: Enjoyable activities

Some activities are fun, help you feel happier, and are more fulfilling.

Examples: *Spending time with friends, going to a movie, or fishing.*



Getting things done: Meaningful activities

Other activities may not be fun while you are doing them; but once you finish, you feel good about what you have just completed.

Examples: *cleaning, exercising, or catching up on paperwork*



Taking Action and Next Steps

Do current activities more often.

OR

Restart activities you did in the past.

OR

Try a new activity that interests you.

Identifying Activities

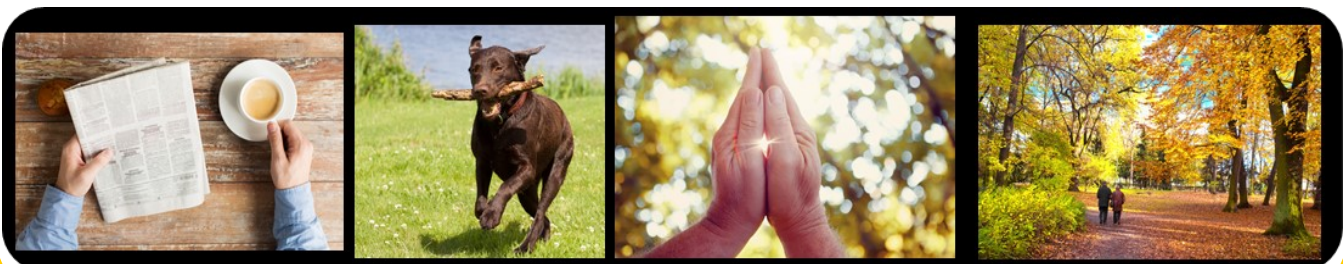
What enjoyable or meaningful activities are you doing currently?

Current Activities
1)
2)
3)



What other enjoyable or meaningful activities would you like to do that you are not doing now? Could you include a friend or family member?

Desired Activities
1)
2)
3)



Activity Cheat Sheet

Check off the activities you are interested in:

Outdoors:		Social events:	
Taking a walk		Visiting family or friends	
Visiting a park		Going to a party or gathering	
Hiking		Inviting a friend or relative to dinner	
Fishing		Talking with a fellow Veteran at the VA	
Hunting			
Going on a picnic		Taking Care of Yourself:	
Gardening or yard work		Getting a haircut	
Boating		Listening to music	
Camping		Doing a hobby	
Playing golf		Taking a bath	
Listening to the sounds of nature		Writing in a journal	
		Meditating	
Working on Health:			
Attending a therapy group at the VA		Education, Learning, or Art:	
Attending a Vet Center support group www2.va.gov/directory/guide/vetcenter.asp		Learning something new (musical instrument, language, or skill)	
Taking an exercise class at a gym		Doing something artistic (painting, pottery)	
Cooking a healthy meal		Reading a book	
		Taking an art or computer class	
At Home:		Writing stories, novels, etc.	
Working on home-improvement project		Creating your own webpage	
Cooking or baking			
Washing the car		Helping Others:	
Working on car		Volunteering at the VA or other places http://www.volunteer.va.gov/	
Re-arranging furniture or decorating		Doing charity work	
Restoring old furniture or building your own furniture		Doing favors for others	
Collecting things		Helping or talking to someone	
Playing with a pet		Giving gifts	
Entertainment:		Religious Activities:	
Playing cards or games with friends		Going to a place of worship	
Playing bingo		Attending a prayer group	
Going to a concert		Reading religious books	
Going to a musical, play or comedy			
Going to a sporting event		Treats:	
Going to the movies		Eating your favorite meal	
Going dancing		Drinking a cup of coffee or tea	

Action Plan

The specific goal or activity I plan to work on:

Timeline for completing goal:

Steps to help me accomplish my goal:

Possible barriers and ways to overcome them:

How important is this goal to you?

Not Very Important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Important

How likely are you to complete these steps?

Not Very Likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Likely

Tracking your progress:

What progress did you make towards your goal this week?

☐ Exceeded ☐ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Did Not Attempt

What went well?

What challenges came up?

Action Plan

Next Steps

- ☐ Option 1: **Continue** with your plan as is—keep doing what you
- ☐ Option 2: **Modify** your plan to better meet your needs.
- ☐ Option 3: **Use a different skill** that better meets your needs.

Next Steps—Notes

Other Skills

Questions to think about:

- What other skills are you using?
- Are these skills working for you?
- Do you see any changes needed for these skills?

Next Steps— Plans to use these skills

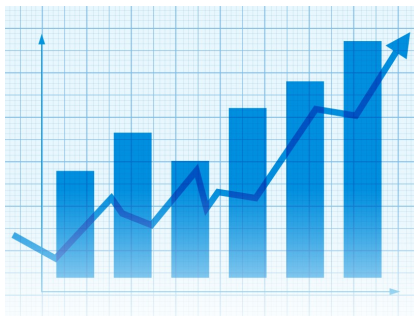
Engaging in Activities Tip Sheet

Follow your action plan, not your mood.

Engaging in activities, even when you don't feel like it, will help improve your mood. You may be surprised to find yourself enjoying the activity once you get going. Use your action plan to help you stay on track in meeting your goals.



Monitor your progress and problem-solve barriers.



Keeping track of your progress will help you know what's working and what you might need to change. Take note of any obstacles you run into in completing your action plan, and talk with others or problem-solve about how to overcome them. Stay positive and get creative.

Include others.

Consider how you can include a friend or family member in your activities. They may be able to do the activity with you, or they may help hold you accountable and increase your motivation to follow through on your action plan.



Be patient and acknowledge success.



Adding activities back into your life gets easier as it becomes part of your regular routine. Each step you take toward meeting your goals is important, so be sure to acknowledge your accomplishments! Early success can build your confidence and increase your motivation to keep moving forward.

Monitoring Activity/Mood: Hourly Monitoring Form

Instructions: Choose 1 day and keep track of your activity and mood:

1. Write down what you were doing each hour
2. Rate how you were feeling each hour

<i>time</i>	What was I doing?	What was I feeling?
		  
8:00am		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
9:00am		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
10:00am		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
11:00am		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
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10:00pm		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>




Monitoring Activity/Mood: Daily Monitoring Form

List two activities you would like to accomplish this week:

1. _____

2. _____

- 1) For each day, check the yes or no box in the Activity 1 and 2 columns to show whether you completed each activity.
- 2) Rate your mood at the end of the day.

	Activity 1	Activity 2	How was I feeling that day?				
							
Monday	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friday	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sunday	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>




Monitoring Activity/Mood: Daily Monitoring Form

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Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friday	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sunday	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Managing Unhelpful Thoughts



What to Expect in this Session

Session Roadmap

1. We will set an agenda for the session.
2. How are you doing? We will complete a quick mood “check-in.”
3. We will review the previous session’s assignment and any other ongoing homework or skills you are using.

Developing New Skills – Using Relaxation Skills

4. We will review the differences between thoughts and feelings.
5. We will identify common types of unhelpful thoughts.
6. We will look at how Dave/Danielle used the Managing Unhelpful Thoughts session to address his unhelpful thought patterns.
7. We will identify unhelpful thoughts that are causing you distress.
8. We will introduce coping statements to manage unhelpful thoughts.
9. We will discuss how to evaluate unhelpful thoughts (optional skill)
10. We will develop an action plan to help you meet your goals.



Rate your Mood

Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems?

	Not at all	Several Days	More than half the days	Nearly every-day
1. Little interest or pleasure in doing things.	0	1	2	3
2. Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless.	0	1	2	3
3. Trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, or sleeping too much.	0	1	2	3
4. Feeling tired or having little energy.	0	1	2	3
5. Poor appetite or overeating.	0	1	2	3
6. Feeling bad about yourself—or that you are a failure or have let yourself or your family down.	0	1	2	3
7. Trouble concentrating on things, such as reading the newspaper or watching television.	0	1	2	3
8. Moving or speaking so slowly that other people could have noticed. Or the opposite—being so fidgety or restless that you have been moving around more than usual.	0	1	2	3
9. Thoughts that you would be better off dead, or of hurting yourself in some way.	0	1	2	3

How difficult have these problems made it for you to do your work, take care of things at home, or get along with other people?

Not Difficult at All	Somewhat Difficult	Very Difficult	Extremely Difficult
0	1	2	3

Feelings vs. Thoughts

Dave's feelings and thoughts

Situation:

Dave didn't feel well and missed his daughter's graduation.



How
Dave
Feels

- **Frustrated**
- **Sad**

What
Dave
Thinks

- ***I feel like a failure.***
- ***I'm a terrible father.***

What are feelings?

- Feelings (also known as emotions) are core human experiences.
- Feelings are best described with one word (sad, worried, happy, satisfied, scared, etc.). *Note: In the example above – the sentence “I feel like a failure” is a thought, not a feeling.*
- Examples of feelings (emotions) include the following:



What are thoughts?

