EXECUTIVE FUNCTION

Clinician Manual and Worksheets

# Executive Functioning Group

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# Acknowledgment

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# Session 1

# Orientation

**Objective:** Group members learn to identify what EF skills are and how the group addresses them. In addition, group members begin to identify what skills they might want to develop and what their motivation is to do so.

**Materials:** Handouts 1A through 1G

**What to Say:**

*The overall goals of this group are to:*

- *Give you the tools to manage executive functioning problems*
- *Surround you with a supportive community of other people struggling with similar issues*
- *Help you build a track record of success and in doing so enhance your confidence and self-efficacy to cope with EF problems*

**Exercises:** Give participants Handouts 1A,1B,1C

*But what exactly is executive functioning- What does this mean? Let's' read about what people think it means.*

Emphasize that EF are essentially all the things that have to happen in order to get things done. There's overlap between the areas described and it may be easier to think of someone's executive functioning being like a concert with many instruments (e.g. skills) being worked at the same time in order to get the desired result. Explain that most psychiatric problems have associated executive functioning deficits. In fact, even when mood symptoms improve, EF skills can still suffer, which can lead to problems if one leaves treatment and expects to be "back on track" and finds that they are not able to do what they once could.

Next focus on the group structure and give Handouts 1D,1E and 1F. Discuss them as a group

End with Handout 1G giving everyone time to complete it and then share with the group.

**Handout**

**1A**

# EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Executive functions let people plan, organize and complete tasks. Here’s a closer look at the different areas of executive function and the skills they affect.

**Circle the areas where you struggle**.

**Initiative/Motivation**

The ability to get yourself going on a task, even if it is unappealing, without prompting. The ability to start projects well before a deadline (e.g. not procrastinate).

**Organization Skills**

The ability to create order, plan and keep track of things.

**Working Memory (The Brain’s RAM)**

The ability to hold information in mind and then use it in some way. (Try spelling “mouse” backwards)

**Sense of Time**

The ability to estimate how much time things will take, manage your time and use scheduling skills.

**Flexibility**

The ability to adjust your behavior when needed and roll with changes to your schedule or tasks.

### Attention

The ability to focus, even when you are not interested, especially when there are distractions.

### Emotional Self-Control:

The ability to tolerate frustration & anger, control impulsive tendencies.

### Behavioral Self-Control

The ability to stop yourself from doing things that aren’t helpful, the ability to think before you speak or act.

### Persistence

The ability to stick with a task.

# HOW DO EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING PROBLEMS AFFECT PEOPLE?

Other members of this group have mentioned the following problems as a result of EF difficulties.

✎ Select which of these describe you:

○ Shame and self-criticism for not being able to act on your intentions/values

○ Low self esteem

○ Lateness and increased stress from rushing

○ Distractibility/Poor Attention

○ Depression due to difficulty reaching goals/achieving your full potential

○ Procrastination and avoidance

○ Memory problems

○ Difficulty regulating your sleep

○ Difficulty planning & completing tasks

○ Disorganization (e.g. cluttered space, lost belongings)

○ Difficulties in relationships/social situations (interrupting, acting before you think, doing things you regret later, difficulty waiting)

○ Feeling easily bored

○ Difficulty switching from one task or location to another

Handout

1C

# MYTHS VS. FACTS

**Myth: Only people with ADHD have executive functioning problems (EFP).**

FACT People with other mental health challenges also struggle with EFP. For example. depression, bipolar and psychotic disorders are all associated with EFP.

**Myth: A good recovery means improving steadily and quickly.**

FACT Recovery takes time and is not just a series of successes. There will be setbacks but that is ok- you can learn from the setbacks. Often, recovery also takes longer than anyone involved would like it to. However, the quality of the recovery is often better if the process is not rushed.

**Myth: If you have struggled with EFP since childhood it is unlikely things will ever change.**

FACT EF skills can be learned and improved with practice. In this group you will learn ways to adapt your environment to suit you and you'll learn ways to adapt to the demands of your environment.

**Myth: If you don't follow through on your goals you must not really want to achieve them.**

FACT Many people struggle greatly with the fact that their actions do not always follow their intentions. You and other people in your life may even attribute this to your being "lazy, crazy or stupid."

While there is no way for anyone else to tell you for sure why you may have difficulty taking action, our interest in this group is to look at the problem from several different angles. Could it be that you don't have the skills necessary to complete the goal? Is the goal too big or too small? Have you not figured out enough ways to motivate yourself? Is it truly you goal or is it someone else's? All of these factors, and more, could be at play.

**Myth: Motivation, willpower and attention are fixed traits that you either have or you don't.**

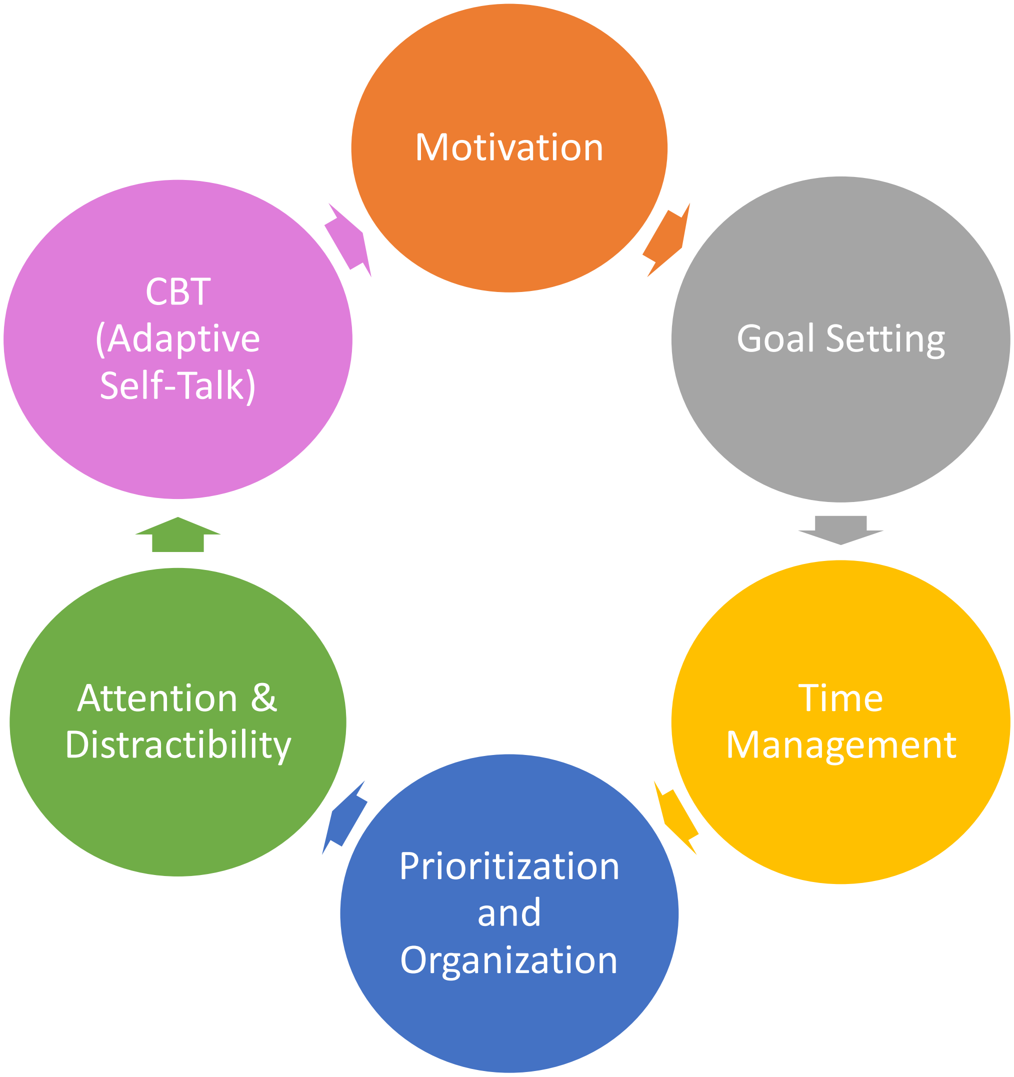
FACT One of the most important guiding principles of this group is that these are all skills you can learn and improve.

