CARIBOU CBT
Individual Manual for Therapists

A Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy Intervention for Adolescents with Depression
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Acknowledgements

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This manual is a modification of the Adolescent Coping With Depression Course (CWD-A) with permission from Gregory Clarke, PhD.
**Acronyms and Abbreviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2SLGBTQ+</td>
<td>Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Pansexual, Trans, Gender Independent, Queer and Questioning, and other identities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>Acceptance and Commitment Therapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Behavioural Activation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBT</td>
<td>Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWD-A</td>
<td>Adolescent Coping with Depression Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DBT</td>
<td>Dialectical Behavioural Therapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOALS</td>
<td>Get straight to the facts, use an “I” statement to describe your Own experience, Ask for what you want or say “no”, Loop back to the first three steps, Show gratitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDD-A</td>
<td>Adolescents with Major Depressive Disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMART</td>
<td>Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Realistic, Time bound</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

Purpose

This manual was developed from the need for an updated guide to deliver Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT) for adolescents with major depressive disorder (MDD-A). The manual reflects the core theory of CBT: that changing one's emotions directly can be difficult for people, while strategies to change one's situations, thoughts or actions can indirectly change one's emotional experience and lead to reduction of depressive symptoms.

The manual is intended for use by clinicians who plan on providing individual CBT for adolescents with depression. Clinicians may include, but are not limited to social workers, registered therapists, mental health nurses, occupational therapists, psychologists, psychiatrists and trainees within each of these disciplines. We advise that clinicians have some basic formal training in CBT before implementation.

The purpose of this manual is to guide clinicians through the process and the content, so they are able to provide individual CBT within their clinical context. This Introduction will provide an overview of important aspects to note as a therapist working with youth and from a CBT framework. The manual therapist notes in italics then provide more support to walk therapists through each activity and provide tips on how to best engage the youth.

Contextualization of an Evidence-based Approach

Dr. Gregory Clarke et al. (1990) developed the Adolescent Coping with Depression Course (CWD-A), which appears to be the most commonly studied evidence-based group CBT for MDD-A manual to date. Our group saw opportunities to contextualize the implementation of CBT for MDD-A. This included making session content more relevant to the current experiences of young people, dividing the content into modules and incorporating additional material with Dr. Clarke's consent. The current version of the manual went through several iterations and was refined based on our experience providing therapy for over more than two years, in the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) Child, Youth & Family Services: Mood and Anxiety Clinic. We anticipate there will be future iterations of this manual and that it may be modified for different contexts.

Youth Input

Collaborating with youth can result in projects and outcomes that better reflect the needs of youth. With this understanding, we partnered with several young people with lived experience of mental health or substance use challenges through CAMH's "Youth Engagement Initiative," including one youth partner who is a co-author on the manual. Through several exchanges and multiple iterations, youth partners provided suggestions on alternate wording, engaging activities, graphic design and creative themes for the manual, in keeping with an Integrated Knowledge Translation approach. We also updated the example scenarios in the manual to reflect youth's present-day experience. For example, the current generation of youth text and interact with social media more often than they phone each other. We added case illustrations that...
include situations commonly experienced by 2SLGBTQ+ populations. We also incorporated youth-friendly language and suggested activities to make the modules more interactive. Youth also named the modules with video game themes (Power Up, Multiplayer, Level Up and Reboot) to make the material more engaging.

# Modules

The original CWD-A was 16 sessions long and was intended to be a closed group, held twice a week. We sectioned the CWD-A content into four modules of four sessions each, still totaling sixteen sessions. This approach highlights the four themes reflective in many therapeutic approaches: behavioural activation, cognitive restructuring, communication skills, and problem solving. We categorized the skills in the original CWD-A manual as being relevant to one of these themes and then assigned each skill to one of these modules. Although there are both benefits and drawbacks to structuring treatment using modules, we believe the benefits outweigh the drawbacks. The benefits are as follows:

- There will be variability in how youth respond to the four modules; youth who complete and respond to even one module can still leave treatment with a sense of closure, while youth who have not improved with one module may continue with further support to see if the next module leads to benefits.
- Modules enable treatment to be tailored to a youth’s needs. For example, youth who are adept at mood-enhancing activities and problem solving, but struggle with social skills and negative cognitions, can be prescribed a specific set of modules that address areas the youth needs to focus on.

There are also drawbacks, for example:

- Some material from one module (e.g. being able to label and rate emotional intensity from the Behavioural Activation Module) may help with a skill from another module (e.g. Cognitive Restructuring). Not learning one skill before another may limit the benefits.

## Incorporating “Third Wave” material

In the past 30 years, Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT), as well as Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) have created further options to use skills consistent with CBT principles. Examples include:

- changing judging thoughts to non-judging thoughts
- changing “fighting reality” thoughts to “accepting reality” thoughts
- using client-identified values to engage clients in activities that are personally meaningful.

Our clinical experience is that these skills are highly relevant for youth and motivate them to engage with the material.
Process Considerations

1 Collaborative Empiricism

An important approach in CBT is collaboration; that is, working alongside youth to engage them in self-discovery. This is in contrast to doing the work for the youth, or over-relying on external motivators to have them “go through the motions” of the exercises without internal reflection. Empiricism refers to examining evidence supporting and refuting depressive beliefs — and is most highlighted in the Reboot: Cognitive Restructuring Module. It is tempting to list evidence for and against depressive beliefs for the youth; collaborative empiricism is about engaging youth to discover the evidence themselves. It encourages intrinsic motivation. Two tools are emphasized to enhance this process:

- Socratic questioning—Ask youth open-ended questions to have youth elicit different perspectives.
- Behavioural experiments—Collaborate with youth to design experiments to further explore evidence for and against depressive beliefs.

For more on collaborative empiricism, see Tee and Kazantzis (2011).

2 Applied Behavioural Principles Within Groups

One important aspect of CBT is Applied Behavioural Theory. This includes the premise that the probability of engaging in a future behaviour is affected by the outcomes experienced after engaging in this behaviour in the past. Positive reinforcement is the preferred way to apply this concept. Positive reinforcement in CBT can come in many ways. To provide positive reinforcement, therapists can look for opportunities to:

- smile with eye contact
- remember a youth’s name
- offer praise
- validate a youth’s experience

Therapists can also foster an environment where youth:

- feel connected to someone
- perceive their own progress
- are having fun
- have moments of self-discovery (“aha” moments).

Use these approaches as much as you can, while still being genuine and encouraging, to help youth engage with the material. Be creative and spontaneous with these concepts. If it feels “too scripted” to the youth, it may not be as effective. Keep in mind that a reinforcer in one situation may be aversive in another; for example, if youth perceive receiving candies as prizes for correct answers to questions as patronizing or childish, the candies may be experienced as aversive rather than rewarding.
Youth may express oppositionality, irritability or disengagement by putting their head down, slouching, or not answering questions. Avoid reacting negatively; that is, avoid eye-rolling, sighing or appearing frustrated. Reacting in these ways may reinforce negative beliefs that young people may have about themselves and their experience, and, as a result, perpetuate these behaviours.

Prepare ahead of time by reviewing the therapist notes. Handouts are intended to keep the session structured and keep youth engaged. “Roll” with any resistance that may come up in the session. If they provide negative feedback about the skills:

- Validate a component of what they are trying to say.
- Explore what leads them to see their view as helpful (which opens the door for exploring what might not be helpful about it).
- Let them know that they are free to disagree with what the handouts have to say.

Another option is to put interfering behaviour “on cue.” For example, if youth are using their cell phones during part of the session, ask them to wait until a predefined time; when that time comes, say, “ok, you can get out your cell phone and text away for the next 3 minutes...” Explore why youth might be behaving in a way that is interfering to the session. For example, youth might be using their cellphones as a way to cope with anxiety or to help them focus on the conversation. You can make modifications to the environment to help with this by providing youth with fidgets (e.g., pipe cleaners, stress balls) or materials to doodle/colour. Invite youth to disagree with concepts in a structured way, rather than waiting for them to disagree at unstructured times. You may consider creating a “parking lot” where you can put conversations on hold and come back to them when they are more relevant.

The concept of “shaping” is key to positive reinforcement processes while maintaining a positive atmosphere: reinforcing desired behaviours, while not reinforcing regressive or stagnant behaviours. A common example of applying this principle is when youth are having trouble completing their home practice assignments, and you have reason to believe that low motivation or forgetfulness may be the main barrier to completing the homework. In this example:

- Start by providing reinforcement when they bring their last week’s handouts to session (even if not completed at all).
- The following week, highlight partial completion of the assignment, but not just for bringing in last week’s handouts.
- The next week, reinforce completed assignment even if it is low quality (but not if partially completed homework).
- “Raise the bar” each week. Increase the expectation that youth will complete the weekly assignment until they bring in consistently high-quality assignments every week.

Keep in mind that other factors may be getting in the way of completing assignments (e.g., chaotic living environments or learning disorders); in these situations, the shaping approach may not work. Different youth may need different targets in their shaping schedule or in what active completion or participation may look like for them. For more ideas on applying behavioural principles that don’t involve punitive reactions, see “Don’t shoot the dog” by Karen Pryor.11
Normalize and validate youth experiences. CBT is a set of active skills and strategies to improve mood. Some youth may interpret advice to use the skills in an invalidating way; when therapists say “try this,” the youth may hear this as “they're telling me I am doing it wrong,” or “they are saying my thoughts are bad” or “they want me to be fake”, leading to oppositional behaviours. It is important to normalize and validate this experience and invite discussion around it. It may also help to clarify how youth can use the following steps when using a new skill to avert this type of resistance to using the skill:

- fully acknowledge the emotions and thoughts experienced before using these strategies
- self-validate these emotions and thoughts
- consider the options to change the emotion using the CBT strategies.

Clarify that the focus is to support youth so they feel more empowered to have control over their emotions for their own benefit — not for the sake of meeting others' expectations.

**Orientation**

Before starting therapy at the beginning of any module, youth need to be oriented to the CBT model. This will help them understand the purpose of CBT and the information and strategies that they will be able to gain by participating in the sessions. During the orientation session, it is important to discuss:

- The CBT model; that is, the relationship between emotions, situations, thoughts and actions.
- The day and time sessions are held every week.
- A very brief overview of the four module themes (Behavioural Activation, Cognitive Restructuring, Communication & Relationships, Problem Solving).
- That this is a skills-based therapy and that home practice is required in order to get the most benefit from CBT.
- The attendance policy (i.e. what will happen if the youth misses a scheduled session).

**Session Structure**

Sessions are typically 50 minutes long. Having the agenda available for youth to see can help orient youth so that they know what to expect. Having water and snacks available can be a sign of respect for their time and help prevent them from being distracted by feeling hungry or thirsty. Encouraging a water or food break also models a strategy that can be used for self-regulation as a way to maintain attention and reduce irritation from hunger or thirst.
Below is a sample agenda that outlines how the sessions are typically structured each week:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Summary of Agenda</th>
<th>Time frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quick Check-in</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Practice Review</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Material</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Practice Assignment</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrap Up</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1 Quick Check-in: 5 minutes

Ask youth to share how their week was in a few sentences.

Here you are getting a sense of participants' mood and also attending to potential examples for skill use later on in the session. For instance, if a youth describes low mood after an argument with a friend, and the new material is discussing collaborative problem solving, you could address the youth's situation when the new skill is being taught later in session. This may increase the sense of relevance of the skill and enhance uptake. Note: An alternative approach is to move the check-in after the new material section (see below), as it allows an opportunity for youth to incorporate and discuss the new skill learned.

2 Home Practice Review: 10 minutes

Have participants describe their experience completing the previous week's home practice assigned to the previous session. Be sure to have a back-up plan if youth have not done the assignment (most often, there is a back-up example for therapists to use in the handouts). If youth haven't done the assignment, ask them what got in the way — unclear expectations, forgetting and low motivation are most common — and problem-solve around these in session. Be sure to follow through on the home practice review and reinforce the importance of doing skills practice between sessions. As an option, they can also describe what specific goal they assigned themselves the previous week and how it went.

3 New Material: 20 minutes

Next is new material, described later in this manual. Allow some time for discussion on certain points. Youth may disagree with some of the suggestions in the new material. Invite disagreement by asking, "Do you think this skill would be helpful for you? What is your favourite part of the new material? What is your least favourite?" As a therapist, you could:

- validate any hesitancy — while skills may be simple in concept, they are hard to put in action
- ask about pros and cons of using the skill
- invite a behavioural experiment (e.g., "I don't know if it will work. Is there a way we could test it out?")
- accept their experience (e.g., "Some skills work for some and not for others — the idea is to give you a bunch of ideas and see what works").

4 Home Practice Assignment: 10 minutes

With 10 minutes left in the session, review what is expected for youth to do for the upcoming week. There are two types of assignments:

- an overall list of standard tasks youth are asked to do, listed at the end of the handouts
- an optional personal goal that youth identify for themselves.
Therapists may decide to ask youth to make their personal goal more Specific, Measurable, Achievable and Realistic, and to have a Timeline (SMART goals). Again, use as much positive reinforcement and shaping principles as possible. There is no home practice assignment for the fourth sessions in the handouts for each module, but personal assignments can still be done. Alternatively, therapists can still ask youth to practice the new skills discussed in session even though the module theme is changing. If you do this, be sure to follow-up with the assigned practice the following week. Ask if there is anything that might get in the way of completing their goal that week, and problem-solve around anticipated barriers.

5 Wrap Up: 5 minutes

Close the session by asking youth to share one reflection on the session: “Tell me, in one or two sentences, what your experience of session was today.” This allows therapists to gauge what stuck out for youth. Therapists can use this information to fine-tune future sessions.

Hand out graduation certificates when a youth graduates (typically at the end of their fourth module), ideally after teaching new material. Youth tend to really like getting these certificates. Describe your observations (particularly positive observations) of the youth’s progress in therapy.

Content Rationale

A General

The mood cycle diagram: (below) is shown in each of the modules. The idea is that each skill can be related to this diagram and that by changing your thoughts, actions or the situation, you can change your emotion. Be sure to come back to this rationale for each skill set. When youth go through their personal examples, review the diagram and label each component (situation, thought, action, emotion) to practice conceptualizing life problems in this way.
Checklists: Some activities have checklists for common responses that youth may give. The benefit of this is that youth might be having an experience that they are having trouble articulating. Seeing a list of response options may help youth select one that makes sense for them and may help facilitate engagement. The downside is that it may mean the youth’s own ideas are not shared, which limits exploration. We encourage using more open-ended questions initially with these activities. If youth are having trouble, the checklists are a good back-up.

“Depressive Thoughts” vs. “Balanced Thoughts”: Each of the Power Up (Behavioural Activation), Multiplayer (Communication and Relationships) and Level Up (Problem Solving) modules have a chart with typical depressive thoughts related to the topic with the invitation to generate balanced alternative thoughts, in keeping with the spirit of collaborative empiricism. The idea is to expose youth to other ways of thinking, but also to the idea that “balanced thoughts” don’t have to be the opposite (i.e., “all good” vs. “all bad”).

The therapist version will include suggestions if youth struggle to come up with their own. Youth can change some of the wording to make it more personalized. Some examples may be relevant for youth where others may not. Youth may find it really hard to take on these “balanced thoughts.” If so, normalize their struggles and let them know that changing their thought patterns can take a really long time. The goal is for them to know that there is another option for how to think about something, but it might take a while to shift their thinking in day-to-day life. If a youth finds one of the balanced thoughts immediately helpful, this is worth highlighting and discussing in the session.

Module Wrap-Up: At the end of each module is a chart with the list of skills learned and options for youth to talk about whether they thought about using these skills and whether or not they found them helpful. This wrap-up is an opportunity for youth to see how the skills all fit together and review if the strategies will work for them. They can also explore what gets in the way of effective skill use.

Power Up (Behavioural Activation)

Behavioural activation (BA) can be defined as a therapeutic process that emphasizes deliberate attempts to increase behaviours that are likely to bring the individual into situations that are naturally rewarding with the aim of improving mood and overall quality of life.¹²

Session 1 starts with a discussion of the theory behind BA; namely, that a youth’s depressive behaviours (passivity, isolation, negative affect) have been reinforced, and healthy behaviours (activity, socialization, positive affect) may have led to aversive experiences. Moreover, depressive behaviours (e.g., isolation) lead to environmental changes (e.g., friends stop calling) which lead to more depressive experiences (e.g., the belief that “my friends don’t like me”) leading to worsening of mood. This results in a vicious cycle (explained as the “downward spiral” in the handout). The next section of Session 1 is about enhancing self-awareness in mood states and is traditionally included in BA therapy (as well as other types of therapy). Some youth find this part very easy, and some more difficult. Pacing this section based on how youth are grasping the concept is important. Some youth will have a hard time putting a number to the intensity of their mood, in which case you can ask them to estimate. As they practice more and more, they will eventually become more precise at rating the intensity of their mood. Notice that each mood is rated separately on a different scale, as opposed to one overall scale of “good mood” at one pole and “bad mood” at the other. This helps teach youth that there are many mood states, some of which can be experienced at the same time; for example, after watching a good dramatic film, you might feel both happy and sad at the same time. Identifying emotions and rating their intensity is an important skill used in Level Up (Problem Solving) and in Reboot (Cognitive Restructuring), so you may have to review it briefly in other modules as well.
Session 2 begins with discussion around identifying and increasing enjoyable activities. This is a traditional component of BA. Youth may already find that they are doing things they enjoy, but that the benefits don't really last. For example, watching TV or being on social media can be enjoyable, but these activities often don't help us feel connected to others or that we are accomplishing things — and depression continues. The idea is to balance these activities to provide more powerful reinforcing experiences. Achieving the right balance is key. During the session and through the handouts, you can incorporate activities where youth are able to brainstorm activities they enjoy. Activity scheduling is also included here. Without a clear time and date assigned to the activity, youth may neglect to follow through. Unstructured time is more likely to be time where the impulse to isolate or “shut down” wins.

The following material is spread out over sessions 3 and 4. Examining beliefs around activation incorporates the “cognitive” part of CBT into this module. It is very important to highlight that people often don't engage in these activities because they predict that it won't help their mood. While facilitating this component of the session, try and incorporate an activity (e.g. a card game) or experiment where youth are able to see this in practice. Label the thought prior to engaging in the activity (like the card game) as a “prediction” and invite youth to test it out. Do the activity in session. Ask them to rate their mood or energy after the activity. Frame the expected result as a “slight” improvement in mood and energy; and that this slight improvement is actually a sign the youth is moving toward an “upward spiral” and that these small improvements accumulate over time to reduce symptoms of depression.

Functional analysis of depressive behaviours is often included in various iterations of BA. Conducting a pros and cons assessment of “continuing my current routine” and “changing my activities to better fit the four targets” offers the youth and therapist a window into what might be maintaining the current repertoire, while shifting motivation toward change. Therapists and youth are encouraged to collaboratively look for ways to make depressive behaviours less reinforcing and healthy behaviours more reinforcing. Within this section is the idea of “graded exposure” — starting with easier ways to shift activities and moving toward more difficult ones.

A discussion of values is also a more recent addition to BA. A similar strategy is used in ACT\(^1\) and in the “Accumulating Positive Emotions Long Term” skill in DBT\(^1\) where Linehan frames this exercise as “building a life worth living.” This is an important skill particularly for youth who are struggling with chronic suicidal thoughts. The skill of “Graded Task Assignment” is reframed in this module as “Breaking it Down” and incorporated into a discussion of values. Youth may avoid thinking about the long-term future as it often feels overwhelming or more likely to lead to a sense of failure than success. Validate and normalize their feelings and guide them through the process in a supportive way. Of course, “Breaking it Down” can also be used for short-term goals as well, such as a school assignment due the following week.

Social skills and problem-solving skills are both components typical of BA that are not included in this module but are addressed in others.

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**Reboot (Cognitive Restructuring)**

This module focuses on the cognitions that link the facts about the situation to the emotional experience.