- Thoughts are the things we tell ourselves about an experience.
- They typically involve phrases or full sentences.
- Sometimes thoughts become so automatic that they are not always easy to recognize.

Feelings vs. Thoughts

Danielle's feelings and thoughts

Situation:

Danielle was stressed about paying a late bill and ate too many sweets.



How
Danielle
Feels

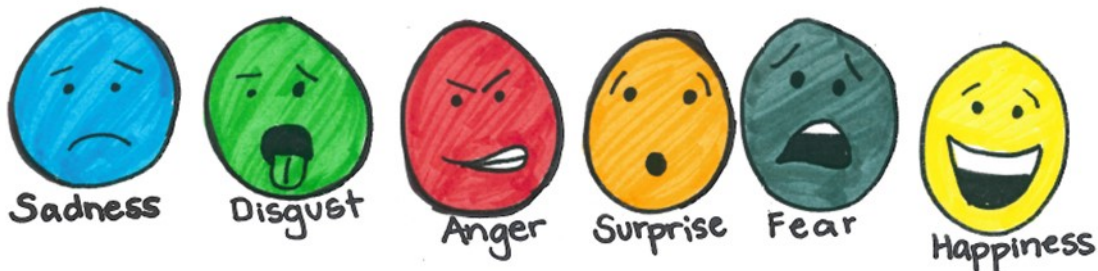
- **Frustrated**
- **Worried**

What
Danielle
Thinks

- *I feel like a failure.*
- *I can only count on myself, no one understands me.*

What are feelings?

- Feelings (also known as emotions) are core human experiences.
- Feelings are best described with one word (sad, worried, happy, satisfied, scared, etc.). *Note: In the example above – the sentence “I feel like a failure” is a thought, not a feeling.*
- Examples of feelings (emotions) include the following:



What are thoughts?

- Thoughts are the things we tell ourselves about an experience.
- They typically involve phrases or full sentences.
- Sometimes thoughts become so automatic that they are not always easy to recognize.

Unhelpful vs. Helpful Thinking

Our thoughts have a great impact on how we feel. Thoughts can be helpful, unhelpful, or something in between.

Unhelpful Thinking

This type of thinking is an interpretation of a situation that is unnecessarily negative and ultimately not helpful. Unhelpful thought patterns can include over-reacting to a situation, exaggerating the negatives, or focusing too much on things that you have no control over.

Example #1: Unhelpful Thinking Pattern

Situation / Experience

Busy day at work; a lot of pressure to finish a project that isn't going well.

Thoughts

"I am doing a terrible job today."

Feelings

Stress
Sadness

Helpful Thinking

This type of thinking is not always positive or "sunny" but is at least accurate and realistic. Helpful thinking means that you are thinking about situations and reacting in a way that is in your best interest.

Example #2: Helpful Thinking Pattern

Situation / Experience

Busy day at work; a lot of pressure to finish a project that isn't going well.

Thoughts

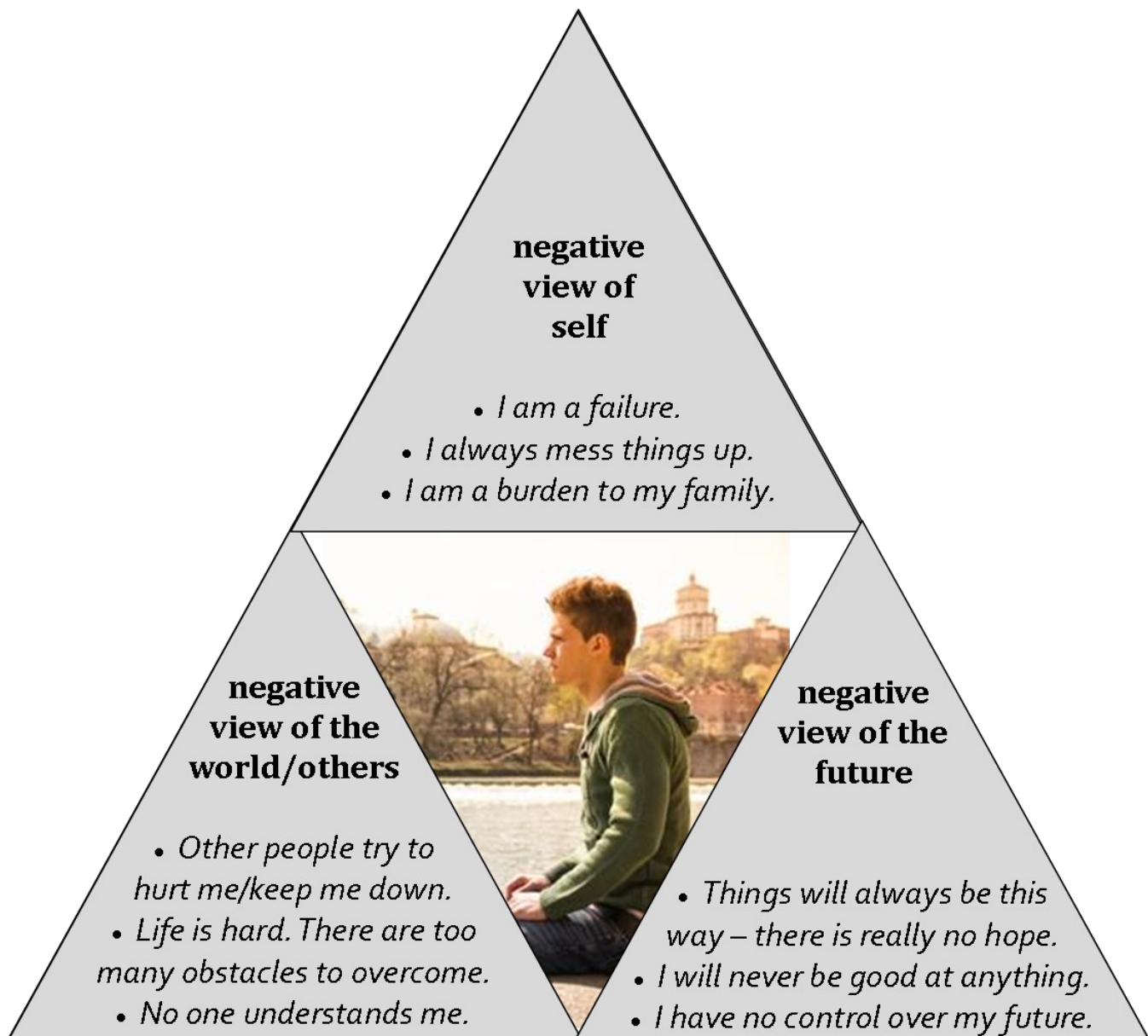
"This is a stressful day, but I have handled stress before."

Feelings

Stressed
Capable/Confident

Common Unhelpful Thinking Patterns when Depressed

Individuals with depression often have negative (unhelpful) thoughts related to their views about: The Self, The Future, The World.









Do you recognize any of these negative thought patterns in your own life?

Dave's Thought Worksheet

First let's take a look at how Dave's unhelpful thoughts impacted his mood and behaviors. Then, notice how Dave used helpful thinking strategies to improve his mood.









Original thoughts		
Situation		<i>Sitting at home watching TV during the middle of the day</i>
Thoughts		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I am truly useless now. (negative view of self)</i> • <i>This is pathetic – I am wasting my life away. (negative view of future)</i> • <i>There is no one helping me and it seems that no one cares. (negative view about others)</i>
Feelings		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Depressed</i> • <i>Mad / angry</i> • <i>Lethargic / without energy</i>
Behaviors		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Stay on the couch – no motivation to get going</i> • <i>Isolate from others</i>
New thoughts		
New / Alternative Thought		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Nothing is going to change until I make a change.</i> • <i>I will not stand by and waste my life. I insist on taking action.</i> • <i>My family is supportive, maybe they just don't know how to help.</i>
New Feelings		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Determined</i> • <i>Hopeful</i> • <i>Motivated</i>



Danielle's Thought Worksheet

First let's take a look at how Danielle's unhelpful thoughts impacted her mood and behaviors. Then, notice how Danielle used helpful thinking strategies to improve her mood.



Original thoughts	
Situation 	<i>I need to pick up a shift at work, but I can't find</i>
Thoughts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I'm a failure. (negative view of self)</i> • <i>Nothing ever goes right for me. (negative view of future)</i> • <i>I can't rely on anybody but myself. (negative views of others)</i>
Feelings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ashamed</i> • <i>Worried</i> • <i>Tired/without energy</i>
Behaviors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Avoids phone calls and messages</i> • <i>Sits on the couch — no motivation to get going</i> • <i>Eats too many sweets and comfort foods.</i>
New thoughts	
New / Alternative Thought 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I'm overwhelmed by my situation not because of who I am.</i> • <i>I can still make healthy eating choices when I'm stressed.</i> • <i>Family and friends have helped me with child-care in the past.</i>
New Feelings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Encouraged</i> • <i>Confident</i> • <i>Motivated</i>

Identifying Unhelpful Thoughts

	Situation #1:	Situation #2:
Original thoughts		
Situation <i>What actually happened? Where? When? How?</i>		
Thoughts <i>What thoughts went through your mind? What views did you have about yourself, your future, or others?</i>		
Feelings <i>What emotions did you feel at the time?</i>		
Behaviors <i>What did you do in response? Also include any withdrawal of activities – like staying at home or staying in bed.</i>		
<div>  New thoughts  </div>		
New/Alternative thoughts <i>What is another, more helpful, way to think about this situation?</i>		
New Feelings <i>What emotions did you feel after identifying alternative thoughts</i>		

Using Coping Statements to Manage Unhelpful Thoughts

What are Coping Statements?