**Myth: If you're smart enough you don't have difficulties getting things done.**

FACT In fact, what can be so frustrating for many people with executive functioning issues is that they are very capable of doing the task, but they can't get themselves to do it. The purpose of this group will be to bridge the gap between your intelligence and your actions.

**Handout 1D**

# GROUP STRUCTURE


Motivation
Goal Setting
Time Management
Prioritization and Organization
Attention & Distractibility
CBT (Adaptive Self-Talk)

## MODULES

Above are the sections of material (modules) that we cover. Because this group has open enrollment you will be joining an existing group and can complete the cycle by looping around to the section that you began with. If you need help on a certain topic and we are not in that module you can ask for support during the group discussion in the second half.

Once you have completed a full cycle of the material you are considered a "varsity" member of the group.

**Handout 1E**

## WE SUGGEST YOU HAVE THREE THINGS WHEN YOU START THIS GROUP

### 1. Watch

XONIX
22 SU
7:48
CHRONO
ALARM
CHIME
32
WR 100M

Wearing a watch is the first step in improving time management. Many people will say, “But I use my phone.” Using your phone requires additional steps (e.g. taking it out of your pocket/purse, activating the screen) that a watch does NOT require. This is why people stopped using pocket watches. In addition, looking at your phone can put you at risk for becoming distracted by other things like notifications, apps etc. If you want to improve your time awareness and time management skills wearing a watch is the single most important thing you can do to improve your life in this area.

If you’re not sure you like the idea, think about wearing a watch for a trial period of one month to see if it makes a difference.

### 2. Calendar

During the course of this group you will need to have a calendar to keep track of your schedule. We will be discussing what kind of calendar works best for you, but start thinking about it.

- Should it be small enough to carry in your pocket?
- Should it be colorful enough to spot easily?

### 3. To-Do List

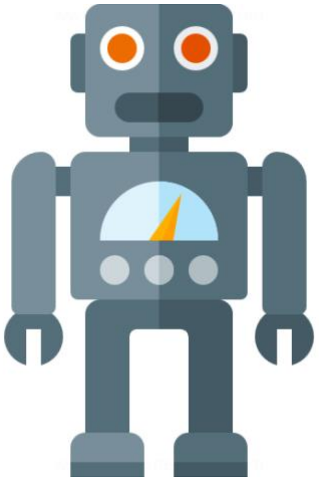
My To-Do List
Date
✓
Item

A To-Do list can be a document you have on your phone, an app that organizes your tasks or just a notebook that you have with you at all times. Some people choose calendars that include a section for a to-do list to streamline things.

## DIGITAL VERSUS PAPER

If you don't currently have a calendar or to do list, or if your current systems are not serving you well, you will want to consider whether these tools should be digital or paper. Here is a list of pros and cons according to previous group members:

**DIGITAL**



**Pros:**

- Ability to set alarms
- Recurring appointments are easy to set
- Travel times can be set/anticipated digitally
- More likely to have it on you
- Can access on other devices

**Cons:**

- Ability to become distracted by apps etc.

**PAPER**

**Pros:**

- Writing by hand can help encode the information in your memory
- Crossing completed items off can be very satisfying
- More personal control over setup

**Cons:**

- If it is lost it's very problematic
- The extra work of writing the schedule out can prove too time consuming.
- Writing things out may be a pseudo-efficiency trap

**NAME:**

**EMAIL:**

**CELL PHONE:**

**What are 2 behaviors that you would like to see change during the course of this group? How will you know you are successful?**

**1.**

**2.**

**What is your motivation for being in this group?**

# Mindfulness & Motivation & Goal Setting

**Objective:** Group members start learning how mindfulness, motivation and goal setting can increase their productivity. Motivation and willpower are understood to be skills that can be learned, not static traits

**Materials:** Handouts 2A, 2B, 2C

**What to Say:**

*How many of you have heard the term Mindfulness? Today we will start by talking about how mindfulness can help you get things done.*

**Exercises:** Pass out Handout 2A and start a discussion

- Elicit examples of times when group members have felt mindful.
- Elicit examples of times when the lack of mindfulness (a.k.a. being on "autopilot") has caused difficulties in "getting things done" (e.g. losing track of time on the internet, noticing when you have begun doing pseudoefficiency tasks rather than what you planned).
- Second, ask how is mindfulness needed in order to "get things done"? (e.g. noting the passage of time and transitioning from task to task, consciously making decisions about where to dedicate your attention, observing and describing the negative self-talk you might be engaging in).

Pass out Handout 2B and take turns reading sections aloud, stopping for discussion about how the material applies in their lives.

Pass out Handout 2C and introduce them to how this will be used. Worksheet 2D is an example for your reference.

Worksheet

2A

# Mindfulness Training

We are going to be practicing something called **mindfulness** at the beginning of each session. Mindfulness is both very simple and very complex. It is the practice of being present in the moment, without getting caught in thoughts of the past or the future. It means soaking up all the information you can about the moment and participating in it.

There are a myriad of ways you can practice mindfulness meditation. Some of these include:

Mindful movement (e.g., paying attention to how your body is jostled on the subway, mindfully saying "heel, ball, toe" to yourself as you walk)

Mindful awareness of senses (e.g., seeing if you can pick out various layers of sound while walking on the street, paying attention to different textures of clothing as you plan your outfit for the day)

Mindful eating (e.g. taking a moment before you eat to look at your food, smell it, and imagine what it will taste like)

Mindful breathing exercises (e.g. box breathing or color breathing)

Mindful body scan (e.g. halo of light practice or guided meditation)

Mindful observation of thoughts (e.g. the "conveyor belt" practice)

**Mindfulness** helps raise your awareness for how you talk to yourself and how you behave. It also teaches you to focus your attention, a skill which is invaluable in implementing EF skills. Further, mindfulness helps us practice non-judgment towards our experience.