Session 1 starts with a discussion about how emotions can come on strongly when we react to a belief as though it is a fact. “Thought traps” (i.e., cognitive distortions) describe common errors in thinking; youth often can relate to many of these, which may promote a lot of discussion. Be prepared to address youth who might feel invalidated by the idea that their thinking is “wrong.” It is important to frame thought traps as common even among people without depression, but they may have more of an impact among people who are depressed.
Notice that in describing the process of creating a balanced thought, we use the term “train of thoughts” rather than “automatic thoughts” as the language is more familiar for youth. The manual also uses the term “reflex thoughts” instead of “hot thoughts.” These changes reflect feedback from youth that the term “hot thoughts” are associated with sexual themes, which can distract from the session content. The creation of balanced thought neutralizes the power of the reflex thought by getting away from polarized thinking and back to the importance of identifying facts versus beliefs. Therapists experienced in DBT may notice that creating a balanced thought is articulating a “dialectic”, where two ideas that seem opposite on the surface can both be true at the same time.

In Session 2, further strategies on what to do with thoughts include brainstorming and evaluating alternative ways to interpret the situation. There are parallels to the problem-solving approach discussed later and summarized below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive Restructuring</th>
<th>Problem Solving</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1</strong></td>
<td>Describe the situation and emotion (the need is less important here, and might be better to address after identifying the reflex thought, as it is the appraisal of the situation that is the threat to the need).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1a</strong></td>
<td>Identify the “reflex thought” — this might include listing the “train of thoughts” that arise and identifying which leads to the most emotion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 2</strong></td>
<td>Brainstorm interpretations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 3</strong></td>
<td>Evaluate: List evidence for and against each interpretation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 4</strong></td>
<td>Multiple options: play detective, balanced thought, act-as-if.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After going through each step in session, you can then link the options for Cognitive Restructuring within Step 4 to particular thought traps:

- Playing detective might help most when youth are overgeneralizing or jumping to conclusions.
- Balanced thinking helps with polarized thinking. Act-as-if might be helpful in most thought traps (A skill to help with catastrophizing is described in Session 4, where skills to manage anxiety are discussed).

The next skill of self-validation is a skill that tends to be more emphasized in DBT, though several CBT manuals highlight how emotions have a function. Regardless, self-validation is still about shifting our beliefs, but the belief being addressed is about one's own appraisal of the emotional experience. This skill involves linking the emotion to Maslow's hierarchy of needs discussed in more detail later in the Level Up (Problem-Solving) Module.

Session 3 begins with a discussion of core beliefs. Addressing these beliefs in the session can be sensitive, as the exercise tends to be emotionally charged. Therapists can normalize this: “As we read through these core beliefs, you may experience some emotion. This is normal.” Be transparent with youth that these beliefs are difficult to shift, but that it can be helpful to be aware of the beliefs and look for ways to work on shifting them through the skills learned in Sessions 1 and 2. The next exercise in Session 3 is focused on giving and receiving positive feedback can also be equally emotionally charged — in a positive way — and can be a nice counterbalance to the discussion around core beliefs. Youth may be anxious about the process and express feeling awkward, though it very often results in a positive experience for them. Openly acknowledging that this is an awkward activity can help youth get through it.
In Session 4, the first skill discussed is also heavily influenced by DBT and is often included in more recent iterations of CBT. This skill is about “making non-judging statements”, which is also discussed in the Multiplayer (Communication and Relationships) Module, though the focus here is on reframing judging thoughts about oneself, as opposed to others.

The final skills are quick descriptions of ways of managing anxiety, which often accompanies depression. Despite its simplicity, many young people find the simple thought-stopping skill effective. The “worry time” skill is essentially putting the unwanted behaviour (“worrying”) on cue. The “change the movie in your mind” skill is good for catastrophizing and is similar to the Cope Ahead skill in DBT.

**Level Up (Problem Solving)**

The TORDIA study found reviewing problem-solving skills within CBT to be associated with improved outcomes. The NICE Guideline on the long-term management of self-harm also suggests that a problem-solving component may be helpful to address self harm, which is common in adolescent depression.

Session 1 is dedicated to being able to define a “problem,” discussed here as a situation that threatens a need. Emotions are framed as normal, often functional responses to a need that is being threatened. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, which many youth may be familiar with, is used as a reference point. This adapted list of needs includes a sense of control, which is a common theme for adolescents and identified by other theorists as an issue to resolve (e.g. Erikson’s psychosocial stage called autonomy vs. shame and doubt, and literature on “locus of control”). Also in the adapted list of needs is a sense of identity — the sense that a person knows who they are and feels like the same person in different situations. Erikson also identified this as a common theme in adolescence (identity vs. role confusion), as did Heinz Kohut through his self-psychology theories. Simplifying needs down to six fundamental ones (physiological, physical safety, relationships, self-esteem, control and identity) allow youth to formulate their own problems. Helping youth make sense of their emotions by connecting them to their needs can be a validating experience: this is expanded on in the “Self-validation” section of the Reboot (Cognitive Restructuring) Module.

Being able to describe facts about a situation (and distinguish this from interpretations) is an important skill in many aspects of CBT. This skill is highlighted here. Identifying emotions is more deeply covered in the Power Up (Behavioural Activation) Module, but can be reviewed here if needed.

Problem solving is framed as a strategy to find out how one’s needs can be met. If the need is met, the impetus for the emotion is no longer present and the emotion can settle. Beliefs about problem solving are discussed, as they often interfere with the process.

Session 2 focuses on the following steps: brainstorming solutions, evaluating them, reflecting on whether they will address the root of the problem, troubleshooting and carrying out the solution. Youth may find the many steps overwhelming and express low motivation to do them all. It can be helpful to highlight that they are likely already doing many of the steps naturally, but may be getting stuck on a particular one. Therefore, working with youth to focus on the step they are having difficulty with may be all that is needed. For larger problems, youth might decide to go through the whole process and write down the steps guided by the handouts.

Session 3 discusses Collaborative Problem Solving. This approach was described in the original Adolescent Coping with Depression (CWD-A) manual, though has become a therapeutic approach in its own right with Dr. Ross Greene’s book The Explosive Child. The principles of individual problem solving are also present, but now include having another party involved — typically a caregiver.
Session 4 (the final session) is about acceptance. The therapist acknowledges that some problems are not solvable. This skill is about shifting attention away from “reality fighting thoughts” (which may actually be helpful if the problem is readily solvable) to “reality acceptance thoughts” (that can be particularly helpful when the problem is not immediately solvable). DBT and ACT both address acceptance and can compliment the other skills. The therapist guide also includes a list of problems youth might encounter, which can be useful when the youth is quiet. Ideally, youth would share their real-life problems and then the problem-solving skills can be used to address these problems. If youth are not willing to share, they can pick from example problems to work through. Youth can each work on their own problems through the handouts or through role-plays (which is particularly helpful for collaborative problem solving). The acceptance skill can also be applied to these situations.

**Multiplayer (Communication and Relationships)**

Relationships have a significant effect on mood. A secondary analysis of the TORDIA study showed that CBT is more effective when social skills are included as part of CBT. Young people who experience challenges in their social lives may be more likely to experience depression. Depression may also make it harder to engage in pro-social behaviour. The group format for CBT allows youth to practice skills through activities and experiments in vivo, where they receive immediate feedback on various ideas about social norms. This benefit is less pronounced in individual therapy.

Session 1 of this module starts by breaking down social interactions into a set of very basic behaviours: “Social Skills 101.” Many of these skills may seem obvious, but when depressed, they may not come automatically. A reiteration of emotional spirals follows, in keeping with the beginning of the Power Up (Behavioural Activation) Module. Next the therapist explores depressive thoughts youth may have that affect relationships and facilitates an open discussion with the youth about how to start a conversation.

In Session 2 there is discussion around how sometimes youth may not want to start a conversation, because they won’t know how to end it without feeling like they are being rude. Ideas about how to end conversations are explored. Next, further social skills are discussed to build on the “Social Skills 101” discussed in the previous session. Engaging responses (i.e. active listening) are covered next. The intention is to teach youth about ways to respond that build connections and form deeper relationships.

Session 3 begins with discussion around “non-judging” in relationships. Note that “non-judgment” is also covered in the Reboot (Cognitive Restructuring) Module, though in that module the focus is on judging thoughts about oneself (though it is good to point out that the two are related). TMI (“Too Much Information”) is a section about self-disclosure: again, youth may provide a lot of feedback to each other in this section. To start discussion, it can be helpful to ask “Do you tend to overshare information? or undershare? What are the pros and cons of each of these approaches?” Next, the GOALS acronym is used to describe assertive communication. Therapists experienced in DBT will notice parallels with the DEARMAN skill in this section. Youth tend to like the role-plays, particularly when you ask them to do ridiculous tasks and they get to say no — effectively.

Session 4 is about practice and putting it all together. Feel free to diverge from the examples provided in the handouts for this fourth session, and use the youth’s real-life situations, particularly if you notice something to discuss from the “Check-in” phase of the session. This session can also be used to as a “flex” session, if material from previous sessions has not yet been covered or needs to be discussed in more depth.
Other Considerations

Some skills left out of this manual that could also be discussed include relaxation exercises and mindfulness/meditation techniques. The thought stopping technique of snapping an elastic band against the wrist was removed, as youth within the Youth Engagement Initiative noted that young people may find this skill outdated and unhelpful. Skills that have been left out in this version of the manual may be included in later iterations, particularly to further address comorbid anxiety.

Within the manual, there is a lot of overlap with DBT, as DBT was highly influenced by CBT; and now CBT, as it is currently practiced, is highly influenced by DBT. Even when the concepts overlap, there is variation in how distinctly the skills are described. The following table is intended to help differentiate what skills are covered in the Mood Foundations & CARIBOU CBT versus what is covered in DBT. Clinicians may wish to supplement CARIBOU CBT material with the remaining DBT skills for youth with emotion dysregulation, impulsivity and self-harm.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparison of CBT and DBT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education and Lifestyle</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education on depression (biopsychosocial model)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education on borderline personality disorder (biosocial transaction model)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep hygiene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Concepts Related to Behavioural Activation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs about engaging in activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downward spiral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connection between situation, emotions, thoughts, actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying/rating emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging in pleasurable activities / Accumulating positive emotions short term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying values and long-term goals / Breaking down long-term goals into smaller steps / Accumulating positive emotions long term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging in activities that build a sense of accomplishment (mastery)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity scheduling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Concepts Related to Communication and Relationships</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs about relationships / Relationship dialectics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating new friendships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to leave a conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ending destructive relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active listening/ GIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding without judgment, self-disclosure / Describe, express</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertive communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAST (be Fair, make no Apologies, Stick to values, be Truthful)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Concepts related to Problem Solving</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs about problem solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Function of emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defining a problem/ (Describe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem-solving/ Pros and cons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative problem solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reality acceptance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Comparison of CBT and DBT (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>CBT</th>
<th>DBT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Concepts related to Cognitive Restructuring</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facts vs. beliefs (Observe/Describe)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thought traps/ Cognitive distortions</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balanced Thinking/ Dialectics</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-validation</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act-as-if belief</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brainstorming alternative interpretations</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What if? Then what? (Cope ahead)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-judging stance</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other DBT-Specific Concepts</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wise Mind</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate (Mindfulness)</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-mindfully/Effectively (Mindfulness)</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis survival skills (ACCEPTS/5-senses/IMPROVE)</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness/Willfulness</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialectical abstinence — and other addiction-specific skills</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposite action for emotions other than sadness</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References


References


**Mood Cycle**

The concept behind CBT is that your emotions are affected by the situation you are in, as well as your thoughts (cognitions) and actions (behaviour). Look at the diagram below.

*Look at the diagram with the youth:*

![Mood Cycle Diagram]

Using the above diagram, identify the situation, thought, emotion and behaviour in the scenario below.

*Ask a youth to read through the example...*

> “Brianna wakes up in the morning to her alarm. She feels like her mood and energy are low. She imagines that if she gets up and gets ready for school that she will feel horrible — that she will be dragging her feet all through the day. She has the urge to roll over and go back to sleep. She pulls the covers over her head and goes back to sleep.”

*As the youth identify each component, write it on the board beside the corresponding label.*

Sometimes it is tricky to distinguish each part of the cycle — this is important so that you know what to do next. Label each of the following as a “Situation” “Thought” “Emotion” or “Action”:

*Ask youth to label the items below.*

**Sadness**

*(Emotion)*
My mother was raising her voice saying “Please get out of bed!”

(Situation)

You call up a friend.

(Action)

“Trish doesn’t understand me”.

(Thought)

Smiling

(Action)

You brush your teeth.

(Action)

Nervousness

(Emotion)

My teacher returned my assignment.

(Situation)

The cycle can get into a loop, where the mood ends up spiraling.

2 Emotion Spirals

Ask the youth to read...

When we feel bad, we are more likely to shut down and stop doing things we enjoy. This can make us feel worse. This cycle can lead to a downward spiral in our mood.

When we feel good, we are more likely to do things we like. Once we start doing things we like, we tend to feel better. This cycle can lead to an upward spiral in our mood.

This “behavioural activation” module will help you learn skills to change the spirals by making changes in your actions.

Look at the spirals together as you describe how actions and emotions interact...
Do you recognize this downward spiral in yourself?

Ask if the youth has noticed a downward spiral in themselves and ask them to give examples. Also elicit examples of upward spirals.

What are some things that cause an upward spiral for you?
3 Noticing and Rating Your Moods

Naming your emotions is an important first step in being able to change your emotion. Some people find this easy, others find it hard. For each of the following emotions in the table below, think about the following:

- What does your body do or feel like?
- What are your thoughts like?
- What actions do you have the urge to do?
- What is your energy level like?

*Ask youth to complete the table below with you. Note that youth can use words, symbols or pictures to represent their ideas.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotion</th>
<th>Body</th>
<th>Thoughts</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Energy Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
<td>E.g., heavy, slouching, tearful, chest pain</td>
<td>E.g., negative, hopeless, foggy</td>
<td>E.g., shut down, isolate, cry</td>
<td>E.g., low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bored</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(irritable)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxious</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proud</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e.g., Numb, feeling empty, guilty, ashamed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rating the Intensity of Your Emotions

The intensity of the emotions that you experience throughout the day will change from hour to hour. It can be helpful to be able to describe this intensity for many reasons:

- First, it can help you communicate to other people what you are feeling so they can give you appropriate support.
- Second, it helps give you information on what you might need to do to control your emotion. For example, if you are at a 2 out of 5 in sadness (i.e. only slightly sad), you might use a different strategy than if you are at a 5 out of 5 (i.e. extremely sad).
- Third, if you notice when your emotion is at a low intensity, you can try to take steps to prevent it from becoming a 5 out of 5.

The first step in rating your emotion is to set “anchor points” on a scale from “0” to “5.”

Rating sadness

A “zero” will represent the least amount of sadness you have ever felt. At a “zero” you have no physical signs of sadness, no thoughts that go with sadness (such as negative thoughts) and you are active with a good amount of energy. Can you think of a time when your sadness was at “zero” (i.e. no sadness)?

Ask for examples from the youth.

A “five” will represent the most amount of sadness you have ever felt. Can you think of a time when your sadness was at “five”?

Ask for examples.

Rating happiness

A “zero” represents the least amount of happiness you ever felt. Can you think of a time when your happiness was at a “zero” (i.e. not happy at all)?

A “five” represents the most amount of happiness you have ever felt. At a “five” you have physical signs of happiness (e.g., smiling, high energy), thoughts that go with happiness (such as positive thoughts) and you are very active with lots of energy. When was the last time you were at a “five”?

Ask for examples.
To explain why two scales are needed and why we don’t just use one scale with low mood at one end and high mood at the other, ask youth to think of a time when they might have been both happy and sad at the same time, like after watching a good dramatic movie, or at significant life events (e.g., births or weddings) where people might cry and be happy at the same time.

Using yesterday as an example, rate the highest intensity each emotion got to throughout the day on a scale from 0 to 5:

Have the youth complete the following:

- **Sad**
- **Bored**
- **Angry (irritable)**
- **Anxious (fearful)**
- **Happy**
- **Proud**

Sometimes, it is difficult to know what emotion you are feeling. Noticing, naming and rating your emotions can help you feel more aware of what is happening — and help give you more control over the intensity of the emotions.

Ask youth to use the table below to keep track of their emotions and the intensity of each emotion over the next 7 days.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotion</th>
<th>Intensity of Emotions (0-5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Day 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bored</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxious</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proud</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Write down your personal goal over the next week based on the skills discussed today:


Work with youth to identify a personal goal for themselves over the next week. Remind youth to focus their goal on something they can do within a week and to try and be as specific as possible.

Ask youth to share their personal goal, if they are willing.

Ask if youth have any questions about the home practice or if they anticipate anything that might get in the way of doing it and problem solve around these.

Allow 5 to 10 minutes to have youth provide a statement about their experience in session today (e.g., “What did you like / not like?” “What did you notice?” “What was helpful / not helpful?”).

An alternative concluding activity is to discuss “hopes and hesitations”: youth describe one thing they hope to get out of participating in the therapy and one thing they may be hesitant about. This can help therapist plan for next sessions.

Another alternative way to end session is with the Head, Heart, Feet activity.

Ask youth to answer one of the following questions:

- What is one thing you’re thinking about after session today? (Head)
- What is one thing you’re feeling after session today (Heart)
- What is something you are going to do after session today? (Feet)

5 Home practice

At the end of each day, rate the highest intensity each type of emotion got to throughout the day. We will explore patterns at the next session.
1  Review

Look at the diagram together.

Using the diagram above, describe each of the components that are represented in the following scenario.
Ricky had a math test today. He looked at the first question on the test and had a hard time answering it. He said to himself, “I am the worst at math” and then felt discouraged and exhausted and put his head down on his desk. His friend, Kevin, asked “what’s wrong?” and Ricky didn’t answer.

Did you notice any times in the past week where you got into a downward spiral? What about an upward spiral? 

Ask youth to share.

How did it go tracking your mood? What are the downsides of tracking your mood? Upsides?

Ask youth to share.

Did you remember to do it? If not, what can you do to help you remember?

Brainstorm ways to cue memory to do the home activity.

Are there any patterns that you noticed in your emotions?

Ask youth if they can describe patterns.

If you forgot to track your mood over the last week, fill out this chart to help you notice your emotions over the past three days. Rate the maximum intensity (from 0 to 5) that you may have felt for each emotion, with 5 being the most intense.
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If the youth has not done the activity, coach them to fill in the mood chart for the past three days.

They might find it easier to start with “yesterday” and work their way back to “3 days ago.”

Have youth also discuss their personal goal from last week and how it went.

2 Enjoyable Activities

Alternate reading each statement, and discuss each point in session.

Read each statement, and discuss each point:

1. The amount and quality of enjoyable activities we do can affect our moods.
   Using the mood cycle diagram on the board, point out the arrow:
   “Action” → “Emotion”

2. Our moods can affect the amount and quality of enjoyable activities we do.

3. This relationship between the activities we do and our mood can lead to a “downward spiral.”

4. To change the pattern to an “upward spiral” it is important to engage in enjoyable activities, even when you aren’t feeling confident or don’t feel like doing them.
Optional questions for discussion:

• After reading these statements, how likely is it that you would change your behaviour if you were feeling low in the future?

• What would get in the way of engaging in more activities?

• Do you believe that engaging in more activities would help to boost your mood? What leads you to believe this?

• If you continue shutting down when you feel low, how likely is it that your mood would improve?

• How likely is it that your mood would improve if you do the opposite of what your mood is telling you to do when you are down, and you become more active instead?

• How can you remind yourself to keep being active even when you are feeling low?

Therapy can help you track and increase the number of activities you participate in to see if they make you feel happier.

It can be helpful to get a sense of what a usual day looks like for you.

As best as you can remember, list the activities you did in the past three days. Activities should be specific (e.g., “I worked on my math assignment” vs. “I did homework.”)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time of Day</th>
<th>Activities 3 days ago</th>
<th>2 days ago</th>
<th>Yesterday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evening</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nighttime</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compare your activity chart to your mood chart. Did any patterns come up?