A coping statement is a statement you make to yourself to help decrease feelings of stress and depression. It is a way to provide "instructions" to yourself to reduce how much negative thoughts get in the way.

Coping statements can serve as "alternative thoughts" when unhelpful thinking patterns are getting you down. Remember, coping statements are not "pie-in-the-sky" statements but, rather, should be statements that you actually believe to be true.

Example Coping Statements:

"I can do what I need to do."

"Even if I make mistakes, it will be okay."

"If I take it one step at a time, I can meet this challenge."

"I can take control of my stress by getting up and doing things."

"I choose to think positively and to remember the things I can still do."

"I am not going to let my pain limit my life."

"I have people in my life who care about me."

"I can ask for help when I need it."



My Coping Statements

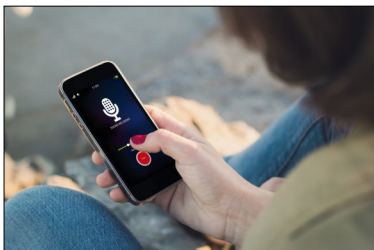
Coping Statements I Can Use:

Stressful Situation	Coping Statement(s)
1.	
2.	
3.	

Tips for Using Coping Statements:



- Don't be afraid to talk to yourself! Say coping statements aloud to yourself instead of just reading them.



- It can sometimes be helpful to audio record the statements and listen to them when necessary.



- Place your coping statements where you will see them regularly (a note on your refrigerator, on your phone, etc.).

Managing Unhelpful Thoughts

Optional Advanced Skills



Evaluating Unhelpful Thoughts

You previously learned how to identify unhelpful thoughts and use coping statements to decrease stress and depression. However, it can also be useful to challenge these unhelpful thoughts in a more direct way.

How to Evaluate your Thoughts:

1. EXAMINE THE EVIDENCE

Think like a scientist—look for evidence for and against a specific thought to evaluate how realistic it is. Approach your thoughts as if they are scientific hypotheses (or guesses), rather than facts. Often, we focus on one explanation or interpretation of a situation, rather than looking at the whole picture and considering other possible interpretations. In depression, people tend to focus only on the negative aspects of a situation rather than examining all the evidence and taking a balanced perspective.

Inspect the evidence *for* the thought.

- What has happened to suggest the thought is true?

Inspect the evidence *against* the thought.

- What has happened to suggest the thought is not true?

TIP: Ask yourself these questions:

- Is this thought based on feelings or facts?
- Am I 100% certain this thought is true? If not, why not?
- Is there another possible explanation or interpretation of the situation?

What counts as evidence?

- Specific behaviors or actions
- Past experiences
- Feedback from others

What doesn't count as evidence?

- Feelings
- Interpretations of events
- Interpretations of others' actions



2. IDENTIFY ALTERNATIVE THOUGHTS.

The next step is to come up with an alternative, more balanced way of thinking about the situation. Remember, we tend to assume that the first thought that comes into our head is the “truth,” so it’s important to open your mind to ALL other possibilities.

One way to generate alternative thoughts is to ask yourself, “*What would I tell someone I loved if he/she were in this situation and had these thoughts?*”

Evaluating Dave's Unhelpful Thoughts



Let's take a look at how Dave used a scientific approach to evaluate his unhelpful thoughts in a more direct way.

Original Thoughts	
Situation <i>What actually happened? Where? When? How?</i>	<i>My friend cancelled on me at the last minute.</i>
Thoughts <i>What thoughts went through your mind? What views did you have about yourself, your future, or others?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>She must be sick of me.</i> • <i>I'm a failure at relationships — no one wants to spend time with me.</i>
Feelings <i>What emotions did you feel at the time?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sad</i> • <i>Lonely</i> • <i>Worthless</i>
Behaviors <i>What did you do in response? Also include any withdrawal of activities – like staying at home or staying in bed.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Stayed at home by myself all day</i> • <i>Watched boring daytime TV</i>
Evidence	
Evidence to support the thought <i>What has happened to make you believe this thought is true?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>She cancelled our plans.</i>
Evidence that does not support the thought <i>What has happened to prove the thought is NOT true?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>She said she had to care for her sick granddaughter.</i> • <i>We have spent a lot of good time together recently .</i>
New Thoughts	
New/alternative thought <i>What is another, more helpful, way to think about this situation?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This time didn't work out to get together, but we can make plans in the near future.</i>
New feelings <i>What emotions did you feel after identifying the new/balanced thought?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Hopeful</i> • <i>Comforted</i>

Evaluating Danielle's Unhelpful Thoughts

Let's take a look at how Danielle used a scientific approach to evaluate her unhelpful thoughts in a more direct way.



Original Thoughts	
Situation <i>What actually happened? Where? When? How?</i>	<i>Couldn't go on walk with daughter this week because of migraines.</i>
Thoughts <i>What thoughts went through your mind? What views did you have about yourself, your future, or others?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>My health is going to get worse.</i> • <i>My daughter will think that I am lazy.</i>
Feelings <i>What emotions did you feel at the time?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Rejected</i> • <i>Insecure</i> • <i>Depressed</i>
Behaviors <i>What did you do in response? Also include any withdrawal of activities – like staying at home or staying in bed.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Isolated from daughter.</i> • <i>Laid in bed all day.</i> • <i>Watched TV</i>
Evidence	
Evidence to support the thought <i>What has happened to make you believe this thought is true?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Didn't go on walk with daughter.</i> • <i>Stayed in bed and watched TV.</i>
Evidence that does not support the thought <i>What has happened to prove the thought is NOT true?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I rescheduled the walk to later in the week.</i> • <i>My daughter helped me with managing my migraine.</i>
New Thoughts	
New/alternative thought <i>What is another, more helpful, way to think about this situation?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I didn't feel well enough to walk today, but have rescheduled to do it later this week.</i>
New feelings <i>What emotions did you feel after identifying the new/balanced thought?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Hopeful</i> • <i>Secure</i> • <i>Proud</i>

Evaluating My Unhelpful Thoughts

	Situation #1:	Situation #2:
Original Thoughts		
Situation <i>What actually happened? Where? When? How?</i>		
Thoughts <i>What thoughts went through your mind? What views did you have about yourself, your future, or others?</i>		
Feelings <i>What emotions did you feel at the time?</i>		
Behaviors <i>What did you do in response? Also include any withdrawal of activities – like staying at home or staying in bed.</i>		
Evidence		
Evidence to support the thought <i>What has happened to make you believe this thought is true?</i>		
Evidence that does not support the thought <i>What has happened to prove the thought is NOT true?</i>		
New Thoughts		
New/alternative thought <i>What is another, more helpful, way to think about this situation?</i>		
New feelings <i>What emotions did you feel after identifying the new/balanced thought?</i>		

Action Plan

The specific goal or activity I plan to work on:

Timeline for completing goal:

Steps to help me accomplish my goal:

Possible barriers and ways to overcome them:

How important is this goal to you?

Not Very Important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Important

How likely are you to complete these steps?

Not Very Likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Likely

Tracking your progress:

What progress did you make towards your goal this week?

☐ Exceeded ☐ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Did Not Attempt

What went well?

What challenges came up?

Action Plan

Next Steps

- ☐ Option 1: **Continue** with your plan as is—keep doing what you
- ☐ Option 2: **Modify** your plan to better meet your needs.
- ☐ Option 3: **Use a different skill** that better meets your needs.

Next Steps—Notes

Other Skills

Questions to think about:

- What other skills are you using?
- Are these skills working for you?
- Do you see any changes needed for these skills?

Next Steps— Plans to use these skills

Using Relaxation Skills to Manage Stress & Tension



What to Expect in this Session

Session Roadmap

1. We will set an agenda for the session.
2. How are you doing? We will complete a quick mood “check-in.”
3. We will review the previous session’s assignment and any other ongoing homework or skills you are using.

Developing New Skills – Using Relaxation Skills

4. We will discuss stress and tension and introduce two relaxation skills that can be applied in your life.
5. We will review how Dave/Danielle used the relaxation skills session to address stress and tension.
6. We will review information about the relaxation skill you choose and then practice the skill in session.
7. We will develop an action plan to help you meet your goals.