**Other benefits of mindfulness meditation:**

- Increased attentional control
- Improved emotion regulation
- Decreased stress

Every day at the beginning of group we will be practicing a brief mindfulness meditation like the above mentioned activities.

# Learning About Motivation

**Worksheet**

**2B**

For many people, lack of motivation is one of the most troubling aspects of being diagnosed with a mental illness. Poor motivation can mean that, even if a person is smart or creative enough to do something, they can't get themselves to do it. It can also mean that tasks that have very little interest or are not immediately gratifying can be even more difficult to do than usual.

If only we had a foolproof way to crank up our motivation so that we can take care of tasks we don't want to do or tasks we want to do but can't seem to get ourself to take action. If only it were that simple! Unfortunately, anyone who tells you they have a silver bullet for procrastination, avoidance and pseudo-efficiency is probably selling you snake oil.

What we endeavor to do in this group is to help you:

- Gain knowledge about what motivation is and what science can teach us about how humans get and stay motivated.
- Increase self-knowledge about your own motivation
- Understand common barriers to motivation and learn strategies to help you overcome those barriers

We are going to share with you some theories about how people get motivated. Knowledge is power, and many have found that better understanding how motivation works and what you can do to change it can increase your sense of mastery and self-regulation.

Like everything else you learn here, what works for some will not work for others. Motivation is a very personal phenomenon and your task will be to document in your goal binders what strategies were successful and which were not so that you can build a file on your own motivational system and skillset.

One of the things that motivation requires is the ability to see yourself doing things. Being able to picture yourself following through on some phone calls or showing up to a job interview on time can help you in actually doing them in real life. You might say it takes some imagination in order to get yourself to do things.

**Worksheet 2C**

**Name:** ______________________________

**Week of: / /**

## Weekly Goals:

| Goal or Task | Motivation<br>L M H<br>Urgency<br>L M H | Values | Potential Pitfalls | Skills to Use |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | | | | |
| OUTCOME: | | | | |
| 2. | | | | |
| OUTCOME: | | | | |
| Upcoming deadlines: | | | | |

Goals: Remember to make goals ESMART: emotionally charged, specific, measurable, achievable, relevant & timely
Motivation: L=Low, M=Medium, H=High
Values: why is the goal important to you?
Skills to Use: chunking (by time or task), piggy backing, pleasurable pairing, partnering, preparation, projection, pros & cons, presents/rewards, radical acceptance/willingness, zombie/just do it method, pre-emptive strike, cleaning ninja, secret goals, carve out, sleep hygiene, time estimation, time padding, time tethering, time guarding, mindfulness, self-talk, breaks, attention gauge, distraction dump, distraction delay, CBT thought record.

# Worksheet 2D

**Name: ______Sample____________________**

**Week of: / /**

## Weekly Goals:

| Goal or Task | Motivation L M H Urgency L M H | Values | Potential Pitfalls | Skills to Use |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1.** Schedule appointment for a dental checkup. | M / H | I will be healthy, and by managing my own schedule will be more independent | P1: Running out of minutes on phone<br>P2: Hopelessness that there are no appts in next month<br>P3: Forgetting to make the call | S1 Monitor time on phone<br>S2 Get on wait list<br>S3 Write it on to do list |
| **OUTCOME:** | | | | |
| **2.** | / | | | |
| **OUTCOME:** | | | | |
| **Upcoming deadlines:** | | | | |

Goals: Remember to make goals ESMART: emotionally charged, specific, measurable, achievable, relevant & timely
Motivation: L=Low, M=Medium, H=High
Values: why is the goal important to you?
Skills to Use: chunking (by time or task), piggy backing, pleasurable pairing, partnering, preparation, projection, pros & cons, presents/rewards, radical acceptance/willingness, zombie/just do it method, pre-emptive strike, cleaning ninja, secret goals, carve out, sleep hygiene, time estimation, time padding, time tethering, time guarding, mindfulness, self-talk, breaks, attention gauge, distraction dump, distraction delay, CBT thought record.

# Motivation Module: What Do You Value?

## Session 3

## Part 1: Values Clarification

**Objectives:** 1) For the participants to identify their values in four areas of life in order to increase motivation. 2) To help the participants understand if they are currently living in accordance to their personal values. 3) For the participants to understand the difference between values and goals.

**Materials:** : Each participant will need a copy of My Values (Worksheet A)_ the Bull's Eye worksheet set (Worksheet 3B), Happiness Trap quote (Worksheet 3C), and a pen or pencil.

**What to Say:**

*"I am going to do an exercise with you to help you figure out what your values are. We will focus on what is important to you, which may be different from what your friends, family and providers find important. Knowing what you value- what you really care about is the foundation on which you can begin to get what you want and will provide you with the energy to get things done.*

*Values are not the same as goals. Russ Harris, a psychologist who investigates the impact of values on motivation describes the difference between values and goals. Let's read what he wrote together, taking turns reading a sentence. Give everyone Worksheet 3C.*

*"Values are like directions we keep moving in, whereas goals are what we want to achieve along the way. A value is like heading West; a goal is like the river or mountain or valley we aim to cross whilst traveling in that direction. Goals can be achieved or 'crossed off', whereas values are ongoing. (No matter how far West you go, you never reach it!) For example, if you want to be a loving, caring, supportive partner, that is a value: it involves ongoing action. In contrast, if you want to get married, that's a goal - it can be 'crossed off' or achieved. If you want a better job, that's a goal. Once you've got it - goal achieved. But if you want to fully apply yourself at work, contribute your best, and engage fully in what you're doing, that's a value: it involves ongoing action."*

*The Happiness Trap, Russ Harris*

*Give them an example from your own life, for example I really value my family, that is why it is one of my goals for this weekend to visit my grandmother who has a hard time getting out of the house. When clients understand the difference between values and goals, introduce the Bulls Eye.*

## Exercises:

The 'Bull's Eye' is a values-clarification exercise designed by therapist Tobias Lundgren, that we have adapted. The bulls eye is divided into four important domains of life:

1. work/education
2. leisure
3. relationships
4. personal growth/health.

To begin with, think about your values in these 4 areas of life. Not everyone has the same values, and this is not a test to see whether you have the "correct" ones. Think in terms of general life directions, rather than in terms of specific goals. There may be values that overlap – e.g. if you value studying computer science, that may come under both Education and Personal Growth.

What you would value if there were nothing in your way, nothing stopping you? What's important? What do you care about? And what you would like to work towards? Your value should not be a specific goal but instead reflect a way you would like to live your life over time. For example, to visit your grandmother this weekend might be a goal; to be an involved and interested family member might be the underlying value. Note! Make sure they are your values, not anyone else's. It is your personal values that are important!

Use your paper and pen to write down your values on Worksheet 3A. There are four areas of life to think about and the areas are described. Let's look. Give everyone Worksheet 3A and be sure they understand and are writing down their values.