See if youth can link their emotions to their activities. Have youth share any links if they feel comfortable. Were there any similar links among youth?
Increasing Activities to Improve Your Mood

It is important that the activities we do are meeting key targets in our lives:

1. **Sense of connection**: Does it make you feel closer to others?
2. **Success**: Does it give you a sense of achievement?
3. **Enjoyment**: Do you like doing it?
4. **Personal values**: Does it fit with what's important to you (e.g., honesty, self-growth)?

In the chart below, rate how much each activity meets each target, using a scale of 0–5, with 5 meeting the target the most.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Rating of Targets (0-5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sense of Connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enjoyment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal Values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching videos on YouTube</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texting friends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleeping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing video games</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using social media (FB, IG, Snapchat etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to music</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going for a walk or run</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing homework</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanging out with friends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking a meal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having dinner with family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing a team sport</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing a personal art project</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing an instrument</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching a movie with friends or family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing a “games night” with friends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discuss the results. What did people notice? Which activities are they doing regularly now? Which activities might be more helpful in enhancing mood?

More interactive option: Identify one of the activities. Ask youth to indicate if the activity meets one or more of the four targets for them. Ask the youth to describe which target(s) and why. Next, the youth will list a new activity that also meets some of the targets for them. Repeat the activity with additional examples. (These can be activities from the list or new examples.)

4 Finding Balance

Work with youth to complete the “Finding Balance in Your Activities — Now” and “Finding Balance in Your Activities — Future” worksheets.

It is important to find balance in the four targets discussed above. Take a look at the “Finding Balance in Your Activities — Now” worksheet (page 38). List activities you are currently doing in the appropriate petal.

Take a look at the “Finding Balance in Your Activities — Future” worksheet (page 39). List at least 10 new activities you think might help improve your mood in the appropriate petal; remember to aim for balance between the four targets. Make sure you list at least two activities in each petal (except “other”). If you are unsure of what activities to include, take a look at the list at the Activities List for Short Term Targets (page 43).

Of the activities you identified as wanting to work on, which would be the easiest to start doing?

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

Which would be a medium level of difficulty to start doing?

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________
Which would be the hardest to start doing?

Once youth have completed the activity, have a discussion to see if they are meeting each of the four targets. For the 10 activities they have selected, encourage them to start changing routines by introducing the easiest new activities into their day.

**Alternative activities:**

• Bring in magazines and art supplies and have youth make a collage and/or drawings of pleasurable activities that they would like to engage in. The idea is that seeing images of the activities increases the chance of youth trying them out.

Or...

• Ask youth to take screenshots on their phone of activities they would like to do or quotes that are meaningful to them. Youth can then create a folder in their camera roll where they can save the photos. Depending what phone they have, they may also be able to create a list of the activities and set up notifications to remind them to do the activities.
Finding Balance in Your Activities — Now

- Sense of Connection
- Success
- Personal Values
- Enjoyment
- Other

Power Up
Behavioural Activation
Power Up
Behavioural Activation

Finding Balance in Your Activities — Future

Sense of Connection

Success

Personal Values

Enjoyment

Other
5 Activity Scheduling

We have spent a lot of time talking about what activities you do and plan to do. Sometimes, if our time is too unstructured, our moods get the best of us and throw us in a different direction. Creating a schedule ahead of time prevents us from slipping into impulses to be inactive or to do the same things over and over that might not be helping to improve our moods.

Schedule your coming week on the next page to help ensure you make time for the activities that will be most valuable to you (refer to the activities on your “Finding Balance in Your Activities — Future” worksheet). Do your best to stick to it. Some of it may already be determined for you (e.g. scheduled classes at school). Pay particular attention to activities that you would like to do and are valuable for you during those times that are not already scheduled — even between classes (like joining a club at lunch).

After the youth have completed their schedule, ask them if they think making a schedule would be helpful to them and/or what might get in the way of sticking to the schedule. What are the pros and cons of doing this schedule?
### Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:00 a.m.</td>
<td>9:00 a.m.</td>
<td>11:00 a.m.</td>
<td>1:00 p.m.</td>
<td>3:00 p.m.</td>
<td>5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>7:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 a.m.</td>
<td>11:00 a.m.</td>
<td>1:00 p.m.</td>
<td>3:00 p.m.</td>
<td>5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>7:00 p.m.</td>
<td>9:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 a.m.</td>
<td>1:00 p.m.</td>
<td>3:00 p.m.</td>
<td>5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>7:00 p.m.</td>
<td>9:00 p.m.</td>
<td>11:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Home Practice

Over the next week, track the activities you do in the calendar you just completed. Also track your emotions and rate the maximum intensity (from 0 to 5) that you may feel for each emotion. Next week we will see if one has an effect on the other.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotion</th>
<th>Intensity of Emotions (0-5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Day 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bored</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxious</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proud</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Write down your personal goal over the next week based on the skills discussed today:


Work with youth to identify a personal goal for themselves over the next week. Remind youth to focus their goal on something they can do within a week and to try and be as specific as possible.

Ask youth to share their personal goal, if they are willing.

Ask if there are any questions about the goal. Ask youth if they anticipate anything that might get in the way of reaching their goal; problem solve around these potential obstacles.

Allow 5–10 minutes for the youth to provide a statement about their experience in session today. E.g., “What did you like/not like?” “What did you notice?” “What was helpful/not helpful?”

An alternative way to end session: Head, Heart, Feet activity

Ask youth to answer one of the following questions:

• What is one thing you’re thinking about after session today? (Head)
• What is one thing you’re feeling after session today? (Heart)
• What is something you are going to now do after session today? (Feet)
Activities list for short-term targets

Check off 10 activities you are most interested in trying.

**Sense of connection**

- Talk about sports, my job or school with a friend.
- Play sports (e.g., basketball, soccer, swimming, bowling).
- Go to a sports event.
- Play a game with someone (e.g., board game, cards, pool).
- Coach someone.
- Go on outings (e.g., to the park, a picnic, a barbecue).
- Go to a fair, the zoo or an amusement park.
- Go camping.
- Attend a concert.
- Go to a party.
- Play party games.
- Go on a date.
- Ask friends to visit you or visit them.
- Introduce people who you think would like each other.
- Meet someone new.
- Have lunch with friends or co-workers.
- Hang out with friends at the park.
- Join a club or participate in a new activity at school.
- Join an advisory or working group at a local organization.
- Join a musical group.
- Participate in a traditional ceremony in your community.
- Act in a school play or with a local group.
- Learn new things from others (e.g. Elders, coaches, teachers).
- Hang out with relatives.
- Volunteer or help with a charity.
- Appreciate good things happening for your family or friends (e.g., make a congratulation card for a friend).
- Have an engaging conversation with people in class or at work.
- Give gifts.
- Help someone when they are in need (e.g., by talking to them or doing something for them).
- Compliment or praise someone.
- Talk on the phone.
- Attend a family reunion or get-together.
- Throw a party or get-together.
- Talk about good memories.
- Do something unexpected to surprise people.
- Go to a barber or hairstylist.
- Write letters, cards or notes.
- Ask for help or advice.
- Smile at people more often.
- Spend time with a romantic partner.
- Get in touch with an old friend.

**Success**

- Rearrange or redecorate your room or living space.
- Read an interesting book or article.
- Go to a lecture or listen to a webinar or talk online.
- Do something nice for a family member.
- Do home repairs.
- Do repairs on a vehicle (e.g., car, bike, motorcycle, tractors).
- Do carpentry.
- Do a puzzle or crossword.
- Write stories, novels, plays or poetry.
- Write a paper, essay or report.
- Work at your job.
- Learn a language.
- Play a musical instrument.
- Solve a personal problem.
- Make food or crafts to sell or give away.
- Do pottery, jewellery making, beading, knitting, sewing or another craft.
- Garden or do landscaping or yard work.
- Plan or organize an event.
- Compete in a sports event.
- Make a speech or do a presentation.
- Eat a balanced diet.
- Get exercise.
- Get a good night’s sleep.
- Learn to do something new.
- Do a favour for someone.
- Read the newspaper.
- Find new music that you enjoy.
- Do housework, laundry or other cleaning.
- Care for houseplants.
- Babysit.
- Do volunteer work or some kind of community service.
- Work hard on assignments for school.
- Learn how to apply make-up.
- Learn how to code computer programs.
- Train a pet.

**Enjoyment**
- Read a novel, a comic, poetry or a magazine.
- Write in a diary or journal.
- Watch television.
- Think about something good for the future.
- Think about people you like.
- Take a bath or shower.
- Brush or wash your hair.
- Sing to yourself.
- Just sit and daydream.
- Listen to the sounds of nature.
- Listen to music.
- Watch the sky, the clouds or a storm.
- Pick wild foods or fruit, or collect rocks or driftwood.
- Wear clothes you feel comfortable and confident in.
- Make a purchase (e.g., a car, bike, phone).
- Look for flowers.
- Smell something nice like a candle or perfume or a flower.
- Say prayers.
- Brush your teeth.
- Go to the library.
- Surf the Internet.
- Play with a pet.

**Multiple targets**
- Be in nature (on a beach, by a stream, on the grass).
- Explore your own city or an unfamiliar one.
- Plan a trip or vacation.
- Buy things for yourself.
- Hang out at the beach.
- Do artwork, such as painting, sculpting, drawing or making a movie.
- Learn how to drive.
- Breathe fresh air.
- Smell a familiar smell.
- Write or listen to music.
- Be with animals.
- Explore something new in your environment.
- Make snacks.
- Dance.
- Put on makeup, fix your hair, etc.
☐ Sit in the sun.
☐ Take photos.
☐ Listen to jokes.
☐ See beautiful scenery.
☐ Prepare and eat a good meal or cook something new.
☐ Go to a community centre or other public space.
☐ Go on a hike.
☐ Visit a museum or exhibit.
☐ Go fishing.
☐ Go to the gym.
☐ Go to a book signing or movie screening.

**Note:** Activities that target personal values will come later.

☐ Watch a movie.
☐ Eat at a restaurant.
☐ Meditate or do yoga.
☐ Do exercise (e.g., swimming, running, biking, skateboarding, rollerblading).
☐ Go shopping.
☐ People watch.
☐ Take a walk.
☐ See a play or musical.
1 Review

*Ask the youth about the home practice.*

How did it go tracking your mood through the week?

If you have not tracked your mood, use the table below to write down your moods (from 0 to 5) for the past four days.
### Emotion Intensity of Emotions (0-5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotion</th>
<th>3 days ago</th>
<th>2 days ago</th>
<th>Yesterday</th>
<th>Today</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bored</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxious</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proud</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How did scheduling your activities go?

Were you able to keep to your schedule? What got in the way or worked well?

If you forgot to complete your schedule or to bring it in, use the following grid to write down activities you did in the past four days:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 days ago</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 days ago</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yesterday</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Today</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:00 a.m.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 a.m.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 a.m.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Did you notice any patterns between your activities and your emotions this past week?

What are the four targets you are aiming for in mood-enhancing activities?
* Have them identify and also describe each in their own words.

• Sense of connection

• Success

• Enjoyment

• Personal values

Aim to do at least one activity that meets each of the targets by the end of each day.

*Ask youth to talk about their personal goal from last week and how it went.*
2 What Gets in the Way?

Ask youth to read the following thoughts about activities and generating alternative thoughts.

Which of the following thoughts about activities can get in the way of doing activities you enjoy? What are some “balanced thoughts” that might be helpful?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Depressive thoughts about activities</th>
<th>Balanced thoughts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Doing activities won’t help my mood.</td>
<td>Sometimes activities will help my mood, and sometimes they won’t.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. People won’t believe I am depressed if I look like I am having fun.</td>
<td>Other people may have their own beliefs about what it looks like to be depressed. I know what I feel inside, regardless of what I look like on the outside; depression can look different for everyone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I don’t deserve to do activities that I enjoy.</td>
<td>Deciding to do enjoyable activities is not about whether or not I deserve to do these activities; it is more about whether or not they will help me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. If I have fun, it will eventually end, and that will lead to more sadness.</td>
<td>Pleasure comes and goes. Sadness also comes and goes. I may as well let myself enjoy fun times when I can.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. If I do things that I enjoy, I will also have to expose myself to stressful events.</td>
<td>If I avoid stress, I also avoid doing things that are enjoyable. I will need to learn how to manage stress to also be able to experience pleasure — and the best way to do that is to get more experience doing activities that may seem stressful at first.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I will be too concerned with thoughts like, “I should be having more fun” or “I could be having more fun.”</td>
<td>There is no standard amount of “fun” to be had — everyone’s experience is different, and there is no pressure to feel a certain way about an activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I won’t have enough energy.</td>
<td>Doing activities often brings more energy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ask which thoughts are prominent for the youth. If there are prominent ones, discuss these in more detail. Ask if there are specific alternative thoughts that might be helpful.

If you get the sense that the youth struggles with the belief, “I don’t have enough energy to do something,” have the youth rate their energy on a scale of 0–10. Then direct them to get up and move around — even go for a walk outside on their own and then come back to the room and rate their energy. Have people comment on what they noticed. Many people will note an increased energy level, which can be helpful in showing how being active can actually increase our energy level. (Knowing this can help to motivate people as well.)

The examples of depressive thoughts on the left side of the chart above can be common, but are unlikely to be helpful. Remember that these depressive thoughts are beliefs and not facts. These beliefs can lead to avoiding activities you enjoy. If you never start an activity, there won’t be a chance to challenge these depressive beliefs, and this can lead to more depression.

Ask the youth if they agree or disagree.
If you have additional depressive beliefs that you experience, try to think about balanced thoughts as well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Depressive thoughts about activities</th>
<th>Balanced thoughts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 Pros and Cons of Changing Routines

Changing up your routine can be difficult. We all fall into habits in how we spend our time. Perhaps shifting our activity is difficult because our current activities do something for us. Fill out the chart below as it relates to you, in the order of the numbers indicated in the boxes.

**Options for this activity are to:**

- Use the table to discuss in a general sense; that is, "continuing my routine in general" relative to "changing my general routine".
- Have individuals do the pros and cons activity below, starting with a specific activity they have targeted (e.g., going to the gym).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continuing my current routine</td>
<td>1. (Do this one first)</td>
<td>3. (Do this one third)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing my activities to better fit the “4 targets”</td>
<td>4. (Do this one last)</td>
<td>2. (Do this one second)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The order of completing the boxes is intentional as it guides youth from their current stance to a different one. Boxes 1 & 2 and 3 & 4 may yield similar responses, but may also elicit new information when the issue is looked at from different angles. Completing all four boxes is important to get a complete picture.

Does this help motivate you to change up your routine?

Collaboratively, therapists and youth may discuss whether there is a way to break away from reinforcers that maintain depressive activities.
Personal Values and Increasing Activities
That are Important to You in the Long Term

So far we have discussed how to engage in mood-enhancing activities in the short term. These strategies are good if you have bumps in low mood from day to day. But if you don’t keep yourself motivated with bigger goals, it can be difficult to keep up a more active lifestyle in the long run. Before starting to set bigger goals, it can be helpful to identify our values.

**What is the difference between a “value” and a “goal”?**

*Present this question to the youth. Discuss how values lead you in a certain direction, while goals show you got there, in a tangible way.*

**What are some core values you would like to live by?**

*Have youth answer this question. If youth are having a difficult time thinking of values they want to live by, they can refer to the list below.*

If you are struggling to come up with some values, consider the list below:

- Having a few close relationships
- Having a lot of friends
- Committing to self-growth
- Being spiritual
- Connecting to culture
- Helping other people
- Helping the environment
- Being true to yourself
- Doing exciting things
- Being knowledgeable
- Doing well at school
- Being honest
- Standing up for human rights and justice
- Being assertive
- Being respectful
- Learning new things
- Having a high-paying job
- Inspiring other people
- Having a sense of humour
- Being productive
- Being organized and on time
- Being independent
- Being physically fit and healthy
- Having a balanced lifestyle
Now choose a value you would like to spend more time focusing on and come up with three activities that would align with this value.

**Value:**

**Activity 1:**

**Activity 2:**

**Activity 3:**

Ask youth to share specific activities they plan to do, along with an aligning value. If they get stuck, work with them to brainstorm activities.

**Which activity will I start with?**

**When?**

**Where?**

**With who?**

Is there anything else that can help me to get started?

---

### 5 Home Practice

In addition to working on increasing activities that align with your values, continue scheduling activities and tracking your mood as you did last week. This past week was only a peek into the relationship between your mood and your actions. Try to increase the activities that you really enjoy and that will likely have the greatest impact on your mood. Add the activities that fit your values to your schedule.

**Write down your personal goal over the next week based on the skills discussed today:**

---

Work with youth to identify a personal goal for themselves over the next week. Remind youth to focus their goal on something they can do within a week and to try and be as specific as possible.
Ask youth to share their personal goal, if they are willing.

Ask if there are any questions about the home practice. Ask youth if they anticipate anything that might get in the way of doing it, and then problem solve around these potential obstacles.

Allow 5-10 minutes to have youth provide a statement about their experience in session today (e.g., “What did you like / not like?”, “What did you notice?”, “What was helpful/not helpful?”).

An alternative way to end session: Head, Heart, Feet activity

Ask youth to answer one of the following questions:

• What is one thing you’re thinking about after session today? (Head)

• What is one thing you’re feeling after session today (Heart)

• What is something you are going to now do after session today? (Feet)
**Mood Tracker**

Over the next week, rate the maximum intensity (from 0 to 5) that you may feel for each emotion, with 5 being the most intense.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotion</th>
<th>Intensity of Emotions (0-5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Day 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
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<td>Bored</td>
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<td>Happy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proud</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
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<td>---------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>9:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Remember to add the activities that fit your values to your schedule.
Review

Review the table on the next page with the youth. As a bonus, ask youth if they can remember an additional depressive thought and alternative thought that came up in the last session. Match the depressive thought pattern to an alternate thought about activities.
Match the depressive thought with the letter corresponding to the appropriate balanced thought:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Depressive thoughts about activities</th>
<th>Balanced thoughts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Doing activities won’t help my mood.</td>
<td>a. If I avoid stress, I also avoid doing things that are enjoyable. I will need to learn how to manage stress to also be able to experience pleasure — and the best way to do that is to get more experience doing activities that may seem stressful at first.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. People won’t believe I am depressed if I look like I am having fun.</td>
<td>b. Doing activities often brings more energy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I don’t deserve to do activities that I enjoy.</td>
<td>c. Deciding to do enjoyable activities is not about whether or not I deserve to do these activities; it is more about whether or not they will help me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. If I have fun, it will eventually end, and that will lead to more sadness.</td>
<td>d. There is no standard amount of “fun” to be had — everyone’s experience is different, and there is no pressure to feel a certain way about an activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. If I do things that I enjoy, I will also have to expose myself to stressful events.</td>
<td>e. Other people may have their own beliefs about what it looks like to be depressed. I know what I feel inside, regardless of what I look like on the outside; depression can look different for everyone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I will be too concerned with thoughts like “I should be having more fun” or “I could be having more fun.”</td>
<td>f. Sometimes activities will help my mood, and sometimes they won’t.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I won’t have enough energy.</td>
<td>g. Pleasure comes and goes. Sadness also comes and goes. I may as well let myself enjoy fun times when I can.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How did it go with tracking your mood throughout the week?

If you have not tracked your mood, use the table below to write down the intensity of your emotions (from 0 to 5) for the past 4 days, with 5 being the most intense.
How did scheduling your activities go?

Were you able to keep to your schedule? Were you able to incorporate any new values-based activities? What got in the way or worked well?

If you forgot your schedule, use the following grid to write down activities you did in the past four days:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activities 3 days ago</th>
<th>2 days ago</th>
<th>Yesterday</th>
<th>Today</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:00 a.m.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 a.m.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:00 p.m.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotion</th>
<th>Intensity of Emotions (0-5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 days ago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bored</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxious</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proud</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Emotion Intensity of Emotions (0-5)

3 days ago 2 days ago Yesterday Today

Sad
Bored
Angry
Anxious
Happy
Proud
Other

How did scheduling your activities go?

were you able to keep to your schedule? Were you able to incorporate any new values-based activities? What got in the way or worked well?