Rate your Mood

Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by any of the

	Not at all	Several Days	More than half the	Nearly every-
1. Little interest or pleasure in doing things.	0	1	2	3
2. Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless.	0	1	2	3
3. Trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, or sleeping too much.	0	1	2	3
4. Feeling tired or having little energy.	0	1	2	3
5. Poor appetite or overeating.	0	1	2	3
6. Feeling bad about yourself—or that you are a failure or have let yourself or your family down.	0	1	2	3
7. Trouble concentrating on things, such as reading the newspaper or watching television.	0	1	2	3
8. Moving or speaking so slowly that other people could have noticed. Or the opposite—being so fidgety or restless that you have been moving around more than usual.	0	1	2	3
9. Thoughts that you would be better off dead, or of hurting yourself in some way.	0	1	2	3

How difficult have these problems made it for you to do your work, take care of things at home, or get along with other people?

Not Difficult at All	Somewhat Difficult	Very Difficult	Extremely Difficult
0	1	2	3

Stress & Tension in Your Life

We all experience stress and tension at times. This is an important and natural response to the demands in our lives. If we didn't feel stress or tension, then we would not feel motivated to deal with these demands.

Most of us like some challenges! However, too much stress can cause problems and impact our health and well-being.

You may experience stress and tension in a number of ways.

Check any of these signs that look familiar to you.

Common sensations of stress and tension

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Muscle tension | <input type="checkbox"/> Heart pounding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty concentrating | <input type="checkbox"/> Irritability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feelings of worry or fear | <input type="checkbox"/> Sweaty palms |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thinking the worst might happen | <input type="checkbox"/> Fatigue |

What are sources of stress and tension in your life?

How has this impacted your life?

Taking Control with Relaxation Skills

The purpose of relaxation exercises is for you to gain skills to guide your mind and body away from stress and tension and into a more relaxed state.



Relaxation and tension are incompatible states that cannot occur together.

If you are relaxed, then you are not tense. If you are tense, then you are not relaxed.

Here are two simple, effective skills to help you gain control over your stress and tension.



Deep Breathing

- Learn how to breathe optimally for oxygen “transfer” to reduce bodily tension and lower your heartbeat.

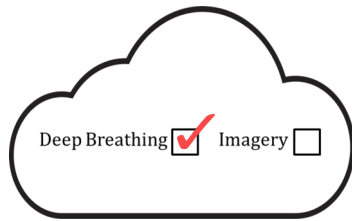


Imagery

- Learn to use vivid, soothing mental imagery to focus your attention away from unhelpful thoughts and feelings.

Which skill would be the most helpful to you?

How Dave Uses Deep Breathing



Dave starts feeling anxious while waiting in line at the bank. He needs to talk to the teller about his overdrawn account balance and see if he can reverse some incorrect charges.



- *Worried.*
- *Feels tightness in his stomach.*
- *Feels stressed out about finances.*



- *Snaps at the teller when he gets to the counter, because he feels so stressed out.*
- *Sometimes he leaves the line altogether to avoid talking to the teller.*



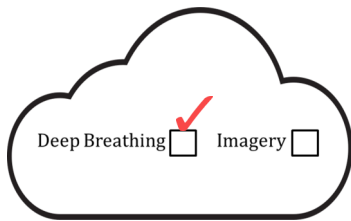
- *"I am going up to the teller, and she'll tell me there is no money in my account."*
- *"The teller is going to think I am a low-life."*
- *"I have no control over my finances."*

Dave uses his deep breathing skills from the session:



1. Dave realizes his breathing is "portable;" therefore, he can practice it in line or anywhere else he starts feeling stressed.
2. By focusing on his breath, Dave stops thinking about his anxious thoughts, and his stomach tightness loosens. He is able to remain waiting in line.
3. By the time Dave gets to the teller, he feels more in control and is able to explain his situation calmly to the bank teller.

How Danielle Uses Deep Breathing



Danielle starts feeling anxious when she checks her mail and sees four bills that need to be paid.



How Danielle Feels

- *Nervous; her body feels tense*
- *Flustered*
- *Anxious; her stomach feels tight*

What Danielle is Doing

- *Stops going through her mail or looking at other bills.*
- *Distracts herself with TV or comforting foods.*
- *Snaps at her daughter when she comes home from school.*

What Danielle Thinks

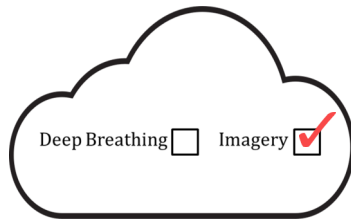
- *"This is too much money to pay, I won't be able to pay it."*
- *"I have no control over my finances."*
- *"I'm going to let my daughter down."*

Danielle uses her deep breathing skills from the session:



1. She realizes her breathing is "portable;" therefore, she can practice it anywhere in her home.
2. By focusing on her breath, Danielle shifts focus from her worrying thoughts and notices her body relaxing. With slowed breathing, she becomes less flustered.
3. Regaining control of her anxiety, she decides to look at her bank account and begin problem solving the bills she needs to pay.

How Dave Uses Imagery



Dave wakes up, and the first thing he notices that morning is his chronic pain.



- *Low mood.*
- *Frustrated.*
- *Preoccupied with his pain.*



- *Avoids physical activity when he is in pain.*
- *Stays in bed and watches TV to try and distract himself.*



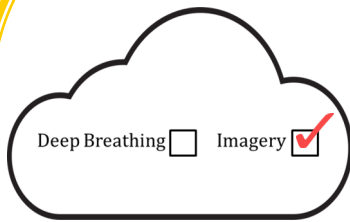
- *"I am in too much pain to do anything productive."*
- *"I have no control over my pain—It is taking over my life."*

Dave decides to use his imagery skills from the session:



1. The imagery exercise helps him relax and distracts him from his pain.
Dave has noticed that when his stress decreases, his muscles relax, and his pain often decreases
2. This exercise helps him shift his way of thinking.
He realizes he could make some positive changes to manage some of his pain.
3. Dave finds that, with regular practice, this technique improves his overall sense of well-being.

How Danielle Uses Imagery



Danielle tries to go to sleep, but cannot fall asleep because she has been worrying all day and has a headache.



- *Helpless*
- *Frustrated*
- *Discouraged*



- *Stays in bed and looks at her phone apps.*
- *Tosses and turns - tries to get comfortable*



- *"I am worried that this is going to ruin my day tomorrow."*
- *"I can't rest. I can't catch a break. I'm stuck."*

Danielle decides to use her imagery skills from the session:

1. The imagery exercise distracts her from her headache and helps her relax.

Danielle has noticed that when she focuses on a relaxing image, her mind relaxes and her thoughts slow down.



2. This exercise helps her shift her way of thinking.

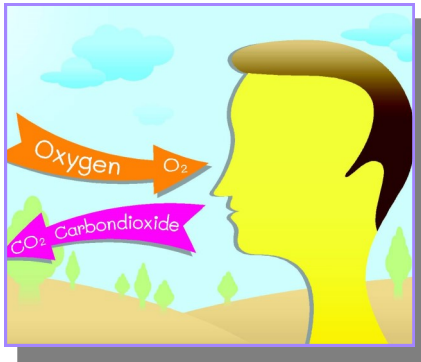
She realizes that she can think more clearly - there are ways she can cope with her worrying.

3. Danielle finds that, with regular practice, this technique improves her overall sense of well-being.

Using Deep Breathing to Reduce Stress & Tension

Why is deep breathing used?

There needs to be a balance between oxygen and carbon dioxide in the blood for the body to run efficiently. This balance is maintained through how fast and how deeply we breathe.



Rapid and shallow breathing disrupts the oxygen-carbon dioxide balance and can cause many of the physical sensations that accompany stress and tension.

One thing that can help is deep breathing.

- Changing the rate and way you breathe can make your entire body feel more relaxed and function more effectively.
- Taking a deep, full breath can produce a feeling of calmness and relaxation by increasing your oxygen-rich blood flow.
- Deep breathing can help you start to form good habits for reacting to stressful situations.



How to Practice Deep Breathing

Take notice of your breathing. Is your chest or stomach moving? You most likely breathe more from the **chest** than the stomach. We want to teach you to breathe more with your **stomach** and diaphragm rather than your chest.

How to Deep Breathe:

1. Place one hand on your abdomen, with your little finger about one inch above your navel, and place the other hand on your chest. If you are lying down, you can place a book on your stomach instead of your hands.
2. **Inhale “into your stomach,”** through your nose, pausing naturally before exhaling. You should see the hand or book on your stomach move more than your chest.
3. **Exhale** gradually through your lips, by tightening your stomach muscles and pausing naturally before inhaling again.
4. Take slow, even, deep breaths. Breathe in and out at a comfortable rate. Do not pause at the top of each breath.