Then give the Bull's Eye worksheet set (Worksheet 3B) and do that exercise.

## Worksheet 3A

# My Values

**1. Work/Education**: refers to your workplace & career, education and knowledge, skills development. (This may include volunteering and other forms of unpaid work). How do you want to be towards your clients, customers, colleagues, employees, fellow workers? What personal qualities do you want to bring to your work? What skills do you want to develop?

**2. Relationships**: refers to intimacy, closeness, friendship and bonding in your life: it includes relationships with your partner, children, parents, relatives, friends, co-workers, and other social contacts. What sort of relationships do you want to build? How do you want to be in these relationships? What personal qualities do you want to develop?

**3. Personal Growth/Health**: refers to your ongoing development as a human being. This may include organized religion, personal expressions of spirituality, creativity, developing life skills, meditation, yoga, getting out into nature; exercise, nutrition, and addressing health risk factors like smoking.

**4. Leisure**: refers to how you play, relax, stimulate, or enjoy yourself; your hobbies or other activities for rest, recreation, fun and creativity.

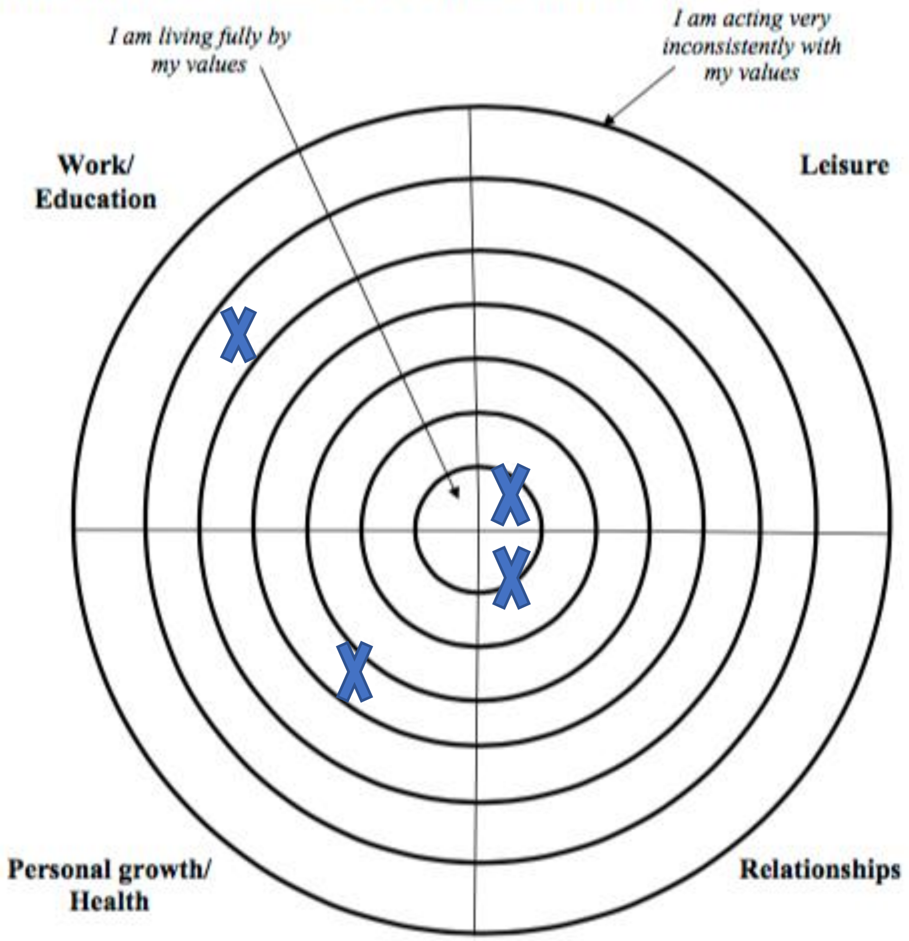
**Worksheet 3B**

# The Bull's Eye

*The Bull's Eye is a way of showing if you are living by your values. An X in the Bull's Eye (the center of the board) means that you are living fully by your values in that area of life. An X far from Bull's Eye means that you are way off the mark in terms of living by your values. Let's do an example together.*

If someone thinks the most important way to spend their time is seeing a cousin, they might mark an X in the "Leisure" and "Relationship" quadrants. If that person would like to go back to work but has struggled with feeling motivated to explore jobs that interest them, the "Work/Education" X will be farther from the center. If they are trying to make healthy changes to their diet, the "Personal Growth/Health" X might be closer to the center.

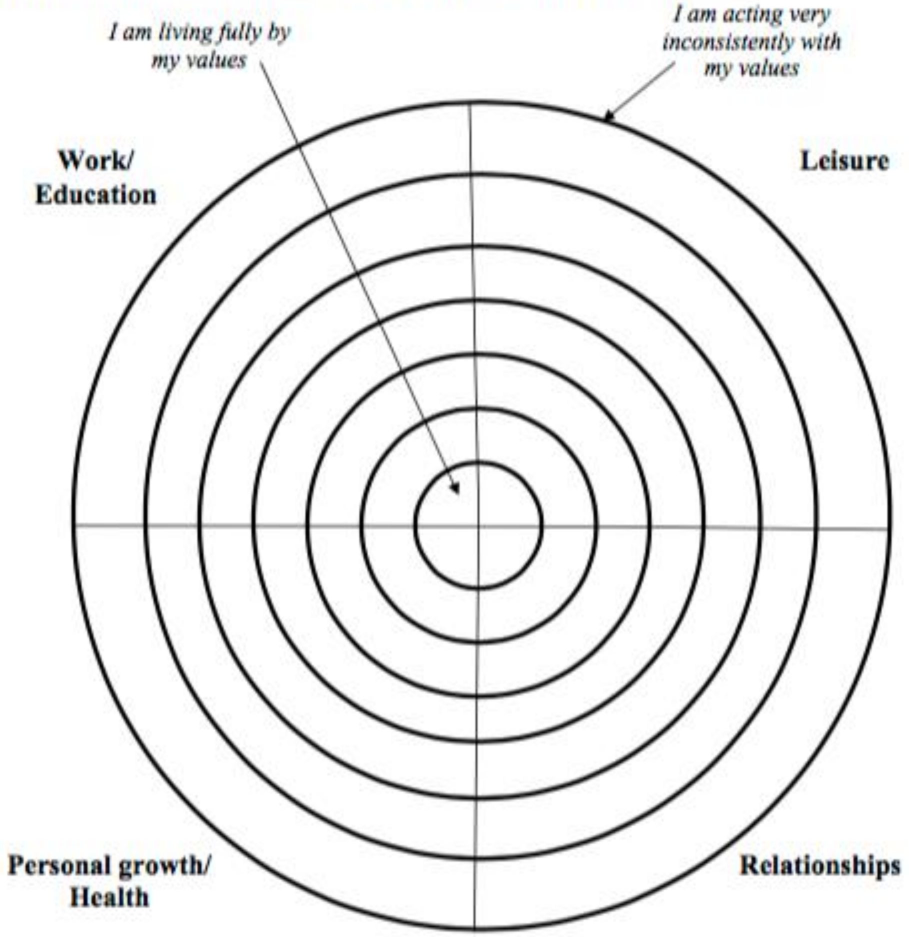
**THE BULL'S EYE:** make an X in each area of the dart board, to represent where you stand today.