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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bored</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Angry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxious</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Happy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proud</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Emotion Intensity of Emotions (0-5)

3 days ago 2 days ago Yesterday Today

Sad
Bored
Angry
Anxious
Happy
Proud
Other

How did scheduling your activities go?

were you able to keep to your schedule? Were you able to incorporate any new values-based activities? What got in the way or worked well?

If you forgot your schedule, use the following grid to write down activities you did in the past four days:
Are there any further patterns coming out of tracking your mood? What did you notice?

Summarize and point out patterns with the youth if they can be identified. If there is the same mood pattern every day, ask if there are times in the day that are worse. Ask “What do you think is leading to this pattern?”

Are you starting to shift what you have been doing with your activities? Has it affected your mood? **If so, what do you think is causing this change in your mood?**

If the participant said no to the first two questions, explore what might be preventing them from being able to shift their mood or what may make it easier for them to make this shift. Going back to the “depressive” and “balanced thoughts” may be relevant here.

Have youth also discuss their personal goal from last week and how it went.

**Do you remember which value you chose to work on this past week? Write it here:**

If you don’t remember, choose one from the list below as you will need it for today’s activity.

Work with youth to make sure they have a value to work with. This will come up in activities later on.

- Having a few close relationships
- Having a lot of friends
- Committing to self-growth
- Being spiritual
- Connecting to culture
- Helping other people
- Helping the environment
- Being true to yourself
- Doing exciting things
- Being knowledgeable
- Doing well at school
- Being honest
- Standing up for human rights and justice
- Being assertive
- Being respectful
- Learning new things
- Having a high-paying job
- Inspiring other people
- Having a sense of humour
- Being productive
- Being organized and on time
- Being independent
- Being physically fit and healthy
- Having a balanced lifestyle
2 Long-Term Goals and “Breaking it Down”

Having longer-term goals can help put your values into action.

What sorts of things get in the way of setting longer-term goals?

Discuss with the youth. Youth often say that setting longer-term goals is too overwhelming, and they are anxious about failing. Some will express a lack of direction or hopelessness. Validate their experience and encourage behavioural experiments to overcome the anxiety or sense of hopelessness. This may include breaking up the goal into smaller goals and starting off with a smaller first step.

Once youth have finished answering one question, review the next question.

Now think of a longer-term goal that fits the value you selected above. (Remember that a goal should be something you can measure so that when you accomplish it, you will know.)

Review the activity above with the youth and then ask them to think about a longer-term goal. Remind the youth to keep goals concrete and specific so they will know they have accomplished them. If the youth has difficulty identifying a goal that aligns with their value, guide them through a brainstorming process.

This goal may seem too big. It is important to break it down into smaller goals.

What steps do you need to do to achieve the longer-term goal?

Review with youth to help make sure the smaller goals are manageable and will help youth achieve the longer-term goal.

1: ____________________________

2: ____________________________

3: ____________________________

4: ____________________________

5: ____________________________

6: ____________________________
Now take step number 1, and break it down further.

**What is the first thing you need to do to complete step number 1?**

Note that the idea is to see that youth can start on this process today.

**When and where will you do it?**

**Will you need to ask anything from anyone else to do it?**

**Is this doable? Will anything get in the way? How will you tackle any barriers to this smaller step?**

**What would be the next thing you need to do to complete step 1?**

Discuss how using imagery, writing goals down or telling other people about goals will help in increasing the chances of following through. Ask a youth to read the text below:

A big long-term goal can seem overwhelming and unachievable. Breaking it down into smaller steps makes it seem much more manageable.

If you find yourself discouraged or unable to meet the goal, try to break it down further into even smaller steps.

Keep moving through the steps until you get there. Track your progress by checking off when you have completed the steps along the way. Celebrate smaller achievements.
3 Wrapping Up

Review the activity below with youth, and ask them to fill out the table.

Look at the list of skills we have discussed in this module. Put a ‘✓’ in each column to rate the extent to which you have used the skills in your life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Skill Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Haven’t thought about using it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labeling events, emotions, thoughts and actions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noticing downward spirals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving towards an upward spiral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naming and rating the intensity of moods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targeting closeness, accomplishment, pleasure and importance in activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using &quot;balanced thoughts&quot; about activities to get around depressive thoughts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing activities that fit values</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working towards long-term goals and &quot;breaking it down&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discuss the results, including any barriers to using the skills or what made certain skills easier to master accomplish than others.
1 Thoughts and emotions

We have control over what thoughts we have. The thoughts we control can change the emotions we experience.

*For example, ask the youth to think of as many worries as they can for the next 30 seconds; then, for the next 30 seconds, try and recall as many positive memories as they can. What did they notice?*

You will always have thoughts from time to time that can lead to negative emotions. The skills learned here can be used to manage these thoughts, to increase the control you have over your emotions.

2 Facts versus beliefs

*This section partially reviews Session 3 in Module 3: Communication and Relationships. Go into as much or as little detail as you see fit, and then move on to the next section, “Thought traps.”*

First, it is important to know the difference between a fact and a belief.

*Explain that facts are things that are most likely to be true. They are qualities of a person, place or thing that are observed through your five senses (sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell). If most people looked at the same person, place or thing, they would likely agree that the quality you observed is true.*

*Some youth might argue against this if they get academic about it. If this happens, you can acknowledge that if you get down to molecular physics, you might have good reason to disagree with these statements; however, for everyday life, we take these as facts.*

Facts are what we can observe through our five senses: “I see...”, “I hear...”, “I feel...”, “I smell...”, “I taste...”. Facts can also be what you think or feel internally — provided you start by saying, “I think...” or “I feel...”

The content of what you think or feel isn’t a fact — it is just a thought or a feeling. But it is a fact that you think or feel it. According to this definition, which of the following can be facts and which are beliefs?
Discuss the subtleties of some of these responses. For example, examine why “French fries taste good” is a belief — because not everyone would agree — but “These French fries taste salty” could be a fact.

**Beliefs involve some personal interpretation of the facts.**

Ask the youth why this is important: People, in general, tend to take beliefs and treat them as facts. When people do this, it can have a strong impact on their emotions. In turn, beliefs can be very much influenced by our mood.

**Our mood can affect our beliefs and our beliefs can affect our mood.**

Ask the youth for examples of times when their mood led to their thoughts changing in a positive or negative way.

For example, Clara was on Instagram and noticed a bunch of pictures of her friends smiling and eating at a restaurant. If Clara is happy when she sees the pictures, she might think “I am glad my friends are having a good time!” or “My friends seem happy in this picture” — and remain happy. Whereas, if Clara were sad she might think, “how come they didn’t invite me? I guess they don’t want me around” and become more sad.

### 3 Thought traps

Read or have the youth read each thought trap. If they have examples of when this has happened in their own life, invite that discussion. If not, move to the examples in Section 4 to have them identify thought traps.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Fact</th>
<th>Belief</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I can hear my dog barking”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“My dog is anxious”</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I feel angry”</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“You are angry”</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I am a safe driver”</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I passed my driver’s test and don’t have any traffic tickets”</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“These French fries taste salty”</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“French fries taste good”</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Joey doesn’t like me”</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Joey spoke to me loudly”</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I feel lonely”</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Nobody cares about me”</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Therapy is fun”</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I like coming to therapy”</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are common patterns in how depression can trap our thinking, making it more likely that depression will stick around or get worse. Understanding these traps can remove power from the beliefs that aren't helpful for you.

Here are common ways depression can trap someone's thinking:

- **The negative filter**: In this trap, someone may only pay attention to facts that support their negative beliefs and ignore facts that go against their beliefs. When people struggle with depression, they tend only to pay attention to negative things that happen.

- **Polarized thinking**: Someone may only see things as “all good” or “all bad” — there is no room in between.

- **Overgeneralization**: Someone takes a small piece of information and assumes that it represents all other similar situations. One negative event means that the same outcome will keep happening over and over. Look for words like “always” and “never” — these usually mean that overgeneralization is happening.

- **Jumping to conclusions**: Someone may interpret a situation based on little information.

- **Catastrophizing**: Focusing on the “what ifs?”. This is the tendency to predict that the worst possible event will happen in the future.

- **Personalization**: “It's all because of me.” Events that happen (whether positive or negative) often have many different causes. People with depression tend to think that they have a bigger role in negative events than they actually do.

- **Emotional reasoning**: Feelings = truth. This is where we mistake our emotion-driven belief for a fact. For example, feeling guilty about your role in an event does not directly mean you have done something wrong.

Ask the youth which thought traps they notice in themselves.

## Balanced thoughts

**It is really important to be able to create balanced thoughts in order to counteract these thought traps.**

See the “Balancing Your Thoughts” worksheet (pg. 68). These are steps that you can use:

**Step 1:** Identify the situation. Be specific: Where were you? What time was it? Who was there? What was said?

**Step 2:** Name the emotion (e.g., sad, anxious, angry) and rate its intensity from 0 to 5.

**Step 3:** Identify your “train of thought.” We typically have several thoughts (or beliefs) that pop up with any situation. List your thoughts that seem to come automatically.

*Discuss this example with the youth: “If I say the word “homework,” what words come to mind for you?” This is their train of thought.*

**Step 4a:** Identify your “reflex thought.” This is the thought that leads to your strong emotion.

*Using the “homework” example, ask, “Did any of these thoughts lead to an emotion? Which brings up the strongest emotion? This is the thought you want to work with.”*
Note: Traditional CBT uses the term “hot thought”; however, we have found that youth have distracting associations with this term, so we use “reflex thought” instead.

**Step 4b (optional):** Identify the need (e.g., physiological need, security, relationships, self-esteem, sense of identity, sense of control that is being threatened by this thought. This can help make sense of your emotion.

**Step 5:** List evidence for and evidence against this reflex thought. Go back to facts for this part.

**Step 6:** Take one fact from the “evidence for” column and one fact from the “evidence against” column, and connect the two with the word “AND.”

**Step 7:** Rate the intensity of your emotion again — did it decrease?

**Try these steps with the following examples:**

_Use the worksheet, guide the youth through one of the examples provided below, if their feedback suggests this would be helpful. Also use the examples to identify “thought traps.”_

- Sam was working at the clothing store as a cashier. There was a long line-up. The next customer in line came up and said “You know, you really need to be more efficient. I’m not coming back here again — you’ve wasted my time.” Sam noticed a train of thought including “I am bad at this job,” “This woman is annoying,” “I don’t like this job,” “I am too slow,” “I can’t do anything right.” They noticed feeling anxious, angry and sad.

- Taylor was at the gym using a weightlifting machine. A staff member approached them with a stern look on his face, leaning forward and telling Taylor loudly that they needed to get off the machine because “You’re doing it wrong and it’s not safe.” Taylor had lots of thoughts, including “I made him angry,” “I messed up again,” “Other people at the gym are judging me,” “I shouldn’t be here,” “I should just go home,” “I can’t do anything right.” Taylor felt embarrassed and sad.
Balancing Your Thoughts

Situation:

Emotion:

Train of Thoughts

Reflex Thought:

Need:

Reflex Thought

Evidence For

Evidence Against

Create a balanced thought. Write down one fact that supports your reflex thought and one fact that contradicts it; then put the word "AND" in between these two facts.
Home practice

Direct the youth to use “Balancing Your Thoughts” worksheet on the next page for members to do this at home. Ask if there are any questions about the home practice. Ask if they anticipate anything that might get in the way of doing it. If so, problem-solve around these potential concerns.

Try creating balanced thoughts with a situation you might have run into recently — or try it out this week if you run into a strong emotion driven by a “reflex thought.”

**Write down your personal goal over the next week, based on the skills discussed today:**

Work with the youth to help them identify a personal goal for the next week. Remind them to focus their goal on something they can do within a week, and to try to be as specific as possible.

Ask youth to share their personal goal, if they are willing.

Allow five to 10 minutes for the youth to provide a statement about their experience in session today (e.g., “What did you like/not like?”, “What did you notice?”, “What was helpful/not helpful?”)

An alternative way to end session is the head, heart and feet activity:

Ask youth to answer one of the following questions:

- **What is one thing you’re thinking about after session today? (Head)**
- **What is one thing that you’re feeling after session today? (Heart)**
- **What is something that you are going to do now do after session today? (Feet)**
BALANCING YOUR THOUGHTS

SITUATION:

EMOTION:

TRAIN OF THOUGHTS

REFLEX THOUGHT:

NEED:

Reflex Thought

Create a balanced thought. Write down one fact that supports your reflex thought and one fact that contradicts it; then put the word "AND" in between these two facts.

EVIDENCE FOR

EVIDENCE AGAINST
1. **Review**

*Work through each review question with the youth.*

Which of the following statements could be a fact and which would be a belief?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Fact</th>
<th>Belief</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most sparrows can fly</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher is angry today</td>
<td></td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like ice cream</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That person always lies</td>
<td></td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think Instagram is really cool.</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are more than four people in the room.</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is after 3:00 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Remember that statements that start with “I think,” “I feel” or “I like” could be considered facts, because they are the person’s own experience.*

Which thought trap goes with which scenario?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thought traps</th>
<th>Scenarios</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Negative filter</td>
<td>a. “Tom and Dina were walking down the hall together — they must be dating.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Polarized thinking</td>
<td>b. “My teacher was acting differently today — I think it was because of the question I asked earlier.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Overgeneralization</td>
<td>c. “I am angry with my dad — it means that he did something to intentionally hurt me.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Jumping to conclusions</td>
<td>d. “The forecast calls for scattered showers with breaks of sun — the whole day is ruined.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Catastrophizing</td>
<td>e. “Jenna is horrible — she gave me the worst look today.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Personalization</td>
<td>f. “I was late for class today — my teacher will surely call my parents to have me grounded.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Emotional reasoning</td>
<td>g. “Charlie said she didn’t like my shoes — it must mean she doesn’t like me.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What types of thought traps did you notice this past week?

Consider the following example:

Rebecca was bored on a Sunday afternoon. She tried texting three of her classmates, but after a few hours no one had answered. She thought, “I don’t have any friends.”

She noticed this was a “reflex thought” and decided to list “evidence for” and “evidence against” this thought.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence for</th>
<th>Evidence against</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• I have been texting my classmates this afternoon and no one is answering.</td>
<td>• Evan and I were joking together on Friday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I am often bored on Sunday afternoons.</td>
<td>• Last Saturday, I went to the mall with Keira.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hannah didn't say hi to me in class on Friday.</td>
<td>• Erin was texting me yesterday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• On Sundays, people are often busy with different activities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is a balanced thought that Rebecca can make from this?

Sample answer: No one is answering my texts AND people are often busy on Sundays with different activities.

Take some time to go through last week's home practice. If the youth didn't do it, provide another “Balancing Your Thoughts” worksheet and see if they can use a situation they encountered over the past week to complete it. Alternatively, discuss barriers to doing the home practice (gently and collaboratively).

Review youth’s personal goals from the previous week. Identify successes and challenges in achieving their goals. Discuss ways to problem-solve their challenges.

More strategies to change your thinking

After identifying the situation, “reflex thought” and emotion, here are some other options for how to change your thinking. These are alternative options to “Creating a Balanced Thought” discussed last session. First look through the examples below for each option and then you have an opportunity try them out in your real-life situations.
As you review the material below, ask the youth to follow along using the “Changing Your Thoughts” worksheet. First, you will go through an example. Once you have reviewed all of the steps using the example, then the youth will have time to complete the worksheet on an personalized situation.

**Option 1. Brainstorm and assess**

List other ways of interpreting the situation. “What else could be going on?” Try to keep an open mind.

After brainstorming, list evidence for and against for your reflex thought, and also for three of the other beliefs that you want to explore.

Consider the following example:

*Ask a member to read:*

Other than her reflex thought, what else could be going on? Choose up to three other interpretations to assess the evidence for and evidence against each possibility.

Guide youth through the brainstorming process, choosing four beliefs (including the reflex thought) and assessing evidence for and against each.

1. 

2. 

3. 

**Option 2. “Act-as-if”**

An “act-as-if” belief is what you will assume to be true, at least temporarily, so that you can carry on until you know more facts. Using the evidence and your own judgment, choose an explanation that would be the most helpful as an “act-as-if” belief.

*Ask the youth to read:*

If Clara behaves as though all her friends don’t want to hang out with her, she may call them to accuse them and push them away. Or she may avoid them, leading to feelings of isolation. If she acts as though they didn’t invite her because it was a last-minute arrangement (rather than because “they don’t like me”), then she would be more likely act friendly with them. When she hung out with them again, she might notice they still smiled and laughed with her — providing more evidence against the reflex thought.
Ask if the youth understands what an “act-as-if” thought is, and whether they think it would be a useful strategy. See if they can come up with other examples of how to use act-as-if thoughts.

### Option 3. Play detective

Get more facts. Try to be open and curious — not suspicious or accusatory. Seek out ways to get facts that will help you know what’s going on. Try out “experiments” to test out your beliefs.

As Clara looks through the pictures more thoroughly, she notices that her ex-boyfriend is at the dinner; and she looks through her calendar and notices that it is his birthday today. In talking to one of her closer friends, Clara finds out that her ex-boyfriend has said that he is still finding the break-up difficult. Later that evening, Clara texts one of her friends to invite her hang out the following weekend. She does this to test her reflex thought. Her friend texts back “for sure!” Clara realizes that this response does not fit her belief that her friends don’t like her

Use the “Changing Your Thoughts” worksheet on page 78 to guide you through these steps for your own real-life examples. You can use the worksheet in session, try it for home practice or both.

*If there is time, discuss this process and whether or not the youth would find it helpful. Can they see themselves doing it? What might get in the way? This will also be discussed in more detail in the next session.*

Remind the youth that some of these steps might be useful even if done on their own — for example, just brainstorming alternative explanations may have enough of an effect on a person’s mood to shift things for the better.

### 3 Self-validation

Validation means communicating to someone that some part of their experience makes sense to you.

For those who have done the “problem solving” skill set, you may remember that emotions are there to meet our needs (physiological, security, relationships, self-esteem, sense of control and sense of identity).

*If you like, you can draw out the “Hierarchy of Needs” from the problem solving module.*

In our culture, we are often told that emotions don’t make sense, which can be invalidating.

For example, if you are sad about not being able to hang out with your friend on the weekend (primary emotion of sadness because your “relationships” are threatened, someone might say “don’t be so sad — there will be other weekends, so stop sulking.”

*Draw each step below on the board.*
The indirect message might be “Your sadness doesn’t make sense.” You might then feel even more sad because your sadness doesn’t make sense to you or to others. You end up feeling sad about feeling sad (secondary emotion). Meanwhile, your need for connecting with people and your sense of control are on the line.

In this situation your needs are threatened — and so sadness does make sense.

**Self-validation is a tool that you can use to help make sense of these experiences. Self-validation can simply be thinking to yourself, “My emotion makes sense.” This takes away the secondary emotion and so can decrease the intensity of the sadness.**

### 4 Practicing changing your thoughts

Choose some of the common situations below and use the “Changing Your Thoughts” worksheet to work through the different strategies that have been discussed.

*Go through one example. Then ask the youth to choose a different example to work through on their own (they can also use their own examples). Feel free to choose whichever “process” you think would be most helpful for the youth from the “Changing Your Thoughts” worksheet (i.e. brainstorming, self-validation, creating a balanced thought, identifying thought traps). Spend time reviewing the process.*

- Phil was texting a guy he recently met at school with whom he is hoping to hang out with more. He sent two messages in the morning saying “Hey” and “We should hang out this weekend.” It is three hours later and he hasn’t heard back. He notices a train of thought: “He doesn’t want to hang out with me,” “No one wants to hang out with me,” “I don’t have any friends,” “I will always be alone.” He notices feeling sad and then thinks “I’m so sensitive — I shouldn’t feel this way.”

- Renita has missed some school due to being depressed. One afternoon, her mother says to her, “I’m really worried that you’re not getting to school — I just don’t want you to get behind.” Renita notices a train of thought: “My mom is always on my back,” “I am stupid — I’ll never get these credits,” “I am a disappointment,” “I am failing at life,” “Oh no, I’m getting angry again.”. Then she notices a feeling of numbness and emptiness.