Other Resources

You can view an animated video demonstrating how to perform deep breathing at this web address:

<https://youtu.be/YdsipKCACac>

Instructions for Practice Exercises

Changing your experience of stress is like learning a new skill - *it gets easier with practice!*

- Practice regularly. Try three five-minute sessions a day.
- Once you are comfortable with deep breathing, try the following:
 1. Inhale at a normal speed.
 2. Exhale for four seconds.
 3. Pause for four seconds, then repeat.
- Focus on the count during your exhalations, and pause before inhaling again. This will activate your body's relaxation response!
- Start by practicing only in non-stressful situations. Once you feel comfortable with it, you can use deep breathing in stressful situations.
- Increase awareness of stress! Identify stressful situations and write down feelings, physical signs, thoughts, and behaviors associated with those situations. This will help you be aware of when you can use deep breathing skills to help relax.
- Deep breathing can be done anytime, such as while sitting in traffic or waiting in line at the grocery store.



Using Imagery to Reduce Stress & Tension

What is imagery?

Imagery is a simple process that uses your imagination to communicate with your body. To your body, images and experiences created in your mind can be as real as actual events. Your body will react as though the experience is happening. It seems the body may not know the difference between an actual event and a thought!

Why is imagery used?

You can take advantage of this by using your imagination to visualize pleasant experiences. Using imagery this way can ease stress and promote an overall sense of well-being.

Think about times when you have daydreamed. We have all daydreamed about pleasant things that made us feel better.

Of course, the opposite is also true! The difference is that daydreaming usually happens “on accident.” Imagery is used on purpose with a specific goal in mind; to feel better!



Imagery, therefore, can be a powerful tool when used correctly.

How To Practice Using Imagery

1. Find a quiet space where you can either sit or lie down.
2. Start with a quick check-in on what you are thinking and how you feel in your body.
3. Practice deep breathing for a few minutes if you wish (see deep breathing instructions).
4. Imagine going to a place where you feel safe, peaceful, and calm. This place can be a real place or somewhere you invent yourself.
5. Take some time to develop the image of this place in your mind so you can fully experience all of the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and textures.
6. Practice relaxing as you use all of your senses, and imagine being in this special place.

Example:

Imagine a glass of lemonade. The glass feels icy and cold; visualize the color of the lemonade, think of the fresh citrus smell, think of how it *tastes*.

You probably are salivating thinking of this juice, aren't you?

Try to create a pleasant, positive image that fits your preferences and has meaning to you.



A Generic Example:

Find a comfortable position, either sitting comfortably in a chair or lying down. Close your eyes and take several long, deep breaths.



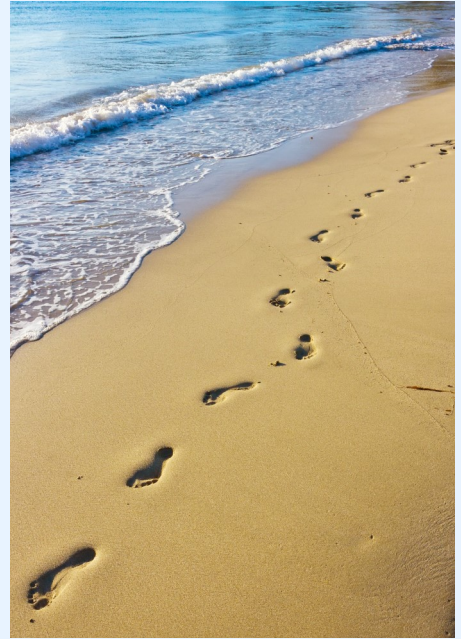
Once your whole body feels relaxed, travel to your favorite place... it can be any time period or any place. This place is calm and safe... there are no worries here.... Look around this place. What do you see? Do you hear the sounds around you? What are some of the sounds you hear in this place you are imagining? How does this special place smell? Walk around a little and take in all of the wonderful sights.... Feel the air around you and relax.... The air is fresh and it's easy to breathe here. Pay attention to how your body feels.... Say to yourself, "I am totally relaxed... without worries... all of the tension has drained away from my body." Take a moment to fully experience your favorite place. Notice the sounds, sights, and smells, and how it feels to be in this very special place. Remember that you can visit this place as often as you want and that it is wonderful. Say to yourself, "I am relaxed here... this place is special and makes me feel at peace."

When you are done with your visit to this special place, open your eyes, and stay in your comfortable position. Continue to breathe smoothly, in a relaxed and rhythmic fashion. Take as long as you want to enjoy and relax. You feel at ease knowing your special place is always available to you; and you find that you feel relaxed, even after you leave.



Beach Example

Imagine yourself walking down a sandy beach. The sand is white and warm between your toes. You are looking out over the calm, blue water. The waves are gently lapping at the shore. You feel the pleasant warmth of the sun on your skin... it's a perfectly comfortable temperature outside. Breathe in deeply. There is a gentle breeze, and the sun is shining. Big, cotton-like clouds drift by as you hear sea gulls in the distance. You taste traces of salt on your lips. You are completely relaxed... there are no worries on this beach. There is nothing to



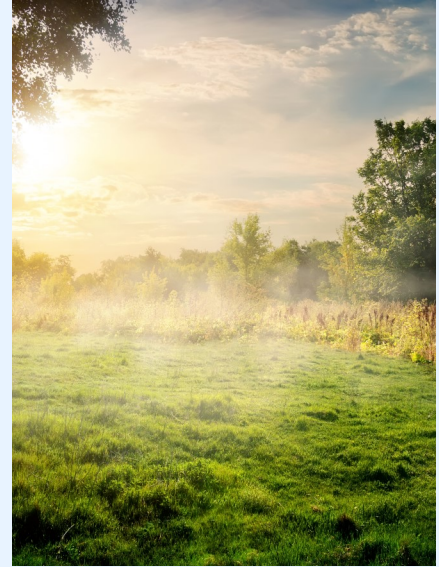
distract you from feeling tranquil. Worries drift away. Notice the sounds, the sights, the smells, and how it feels to be in this very special place.

Feel the sand under your feet... you decide to stretch out on the warm, fine, white sand... breathe deeply... feel the warm air. Your body is completely relaxed and you have an overall feeling of warmth and comfort. You look up at the clouds passing by slowly across the beautiful blue sky. You are feeling rejuvenated and completely at peace. Remember that you can visit this place as often as you want and that it is wonderful. Say to yourself, "I am relaxed here... this place is special and makes me feel peaceful and content."

When you are done with your visit, open your eyes and stay in your comfortable position. Continue to breathe smoothly, in a relaxed and rhythmic fashion, and take as long as you want to enjoy and relax. You feel at ease knowing your special place is always available to you; and you find that you feel relaxed, even after you leave.

Meadows Example

Imagine yourself walking through a lovely meadow. The breeze feels pleasant against your skin. You are looking out over the calm, beautiful green grass. The blades of grass are gently swaying in the breeze. You feel the pleasant warmth of the sun on your skin... it's a perfectly comfortable temperature outside. Breathe in deeply. There is a gentle breeze, and the sun is shining. Big, cotton-like clouds drift by as you hear birds in the distance. You hear the wind blow gently through the trees. You taste the sweet summer air on your lips. You are completely relaxed... there are no worries in this meadow. There is nothing to distract you from feeling tranquil. Worries drift away. Notice the sounds, sights, and smells, and how it feels to be in this very special place.



Feel the cool grass under your feet... you decide to stretch out on the soft, cushiony grass... breathe deeply... feel the air enter your lungs slowly and deeply. Your body is completely relaxed, and you have an overall feeling of warmth and comfort. You look up at the clouds passing by slowly across the beautiful blue sky. You are feeling rejuvenated and completely at peace. Remember that you can visit this place as often as you want and that it is wonderful. Say to yourself, "I am relaxed here... this place is special and makes me feel peaceful and content."

When you are done with your visit, open your eyes and stay in your comfortable position. Continue to breathe smoothly, in a relaxed and rhythmic fashion; take as long as you want to enjoy and relax. You feel at ease knowing your special place is always available to you; and you find that you feel relaxed, even after you leave.

Instructions for Practice Exercises

- Changing your experience of stress is like learning a new skill - it gets easier with practice!
- Practice makes perfect! Make sure you find several times a day to apply this technique. Practice for 10-15 minutes at a time in non-stressful situations. Once you feel comfortable with it, then you can use imagery in stressful situations.
- When ready to practice, choose a comfortable position, close your eyes, and give yourself permission to relax.
- Some people find using imagery before going to bed and first thing in the morning to be helpful.
- Remember, when using imagery, to use a scene that incorporates all of your senses and make it as elaborate and realistic as you can.
- You will find that, after practice, imagery will become a powerful tool to help you feel better.



Action Plan

The specific goal or activity I plan to work on:

Timeline for completing goal:

Steps to help me accomplish my goal:

Possible barriers and ways to overcome them:

How important is this goal to you?

Not Very Important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Important

How likely are you to complete these steps?

Not Very Likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Likely

Tracking your progress:

What progress did you make towards your goal this week?

☐ Exceeded ☐ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Did Not Attempt

What went well?

What challenges came up?

Action Plan

Next Steps

- ☐ Option 1: **Continue** with your plan as is—keep doing what you
- ☐ Option 2: **Modify** your plan to better meet your needs.
- ☐ Option 3: **Use a different skill** that better meets your needs.