I am living fully by my values
I am acting very inconsistently with my values
Work/ Education
Leisure
X
X
X
X
Personal growth/ Health
Relationships

*Now you can each do this based on the values you wrote down. Make an X in each area of the dart board, to represent where you stand today.* Since there are four areas of valued living, be sure to mark **four Xs** on the dart board.

**THE BULL'S EYE:** make an X in each area of the dart board, to represent where you stand today.


I am living fully by my values
I am acting very inconsistently with my values
Work/ Education
Leisure
Personal growth/ Health
Relationships

# The Happiness Trap

**Worksheet**

**3C**

*"Values are like directions we keep moving in, whereas goals are what we want to achieve along the way. A value is like heading West; a goal is like the river or mountain or valley we aim to cross whilst traveling in that direction. Goals can be achieved or 'crossed off', whereas values are ongoing. (No matter how far West you go, you never reach it!) For example, if you want to be a loving, caring, supportive partner, that is a value: it involves ongoing action. In contrast, if you want to get married, that's a goal - it can be 'crossed off' or achieved. If you want a better job, that's a goal. Once you've got it - goal achieved. But if you want to fully apply yourself at work, contribute your best, and engage fully in what you're doing, that's a value: it involves ongoing action."*

*The Happiness Trap, Russ Harris*

Session
4

# Motivation Module: Motivation Basics

## Part 1 Basic Motivation:

**Objective:** To understand the difference between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

**Materials:** access to YouTube

**What to Say:**

*There are two types of motivation. One type is intrinsic, or internal motivation. You do things because you want to do them. For example, you make a special dinner because you love cooking, even if it takes you 2 hours. The second type is extrinsic motivation, which comes from outside of you, or external sources. For example, you make sure to take out the garbage because you don't want to have bugs in your apartment. You are not taking the garbage out because you love to do it but because you have extrinsic motivation to keep your apartment clean. Or a classic example, you go to work because you get paid.*

**Exercises:** Show the clip from the T.V. show The Office https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lQYzT49hyKo

**Discussion Questions:**

- What types of motivation are being shown in this clip?
- Did you notice how the rewards needed to be something that the workers got excited about?
- Can you think of things in your own life that you have extrinsic and intrinsic motivation for?

## Part 2 Self-Determination Theory:

**Objective:** To understand the self-determination theory formulation of motivations and begin to understand how this can be used to enhance personal motivation.

**Materials:** Worksheet 4A

**What to Say:**

*This theory was developed by researchers who found that* in addition to valuing a task, *there are 3 areas* that *influence a person's ability to have* a *high level of motivation. Those 3 things are"autonomy"(the amount of control you have* in *a situation),*"competence" *(how well* you *think* you *can do something) and* "relatedness" *(how* supportive people are of your efforts). *If a task is important to me, it is something that I have control of, I know I'm good at,* and I like the people I do it with, *then I will have a high level of motivation to get it done. Use an example here that is meaningful to you- for example, "I love to plan parties- I am going to plan a birthday party for my niece- I will be able to pick the decorations and food, my niece and I are very close and I am happy to do this for her and people in the past have said that I am very good at planning events. Ask the group- "Does this sound like I have high motivation to plan this party? Have the group practice picking out of the example you give which is "relatedness", "competence", and autonomy". Explain that this example you provided shows when all 3 areas of SDT are positive, but in the real world this may not be the case. Direct the group's attention to worksheet 4A.*

**Exercises:** Using the worksheet 4A, do an assessment of which variables increase of decrease participants' motivation to do tasks like cleaning their room, exercise etc. While completing the worksheet, have each group member assess how well their needs are met in each one of the three SDT areas.

# Worksheet 4A

| Task | Autonomy<br>How much control do you have? | Competence<br>How likely is it that you will be successful? | Relatedness<br>Are others helpful and supportive? |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Example:**<br>**Exercise** | Only workout I can stand is Zumba, it's only offered 3x week 30 minutes away. | I have been able to pick up the moves at Zumba and feel like I really have the hang of it. | Seeing the same people every week makes me want to keep coming. |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Examples: Watching my budget, stop taking drugs, take a class, lose weight, and clean my room.

# Motivation Module

## Part 2 Self Determination Theory:

**Objective:** To understand how the self-determination theory (SDT) of motivation can be used to increase personal motivation. Review SDT theory and give examples. Next, ask group members which variables, increase or decrease their motivation. Use the discussion to help each group member assess how well their needs are met in each one of the three SDT areas

**Materials:** Each participants will need a copy of worksheets A and B. (The worksheets A1 and B1 are for the clinician to help prepare for the group)

**What to Say:**

*Last time we discussed "Self determination theory", a theory that can help us better understand our own motivation. Lets look at Worksheet A. This theory teaches us that there are three things we need to feel or believe about ourselves to help us get things done. First we need to believe that we can do the task well – that we will be "competent". Second we need to feel a sense of control when doing the task- which, the SDT theory calls autonomy. Third, we need a feeling of "relatedness", of being connected to others in a positive way while doing the task. We feel more motivated when we feel competent, have autonomy and are connected to others in a caring way. While looking at worksheet A you can use the examples on page A1 to describe specific situations. When we do not feel competent, in control or connected to others then this can have a negative effect on our motivation and follow through*

**Exercises:** Ask the group what they think about the theory, if they feel anything is missing, or if they disagree with any part of it. Encourage critical thinking and avoid becoming defensive about the content. We have found that if we make space for people to challenge the material or our explanation it can lead to a deeper understanding for everyone involved. Also, it allows us to model gracefully taking in feedback.

As a group fill out motivation worksheet B on the board where members identify situations, interactions or emotions which increase and decrease their autonomy, competence and relatedness (Worksheet B1 has a completed worksheet to provide the clinician with an example of answers from previous patients). Use the discussion to help each group member assess how well their needs are met in each one of the three SDT areas.

# Self Determination Theory: Creating the best condition to GET THINGS DONE

**Worksheet**

**5A**

**Our Basic Needs**

- **Competence**: Need to feel effective in dealing with environment.
- **Autonomy**: Need to control the course of our lives.
- **Relatedness**: Need to have positive, affectionate relationships with others.

(Deci & Ryan, 1985)

Worksheet
5A1

# AN EXAMPLE (for clinicians)

**WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE:**
**Use a calendar and to do list**

**Competence**:
"In the past I tried making lists but I always lost them. I know I'm good at making things look appealing, though."

**Autonomy:**
"I don't like how my case manager is always nagging me about appointments or to call my doctor or return emails. I do better when he/she lays off and lets me handle things, even if it's more stressful for both of us at first."