- Ravi was hanging out at home after school. His father came in the front door, slurring his words and stumbling around the room. His father yelled at him for not doing his chores and told him to go to his room. Ravi was startled and went to his room — and noticed this train of thought: “My dad is drunk...”
again — this is hopeless,” “I am a bad son,” “This will never end,” “I can’t seem to get it right.” He noticed feeling angry and sad.

• Sam was in class when they needed to go to the bathroom. They raised their hand and asked the teacher to go. The teacher said “Not now, Sam.” Sam noticed this train of thought: “The teacher doesn’t trust me,” “He’s transphobic,” “I never get a break,” “I must have done something wrong,” “Why me?”, “Why do I get so riled up?” They notice feeling shame and anger.

### 5 Home practice this week

Over the next week, try each of the following:

- Brainstorming
- “Act-as-if” thoughts
- Playing detective
- Self-validation.

Notice if your mood improves with these strategies.

*Direct the youth to use the “Changing Your Thoughts” worksheet on the next page for youth to do this home practice.*

**Write down your personal goal for the next week, based on the skills discussed today.**

*Work with the youth to help them identify a personal goal for the next week. Remind them to focus their goal on something they can do within a week, and to try to be as specific as possible.*

Ask youth to share their personal goal if they are willing.

*Allow five to 10 minutes for the youth to provide a statement about their experience in session today (e.g., “What did you like/not like?”, “What did you notice?”, “What was helpful/not helpful?”

An alternative way to end session is the head, heart and feet activity:

Ask youth to answer one of the following questions:

- What is one thing you’re thinking about after session today? (Head)
- What is one thing that you’re feeling after session today (Heart)
- What is something that you are going to do now do after session today? (Feet)
Changing Your Thoughts

INSTRUCTIONS

1 Describe
   a) The situation—use only facts and be specific: where? when? who was there? what was said? what happened?
   b) Your emotion—if there were many emotions, list the most prominent one; how intense was it on a scale of 0 to 5?
   c) Your need—which need was threatened? food/water? sense of safety? relationships? self-esteem? sense of control? sense of identity?

2 Explore your options
   a) Identify your reflex thought—this is the thought that automatically comes to mind, provoking the strong emotion you listed in section (1).
   b) Brainstorm other possible ways to interpret the situation; be open to many possibilities.

3 Assess
   a) The reflex thought—what is the evidence for the reflex thought? What is evidence against? Use only facts.
   b) Choose another three possible interpretations you brainstormed in section (2) and list evidence for and against these.

4 Take action
   Choose any of these:
   a) Choose an “as-if” belief that would be most helpful to take on.
   b) Play detective—get more information.
   c) Create a balanced thought—state one piece of evidence for your reflex thought, then state one piece of evidence against it; put the word “AND” in between them.
   d) Reflect—did your emotion change after any of these steps? If not, try a different strategy.
Changing Your Thoughts
OPTIONS FOR WHAT TO DO NEXT

1. **Choose an “act-as-if” thought.** Which belief would be the most helpful to try on “as if it were true” until you have more information? How would your actions change if you take on this “act-as-if” thought?

2. **Play detective.** Do you need to get more information? How will you go about getting it?

3. **Create a balanced thought.** Write down one fact that supports your reflex thought and one fact that contradicts it; then put the word “AND” in between these two facts.

4. **Reflect.** Has changing your thinking helped your mood? Are your needs met? If not, try a different thought or a different skill to change your mood.
1 Review

If the youth completed the “Changing Your Thoughts” worksheet as part of their home practice, offer the opportunity to review it.

Review the following questions for discussion:

• How did it go?

• Did anyone use any of these strategies in the past week?

• Did it work?
If they did not complete it, provide the worksheets for youth to use. If they don’t come up with their own example, use an example from Session 2 that you didn’t previously use.

(A previous example was: Ravi was hanging out at home after school. His father came in the front door, slurring his words and stumbling around the room. His father yelled at him for not doing his chores and told him to go to his room. Ravi was startled and went to his room — and noticed the train of thought: “My dad is drunk again — this is hopeless”, “I am a bad son”, “This will never end”, “I can’t seem to get it right”. He noticed feeling angry and sad.)

Using the worksheet, youth will have now worked through the following questions.

Choose a time this past week that you had a strong emotion.

Work through the situation starting with:

- identifying the situation, emotion and train of thoughts
- identifying the reflex thought leading to the strong emotion, and identifying the need being threatened by this reflex thought.

Now choose any one or more of the following strategies to see if it would help reduce the intensity of the emotion:

- Create a balanced thought (using evidence for and against the reflex thought).
- Brainstorm other ways the situation could be interpreted (also listing evidence for and against alternative beliefs)
- Use an “act-as-if” thought that might be more helpful to work from.
- Play detective: get more information, run an “experiment.”
- Self-validation ("my emotion makes sense").

2 Core beliefs

Alternate reading the following paragraphs with the youth.
There are common core beliefs in depression that can make life hard. Core beliefs are strong — they often have been there for a while and may be based on messages you received when you were younger or may be due to messages the depression has been giving you for some time, over and over again.

They are still beliefs — and not facts. This is important to note, as it removes some of their power.

Often, “reflex thoughts” are very much related to the themes of core beliefs. Repeated use of the strategies we have already talked about can chip away at these core beliefs.

*Let the youth know that it might be hard to accept the alternative beliefs at first — it needs time and repeated experience to shift perspective.*

Consider the following common core beliefs and then come up with more balanced thoughts. Try to stick to facts (no interpretations, judgments, or predictions. See if using the balanced thoughts as “act-as-if” beliefs helps chip away at the core beliefs.

*Ask the youth to take turns with you reading the following core beliefs and come up with more balanced thoughts. If they struggle, some suggestions are included.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Depressive core beliefs</th>
<th>Alternative balanced thoughts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am unlikeable</td>
<td>Some people will like me, and some people won’t. No one is hated by everyone. No one is loved by everyone. I can also learn how to act in a way so that I am true to myself, and people will still want to be around me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not good at anything</td>
<td>I am skilled at some things and not skilled at others. I can also learn and practice new things so that I can become more skilled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t measure up.</td>
<td>For whatever reason, other people may have standards that I don’t meet; however, these are unrealistic for me now. I can set my own standard for what is meaningful in my life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The future is hopeless.</td>
<td>The future is uncertain. Things change all the time. One small change in my life can lead to bigger changes. One small change that is positive could lead to bigger changes that are positive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People can’t be trusted.</td>
<td>Some people can be trusted — depending on the person and what I am trusting them with. I will need to trust some people sometimes to get by; I will also need to be careful who I trust and when I trust them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People will leave me.</td>
<td>Relationships come and go with everyone. I will need to enjoy them while they are here and cope with it if they end. If people leave, it does not reflect on my self-worth. With each interaction, I can learn something about how to improve relationships moving forward. Relationships that end can also make room for new ones to come.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a bad person.</td>
<td>I have done things I regret. I have done the best I could with what I had. I am taking the time to learn how to do better. Sometimes, I do things that I am proud of.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ask youth which depressive beliefs they can relate to. Are these thoughts helpful?

Do they agree with the alternative thoughts? Would they be more helpful? Would they change the wording of any of the alternative thoughts — even slightly — to make it more helpful for them? Normalize that shifting from depressive beliefs to balanced thoughts takes time and practice.

If you have any core depressive beliefs that you experience, try to think about balanced thoughts as well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Depressive core beliefs</th>
<th>Alternative balanced thoughts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>

3 Hearing and “taking in” positive thoughts

We often aren’t used to hearing and “taking in” positive feedback; sometimes we may not be used to giving it, either. Many people are quick to point out flaws in others, with the intention of making their lives better; however, this focus on negatives can instead be discouraging.

As a therapist, explain that you will be saying some positive things about the youth (e.g. that you like something they said, or a way that they think, or a way that they interact with people, or a value that they have). Also ask them to recall other positive things people have said about them.

Write down the positive comments people in your life have said about you (e.g. your therapist):

• What is it like to hear these positive comments?

• What do you notice about your emotions when you hear them?

• What do you notice about your thoughts when you hear them?

• Did any “thought traps” come up? If you notice negative thoughts counteracting the positive comments, try and let them go — even if only temporarily.
4 Home practice this week

Over the next week, try to notice your strong emotions, and then choose one of the following strategies:

- Identify the core belief that the feeling is coming from, and use the balanced thought list to counteract it.
- Practice “taking in” positive thoughts about yourself — and watch out for “thought traps” taking over.

Ask if there are any questions about the home practice. Ask if youth anticipate anything that might get in the way of doing it, and problem-solve as needed.

Write down your personal goal over the next week based on the skills discussed today:

Work with the youth to help them identify a personal goal for the next week. Remind them to focus their goal on something they can do within a week, and to try to be as specific as possible.

Ask youth to share their personal goal, if they are willing.

Allow five to 10 minutes for the youth to provide a statement about their experience in session today (e.g., “What did you like/not like?”; “What did you notice?”; “What was helpful/not helpful?”)

An alternative way to end session is the head, heart and feet activity:

Ask youth to answer one of the following questions:

- What is one thing you’re thinking about after session today? (Head)
- What is one thing that you’re feeling after session today (Heart)
- What is something that you are going to do now do after session today? (Feet)
Ask the youth if they tried out the home practice from the previous session:

• Identify the core belief that a strong emotion is coming from, and use the balanced thought list to counteract it.

• Practice “taking in” positive thoughts about yourself — and watch out for “thought traps” taking over.

Ask if youth worked on their personal goals from last week related to the material. Discuss successes and challenges. Problem-solve some of the challenges.
## 1 Review

Match the depressive core belief to the more balanced, balanced thought:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Depressive core beliefs</th>
<th>Alternative balanced thought</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I am dislikeable</td>
<td>a. The future is uncertain. Things change all the time. One small change in my life can lead to bigger changes. One small change that is positive could lead to bigger changes that are positive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I am not good at anything</td>
<td>b. Relationships come and go with everyone. I will need to enjoy them while they are here and cope with it if they end. If people leave, it does not reflect on my self-worth; the circumstances didn't allow for it this time. With each relationship that happens, I learn something new. Relationships that end make room for new ones to come.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I don’t measure up</td>
<td>c. I am skilled at some things and not skilled at others. I can also learn and practice new things so that I become more skilled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The future is hopeless</td>
<td>d. I have done things I regret. I have done the best I could with what I had. I do the best I can with what I have. I am taking the time to learn how to do better. Sometimes, I do things that I am proud of.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. People can’t be trusted</td>
<td>e. I can set my own standard for what is meaningful in my life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. People will leave me</td>
<td>f. Some people will like me and some people won’t. No one is hated by everyone. No one is loved by everyone. I can also learn how to act in a way so that I am true to myself and people will still want to be around me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I am a bad person</td>
<td>g. Some people can be trusted — depending on the person and what I am trusting them with. I will need to trust some people sometimes to get by; I will also need to be careful who I trust and when I trust them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2 Letting go of judging thoughts

Review the material below and stop to discuss when you see fit. This material was also covered in the “Communication and Relationships” Module — the key difference here is the emphasis on applying a non-judging stance to oneself, rather than applying it to others.

In the first session of this skill set, we discussed how facts and beliefs are different.

All judgments are a type of belief or interpretation — they are never facts.

For this concept, it is helpful to think of judgments as including any of the following phrases:

- something is “good” or “bad”
- something “should” or “shouldn’t” be
- something is “right” or “wrong”

Judgments tend to intensify emotions. Reframing the judgement as situational facts and your own experience can help regulate your emotions.

Try this: For each of these situations, which thought would lead to more anger? Circle whether each thought is describing a fact or belief.

1. Jordan is angry with Meshal after Meshal refused to help him with his homework. Jordan might have one of two types of thoughts:
   
   a. “Meshal is such a jerk!”
      
      Fact or Belief

   b. “I am angry with Meshal.”
      
      Fact or Belief

2. Maria got 50% on a test — she was hoping for 70%. Which thought will lead to less intense emotion?
a. “I didn’t do as well as I had hoped.”
   **Fact or Belief**

b. “I am so stupid — I can’t seem to get it right.”
   **Fact or Belief**

*Explain that judgments tend to be sweeping statements. People use them because they get attention from other people and communicate in a quick way — but there is a cost.*

The judgments that we make treat our beliefs as though they are facts. Judgments can make the situation we are going through seem to have more impact than it actually does. This can also lead to stronger emotions.

Instead of using judgements, the following phrases can help us to think differently about the situation so the emotions do not become so intense:

- I “like” or “don’t like” something.
- I *think* something is “helpful” or “harmful.”
- I *think* something is “dangerous” or “safe.”
- I *feel* anxious when my teacher calls on me in class.

When you use the phrases above, this can change something from being a judgment to being a fact. You are stating your experience about a situation. “Helpful”/“harmful” and “dangerous”/“safe” tend to be words that don’t intensify emotions as much — and still help you move forward.

Remember that the judgments you make about others and the judgments you make about yourself come from your unique perspective and the personal set of standards you have developed in your mind. You may find that letting go of judgments about others helps your own self-esteem.

*Have the youth classify each of the following statements.*

**Try this:** Circle which of the following are judgments and which are facts? If it is a judgment, how could you say the same thing without judgment?

*My sister is so annoying.*
   **Judgment or Fact**

*I get irritated by some of things my sister does.*

*I am bored in CBT.*
   **Judgment or Fact**

*I don’t think it is safe to meet people on the internet.*
   **Judgment or Fact**
You shouldn’t judge.
Judgment or Fact
I don’t think judgments are helpful.

I should be happier than I am.
Judgment or Fact
I’m not as happy as I would like to be.

I don’t like the way my teacher talks to me.
Judgment or Fact

It’s not right that I have another assignment to do this week.
Judgment or Fact
I don’t like that I have another assignment to do this week.

Those shoes are awesome.
Judgment or Fact
I like those shoes. (Point out here that judgments can also be positive — which is okay sometimes, but can set you up to make negative judgments later).

I find that some CBT skills are helpful for me, while others are not.
Judgment or Fact

3 Targeting anxious thoughts

Some people find these strategies helpful when their mind is racing or “stuck in a loop”:  

• Thought stopping: When you have a negative thought, imagine yelling “STOP!” Then tell yourself, “I’m not going to think about this any more; it’s not helping me.” Some people like to imagine a STOP sign as they do this.  

• Set aside “worry” time: Set a specific time to allow yourself to have all the negative thoughts your brain will have. During that time, don’t do any other activities, like eating or watching TV. If you catch yourself having negative thoughts outside that specific time, say to yourself “I’ll save that to think about later.”

• Change the movie in your mind: If you get the “what ifs?” and start to worry about a future stressful situation, imagine yourself being in that scenario and coping with it really well. Change the movie in your mind from one where you fall apart to one where you are mastering the situation.

Get the youth’s feedback on these strategies.
4 Wrapping up

*Review the activity below and ask youth to fill out the table individually.*

Look at the list of skills that we have discussed in this module. Put a checkmark in the appropriate column to rate the extent to which you have used each skill in your life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Skill Use</th>
<th>Haven’t thought about using it</th>
<th>Thought about using it, but did not use</th>
<th>Used it, but not helpful</th>
<th>Used it, and it was somewhat helpful</th>
<th>Used it, and it was really helpful</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identifying reflex thoughts</td>
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<td>Brainstorming alternative interpretations</td>
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<td>Listing evidence for and evidence against</td>
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<td>Using “act-as-if” thought</td>
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<td>Using balanced thinking</td>
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<td>Creating own balanced thought</td>
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<td>Playing detective (got more information)</td>
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<td>Self-validating</td>
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<td>Challenging depressive core belief</td>
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<td>Taking in Positive Feedback from Others</td>
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<td>Letting go of judgment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Targeting anxious thoughts</td>
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*Discuss the results, including any barriers to using the skills or factors that made certain skills easier to accomplish than others.*
Emotions and Needs

One major reason we have emotions is to help us meet our needs.

In the 1940s, a psychologist named Abraham Maslow described a “hierarchy of needs,” and how people’s motivation to fulfill these needs can affect how they act. Included in this hierarchy are:

Look at the diagram below together and discuss the needs. Many youth may have seen this before in school.

There are two other needs that other theorists have talked a lot about:

A sense of control and A sense of identity

Typically, a strong uncomfortable emotion indicates that one of the above six needs is being threatened. Can you think of a time in the past week where you had a strong emotion? What needs were threatened at that time?

Ask youth to think of a time (or times) where this may have happened in the past week. Review the emotion and the associated threatened need.

Emotion: ____________________________

Need: ____________________________
Consider the above diagram.

*Look at the diagram together and point to each component as you go through the example.*

- A stressful situation may come up that threatens a need (e.g., a conflict with a friend threatens a relationship)
- ...which can lead to a thought (e.g. “she doesn’t like me”)
- ...which can lead to an emotion (e.g. sadness)
- ...which can lead to an action (e.g. avoiding your friend).

Problems are situations where your needs are threatened. If you can change the situation so that your need is met, the emotion won’t be so strong. Problem solving is a way to change your situation in order to, eventually, change your emotion.
Beliefs About Problem Solving

People with depression tend to have negative beliefs about the problems they face. These beliefs can get in the way of problem solving. Which of the following thoughts can get in the way of problem solving for you? Can you think of balanced thoughts that might be helpful?

Alternate reading the following thoughts about problems and generate alternative thoughts together.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Depressive thoughts about problems</th>
<th>Balanced thoughts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am unable to solve problems.</td>
<td>I can learn how to solve problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I think about my problems, my emotions become more intense.</td>
<td>Emotions can be particularly strong when I am facing my problems, but I will likely feel better if I can solve them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My problems cannot be solved. It is hopeless.</td>
<td>Some problems can be solved and some can’t. If they can’t be solved, there are other skills I can use to cope.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I didn’t cause my problems, so I shouldn’t have to solve them.</td>
<td>I may not have caused my problems, but I still need to solve them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t have the energy to solve problems.</td>
<td>It does take energy to solve problems, but saves energy in the long-run.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ask youth which depressive thoughts they can relate to? Are these thoughts helpful?

Assist them in developing alternative thoughts. Normalize that shifting from depressive thoughts to balanced thoughts takes time and practice.

If you experience additional depressive beliefs, try to think about any balanced thoughts about these as well.

Have the youth fill out the table below with their own examples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Depressive thoughts about problems</th>
<th>Balanced thoughts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
4 Defining the Problem

Defining a problem is an important step in trying to solve it. If the nature of the problem is unclear or if you don’t understand what the problem is, it is hard to move toward trying to solve it.

If you're trying to define a problem you are having with another person, clearly and specifically describe what the other person is doing/saying that creates the problem for you. Here are some steps to keep in mind when defining a problem.

Write the bold terms “Describe,” “Need” and “Emotion” on paper and leave these words visible for the duration of the discussion. (Note overlap with communication skills of active listening).

What to do when defining a problem

Describe what the other person is doing or saying that's creating a problem for you. Use only facts to describe the problem:

• Who was there?
• What was said? What did you see happen?
• Where were you?
• When was it?
• If it is a pattern, use the most recent time it came up to describe the pattern.

Identify your need:

• Which of the six needs were threatened? It is important to know, because an effective solution will meet your needs.

Identify your emotion:

• What emotion did you notice when the situation happened?
• How intense was this emotion? Rate the intensity on a scale of 0–5, with 5 being the most intense.
• Was there a mix of emotions? Rate each additional one (0-5). Which was most intense?

How to do it

• Be specific. Rather than say “It was in the afternoon,” say “It was at 4:00 p.m. when I got home from school.”
• Be brief. If there is too much detail, you can get lost in the process.
• Don’t judge. Avoid name-calling, accusing or blaming others. Try not to describe the problem using flaws in the other person; for example, “You’re lazy.”

For the exercise below work with the youth to look at some examples and see how they match the rules of problem definition that were put up on paper. Either have the youth answer out loud or ask them to write down their answers.
You will eventually need to communicate your problem to another person using these steps.

Are these examples using the steps? **Circle “yes” or “no” and describe the reason for your answer.**

**Example 1:** “I know you want me to be safe and that you try to take care of me. My problem is that I want to stay out until midnight on weekends to party with my friends, but my curfew is 11:00 p.m. This bothers me because I have to leave parties early, and I miss out on the fun.”