Next Steps—Notes

Other Skills

Questions to think about:

- What other skills are you using?
- Are these skills working for you?
- Do you see any changes needed for these skills?

Next Steps— Plans to use these skills

Additional Resources

Deep Breathing Mobile App

Breathe2Relax:

Below is a link to a free guided-deep breathing app called “Breathe2relax.” This app will adjust to your particular breathing pattern, and then gradually train you to take slower, deeper breaths. Practice and get comfortable with the basic deep breathing technique first. Then, you can use Breathe2Relax to maximize your results:

<http://t2health.dcoe.mil/apps/breathe2relax>

If you would like more information on how to use Breathe2Relax, please view the following instructional video:

<https://youtu.be/AEZ1dvZuJYc>

Improving Health & Wellness



What to Expect in this Session

Session Roadmap

1. We will set an agenda for the session.
2. How are you doing? We will complete a quick mood “check-in.”
3. We will review the previous session’s assignment and any other ongoing homework or skills you are using.

Developing New Skills – Improving Health and Wellness

4. We will briefly review the skills included in this session. Areas Include: Healthy Eating, Physical Activities/Exercise, Improving Sleep, and Overcoming Pain.
5. We will take a look at how Dave/Danielle used the Improving Health and Wellness session to address pain and eating goals.
6. We will identify the areas of health and wellness that you want to improve.
7. We will work together to identify specific skills you can put into your toolbox to improve your health and wellness.
8. We will develop an action plan to help you meet your goals.



Rate your Mood

Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems?

	Not at all	Several Days	More than half the days	Nearly every-day
1. Little interest or pleasure in doing things.	0	1	2	3
2. Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless.	0	1	2	3
3. Trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, or sleeping too much.	0	1	2	3
4. Feeling tired or having little energy.	0	1	2	3
5. Poor appetite or overeating.	0	1	2	3
6. Feeling bad about yourself—or that you are a failure or have let yourself or your family down.	0	1	2	3
7. Trouble concentrating on things, such as reading the newspaper or watching television.	0	1	2	3
8. Moving or speaking so slowly that other people could have noticed. Or the opposite—being so fidgety or restless that you have been moving around more than usual.	0	1	2	3
9. Thoughts that you would be better off dead, or of hurting yourself in some way.	0	1	2	3

How difficult have these problems made it for you to do your work, take care of things at home, or get along with other people?

Not Difficult at All	Somewhat Difficult	Very Difficult	Extremely Difficult
0	1	2	3

Physical Health

Healthy Eating

Improve your health through diet/eating changes.

- Lose weight.
- Eat healthier foods like fruits and vegetables.
- Improve your eating habits by creating an eating plan and avoiding unhealthy fast food options.



Physical Activity/ Exercise



Increase your activity level to improve your health.

- Find activities that you enjoy.
- Start an exercise plan that works for you.
- Increasing activity can be difficult—this skill topic will help you find solutions to barriers and support you in your exercise plan.

Improving Sleep

Get a better night's sleep and feel more rested.

- Introduce sleep habits to improve sleep quality.
- Start a sleep schedule and routine.
- Reduce stress to help you more quickly fall and stay asleep.



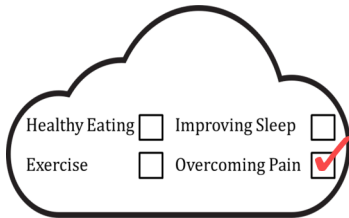
Overcoming Pain



Take action to reduce the impact of pain on your life.

- Explore skills to help you shift your focus away from your pain.
- Learn relaxation strategies to reduce muscle tension, which often makes pain worse.
- Start a pain management plan that fits your needs.

Dave & Pain



Dave has been in constant pain because of his back injury and has not been able to work because of this disability.



- *Frustrated*
- *Down*
- *Unmotivated*
- *Unproductive*
- *Tired*
- *Stressed out about finances*



- *I usually oversleep or just stay in bed after I wake up.*
- *I spend a lot of the day watching TV.*
- *I haven't cleaned up my house in ages; it really needs it.*



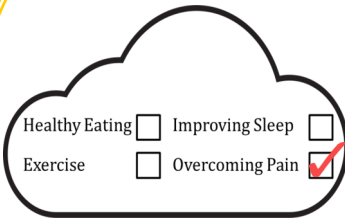
- *My pain controls everything in my life.*
- *There is nothing more I can do to control my pain.*
- *Pain is the reason my life is the way it is.*
- *I can't go back and change anything.*

Dave used the *Pain Tip Sheet* to create a three-pronged approach:



1. Set a plan to become more physically active.
I'll walk at least three times a day for at least 20 min. each.
2. Shift the way he thinks about his pain.
I can make positive changes to control some of my pain and get my life back on track.
3. Use deep breathing.
It will be great if I can stop and relax when I notice that I am tensing up.

Danielle & Pain



Danielle has been in constant pain because of her back injury, and she has been having more headaches lately because of her financial stress.



- *Frustrated*
- *Sad*
- *Tired*
- *Irritable*
- *Anxious about her health*



- *I spend a lot of the day watching TV*
- *I snack on junk food*
- *I put off paying the bills*
- *I avoid or fight with my friends and family*



- *My pain controls everything in my life.*
- *My pain means my health is deteriorating*
- *My pain will keep me isolated and lonely*
- *It's all downhill from here*

Danielle used the *Pain Tip Sheet* to create a three-pronged approach:

1. Set a plan to become more physically active.
I'll walk at least 30 minutes per day to release tension and keep my muscles strong. I'll schedule a regular time to walk with my daughter or a friend.
2. Shift the way she thinks about her pain.
There are things I can do to limit my pain and improve my overall health.
3. Use deep breathing.
I will stop and relax when I notice that a headache is coming on or if my worries are upsetting me too much.



Dave & Healthy Eating



Healthy Eating <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Improving Sleep <input type="checkbox"/>
Exercise <input type="checkbox"/>	Overcoming Pain <input type="checkbox"/>

Dave has gained 25 pounds over the past year.



How
Dave
Feels

- *Embarrassed*
- *Ashamed*
- *Overwhelmed and unsure about how to lose weight.*



What
Dave is
Doing

- *I never have anything good at home, so I just eat fast food.*
- *I just don't do much physically; my back bothers me, and I get out of breath easily.*
- *I don't get out much, either to see friends or to just go shopping and things like that.*



What
Dave
Thinks

- *I have let myself go and now I look terrible.*
- *I have no idea how to fix my eating behaviors—I just feel like giving up.*

Dave decided to use the *Healthy Eating Tip Sheet*:



1. Improve nutrition

I'll go shopping this week and buy what I need to have two healthy meals at home this week.

2. Plan for success

I'll start keeping track of what I eat; if I get on a regular routine, I probably won't snack as much.

Dave knows these are only the first steps, but he wants to start small so he can start seeing improvement without feeling overwhelmed. He can add to his plan over time.

Danielle & Healthy Eating



Danielle has gained 20 pounds over the past two years.



- *Ashamed*
- *Overwhelmed*
- *Embarrassed*
- *Exhausted*



- *I don't have the energy to cook, so I make frozen meals or eat out.*
- *I crave sweets when I'm sad, so I keep snacks and desserts around my house.*
- *I rarely shop for new clothes or wear clothing that would show my figure.*



- *No one will want to be with someone who looks like me.*
- *Food is one of the only good things in my life, I can't give up what I like to eat.*

Danielle decided to use the *Healthy Eating Tip Sheet*:



1. Improve nutrition






I'll go grocery shopping and buy what I need to make two healthy dishes that I can eat or freeze for the week.

2. Plan for success






I'll remove all sweet snacks from my house and replace them with fruits and vegetables to snack on instead.

Danielle knows these are only the first steps, but she wants to start small so she can start seeing improvement without feeling overwhelmed. She can add to her plan over time.