**Relatedness**:
"I like it when, after an appointment, my case manager checks in with me about it, but not before. I'd rather share things with them on my terms, but I appreciate that they are looking out for me."

**Returning to School**

**Competence**:
"I feel as though I used to be good at school, but that I can't rely on myself to study or get good grades anymore. The last time I felt competent in this area was early in high school."

**Autonomy**:
"My counselors have left it up to me whether I return next semester or not. I feel like it's up to me to decide where I want to be and what I want to study."

**Relatedness**:
"Being in group with other people at the same crossroads as I am is helpful because I don't feel like I'm as out of step as I did when I left school. I can start to see how I could be successful even though I had to take a break from school because I see other people have succeeded in doing this."

# MOTIVATION

## Worksheet 5B

| | COMPETENCE | AUTONOMY | RELATEDNESS |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 THINGS THAT INCREASE YOUR MOTIVATION | 1.<br>2.<br>3. | 1.<br>2.<br>3. | 1.<br>2.<br>3. |
| 3 THINGS THAT DECREASE YOUR MOTIVATION | 1.<br>2.<br>3. | 1.<br>2.<br>3. | 1.<br>2.<br>3. |

**Worksheet**
**5B1**

# EXAMPLES (for clinician)

| | COMPETENCE | AUTONOMY | RELATEDNESS |
|---|---|---|---|
| **3 THINGS THAT INCREASE YOUR MOTIVATION** | Completing a task<br>Positive self-talk & reframing<br>Being asked for help | Paying my own bills<br>Having a choice in whether I get help or not<br>Asking for someone's presence but not their help | Appreciation<br>Getting useful feedback<br>Working as a group |
| **3 THINGS THAT DECREASE YOUR MOTIVATION** | Others being indifferent to your opinion<br>Inner Critic/distortions<br>Failure/inability to complete goals<br>Failure to start task<br>Biting off more than you can chew<br>Psychiatric illness<br>Comparisons to others<br>Failing even with effort | Being micromanaged<br>Having a teacher/boss who only wants to hear his/her own ideas<br>Changing expectations unpredictability<br>Being threatened<br>Being infantilized/ Belittled<br>Being done for rather than being asked to try<br>Expectations being too low or high | Feeling unappreciated<br>Working in isolation<br>Feeling misunderstood<br>Feeling your work will never make an impact<br>Feeling no one shares your values |

# Motivation and Realistic Self-Appraisal

## Session 6

**Objective:** Improve knowledge of how realistic self-appraisal helps one stay motivated

**Materials:** Each participant will need a copy of Worksheet 6A. Use a board for writing group discussion points.

**What to Say:**

*It is hard to be motivated to do something if you do not have a clear sense of what you are able to do. If you want to lose weight but have never gone on a diet, how would you know if you could lose 1,2,5, or 7 pounds in a week? Knowing what you have done in the past and being realistic about what you can do would help you know what to expect. But many times, we engage in wishful thinking. We say what we wish would happen and then lose motivation when we confront the reality of what we can do. Let's look at your handout* **ADDRESSING BARRIERS TO MOTIVATION.**

**Exercises:** Have group members work on an example together by choosing a goal (job, school, exercise, social etc.,) and doing radical acceptance (completely accepting what is reality) and realistic self-appraisal. Note to clinician: for more information on "radical acceptance" please see Marsha Linehan's Dialectical Behavioral Therapy workbook.

# Addressing Barriers To Motivation

## Worksheet 6A

We've learned about what is necessary to help us get motivated. What about the forces and feelings that decrease our motivation? What contributes to feeling avoidant, willful or overwhelmed? A big reason is not accepting reality on reality's terms. We will refer to this as "denial".

Everyone participates in some form of denial. However, when your denial makes moving forward impossible it has to be challenged.

Take Ted's case for example. Though extremely bright, he found it difficult to stay in a job for longer than a few months. Sometimes he felt his boss was not very skilled, sometimes he felt the work was beneath him, and boring. Despite all this, Ted does want to work, he just doesn't want to do so with all of these irritating variables dragging him down. Instead, he thinks about how he could create a business venture where he does not have to deal with anyone asking him to do things he does not like to do. While it may be true that Ted would benefit from a more autonomous work environment, he is not accepting that his intolerance for doing tasks he doesn't like has a part in his previous difficulties in the workforce. Additionally, he has externalized the blame to other people or organizations who have let him down. In order to make meaningful progress he will have to own his part of these problems, as painful as that may be.

Another example might be Ella. Ella took a medical leave from school due to the onset of a psychotic illness which is now under control. She is eager to return to school and resume a full course load so she can finish school more quickly. However, the stress of having to take five courses a semester is part of what led to her becoming ill in the first place. She doesn't want to believe that this time around she will have to go more slowly in order for her return to be successful.

In both of these examples there is a refusal to acknowledge the reality of one's limitations. Often times, this goes along with accepting that life isn't fair. Why should Ted have to change his behavior when the people he worked for had their own issues which made the job difficult? Why should Ella have to deal with a psychotic illness when other people can handle a full course load?

In these sorts of situations we can call upon helpful concepts from a therapy called DBT (Dialectical Behavioral Therapy). In DBT, the term radical acceptance means accepting reality as it is (willingness), rather than getting stuck in how things "should" be (willfulness). Radically accepting a situation does not mean that you approve of the current situation, but that you have chosen to look at it with clear eyes and deal with it head on.

When you are feeling willful or oppositional you can take the following steps:

1. Use your mindfulness skills to notice that willfulness has arisen.
2. Radically accept that you are feeling this way and that the situation is as it is.
3. Turn your mind towards acceptance and willingness; participate in reality just as it is rather than how it "should" be.
4. Try a willing posture (e.g. open your hands, relax your body.)
5. Ask yourself what is the threat of being willing? What are you scared of?

(Linehan, 2014)

## Discussion Questions:

Think back to Ted and Ella. How would radically accepting their challenges help them attain their goals?

Once they accept their reality what can they do differently to help them attain their goals?

Think of your own goals. How could radical acceptance, rather than denial, help you achieve your goals?

# Barriers to Motivation: Lack of Autonomy

## Session 7

**Objective:** To understand how lack of autonomy can lead to lack of motivation and learn ways to increase autonomy and communicate your needs to others in an effective way.

**Materials:** Each participant will need a copy of Worksheet 10A. Use a board for writing group discussion points.

**What to Say:**

*As we discussed when we learned self-determination theory, people are more motivated when given autonomy- the ability to make decisions for ourselves, independence in when and how we do things, and freedom to create our own goals. I'm sure we can all think of times when we felt our autonomy was taken away. Maybe we were nagged about something so much that we did not want to do the task -either out of spite or frustration. Or maybe all the advice felt like we were not being trusted to do it right – and that made us shut down. Sometimes the task no longer feels like our own because someone else is taking over the task.*

**Exercises:** Have participants take turns reading through Worksheet 10A and stop after each section for a group discussion about the dynamic in their lives and if they could envision using the skills suggested or if they already are using other skills that work in gaining autonomy.