Yes / No

*Good defining: This person is specific about what the other person is doing that creates a problem, the person expresses their feelings, and it’s brief.*

---

**Example 2:** “My problem is that you are too strict about curfew!”

This definition accuses the listener of being too strict without explaining what is meant by strict.

Yes / No

---

**Example 3:** “You don’t text me back when I text you. I wish you weren’t so lazy about it.”

Yes / No

*This definition accuses the listener of being irresponsible without providing an adequate explanation. Ask youth to identify other downsides in how this person tried to express themselves.*

---

**Example 4:** “I’m upset when you tell me that you are embarrassed to have your friends over and see that I am not doing well. It makes me feel even more guilty about being depressed.”

Yes / No

*The problem is defined well: it is very specific, and focuses on behaviour rather than personality. It also expresses the speaker’s feelings. However, it would have been better to start with a statement showing the speaker can understand the listener’s perspective, like “I get that you want your friends to respect you...”*
5 Practicing Defining and Communicating the Problem

In order to be sure the youth understands what kinds of situations this skill can be used for, have them brainstorm problems that come up and write them on the worksheet. You could also include other examples provided below.

Using what we have learned so far, take four problems that you have struggled with recently (or work with your therapist to choose them) and fill out the diagrams below. Once you have filled it out, practice communicating the problem to your therapist.

*Have the youth complete the follow the diagrams below and verbalize the problems to you.*
If the youth struggles to identify their own problems, you can use some of these examples (which will be used again in Session 12).

• Jake is working hard on a large group science project at school. The three other group members don’t seem to be taking it as seriously. He is anxious that he won’t get a good mark. What can Jake do?

• Michael asked Emily to go to the movies with him. She said “No” clearly once, but he keeps asking her. She really does not want to go. What can Emily do?

• It is Sunday afternoon. Alex has an assignment due for school the next day that they haven’t started working on. Also, their mother is asking them to clean their room and their friend wants to go hang out in the park. Alex is also feeling overwhelmed and tired from depression. What can Alex do?

• Joshua is excited that a new videogame—Wham-Blam-3000—is coming out today. It is the first time he has been excited about anything in a while, but his parents are not letting him play it because they are worried he is spending too much time on the console. What can Joshua do?

• Maddison has struggled a lot with low mood and anger. Her parents are worried about her safety and so have not let her spend time alone at home. What can she do?

• Jamal would like to stay out until midnight on Friday night for a party at his friend’s place, but his mother won’t let him go. What can he do?

• Olivia and Emma have been dating for three months when Olivia tells Emma that she wants to stop going out. What can Emma do?

• Christopher’s friends, Kylo and Shea, tell him that they are finding that his emotions are too much for them to handle and they no longer want to spend time with him. What can Christopher do?

• Isabella is finding that Andrew, her friend from class, keeps coming to her with his problems. She is feeling overwhelmed by this. What can she do?

• Daniel’s brother, William, keeps coming into his room to use Daniel’s computer. Daniel wants his privacy. What can he do?

• Ashley prefers the pronoun “they” to “she” but her boss at her part-time job continues to refer to them as “she.” What can they do?

• It is Wednesday and Ravi has an assignment due on Friday but he has gotten very far because he’s been depressed. His teacher is known to be pretty strict with deadlines and docks marks for every day assignments are late. What can he do?

• When Samantha is at Winners with her friend, he asks her to help distract the cashier so he can steal a shirt. What can Samantha do?

• Grace has been working at a local fast food chain for two weeks and wants to impress her boss. The boss has recently asked her to start taking later shifts — from 6:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. She goes to school every day and so is worried she won’t get enough sleep. What can she do?

• Tyler struggles with depression and is looking to meet new friends. He recently met James at school and they are getting along. One Saturday afternoon, James invites Tyler to “get wasted” with him. Tyler doesn’t want to because he knows that alcohol can make him more depressed. What can he do?
• Abigail overhears some of the guys on her co-ed sports team making sexual comments, which make her uncomfortable. What can she do?

• Nick’s father tends to drink a lot in the evenings and says some pretty hurtful things to Nick when he drinks. Nick knows he wouldn’t say things like this when he is sober, but he’s really upset by his dad’s insults. What can Nick do?

6 Home Practice

Over the next week, try each of the following:

• When you notice one of the depressive thoughts you reviewed today come up for you, try to use an balanced thought that you have checked off to replace with the unhelpful belief to see if it helps your mood

• When you are feeling a strong emotion, try to define the problem:
  › Describe what the other person is doing or saying that’s creating a problem for you.
  › Identify your need.
  › Identify your emotion.
  › Be specific and brief and don’t judge.

Write down your personal goal over the next week based on the skills discussed today:

Work with youth to identify a personal goal for themselves over the next week. Remind youth to focus their goal on something they can do within a week and to try and be as specific as possible.

Ask youth to share their personal goal, if they are willing.

Ask if there are any questions about the home practice. Ask if they anticipate anything that might get in the way of doing it — problem-solve around these.

• During the coming week, identify several problems that you would like to work on. Then, practice defining the problems by writing them down on the next page and using the ideas discussed in session.
Allow five to 10 minutes for youth to provide a statement about their experience in session today (e.g., “What did you like/not like?” “What did you notice?” “What was helpful/not helpful?”)

An alternative way to end session: Head, Heart, Feet activity

Ask youth to answer one of the following questions:

• What is one thing you’re thinking about after session today? (Head)

• What is one thing that you’re feeling after session today (Heart)

• What is something that you are going to now do after session today? (Feet)
Session 2
1. **Review**

   Review the materials from the previous session below.

   **What are the six needs that our emotions drive us to meet?**

   1. ____ *Physiological (food, water, air)*
   2. ____ *Security (shelter, physical safety)*
   3. ____ *Relationships*
   4. ____ *Self-esteem*
   5. ____ *Sense of identity*
   6. ____ *Sense of control*

   **Which part of the diagram does problem solving address?**

   ____ *Situation*

   ![Diagram]

   **What are the three steps of defining a problem?**

   1. ____ *Describe the situation*
   2. ____ *Identify your emotion*
   3. ____ *Identify your need*
What are three helpful concepts to keep in mind when defining a problem?

1. Be specific
2. Be brief
3. Don’t judge

Think of a problem that you experienced recently. Use the three steps (and the three concepts) to define that problem below:

Ask youth to work on this activity individually. Use this exercise as a point of discussion: youth can use this same problem for the further steps throughout this session.

Problem-solving warm up activity: In today’s session you will be working with youth to brainstorm solutions for the problem they selected above.

Example problems may include:

• Your parents set an earlier curfew than desired.
• Your sibling won’t help with chores.
• Your friend asks to copy your homework.
• Your friend doesn’t respond to your texts.
Brainstorming Solutions

When people have a strong emotion, it can often create tunnel vision — where the person has a narrow perspective on what to do next. This can get in the way of finding the most helpful way through the problem.

Ask the youth if they have ever experienced this before, either with themselves or others in their lives.

After defining the problem, it is really important to think about all possible options for ways that you can get your needs met. Sometimes, just brainstorming and realizing that there are many options to resolve the problem can decrease the intensity of the emotion.

Here are some things to keep in mind to make the brainstorming stage more effective:

1. List as many possible solutions as you can.
2. Try not to be critical about any solution yet. Keep your mind open to come up with many possible solutions.
3. Be creative about what other solutions might be possible.

Ask the youth to now use the “Problem Solving” worksheet to brainstorm solutions for the problem they identified earlier. Give youth time to try and problem solve individually. If they are having difficulty with the activity, they can work with you for support as well.
Use the graphic below to begin brainstorming solutions for the problem that you are working through. If you are struggling to come up with solutions, ask a friend or trusted adult to help. Internet searches might help. If the problem is not time sensitive, sometimes setting the problem aside and coming back to it the next day can help too.

2b **Elimination**

Make sure that you are done the brainstorming phase before moving on. It is important to have an open mind during brainstorming and then begin thinking more critically during the elimination phase.

“Elimination” is really crossing off solutions that are unreasonable or unrealistic. For example, if you put “fly to the moon” or “trip the other person” as a solution in the brainstorming phase, consider crossing off those solutions. You should try to have at least three or four realistic solutions remaining.

*Once youth has finished brainstorming, work with them to go through the example problem and eliminate completely unreasonable solutions.*

*(If youth have more options, this is also fine. Try to encourage them to have at least four solutions because they should still have enough options to choose from.)*

Return to the worksheet to begin eliminating solutions that would not be possible.
3  **Assess Pros and Cons**

Together, list pros and cons of the solutions you are working through.

In order to fully assess which solution will be most helpful in changing the situation, list the pros and the cons of the remaining solutions in relation to how they meet your needs.

If you have trouble creating a list, think of how that solution might meet some of your six needs or the needs of others. Try to keep points specific, brief and non-judgmental.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOLUTION ONE</th>
<th>SOLUTION TWO</th>
<th>SOLUTION THREE</th>
<th>SOLUTION FOUR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PROS</td>
<td>PROS</td>
<td>PROS</td>
<td>PROS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONS</td>
<td>CONS</td>
<td>CONS</td>
<td>CONS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4  **Final Steps**

Read through and discuss the section below. Continue to work through each step of the example problem. If you have enough time during session, ask the youth to then work on another problem that they have selected for themselves using the “Problem-Solving” worksheet.

1. **Select a solution**

After listing pros and cons, choose a solution on the worksheet that you think will best meet your needs (not just the one need threatened, but a good balance of all of them).

- When you are making your selection, try first going with the solution that you feel best about. The number of pros and cons isn’t as relevant as the importance of each pro and con to meeting your needs.
- If you have trouble choosing, rate the importance of each pro and con on a scale of 1–5 and then add up the numbers to see how the totals for each solution compare.

Depending on the challenge you are facing, there may be many possible solutions for you to try.

**Solution selected:** ___________________________
2. Reflect on the solution

For the solution you chose, again ask yourself — will this help me meet my needs?

________________________________________________________________________

3. Detect barriers

Is there anything that might get in the way of carrying out your solution? Here are some examples of barriers and ways to try to overcome them:

- Forgetting to carry out the solution? Think of ways to be reminded.
- Low motivation? Go back to your pros and cons and remind yourself why you are doing this.
- Emotions that are too strong? First try other CBT strategies to settle your emotions, or wait until the emotions have settled with time.
- Depressive thoughts? Try using balanced thoughts.

Potential barriers to carrying out the solution:

1. ____________________________________________________________

2. ____________________________________________________________

Ways to overcome these barriers:

1. ____________________________________________________________

2. ____________________________________________________________

Ask the you if they identify any barriers to their solution or ways to overcome these barriers? Did they have a hard time thinking of possible solutions? Can they think of strategies that might be helpful?

4. Make a plan and try it out

Once you have chosen your solution(s), write down a plan as to when, where, how and what will take place to carry out your solution using the worksheet.

*Explain how writing down the solution can make it more likely that you will carry it out. You can also discuss how imagery can be used to increase the chances of you carrying out your solution successfully.*

After you try the solution, ask yourself, did it meet my needs? If not, try a different solution on your list.

Problems can be solvable, but not always. As you’re trying to solve a problem, use other CBT strategies to manage the situation or to manage the emotion in those situations.
1. When will you do it? ____________________________________________________________

2. Where will you do it? __________________________________________________________

3. Who will be there? ____________________________________________________________

4. How will you do it? (step-by-step) ______________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

After going through the steps, ask the youth if they think that they would use this process in their real life? For those who don’t, ask what would get in the way? A common example is that people don’t want to see all of their problems listed on paper because it can make them feel anxious.

If not already done, have the youth try out the solution for themselves and see if their anxiety increases or decreases. See if other barriers to engaging in the problem-solving skill can be worked through.

5 Home practice

Use the “Problem Solving” work sheets on the following pages this week on another problem you are working through; it can be a long-standing problem or one that comes up through the week.
Problem Solving

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Describe
   a) The situation—use only facts and be specific; where? when? who was there? what was said? what happened?
   b) Your emotion—if there were many emotions, list the most prominent one; how intense was it on a scale of 0 to 5?
   c) Your need—which need was threatened? food/water? sense of safety? relationships? self-esteem? sense of control? sense of identity?

2. Explore your options
   a) Brainstorm—other possible actions you can take to meet your needs; be open to many possibilities.

3. Assess
   a) Choose up to four of the brainstormed solutions and list pros and cons of each.

4. Take action
   a) Select a solution.
   b) Reflect if it will meet your needs.
   c) Detect any barriers to your solution before you carry it out; work through these.
   d) Write down your plan (this makes it more likely you will follow through) and carry it out.
Problem Solving

SITUATION: 

EMOTION: 

NEED: 

SOLUTION ONE
- PROS
- CONS

SOLUTION TWO
- PROS
- CONS

SOLUTION THREE
- PROS
- CONS

SOLUTION FOUR
- PROS
- CONS
**Problem Solving**

**NEXT STEPS**

1. **Select.** Which solution did you choose?

2. **Reflect.** Will this meet your needs (not just one, but overall)?

3. **Detect barriers.** Is there anything that could get in the way of carrying out your solutions? How will you deal with this?

4. **Details.** Now that you have identified your plan:
   - When will you do it?
   - Where will you do it?
   - Who will be there?
   - How will you do it, step-by-step?
1 Review

Review the materials from the previous session below. Give youth time to fill in the information in their worksheet themselves.

What are the steps in problem solving?

- Define the problem:
  - Describe the _____situation______ using only the facts
    (who is there, what was said, what did you see happen, where were you, when was it?)
  - Identify your _____needs_____
    (e.g., physiological, security, relationships, esteem, sense of control and identity)
  - Identify your _____emotions_____
    (e.g., anxiety, sadness, anger, boredom, guilt, shame, jealousy, envy, etc.)
- _____Brainstorm_____ solutions without judgment. (There are no good or bad solutions.)
- When you are done step 2 _____eliminate______ solutions that you know are completely unrealistic.
• List **pros** and **cons** of the remaining solutions, particularly in how they relate to your **needs**.

• **Select** a solution (or a set of solutions) and try it out. Remember to base your selection on how likely the solution is to help you to meet your needs.

• **Reflect** on whether this solution will meet your needs.

• **Detect** any barriers that may get in the way and work through them ahead of time.

• Make a specific **plan** about how you would do it:
  › What will you do?
  › When will you do it?
  › Who will be there?
  › How will you do it?

*Ask if the youth was able to try this out. Discuss that each step on its own might be helpful without needing to go through the entire process. For example, sometimes just quickly brainstorming solutions is enough to get through a tough problem. Or really focusing on defining a problem succinctly and without judgment can be helpful — the rest might just flow from there. If you know that there are only two options to solving a problem, looking at the pros and cons is sometimes enough.*

### 2 Collaboration

Some problems you can manage on your own. When problems involve another person (e.g., friend, teacher, caregiver), you may decide to work with that person to try to come to a solution that at least partially meets both of your needs. Working this out together will likely reduce your tension, and improve your mood. Here are some steps to consider:

#### Step 1: Define the problem

• **Describe the situation** using only facts (e.g., what do you see? hear?)

*Discuss examples of facts versus interpretations again. Explain that this is to start the conversation off on neutral ground and make sure everyone is working with the same information.*

• **Identify your needs** verbally, to the other person: Saying “I need food” or “I need water” is straightforward; but stating your other needs directly can seem awkward to the listener. For example, “I need shelter”. Come up with natural-sounding ways of saying the following:
  › **I need shelter:**

  __________________________________________________________

  __________________________________________________________

  __________________________________________________________

  › **I need physical safety:**

  __________________________________________________________

  __________________________________________________________

  __________________________________________________________

  › **I need relationships:**

  __________________________________________________________

  __________________________________________________________

  __________________________________________________________
I need a sense of control:

- Identify your emotion — verbally, to the other person (e.g., “I get sad when this happens”).

Ask if the youth struggles to state their emotion and what gets in the way of doing it.

I need self-esteem:

- Identify the other person’s needs and emotions:
  - Listen to what the other person is saying.
  - Ask them questions about their needs and emotions.

Discuss why it is still important to inquire about their needs, even if they are angry at the other person.

I need a sense of identity:

- Summarize: State your needs and the other person’s needs back-to-back and invite the other person to problem-solve.

Consider the following scenarios to practice defining the problem collaboratively in pairs:

- Steve’s boss has asked him to work the late shifts at the shop, which means staying until 10:00 p.m. Steve has to be at school for basketball practice at 7:00 a.m., and is worried that he won’t be able to get enough sleep.
- Mr. Kipling is expecting an assignment to be handed in on time, but Sophie hasn’t started it because she’s been having difficulty concentrating while she is depressed.
- Kara’s mother is concerned about her wearing clothes that are appropriate for the weather, but Kara wants to feel comfortable wearing whatever she wants to fit in with her friends.

Work with your therapist to define one of the problems listed above. One person will identify their own needs and the other person will act as the other person in the situation. After you’ve worked through one example, switch roles and work on another example so you get more experience defining the problem.

Here are additional steps that you can take when problem solving collaboratively:

**Step 2a: Brainstorm solutions**

Work with the other person to generate solutions together.

- Don’t criticize the others’ solutions.
- Be open to new possibilities.
Step 2b: Elimination

If there are solutions you generated that you both completely agree are not reasonable, cross them off your list.

Step 3: Assessment

Work with the other person to individually rate how each solution meets or threatens your needs.

- You can simply use a “+” or “−” sign to show that it either meets or does not meet your needs.
- Or use numbers to indicate the strength of the need. Rate the intensity on a scale of 0–5, with 5 being the most intense.
- Note, that the evaluation part of collaborative problem-solving is quite different than when doing problem-solving on your own: you are no longer listing pros and cons as you did with individual problem-solving.

Step 4: Choose a solution and carry it out

- Find a solution that optimizes each of your needs.
- You should each be willing to “make the first move” and/or make a change in your behaviour.
- Write down the details on how this will take place:
  - What will you each do?
  - When will you each do it?
  - Who will be there?
  - How will you each do it?
  - What barriers might there be to your plan? How can you work through these together?

Use the “Collaborative Problem Solving” worksheet on the following pages to start thinking more about collaboration.

*Have the youth choose one of the example scenarios above and continue to work through the worksheet to completion.*
Collaborative Problem Solving

SITUATION:

EMOTION:

NEED:

SOLUTION ONE
PERSON A
PERSON B

SOLUTION TWO
PERSON A
PERSON B

SOLUTION THREE
PERSON A
PERSON B

SOLUTION FOUR
PERSON A
PERSON B
Collaborative Problem Solving
NEXT STEPS

1. Select. Which solution did you choose?

2. Reflect. Will this meet your needs (not just one, but overall)?

3. Detect barriers. Is there anything that could get in the way of carrying out your solutions? How will you deal with this?

4. Details. Now that you have identified your plan:
   - When will you do it?
   - Where will you do it?
   - Who will be there?
   - How will you do it, step-by-step?
Try out collaborative problem solving this week. If a family member is willing to do it with you — on a relatively small problem — do it with them. If not, try it out with a trusted friend. Even just doing some of the steps, if you aren’t able to do them all, can be helpful.

*Provide youth with more blank copies of the worksheets that they can use on their own.*

**Write down your personal goal over the next week based on the skills discussed today:**

Work with the youth to identify a personal goal for themselves over the next week. Remind youth to focus their goal on something that they can do within a week and to try and be as specific as possible.

Ask the youth to share their personal goal, if they are willing.

Ask if there are any questions about the home practice. Ask if they anticipate anything that might get in the way of doing it; problem solve around these.

Allow five to 10 minutes to have the youth provide a statement about their experience in session today (e.g., “What did you like/not like?” “What did you notice?” “What was helpful/not helpful?”).

**An alternative way to end session: Head, Heart, Feet activity**

Ask youth to answer one of the following questions:

- What is one thing you’re thinking about after session today? (Head)
- What is one thing you’re feeling after session today (Heart)
- What is something that you are going to do after session today? (Feet)
1 Review

Review the materials from the first session below.

Match the depressive thought with the more helpful balanced thought.