Improving Your Physical Health

 <p>Healthy Eating <input type="checkbox"/> Improving Sleep <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise <input type="checkbox"/> Overcoming Pain <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>
 <p>How You Feel</p>	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>
 <p>What You Are Doing</p>	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>
 <p>What You Think</p>	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>
 <p>Using skills (tools) to cope</p>	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>

Improving Your Physical Health

 <p>Healthy Eating <input type="checkbox"/> Improving Sleep <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise <input type="checkbox"/> Overcoming Pain <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>
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 <p>What You Think</p>	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>
 <p>Using skills (tools) to cope</p>	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>

Healthy Eating Tips:

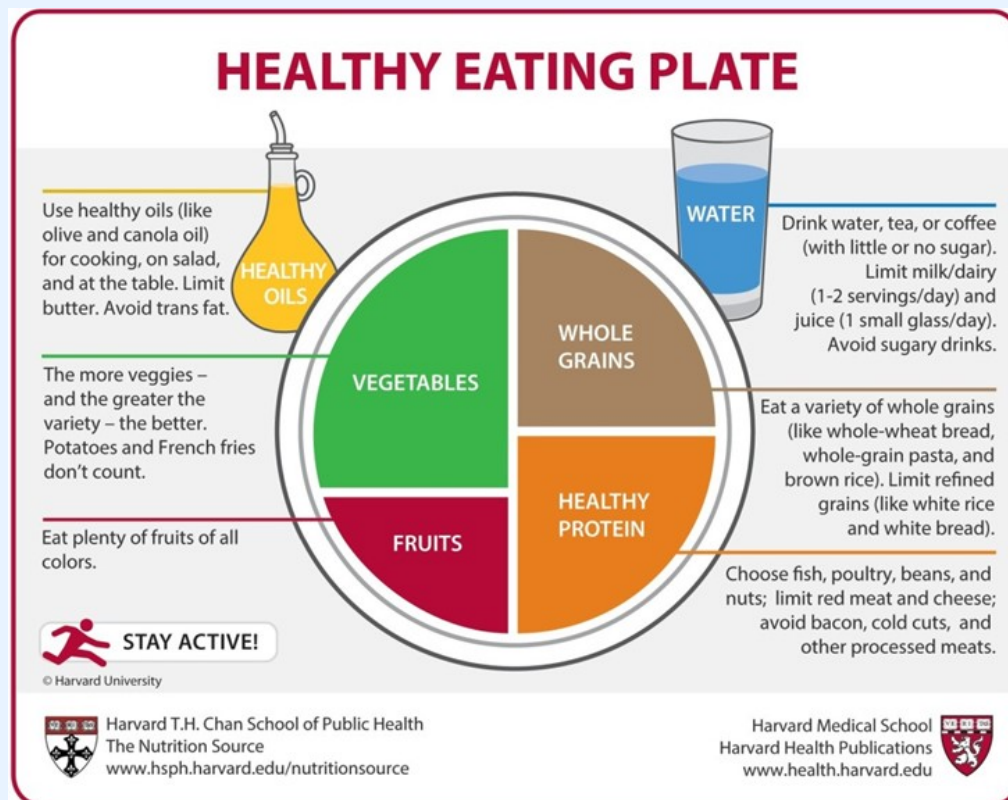
When you eat healthy foods, you are much more likely to feel better—both physically and emotionally. Remember that YOU have the ability to improve the way you feel by taking action. Below are some simple healthy eating tips to help guide your next steps.

Ways to Improve Nutrition:

- Work to set healthy eating goals and action plans to reach your goals.
- Start an eating routine and eat every day at those times. Avoid unnecessary snacking.
- Pay attention to what you are eating and read food labels.
- Eat when you are hungry, not when you are bored, sad or worried.
- Control portion size (next page).
- Eat the rainbow! More fruits and vegetables help to control sugars and reduce unhealthy fats.
- Use the Healthy Eating Plate to guide your eating plan. (See below)

Planning for Success:

- Find healthy recipes you like.
- Identify an eating plan that works for you—one you are excited about
- Get a healthy eating buddy
- Plan ahead (for example, make a grocery list before shopping). Keep healthy snacks on hand.
- Every little bit counts. Avoid feeling frustrated by “setbacks.”
- Track your progress– give yourself credit for even small changes. Celebrate when you reach your goals!
- Consult your primary care provider for more in-depth nutrition guidance.

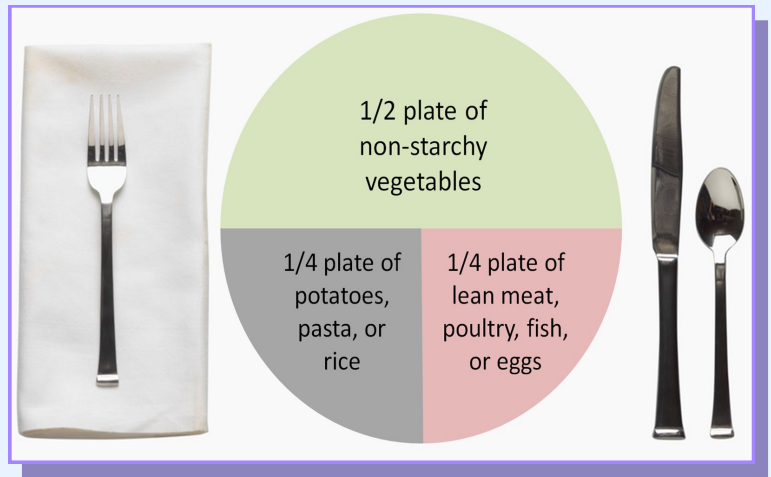


Portion Control

This method is an easy way to think of how many portions to eat without having to measure servings.

Steps:

1. Place the food on your plate in the correct section.
2. Eat your food clockwise, starting with the vegetables
3. Eat one full plateful before refilling.



4. If you have finished and are still hungry, wait five minutes, and then refill and eat the vegetable portion first.
5. Wait five more minutes. If you are still hungry, eat potatoes, rice, or pasta.
6. Wait five more minutes. If you are still hungry, eat meat.

Tips:

- Drink water before, during, and after meals. This helps you control your appetite and digest your food better.
- Slow down while eating. Try to make one plate last about 20 minutes.
- Restaurants use larger plates and serve larger portions than needed. Ask for a to-go box and put half of your meal away at the start. This gives you a healthier portion size and saves you money because you now have meal for later.

Copyright © 2011, Harvard University. For more information about The Healthy Eating Plate, please see *The Nutrition Source*, Department of Nutrition, Harvard School of Public Health, www.thenutritionsource.org, and Harvard Health Publications, www.health.harvard.edu.

Exercise Tips:

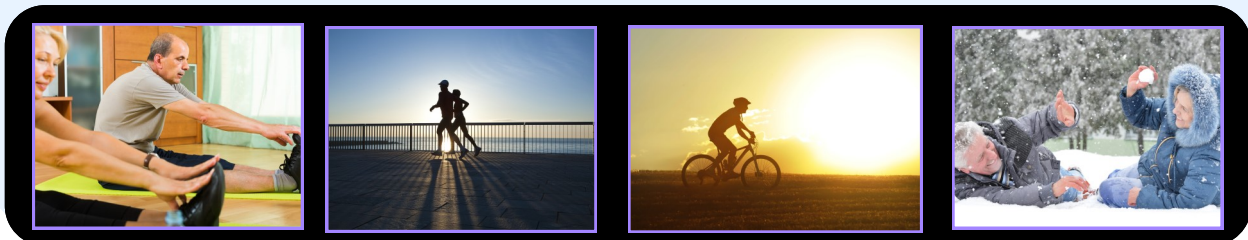
Your activity level is closely related to how you feel physically and emotionally. Below are some simple tips to help you be more physically active and to enjoy the activities you do. Enjoying exercise is a key to being able to stick with it.

Ways to increase activity:

- Set goals and track your progress. When you reach a goal, reward yourself!
- It's okay to have small chunks of exercise throughout the day. Three 10-minute walks are just as good as one 30-minute walk.
- Every little bit counts. Try taking the stairs or parking further away on purpose to build exercise into your daily routine.
- Don't overdo it. Create reasonable but important goals.
- Exercise in the morning if possible. Morning exercise will likely increase your alertness and energy levels later in the day. Avoid exercise two to three hours before bed.
- Consult with your primary care provider to develop an exercise plan that fits your needs.

Making exercise fun—Ways to increase enjoyment of activities:

- Find an activity you enjoy.
- Find an exercise buddy (person or pet), listen to music or audio book, relax with your thoughts and reflect on the things that are important to you.
- Let loose—being active is about having fun.

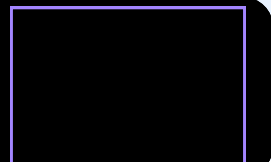


Sleep Tips:

Sleep is critically important to your health and how you feel. Positive changes to your sleep habits can dramatically improve how you feel. The following tips are designed to improve your sleep habits and behaviors.

Ways to improve your sleep cycle:

- **Set a sleep management goal and action plan.** Track your progress to see what works best for you.
- **Track your sleep.** Use the sleep monitoring worksheet to learn about your sleep patterns.
- **Set a sleep schedule.** Help your body get into a regular sleep cycle by going to bed and getting up at the same time each day.
- **Develop a relaxing bedtime routine.** Doing the same bedtime routine each night cues your body that it's time to sleep. Take a hot bath, stretch your muscles, or use a relaxation skill like deep breathing or imagery to help your body relax before bed.
- **Bed is for sleep.** Limiting the use of the bed to sleep and sex helps train your body to think about your bed as a place to sleep. Activities such as reading, eating, using the computer, and watching TV should be done in another room.
- **Get up after 20 minutes.** If you can't fall asleep after 20 minutes, get out of bed and do a calming activity until you feel sleepy. Then go back to bed and try again.
- **Limit naps.** Sleeping during the day can make it harder to sleep at night. Avoid taking naps, or limit your naps to one hour or less. Especially avoid naps later in the day.
- **Limit screen time one hour before bed.** The light from electronic devices stimulates brain activity, making it harder to fall asleep.
- **Exercise in the morning or early afternoon.** Exercising during these times helps you stay alert during the day and can improve the quality of your sleep at night.
- **Get comfortable.** Make your bed and bedroom as quiet, dark, and comfortable as possible. Keep the temperature cool, and use curtains or a sleep mask to block out lights.
- **Avoid caffeine and nicotine in the afternoon.** Stimulants make it harder to fall asleep.
- **Avoid alcohol.** Alcohol disrupts the quality of sleep, causing you to feel less rested.
- **Consult your primary care provider.** Talk with your medical provider if you have breathing or other medical concerns that interfere with your sleep.