Ask the group for examples of when they have felt their autonomy has been low or non-existent. Ask for examples from different areas of life: friends, family, bosses, therapists etc.

Some questions you might ask are:

- In the past what has been the effect of telling others about your goals?
- Can you name a situation in which this increased your motivation? (e.g. telling your best friend you are quitting smoking and getting support from them when you want to light up).
- What about a time when sharing your goals decreased your motivation? (e.g. telling your roommate you are planning on cleaning your room, having her remind you of this plan, getting annoyed/frustrated at her and then not cleaning).

# LACK OF AUTONOMY

It is very common for other people in our lives to feel like they need to be involved to help us get things done.

While working with others to complete our goals can be very helpful sometimes it can reduce the feeling that the task is one's own.

Many people who have been in this group have mentioned that when others nag us or micromanage us it can feel like the other people in our lives don't have confidence that we can do things ourselves. This can be very irritating and make people feel like they are being treated like a child. It can be very helpful to be able to recognize when this pattern is happening in your life. If you can recognize this pattern, then there is a possibility of being able to change it to make communication more effective and help the other person stop feeling like they have to nag/micromanage. Getting things done on your own can help build a sense of achievement that is helpful for increasing motivation.

Whether the people involved in your recovery and goal setting are therapists, friends, significant others or authority figures (supervisors, teachers etc.), it is essential that you know how to talk with them skillfully about your needs. The following section describes some patterns to be aware of, as well as some communication skills to help you express your needs. Think about a specific person when you practice these skills.

## THE PURSUER / DISTANCER DYNAMIC

One pattern to watch for is the "pursuer/ distancer" or "fugitive/detective" dynamic. This is a common interaction that plays out when one individual is seeking autonomy and space, which then makes the other person pursue them even more. Read the following example and think about who is the pursuer/detective and who is the distancer/fugitive.

Greg has been in treatment for several months and his uncle, Ben, has started to ask him when he is going to begin to look for work. Ben asks Greg daily if he has looked for job postings on the shops or if he has checked the online employment listings. Greg begins to feel stressed that he is letting Ben down and ashamed that the process isn't going as quickly as either of them would like. He begins to dread discussing the topic of work with Ben and starts to avoid being around family as much. Instead he starts spending more time at the park, which only leads Ben to wonder if Greg is taking the job search seriously. Ben becomes worried and angry that Greg doesn't seem to be trying harder. Ben increases his attempt to encourage Greg by calling him to offer new suggestions, which only creates more anxiety and frustration for Greg. Each is wondering how they can communicate about this in a way that will interrupt this cycle from continuing.

Knowing about this dynamic will help you name it when it happens, which in and of itself can be empowering. In addition to "putting the pattern on the table", you can begin to radically accept it, challenge yourself to walk in the other person's shoes, give them the benefit of the doubt, and examine how you are participating in the process. Doing this will reinforce your sense of autonomy by allowing you to disengage from the toxic cycle. It will allow also allow you to refocus on yourself and not get distracted by what the other person is doing, or not doing.

## THE "PRE-EMPTIVE STRIKE":

If you find yourself in this cycle, you can increase your autonomy and sense of control by using a "Pre-Emptive Strike". This can either be something you say or do. Here are some examples:

**Pre-emptively say what you will do:**

Try offering people information BEFORE they ask for it. Often what motivates frequent check-ins are fear and the desire to be a good friend/parent/supervisor. If you initiate a check-in, you are allowing that person to feel more at ease while maintaining your sense of autonomy.
What impact might this have on your motivation? How would offering information before it's asked for help you feel more ownership of your intrinsic motivation and autonomy?

**Pre-emptively take the first step:**
Sometimes it helps to take steps toward your goal before anyone says something about it. That way you own it. Read Cleaning Ninja to see how this works.

## "CLEANING NINJA"

"Cleaning Ninja" is a term one of our group members coined when she was in a power struggle with her mother about cleaning her room. Her mom would intermittently nag/beg/cajole the group member to clean and she found that this drove down her motivation a great deal. She felt infantilized and irritated by her mother's requests and suggestions of how to move forward. In group we determined that this was because a) she felt a very low sense of *autonomy* and b) she felt her mother didn't trust her to be *competent* enough to clean on her own without reminders.

The group member decided to, under dark of night, clean her room without her mother knowing. She slowly started chipping away at different areas of her room each night after her parents had gone to bed and found that she was able to make progress and retain her motivation. The added bonus was that her mother was pleasantly surprised, rather than feeling as though she needed to keep up the reminders.

## SELF-SABOTAGE:

Self -sabotage is when you do something that is against your best interests -like when you procrastinate calling someone and then they make other plans and you are left feeling alone. You may have heard the expression, "Shooting yourself in the foot." Have you ever done that?

Self -sabotage is a barrier to motivation, because it prevents you from taking steps to your goals. Consider Sara. Her psychiatrist keeps telling her that if she picked up running again her mood would improve but Sara avoids doing just that because it would feel as though she is giving in to her psychiatrist's demands. Sadly, Sara may even be intrinsically motivated to start running again, but she doesn't exercise to prove to her psychiatrist that she is her own person. Put dramatically, self-sabotage means that you "drink poison and expect the other person to die".

So, what should Sarah do? What should you do if you self-sabotage? Consider how you could reframe your behavior as your own, even if the other person shares that goal for you, and use willingness to do what the situation requires.

# Barriers to Motivation: Relatedness

## Session 8

**Objective:** To understand how lack of relatedness can lead to lack of motivation and learn ways to increase relatedness and communicate your needs to others in an effective way.

**Materials:** Each participant will need a copy of Worksheet 11A. Use a board for writing group discussion points.

**What to Say:**

*As we discussed when we learned self-determination theory, when people do not feel a sense of relatedness, that others care about their goals and are available to help, and that they can get feedback and support if they need it, they tend to be less motivated. In a larger sense, relatedness means that you believe the goal you're working on has a larger purpose that connects you to the world. For example, you might be more motivated to volunteer in a place that cares for sick people because you saw your mother suffer in an institution that was not caring and you want to be part of creating a different experience for others who are sick.*

*Often times, you may want to feel more related or connected to others but aren't quite sure what you want from them. Being able to ask for the kind of support you want is a skill we will be practicing in this group. You can practice while you are here by asking the group leader for an example when a concept doesn't click, or you can ask your care coordinator for their feedback on how you're doing in achieving your treatment goals.*

**Exercises:** Review the different types of support. You may want to draw a line on the board to represent total autonomy to total dependence and ask members to mark where they feel each type of interaction falls.

Read through the material and have group members talk about times when they wanted one type of help or another.

# Fostering Relatedness: Asking For Help (The Right Kind!)

Say you've decided that you do want *some* sort of help, just not the kind that the person is offering right now. What you want probably won't be as simple as just asking the person to leave you alone entirely or asking them to do everything with you. Think of this more as a continuum, with your request having elements of those two extremes. Here are some examples of what others have requested:

**Take Over:** In some instances, especially if you are symptomatic or very overwhelmed, you may need someone else to take over a task. For example, you may need your significant other to take over paying bills if you are feeling unable to think clearly.