### Depressive thoughts about problems | Balanced thoughts
--- | ---
1. I am unable to solve problems. | a. It does take energy to solve problems, but saves energy in the long-run.
2. If I think about my problems, my emotions become more intense. | b. I can learn how to solve problems.
3. My problems cannot be solved. It is hopeless. | c. I may not have caused my problems, but I still need to solve them.
4. I didn’t cause my problems, so I shouldn’t have to solve them. | d. Emotions can be particularly strong when I am facing my problems, but I will likely feel better if I can solve them.
5. I don’t have the energy to solve problems. | e. Some problems can be solved and some can’t. If they can’t be solved, there are other skills I can use to cope.

What is a more natural way to say: “I need self-esteem. When you insult me, I feel sad”?

When you said “... it hurt. I need to feel good about myself.”

Solving problems involves:

- defining the problem (situation, emotion, need)
- brainstorming solutions
- eliminating solutions that are completely out of the question.

What is the next step if you are solving problems individually?

List Pros and Cons

What is the next step if you have a problem with someone else?

(This involves collaborative problem solving)

Indicate how each solution meets or does not meet each person’s needs
2 **Carrying Out Your Plan**

Once you have chosen your plan, some things might get in the way of carrying it out. Research has shown that the following techniques will increase your chances of success:

1. **Write it down.**

   Discuss how writing down what you are going to do actually increases the chances of you doing it — more so than typing. Ask the youth why they think this is. Talk about how writing things down forces you to process the information more thoroughly, which makes it harder to forget.

2. **Imagine yourself carrying out the plan.**

   Rehearsing it in your mind also increases the chance you will act on the plan. Depression may lead you to imagine failure. Instead, imagine yourself working through the solution successfully — it can help.

3. **Rehearse it.**

   Rehearsing it in real life really helps you see how it could work out. It can be similar to "exposure therapy" for anxiety symptoms.

3 **Acceptance: Turn “Oh no!” to “Oh well”**

    Review material below with the youth. Stop to discuss when you see fit.

Sometimes, you may not be able to solve a problem in the moment. There may be too many barriers, or emotions may be too intense. One strategy to manage this situation is to use acceptance. In this case, acceptance means “acknowledging the facts for what they are.” It does not mean you like the facts or that you give up on changing the situation in the future. Only accept facts that have occurred in the past or the present — the future hasn’t happened yet — so it is not yet a fact.

*Explain that there are situations where the probability of the future being different is very low. For example, “I have to accept that I will never be eight feet tall.”*

**There are five ways to approach a problem:**

1. Solve it. (Problem solve.)
2. Change the way you think about it. (See other module, “Reboot Your Thinking: Cognitive Restructuring.”)
3. Accept it. (See below.)
4. Continue to suffer.
5. Make things worse.

**When to use acceptance:**

1. When you have tried problem solving, but you are stuck.
2. When you have tried to change your thinking patterns, but you are stuck.
3. When emotions are too intense to problem-solve or try other strategies to change your thinking, and you are stuck.
The other options (“continue to suffer” or “make things worse”) are not great, so it is important to keep acceptance as an option.

**Step 1: Notice you are fighting the facts.**

“Fighting the facts” is a thought pattern that can worsen your mood. These types of thoughts tend to add fuel to the fire of your emotions.

These thoughts might be: “Why me?” “It’s not fair.” “It shouldn't be this way.” “If only things were different.” “Oh no!”

*These thoughts can be useful when problem solving can help change the situation. When we can't change the situation, these thoughts can sometimes make things worse.*

**Step 2: Identify the fact to accept.**

Remember — during this process, don’t accept beliefs, judgments or predictions about the future — only the facts.

**Step 3a: Change your thoughts.**

While thinking about the fact you identified, start having the thought “it is what it is”, “I don’t like it, but I accept it” or “oh well”. Or just describe the facts to accept over and over.

and/or

**Step 3b: Change what your body is doing.**

Some people find it helpful to pair the following: (1) Think of the fact to be accepted and (2) sit in an accepting posture with a slight smile and relaxed hands. These actions send a message to your brain that promote acceptance.

*You can also add. “Some people like to turn their palms upward to enhance the effect — a symbolic gesture of being open to acceptance or a different way of thinking.” Some youth might find this action odd: explain that it may seem odd but to try it out anyway, in private if they would rather, to see if it helps.*

and/or

**Step 3c: Change your actions.**

Act as though you have accepted the facts, even when you haven’t fully. This can help shift your acceptance even further.

You might find that doing all three (i.e., change thoughts, body position, actions) helps the most.

**Step 4: Repeat.**

Acceptance is not a one-time thing, but needs to be practiced over and over. In more intense situations, the process can lead to a wave of intense emotion, but then a sense of calm.
Go through the following example:

Ian has been really looking forward to going to an amusement park with Kelly and Sharron on Saturday. It has been a while since they all connected. But on Saturday morning, both Kelly and Sharron texted him to tell him that they are both sick and can’t go.

**Step 1:** He notices getting on a thought loop: “Why does this always happen to me, I never get to have fun.” “I wish I was able to go.” “It’s not fair that this happened.”

**Step 2:** His reflex is to go to thoughts like: “They bailed on me. That’s so mean” and “They don’t like me” though Ian catches himself: these are beliefs, not facts. He then identifies the facts of the situation. “I was hoping to go to the amusement park with Kelly and Sharron, and they have texted me, saying that they are sick.”

**Step 3a:** He says to himself, “It is what it is” and “I don’t like that they texted me to say that they are sick and can’t go, but I accept it.”

**Step 3b:** He notices his muscles are tense and takes time to relax his face and hands as he continues to focus on the thought: “I was hoping to go to the amusement park with Kelly and Sharron, and they have texted me, saying that they are sick.”

**Step 3c:** He then asks his brother to hang out with him and to go to the park to play catch (a behaviour that is incompatible with going to the amusement park).

*Have extra copies of the individual and collaborative problem-solving worksheets on hand to work through these practice examples. Feel free to also use current real-life problems the youth are already working through as well.*

Consider the following situations. How could you use problem solving (collaborative or individual) and/or the acceptance skill to address them?

- Jake has been working hard on a large group science project at school, but the three other group members don’t seem to be taking it as seriously. He is anxious that he won’t get a good mark. What can Jake do?

- Emily clearly told Michael she didn’t want to go to the movies with him when he asked her. But he keeps on asking her, and she really does not want to go. What can Emily do?

- It is Sunday afternoon; Alex has an assignment due for school the next day that they haven’t started working on. Also, their mother is asking them to clean their room and their friend wants to go hang out on the park. Alex is also feeling overwhelmed and tired from depression. What can Alex do?
• Joshua is excited that a new videogame, Wham-Blam-3000, is coming out today. It is the first time he has been excited about anything in a while, but his parents won’t let him play it because they are worried he is spending too much time on the console. What can Joshua do?

• Maddison has struggled a lot with low mood and anger. Her parents are worried about her safety and so have not let her spend time at home alone. What can she do?

• Jamal would like to stay out until midnight on Friday night for a party at his friend’s place, but his mother won’t let him go. What can he do?

• Olivia and Emma having been dating for three months when Olivia tells Emma that she wants to stop dating. What can Emma do?

• Christopher’s friends, Kylo and Shea, tell him that they are finding that his emotions are too much for them to handle and they no longer want to spend time with him. What can Christopher do?

• Isabella is finding that Andrew, her friend from class, keeps coming to her with his problems, which is overwhelming her. What can she do?

• Daniel’s brother, William, keeps coming into his room to use Daniel’s computer. Daniel wants his privacy. What can he do?

• Ashley has a part-time job. They prefer the pronoun “they” and not “she”; however, their boss continues to refer to them as “she.” What can they do?

• It is Wednesday and Ravi has an assignment due on Friday, but he’s way behind because he’s been depressed so has had a hard time concentrating. His teacher is known to be pretty strict with deadlines and docks marks for every day assignments are late. What can he do?

• Samantha is shopping with her friend, Ethan. Ethan asks her to help distract the cashier while he steals a shirt that he really wants. What can Samantha do?

• Grace has been working for two weeks at a local fast food chain and wants to impress her boss. The boss has recently asked her to start taking later shifts — from 6:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. She goes to school every day and so is worried she won’t get enough sleep. What can she do?

• Tyler struggles with depression and is looking to meet new friends. He recently met James at school and they are getting along. One Saturday afternoon, James invites Tyler to “get wasted” with him but Tyler doesn’t want to because he knows that alcohol can make his depression worse. What can he do?

• Abigail overhears some of the guys on her new coed sports team making sexual comments, which make her uncomfortable. What can she do?

• Nick’s father tends to say pretty hurtful things to Nick when he drinks, but knows he wouldn’t say things like this when he is sober. What can Nick do?
5 Wrapping up

Look at the list of skills that we have discussed in this module. Mark a ‘✓’ in each column to rate the extent to which you have used them in your life.

*Take some time to reflect on the module and which parts the youth found helpful or not helpful.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Skill Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Haven’t thought about using it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linking emotions to needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considering balanced thoughts when problem solving</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defining the problem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brainstorming solutions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weighing pros and cons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following through on strategies for your solution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describing an interpersonal problem to another person</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative problem solving</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Discuss the results, including any barriers to using the skills or what made certain skills easier to accomplish than others.*
Social skills 101: Getting started

Four skills to keep in mind in social situations:

Ask the youth to read out the four skills listed below. Then discuss when it would be appropriate, and when it would be inappropriate, to use each skill. Provide examples of how to use the skills.

- Maintain regular eye contact.
- Smile during the interaction.
- Say positive things (about yourself, life and the other person).
- Tell the other person about yourself.

Ask the youth about what sort of things they may want to tell about themselves when using the last skill listed (e.g., age, interests, friends, family, school, work, fun). You can also discuss how this may change depending on their relationship with the person and how long they have known them for.

Activity

Start a conversation with your therapist

- What community are you from?

- If you could be an animal, which one would you be? Why did you choose that animal?

- Who are the important people in your life? What makes them important to you?
After you and your therapist have had a conversation, offer each other constructive feedback about the social skills that were used by answering the following questions:

Describe “constructive feedback” to the youth—feedback that is supportive (e.g. things they did well) and can lead to change (e.g. things to do differently next time).

**Which skills did I use?**

**Which did I do well?**

**What is one way I could use the skills more effectively?**

### 2. Social interaction and spirals

*Ask the youth to take turns reading each statement and discuss after each point.*

Take turns reading each statement:

- The amount and quality of our social interactions can affect our moods.
- Our moods can affect the amount and quality of our social interactions.
- This relationship can lead to a “downward spiral.”

*Ask the youth what they think these statements mean. You could draw the downward spiral on paper to help facilitate discussion.*

To change the pattern to an “upward spiral” it is important to participate in social interactions, even when you don’t feel confident or feel like interacting.
Optional questions to ask:

- After reading these statements, how likely is it that you would change your behaviour if you feel low in the future?
- What would get in the way of participating in more social interactions?
- Do you believe that increasing social interactions would work to improve your mood? What leads you to think this?
- If you don’t participate in social interactions when you feel low, how likely is it that your mood would improve?
- How likely is it that your mood would improve if you do the opposite of what your mood is telling you to do, and socialize?
- How might you be able to remind yourself of this concept when you are feeling low?

We can use therapy to practice social interactions.

3 Beliefs about relationships

Remember that our thoughts can affect our emotions:

In the table below, put a check mark next to the depressive thoughts that you find get in the way of starting or navigating relationships. In the right column, write down balanced thoughts that you think would be most helpful to you when you come across a depressive thought.

Alternate reading the following thoughts about relationships and generate alternative thoughts.

Ask which thoughts are prominent for the youth. If there are common ones, discuss these in more detail.

Have the youth fill out the table further below with their own examples.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Depressive thoughts about relationships</th>
<th>Balanced thoughts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I will be rejected.</td>
<td>I may be rejected, or I may not. The only way to know is to at least try to connect with others. If I am rejected, it may not be because of me. It may be more about the other person, or the timing might not be right. I will cope.</td>
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<td>I can’t stand being alone.</td>
<td>Being alone is hard. Learning how to manage being alone will help me be more confident in relationships.</td>
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<td>Another person may judge me. Their judgments may have more to do with their own ideas about themselves rather than me.</td>
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<td>They won’t see me as interesting.</td>
<td>There are some things about me that are interesting. I can learn ways to introduce myself to people by speaking about these more interesting things. I can also show interest in the other person — typically, people like to be asked questions about themselves.</td>
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<td>They will think I am anxious.</td>
<td>I may appear anxious in front of the other person; that is pretty common. The other person might be anxious meeting me too. The best way to overcome anxiety is to keep pushing through it.</td>
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<td>I will run out of energy to keep up the conversation.</td>
<td>Sometimes having a conversation I really like gives me more energy. If I decide I need to end the conversation, I will do so politely.</td>
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<td>I am attracted to him/her/them, and I shouldn’t be.</td>
<td>Being romantically attracted to other people is normal and common — lots of people have a lot of different types of people they are attracted to. It is nothing to be ashamed of. But it is still important that I manage that attraction in a way that is going to be most helpful for me.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you have any additional depressive thoughts about starting or navigating relationships that aren’t listed in the table above, put them in the left column of the table below, along with any balanced thoughts in the right-hand column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Depressive thoughts</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These types of depressive thoughts are common in depression. Remember that they are beliefs and not facts and are not helpful in shifting your mood. These beliefs can make you avoid social interactions; if you never start an interaction, there will never be a chance to disprove these beliefs. Avoiding experiences that could be positive for you can lead to more depression and more feelings of loneliness.

4 Starting conversations

Knowing how to start and end a conversation is an important skill.
In a social situation, one way to join a conversation is to position yourself as part of the circle. If you are part of a conversation group and someone is standing behind you, open up the circle for them as well.

Timing and context are key factors in whether or not the conversation will start off smoothly. **Put a ✓ beside situations that are good times to start conversations with another person and an × beside situations that are not as likely to be successful:**

*Ask the youth to review the examples below with you.*

*There are no “correct” answers for therapists here as these are meant more to prompt discussion rather than suggest a certain approach.*

- The other person is focused on reading a book.
- The person smiles at you.
- You are standing in a long line with the person.
- The person is sleeping.
- The person seems really upset about something.
- The person asks if you like going to the movies.
- A friend introduces you to the person.
- The person is texting.
- The person is looking at the ground.
- The person is petting your dog.

**Put a ✓ beside situations that are good times to join in a conversation with a group of people and an × beside the ones that are not likely to be successful:**

- People are talking about specific rules of basketball and famous basketball players.
- People are talking about a movie you have seen.
- People are standing close together, talking quickly, with no gaps in the conversation.
- People are talking about the weather.
- People are relatively far apart and not making much eye contact with each other.
- There are a lot of pauses in the conversation.
- People in the group say hi to you as you walk by.

Some people struggle with knowing what to say in a conversation. Asking a question, stating a fact or telling a story is often a good way to go. It’s best if you talk about a topic that people have already been discussing, so it’s really important to listen first.
The types of questions you start a conversation with can also affect your success. **Put a ✓ beside questions that are more likely to lead to a good conversation.**

- How old is your dog?
- Do you know when the next bus comes?
- Do you know what you are going to do after you graduate?
- Did you see the baseball game last night?
- Have you thought of volunteering?
- What did you think of English class today?
- Did you know your shirt is dirty?

*For this activity, you can also ask the youth if they have any other suggestions for questions that would likely lead to a good conversation.*

**Now, let’s use all of these skills together in an activity.**

*Ask the youth to discuss the examples below.*

**Put a ✓ beside situations where you are likely to be able to start a good conversation and then put an example of a conversation starter in the space provided.**

**Put an ✗ beside the situations that are not likely to be successful. In the space provided, write down why you don’t think starting/entering into a conversation would be a good idea in this context.**

- Someone on the bus is reading a magazine that you like.
- Someone is arguing with the cashier at the store.
- Someone is waiting for the bus, wearing a t-shirt of your favourite band.
- Someone brought a guitar to a coffee shop.
- Someone asks for directions with a foreign accent.
- You see someone on the street that you kind of recognize from school.

Imagine your week ahead and think of questions you might ask to start a conversation with people in your life.

*Ask the youth if they have any suggestions for topics to bring up when trying to start or maintain a conversation.*
List some possible conversation topics below:


5 Home practice

Over the next week, try each of the following:

• Practice the social skills we discussed today with other people.
• Try an alternative belief you have checked off to see if it helps your mood.
• Start a conversation using the strategies we have discussed.

Write down your personal goal over the next week based on the skills discussed today:

Work with the youth to identify a personal goal for themself over the next week. Remind the youth to focus their goal on something they can do within a week and to try and be as specific as possible.

Ask youth to share their personal goal, if they are willing.

Ask if there are any questions about the home practice and if the youth anticipates anything that might get in the way of doing the practice. If youth identify obstacles, work with them to problem-solve around them.

Allow 5–10 minutes for the youth to provide a statement about their experience in session today (e.g., “What did you like/not like?” “What did you notice?” “What was helpful/not helpful?”)

An alternative way to end session: Head, Heart, Feet activity

Ask youth to answer one of the following questions:

• What is one thing you’re thinking about after session today? (Head)

• What is one thing you’re feeling after session today (Heart)

• What is something you are going to now do after session today? (Feet)
Review

Based on our discussion so far, name four basic social skills that can be used with other people:

Review the basic skills for being friendly and have the youth fill in the information below.

1. _______ Maintain regular eye contact__________________________
2. _______ Smile during the interaction, if appropriate_____________________
3. _______ Say positive things (about yourself, life and the other person)____________
4. _______ Tell the other person about yourself________________________

Review the table below with the youth. As a bonus, ask the youth if they can remember an additional depressive thought and alternative thought that came up in the last session.

Match the depressive thought with a potentially more helpful balanced thought:

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<td>2. I can’t stand being alone.</td>
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<td>3. They won’t like me.</td>
<td>c. Sometimes having a conversation I really like gives me more energy. If I decide I need to end the conversation, I will do so politely.</td>
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<td>4. They will judge me.</td>
<td>d. I may appear anxious in front of the other person; that is pretty common. The other person might be anxious meeting me too. The best way to overcome anxiety is to keep pushing through it.</td>
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<td>5. They won’t see me as interesting.</td>
<td>e. There are some things about me that are interesting. I can learn ways to introduce myself to people by speaking about these more interesting things. I can also show interest in the other person — typically people like to be asked questions about themselves.</td>
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<td>f. I may be rejected, or I may not. The only way to know is to at least try to connect with others. If I am rejected, it may not be because of me. It may be more about the other person, or the timing might not be right. I will cope.</td>
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<td>7. I will run out of energy to keep up the conversation.</td>
<td>g. Being romantically attracted to other people is normal and common — lots of people have a lot of different types of people they are attracted to. It is nothing to be ashamed of. But it is still important that I manage that attraction in a way that is going to be most helpful for me.</td>
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<td>8. I am attracted to him/her/them, and I shouldn’t be.</td>
<td>h. Being alone is hard. Learning how to manage being alone will help me be more confident in relationships.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Review the following questions with the youth:

- Did you notice yourself having any “depressive thoughts” about relationships this past week?
- Did you try any alternative thoughts? Did you notice any differences?
- Did you start any conversations with someone new this week?
- If so, what was the situation? What did you say? Was it successful? If not, what got in the way?

Have youth also discuss their personal goal from last week and how it went.

2 How to leave a conversation

Some people don’t like starting a conversation out of fear they won’t know how to end it without getting overwhelmed or making the other person feel bad.

How do you end a conversation?

- If you are in a group of three or more, just stepping out, saying you have to leave and smiling, are fine.
- If it is just you and one other person, you will need to say something to end the conversation. “It was nice talking to you” or “It was nice to meet you” and “I’m going to go get some food” or “I want to catch this person before they leave” are some ideas.

Do you have other ideas about what to say to end a conversation?

Ask youth if they think they would use any of these strategies. How do they imagine they would work?

3 Social skills: The expansion pack

Sometimes depression or sadness can lead people to behave in ways that may shut down interactions. Consider the following situation:

Ask the youth to read the scenario.
Jenna smiles very little, and she looks at the floor instead of at you. She usually sits slouched over, rather than looking interested and alert. She speaks slowly and softly, which makes it difficult to listen to her for long. She frequently plays with a paper clip or rubs her hand on her leg while you are talking to her. She often fails to show interest in people and gives the impression that she would rather be left alone.