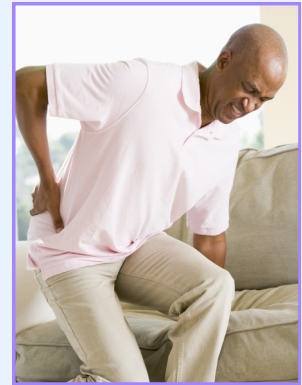


Pain Tips:

Pain is influenced by many factors, including physical health conditions and the environment, as well as the things we think, feel, and do. Without a doubt—pain can be a huge interference. Finding ways to reduce the impact of pain on your life is very important. Remember, there are likely things you can do to help. Below are a few simple tips to guide your efforts.

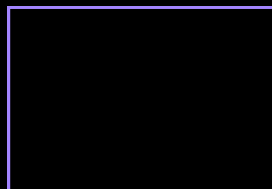
Actions you can take to decrease your pain...

- **Set a pain-management goal.** Track your progress to see what works best for you.
- **Talk with others who have experienced pain.** Sharing your experiences gives you a chance to connect with others as well as to learn new ways to cope with your pain.
- **Increase exercise.** Exercise stimulates the release of natural endorphins and often reduces stress, increases muscle strength, and improves mobility.
- **Shift your focus.** When you focus on pain, it makes it worse. Instead, find something you enjoy doing, such as watching a movie, reading a book, going for a walk, talking to a friend.
- **Practice relaxation skills.** Deep breathing or mental imagery can help decrease stress and tension.
- **Talk to your primary care provider.** Communicate concerns and listen for options.



Other ways to improve pain management:

- Monitor your pain – keeping track of your pain will help you identify factors that make it better or worse.
- Be aware of body positions that exacerbate your pain – standing too long, or not moving around enough might play a role.
- Develop skills to cope with negative feelings that can exacerbate pain (like sadness, stress, and anger)
- Focus your thoughts away from your pain and get engaged with the people and activities that you value.



Action Plan

The specific goal or activity I plan to work on:

Timeline for completing goal:

Steps to help me accomplish my goal:

Possible barriers and ways to overcome them:

How important is this goal to you?

Not Very Important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Important

How likely are you to complete these steps?

Not Very Likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Likely

Tracking your progress:

What progress did you make towards your goal this week?

☐ Exceeded ☐ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Did Not Attempt

What went well?

What challenges came up?

Action Plan

Next Steps

- ☐ Option 1: **Continue** with your plan as is—keep doing what you
- ☐ Option 2: **Modify** your plan to better meet your needs.
- ☐ Option 3: **Use a different skill** that better meets your needs.

Next Steps—Notes

Other Skills

Questions to think about:

- What other skills are you using?
- Are these skills working for you?
- Do you see any changes needed for these skills?

Next Steps— Plans to use these skills

Additional Resources

Physical Activity / Exercise

The President's Council on Fitness, Sports, & Nutrition:

<http://www.fitness.gov/>

Free website for tracking exercise and diet:

<https://www.myfitnesspal.com/>

Improving Sleep

More information on healthy sleep habits:

<http://sleep.org>

http://www.cdc.gov/sleep/about_sleep/index.html

Helpful Mobil App:

CBT-i Coach for iPhone and Android

Reducing Pain

List of organizations that provide free information on chronic pain:

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/002164.htm>

Final Session



What to Expect in this Session

Session Roadmap

1. We will set an agenda for the session.
2. How are you doing? We will complete a quick mood “check-in.”
3. We will review the previous session’s assignment and any other ongoing homework or skills you are using.
4. We will discuss your goals and overall progress during the program.
5. We will discuss how to maintain your progress.
6. We will discuss next steps and wrap up our work together.



Rate your Mood

Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems?

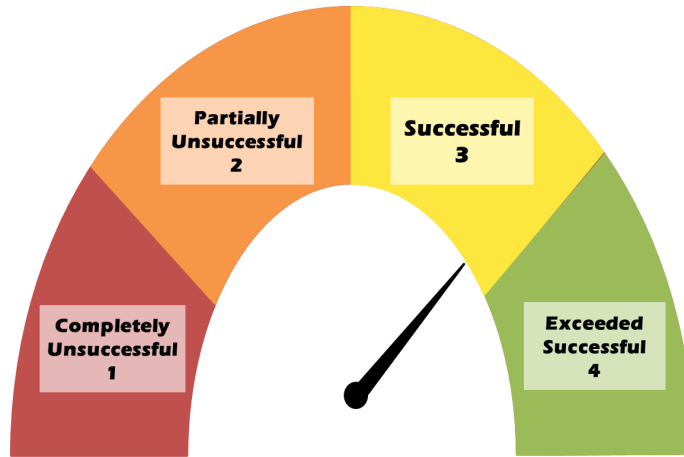
	Not at all	Several Days	More than half the days	Nearly every-day
1. Little interest or pleasure in doing things.	0	1	2	3
2. Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless.	0	1	2	3
3. Trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, or sleeping too much.	0	1	2	3
4. Feeling tired or having little energy.	0	1	2	3
5. Poor appetite or overeating.	0	1	2	3
6. Feeling bad about yourself—or that you are a failure or have let yourself or your family down.	0	1	2	3
7. Trouble concentrating on things, such as reading the newspaper or watching television.	0	1	2	3
8. Moving or speaking so slowly that other people could have noticed. Or the opposite—being so fidgety or restless that you have been moving around more than usual.	0	1	2	3
9. Thoughts that you would be better off dead, or of hurting yourself in some way.	0	1	2	3

How difficult have these problems made it for you to do your work, take care of things at home, or get along with other people?

Not Difficult at All	Somewhat Difficult	Very Difficult	Extremely Difficult
0	1	2	3

Progress Review

Rate your overall success in reaching your goals:



What areas of your life have changed?

- ☐ Overall quality of life
- ☐ Mood/depression/mental health
- ☐ Physical health
- ☐ Ability to cope with stressors
- ☐ Relationships with others
- ☐ Other: _____

What contributed to this change?

Maintaining Improvement

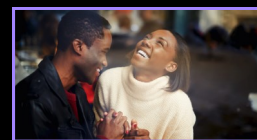
Tips for Maintaining Improvement:

- Continue using your skills to maintain a high quality of life.
- Remain socially connected—be it in your faith community, social groups, the VA, or with friends and family.
- Tell someone close to you about your progress in this program and any ongoing goals. That way, you have accountability and support.
- Remember to set reasonable goals to avoid feeling let down or frustrated. Small steps are more likely to lead to accomplishment and positive feelings. Don't forget your SMART goals!
- Track your progress. When you reach a goal, recognize your effort!

Bumps in the Road:

Despite our best intentions, things happen! We expect that people might hit bumps in the road. When you do, be kind to yourself and remember:

- Anticipating and addressing barriers to your goals will help you continue benefiting from this program long after your last session.
- Think about the bumps in the road you've encountered in the past—how did you get past them?
- What skills can you use to continue reaching your goals?
- Be flexible with new situations. When stressors occur, think about how you can use your toolbox in a different way.



Next Steps

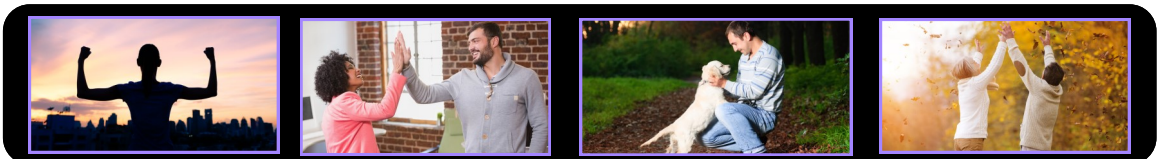
What are your goals moving forward?

What steps can you take to achieve your goals?

Who can help you move forward?

What might stand in the way?

How do you plan to overcome these obstacles?



Additional Help

Signs you should seek additional help:

Options for seeking additional help:

Sometimes, despite attempts to use the skills you learned in this program, you may need additional help. If you notice symptoms of depression returning or worsening, remember that you can contact your VA primary care provider and/or your mental health care provider to get back into care.

If things are getting to the point of a crisis and you need immediate help, contact the **Veterans' Crisis Line**:

- Phone: 1-800-273-8255 (press 1)
- Send text to 838255
- Website: www.veteranscrisisline.net
- Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year