All of this makes you feel as if you don’t want to be around Jenna. You would rather be with someone who enjoys spending time with you.

Invite any comments about this scenario. Does the youth relate to Jenna? Does the youth relate to the person trying to interact with Jenna? Let the youth know that being shy isn’t a bad thing, but that sometimes people can mistake shyness for being disinterested.

Practicing communication skills can help our interactions with other people. Here is a list of skills that may help you in your conversations with others. Which do you think you could start working on?

You might not be able to practice everything, or you might not be comfortable with trying certain things yet. **Choose two or three communication skills from the list to focus on first.**

*Review options with the youth then ask them to check two or three items individually.*

- □ Smile and have a relaxed facial expression that conveys warmth.
- □ Make eye contact.
- □ Join in conversations.
- □ Sit up straight in a chair or stand up straight.
- □ Comment on positive things about a situation.
- □ Gesture with your hands to express enthusiasm (e.g., describe things with your hands or wave)
- □ Ask questions and show interest in others.
- □ Respond to questions.
- □ Tell people about things you are looking forward to.
- □ Speak with a strong, confident voice.
- □ Try not to speak too quickly or too slowly.
- □ Try not to cry unless you are around close friends or family.
- □ Don’t judge others.
- □ Pay attention to others.
- □ Other: ______________________________________

*Promote discussion about options that stand out or that the youth might question being on the list.*
Engage: Hear people out

Communication involves someone sending and receiving information. The communication can be verbal or non-verbal (e.g., eye contact, tone of voice, posture).

There are three ways you can respond to someone who is giving you information:

1. Irrelevant response

Have a conversation with your therapist. Each person should choose their own topic to discuss — and stay on their topic. Responses must have nothing to do with what the other person is saying. You will each be speaking and listening intermittently as you would in a regular conversation.

What was that like as the speaker? As the listener?

2. Partial listening

Now have a conversation where you respond with only partially related answers — and try and steer the conversation to what you want to talk about.

What was this one like as the speaker? As the listener?

3. Engaging

Communication works best when there’s engagement. Here are different examples for engaging responses that can be used in conversations:

- Non-verbal cues (e.g., eye contact, smiling, nodding)
- Verbal cues (e.g., “Mmm-hmm,” “That’s cool”)
- Restate the person’s message in your own words if you need to clarify what they are saying.
- Use empathic statements if someone is upset:
  - “I can see why you would be upset.”
  - “Lots of people would feel the way you do.”
  - “That sucks!”
  - “It makes sense that you feel confused!”
- Hold off responding:
  - Avoid talking about your own ideas until the other person sees you have understood their message or there is a break in the conversation.
  - Don’t show approval or disapproval.

Proceed with the following exercise.

What option is the most engaging response?
• What makes this option the most engaging?
• What makes the others not engaging?
• What other engaging statements could you say?

Review the example below:

You are listening to your friend discuss struggles she is experiencing with her music teacher. Her struggle includes three messages. After each message, check the response that would be an example of engagement.

Message 1: “I keep messing up in music class. Mr. Smith keeps pointing out all the things I do wrong. I think I am going to fail.”

☐ “That’s ridiculous. You’re not going to fail.”
☐ “Maybe you should practice more.”
☐ “It’s stressful to have your mistakes pointed out.”

Discuss responses. The third is most engaging.

Message 2: “Yeah—I think it’s hopeless. He obviously really likes the way Jordan plays—but not me.”

☐ “It sounds like you don’t believe it’s worth trying in music class.”
☐ “You’ll feel better next week. Don’t worry.”
☐ “Let’s go get lunch.”

Discuss responses. The first is engaging.

Message 3: “I try so hard, and he doesn’t seem to care. Do you know what that’s like?”

☐ “No, I don’t even like music.”
☐ “If you don’t like it, just drop out.”
☐ “I have felt unappreciated for my work before—it’s a horrible feeling.”

Discuss responses. The third is engaging.

Try this with your therapist. One partner makes three statements about him/her/themself. The statements should be about something that has meaning to them. The other partner then makes an engaging response for each statement. Then switch.

Review this experience with the youth using the following optional questions:

• What were some of the engaging responses you used in your conversation (non-verbal, verbal, restating, empathetic statements, holding off)?
• How did it feel to make a statement and have the other person restate it?

• How did it feel to repeat the statement made by the other person in your own words?

• When you were the one who was listening, did you find that you had difficulty understanding the message?

• When you were the one talking, did you find that the listener didn’t receive or understand the message the way you intended it?

• Were there any communication breakdowns?

• How might communication breakdowns lead to conflict?

• How does engaged listening address communication breakdowns?

**Answer the following questions:**

1. **Check three examples of engaged listening:**

   - Repeat the speaker’s words exactly, using the same tone.
   - Restate the speaker’s message in your own words.
   - Indicate that you “get” at least a part of the other person’s experience, and then repeat back what they are saying in your own words.
   - State whether you agree or disagree with their message.

2. **What are some communication mistakes that are often made by people who are listening? Check all that apply.**

   - Not giving the person speaking your full attention.
   - Relating the conversation to something the speaker doesn’t know about.
   - Thinking about your replies instead of paying attention to the speaker.
   - Making assumptions about the speaker’s feelings even when the speaker hasn’t made any specific statements about his or her feelings.

**Discuss responses.**

**5 Home practice**

This week, try:

- ending conversations politely
- using more skills to be friendlier in your conversations
- using engaging skills when you talk to people – notice how the other person responds.
Write down your personal goal over the next week based on the skills discussed today:

Work with youth to identify a personal goal for themself over the next week. Remind the youth to focus their goal on something they can do within a week and to try and be as specific as possible.

Ask youth to share their personal goal, if they are willing.

Ask if there are any questions about the home practice. Ask if the youth anticipates anything that might get in the way of doing the home practice and problem-solve around these potential obstacles.

Allow five to 10 minutes to have the youth provide a statement about their experience in session today (e.g., “What did you like or not like?” “What did you notice?” “What was helpful/not helpful?”).

An alternative way to end session: Head, Heart, Feet activity

Ask youth to answer one of the following questions:

• What is one thing you’re thinking about after session today? (Head)

• What is one thing you’re feeling after session today? (Heart)

• What is something you are going to now do after session today? (Feet)
Review

Have the youth discuss their personal goal from last week and how it went.

Ask youth if they practiced how to start a conversation this past week. Did they practice leaving a conversion? What was the situation? How did they do it? Review the conversation skills list below with youth to discuss if they were able to use any of these skills.

Which conversation skills did you practice this past week?

☐ Smiling and having a relaxed facial expression
☐ Making eye contact
☐ Joining in conversations
☐ Sitting up straight in a chair or standing up straight
☐ Commenting on positive things about a situation
☐ Using your hands to express positive emotion (e.g. talking with your hands, waving or describing things with your hands)
☐ Asking questions and showing interest in others
☐ Speaking in a loud, confident voice
☐ Trying not to speak too quickly or too slowly
☐ Talking about what you are looking forward to
☐ Avoiding crying unless you are around close friends or family
☐ Responding to questions
☐ Not judging others
☐ Paying attention to others.
☐ Other: ________________________________________________________

What are some ideas to keep in mind when engaging with others?

Review different engagement skills have the youth fill in the information below. Using non-verbal cues (e.g., maintaining suitable eye contact, smiling, nodding)

Using verbal cues (“Mmm-hmm”, “That’s cool”, etc.)

Rephrasing the person’s message in your own words if you need to clarify what they are saying

Using empathic statements if someone is expressing frustration

Holding off talking about your ideas about the situation; showing approval or disapproval

Try a short role play with the youth, pretending you are worried about your dog being sick. Start by saying the following, and see how the youth responds. “My dog is really sick. I am worried about her. I recently tried changing her food, and it doesn’t seem to be helping.” Prompt them to respond to you with an engaging interaction.
Responding without judgment

Alternate reading the following:

It is important to distinguish between an engaging response and a judging response.

Engaging responses restate the message from the person speaking and allow opportunities for you to clarify what they are saying. It encourages the person speaking to expand on their message and talk more.

Judging responses tend to increase emotions and shut down the conversation.

First let’s understand the difference between a fact, an interpretation and a judgment.

Before you look at the descriptions below, ask them if they can describe the difference between a fact, an interpretation and a judgment. Discuss responses using the information and examples below.

Facts are things we observe with our five senses. If you are observing something that is real, most people will agree on what it is (e.g. “Sara is wearing a coat.”). Also note that your own emotional experiences are considered facts. For example, statements like “I am angry” or “I am happy” are not typically up for debate.

Interpretation is what our mind does to understand facts or information we observe (e.g. “Sara must have been cold”).

Judgment is when you interpret something as “good or bad,” or as something that “should or shouldn’t be” or that is “right or wrong” (e.g. “Sara should have worn a sweater.”)

It can be useful to reframe judgments as “I like it/don’t like it,” “I think it is helpful/unhelpful,” “I think it is safe/dangerous.” This reframing can help to show that this is your own emotional experience or your own interpretation of the information.

Look at the diagram above together and discuss the difference between these four things. Explain how all judgments are interpretations (therefore, not facts) and how not all interpretations are judgments. (Use the diagram to help.) Provide more detailed examples so the youth can understand the concept.

Review the examples below with the youth. Discuss responses or other non-judging responses that they may have used in these situations instead.
Look at the following examples. Circle the letter corresponding to the engaging (non-judging) response.

Example 1: “I have been going to this school for three years, and I can’t seem to make friends.”

A. “That sounds pretty frustrating, especially when you feel that it’s gone on for a long time.”
B. “It’s pretty hard to have fun without friends. You should really work on that. There are lots of things you could do to learn how to make friends.”

Example 2: “I really wanted to go on a date with Lily, but it took two weeks before I got up enough courage to ask her out. I couldn’t believe it when she said yes! But then I was so anxious about it that I cancelled last minute.”

A. “What?! You should have just gone!”
B. “That sucks. I find dating makes me anxious too.”

Example 3: “I hate math. Mr. Pascal is really putting a lot of pressure on me with my homework.”

A. “Yeah — he is such a bad teacher.”
B. “Yeah — I find he puts a lot of pressure on students. I don’t like how he does that.”

Example 4: “I heard that Matt was talking to Bryn again after they broke up. I’m nervous that he is leading her on.”

A. “I can see why you’d be worried.”
B. “That’s so wrong. They shouldn’t be talking again.”

In the last two examples, it is not the original speaker who is being judged, but a third party. Discuss why this might be important (e.g. People might have difficulty trusting you if you readily judge others, and they may be more wary of you. When we judge others, we set a high standard against which we might also compare ourselves: in this way, judgment of others can increase self-judgments and affect our own self-esteem.)

3 TMI? Letting people know what you think and feel

(TMI stands for “Too much information.”)

Telling other people about yourself (self-disclosure) is important for building relationships, even though at times it may feel safer to keep things to yourself. At the same time, revealing too much about yourself too quickly can make others overwhelmed, making it more difficult for them to bond with you.

Do you tend to under-share? Or over-share? Appropriate self-disclosure is an important communication tool.

Ask the youth to respond to the question above and why they might over-share or under-share. What do they find challenging when sharing information with other people?

Proceed with the next activity with the youth:
Identify the following as true or false by circling the correct answer below each statement:

1. Self-disclosure means honestly telling how you feel about what is going on.
   - True or False

2. Appropriate self-disclosure means telling every intimate detail of your entire life.
   - True or False

3. Hiding your reactions to another person’s behaviour is a good way to improve your relationship with that person.
   - True or False

4. Self-disclosure involves taking a risk.
   - True or False

5. You should be self-disclosing at all times in all relationships.
   - True or False

6. Self-disclosure should be a two-way street — it is helpful if both people in a relationship participate in the process.
   - True or False

7. The purpose of self-disclosure is to try to make the other person improve his or her behaviour.
   - True or False

8. It’s best to wait until several stressful situations have built up before you discuss them.
   - True or False

9. The most helpful way to express your feelings is to describe the other person’s behaviour that you are responding to and state how you feel.
   - True or False

Before moving on to the next activity, come to an understanding about what self-disclosure means.

Indicate which of the following are helpful self-disclosures. Place a □ by the statements that can be helpful self-disclosures.

Ask youth to complete the activity below individually.

1. □ “Leave me alone.”
2. ☑ “I’m hurt by what you did to me.”
3. □ “You are too controlling.”
4. ☑ “I get the sense you are angry. Are you?”
5. □ “My friends aren’t the same anymore.”
6. ☑ ”I get upset when you yell at me.”

Take up responses with the youth. Why did they respond the way they did? Do they agree or disagree with which statements are helpful self-disclosures? Why would statements 1, 3, and 5 be disclosures that are unhelpful? Why are statements 2, 4 and 6 helpful?
4 Asking for what you need

There are four types of communication. A simple way to understand them is to think of whether or not they meet your needs and/or threaten the needs of other people in the short term.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication style</th>
<th>Own Needs</th>
<th>Others’ Needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive</td>
<td>Likely to be met</td>
<td>Threatened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>Unlikely to be met</td>
<td>Not threatened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive-aggressive</td>
<td>Unlikely to be met</td>
<td>Threatened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertive</td>
<td>Likely to be met</td>
<td>Not threatened</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See if the youth can come up with examples of each of these types of communication. This is very simplified. Feel free to fill in more nuances as you see fit.

Being assertive is the ideal; it helps ensure that everyone's needs are taken into consideration. In short, being assertive means either:

- Asking for what you want (i.e., your goal in the conversation)

or

- Saying “no” to a request

...without judgments or threats.

Discuss how many people with depression may see themselves as being aggressive when they are in fact being assertive and note the difference.

To increase the chances that your assertion will be successful, there are a few steps to consider. The acronym GOALS might help you remember.

**Step 1: Get straight to the facts.** Describe only what you see or hear, not what you are thinking yet.

This starts the conversation on something both people can agree on.

**Step 2:** Use an “I” statement to describe your Own experience of the situation: either the emotion (“I feel...”) or the thought (“I think...”).

This step requires self-disclosure. Note how this is distinct from “you” statements, which tend to be judgments. Describing your own experience allows the other person to know where you are coming from. People tend to “perk their ears” when you mention that you have an emotion about the situation.

**Step 3: Ask for what you want...** OR... say “no.”

**Step 4:** If the other person does not follow through with your request, Loop back to the first three steps calmly and firmly. Don't let yourself be distracted if they respond with their own judgments.
Step 5: Once they follow through with your ask or respect your “no,” Show gratitude.

If the other person follows through with what you want, be sure to smile and say “thank you”. Be sure that the other person feels appreciated.

**Remember:** Avoid judgments and threats as you do this. Confident body language is important as well:

- Have your back straight and shoulders down and back.
- Use appropriate eye contact.
- Use a confident and loud enough voice.

Rehearse (in your mind or by practicing with a friend) ahead of time — this may make it more effective.

*Do some role-plays with the youth, asking them to walk through each step with their response.*

- “Eddy, can you please run to Starbucks and get me a coffee?”
- “Julia, I would like you to stand up in front of everyone and sing “O Canada.”
- “Reggie, can you please lend me $100? I want to go for a nice meal.”
- “Do you want to go to the party with me tonight?”
- “Just lend me $20 to buy lunch today.”
- “You don’t need to study for the test tomorrow. Come play soccer with me tonight.”

*Provide other examples where they might request things from others:*

- You want your parent/guardian to help you practice driving for your licence....
- You want your classmate to contribute more to a group science project...
- You want your brother to help with the dishes....

5 Home practice

This week, try to practice:

- engaging without judgments
- self-disclosure statements
- assertive communication (GOALS).

Write down your personal goal over the next week based on the skills discussed today:

Work with youth to identify a personal goal for themselves over the next week. Remind youth to focus their goal on something they can do within a week and to try and be as specific as possible.
Ask youth to share their personal goal, if they are willing.

Ask if there are any questions about the home practice and if youth anticipate anything that might get in the way of doing the practice. If youth identify obstacles, work with them to problem-solve around them.

Allow 5–10 minutes for the youth to provide a statement about their experience in session today (e.g., “What did you like/not like?” “What did you notice?” “What was helpful/not helpful?”)

An alternative way to end session: Head, Heart, Feet activity

Ask youth to answer one of the following questions:

• What is one thing you’re thinking about after session today? (Head)

• What is one thing you’re feeling after session today (Heart)

• What is something you are going to now do after session today? (Feet)
1 Review

**Which skills did you practice last week?**
- ☐ Engaging without judgments
- ☐ Self-disclosure statements
- ☐ Assertive communication.

*Ask the youth to answer the questions below.*

**Which of the following are judging statements and which are non-judging?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Judging</th>
<th>Non-judging</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>That movie was the worst.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t like country music.</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa is not acting the way I expected her to.</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think it will be helpful for me to attend therapy.</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter shouldn’t be judging people so much.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What are the GOALS steps in assertive communication?**

1. Get straight to the __facts__.
2. Use an “I” statement to describe your ____own experience ____ of the situation: either the emotion (“I feel...”) or the thought (“I think...”).
3. ____Ask____ for what you want OR say ____“no”____ to a request without judgments or threats.
4. If the other person does not follow through with your request, ____loop____ back to the first three steps calmly and firmly.
5. Once they follow through with your ask or respect your “no,” ____show gratitude____.

*Ask if the youth had any experiences trying out non-judging statements, self-disclosure or assertive communication in the past week.*

*Have youth discuss their personal goal from last week and how it went.*
2 Tricky interpersonal situations

Have a conversation with the youth to note that some of the next activities talk about sex, sexual orientation and gender orientation. Some youth may be more comfortable than others in talking about these topics; for some it may be new.

Use the scenarios to discuss the skills in greater depth.

Remember the skills we have learned in this section so far:

• social skills
• alternative thinking
• how to start a conversation
• how to end a conversation
• engaging
• non-judging statements
• self-disclosure
• assertive communication

Consider the following situations. How can each person use the skills listed above to address the dilemma?

Use the cases to really demonstrate how these skills might help. Use role play as you see fit. You can go through the cases in order or have the youth select which cases they want to explore more. You can also use situations that youth are currently working through in their own lives.

• Jenna is attracted to Russell. They attend math class together. She is not sure how to approach him to ask him out. What can she do?
• Yannick and Sara have been dating for two months. Yannick wants to take the relationship to the next level, physically, with Sara. Sara is not so sure. What can Sara do?
• Petra is transgender. Their classmates, Tim, Kwan and Alex, were eating lunch beside Petra in the cafeteria. Tim made a transphobic comment, at which Kwan laughed. What can Alex do? What can Petra do?
• Yin’s mother is struggling with depression, and this really affects Yin’s mood. Her mother refuses to see someone for help. What can Yin do?
• Vivian has recently identified that she is attracted to girls more than guys. She wants to be able to tell her friends and family, but is not sure what to say and when to say it. What can she do?
• Stephen was on Instagram when he noticed that his friend posted a picture of him that he did not want other people to see. How can he manage this?
• You recently held a small party with your closest friends. Trish, who is sometimes included with your circle of friends, noticed the pictures on Instagram. She replies with a comment on one of the pictures that she is upset she was not invited. How can you respond?

• Paul is an introvert who used to want to stay at home and read or do homework on weekends rather than go out. But over time, he has found that he gets lonely being alone so much. He decides he wants to start doing more things on the weekend, but is not sure who to ask or what to do. What can he do?
3 Wrapping up

Look at the list of skills we have discussed in this module. Mark a ‘✓’ in each column to rate the extent to which you have used them in your life.

*Review the activity below and ask youth to fill out the table. Discuss the results, including any barriers to using the skills.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Skill Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Haven't thought about using it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thought about using it, but did not use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Used it, but not helpful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Used it, and it was somewhat helpful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Used it, and it was really helpful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using social skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using “balanced thoughts” about communication and relationships to get around depressive thoughts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using skills to end conversations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged listening</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding without judgment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using self-disclosure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using assertive communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>