**Do Together:** Similarly, you may want the other person to sit with you and go through your bills and do calculations and then submit the payments together.

**Check-Ins:** Some people like to do the lion's share of the work on their own but want regular check-ins. Check-ins can be useful as weigh stations to review your progress, make sure things are on track and, if not, to problem solve. This group will likely provide opportunities for check-ins on your goals.

**Resource Building/Brainstorming:** You may want someone to brainstorm with you or give you advice about where you might find other resources. For example, you may want to ask your case manager about peer support groups in your community. Or, you may want to ask a friend to brainstorm about possible essay topics for your college application, but you do not want her/him to help you write the actual essay.

**Joint Rewards:** As you know from our earlier session on motivational theory, extrinsic rewards (like getting a cupcake or watching a favorite T.V. show) are usually best when the task in front of you is mundane or uncreative, such as cleaning your bathroom. They are not as helpful for tasks that require creativity or intellectual heavy lifting, such as completing a housing application. If you want your reward to only happen if you complete the whole task then you may want it to involve someone else. For example, you may tell your friend that you will only see the movie you're both dying to go to after you've cleaned your apartment.

**Parallel Work:** In this situation, you are really asking for someone to just be a warm body in the same room while you work on separate tasks. This might mean job hunting online with a friend at the library or asking your roommate to be home while you clean your room. You don't necessarily want help with the task, but you want to be in the same space and feel the accountability that comes with working in tandem.

**Organization:** Many people with executive functioning problems have difficulty organizing their space and their thoughts. You may want to enlist the help of a friend, family member or home health aide to help you sort through the pile of mail on the table so that you can figure out what you can toss and what you need to act on.

**Moral support:** Perhaps you don't want someone to help you problem solve or take action, but you do want someone who will provide you with some emotional TLC. For example, you might consider asking a friend to remind you of your past successes in asking someone out on a date or to help you do some deep breathing before you go to take your GED test.

**Gatekeeping:** Many people find that social media and constant connection by phone and email can be very distracting. In order to focus for a set amount of time, you may ask your roommate to hold onto your phone and only let you know if there are urgent calls or texts to address. (Similarly, you may want to use an internet-blocking website, like those listed in the resources section at the end of this manual).

## Deciding what you need from the other person.

This may sound easier than it actually is. Oftentimes, we want others to change their behavior, but we don't give them very clear instructions on how to do that. In order to increase the chances of your getting your needs met, you will have to figure out what kind of support you think would be most beneficial—and what kind of support would not be helpful, or might even hurt.

Think of examples when you need different types of help.

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

# Session 9

# Barriers to Motivation: Relatedness (continued)

**Objective:** To increase motivation by better communicating your needs to others. To improve communication skills and thereby promote more gratifying relationships.

**Materials:** Each participant will need a copy of Worksheet 9A and 9 B. Use a board for writing group discussion points.

**What to Say:**

*As we discussed when we learned self-determination theory, people need to feel a sense of relatedness (a sense of being connected to others); the feeling that others care about their goals, are available to help and that they can get feedback and support if they need it. We talked about how it is important to know what you need when you ask others for help and we reviewed the different types of help people often need. Today we will talk about how to tell others what you need so they will be helpful.*

*Being able to ask for the kind of support you want is a skill we will be practicing in this group. You can practice while you are here by asking the group leader for an example when a concept doesn't click, or you can ask your service coordinator for their feedback on how you're doing in achieving your treatment goals.*

**Exercises:** Review the different ways to communicate needs for help. Have participants take turns reading aloud the material on Worksheet 9A and stop for discussion. Have group members complete the Worksheet 9B "Communication and Relatedness".

# Communication Skills

## 1. Decide what you need from the other person.

This may sound easier than it actually is. Oftentimes, we want others to change, but we don't give them very clear instructions on how to make that change. In order to increase the chances of your getting your needs met you will have to figure out what sort of support you think would be most helpful.

## 2. Skillfully ask the person to meet your needs.

Once you've figured out what your needs are, consider using a "DEAR MAN" to make the request. DEAR MAN is an acronym from the therapy that was just mentioned, DBT, which helps you make requests of others. It is set up as follows:

***D:*** ***Describe the situation.*** Present the facts, not your opinions. Try to create agreement from the start.

***E:*** ***Express your feelings:*** Use "I" statements rather than "you" statements.

***A:*** ***Assert your Needs:*** State clearly what you want to ask of the other person.

***R:*** ***Reinforce:*** Let the other person know why doing things this way will help both of you

The MAN part is meant to describe HOW you make this request.

***M:*** ***be Mindful***: try to remain present in the moment and avoid getting distracted.

***A:*** ***Appear confident:*** Use posture, facial expression and tone of voice to convey that you deserve respect.

***N:*** ***Negotiate:*** Be willing to negotiate once you have heard the other person's perspective.

An example of a DEAR MAN might go as follows:

**D**: For the last month since we talked about my getting a job you have asked me about my progress almost every night at dinner and last week you started emailing me possible job listings.

**E**: I feel infantilized and overwhelmed when you ask me about my applications and do things for me that I can do myself.

**A**: What would be more helpful to me is if we could check in once a week about this so that I have some time to make progress and get a little breathing room.

**R**: I think that if we're not talking about this every night (and getting snippy with each other in the process) we will be able to enjoy dinners together more. If we set aside time each week then you'll know we're going to talk about things eventually, and I will feel like I'm able to take care of this on my own.

This was an example of using a tool we like to call the "Carve Out"

THE "CARVE OUT"

Sometimes it can feel as though people are reminding you every few minutes about a task. It can also be unnerving to feel as though you may have to talk about your progress, a potentially anxiety provoking prospect, at any moment, whether it's in person, on the phone or via text. One way to both protect your autonomy/independence and motivation while still reassuring others that you're invested in making progress, is to carve out a time, weekly or monthly, to discuss what you've been doing and avoid additional check ins or discussion about the task between meetings. This way you know when to expect to answer questions and can have some freedom to get things done on your own time, and your friends/family can be reassured that the issue will be addressed regularly.

**1. Listen for the other person's perspective and negotiate.**

In some instances your DEAR MAN may be met with an immediate "OK". However, more often than not, you will need to listen to the other person's side of the story and negotiate. In the case of a counselor or friend who you think is overly concerned, they may cite times when you have not followed through on your goals or when you have experienced negative consequences because you did not have enough support. Validating their fear or frustration will likely go a long way in helping them try a new way of interacting. Alternatively, if you are asking for increased support the other person may say that they don't have the time you feel that you need. Let them know that you understand that they have limited time and then restate your commitment to your goal. This may reassure them that you plan to follow through, and therefore make use of their time and support.

In order to create some understanding and empathy consider the following explanations:

Why do some people seem to be overly concerned or "helicopter?"

- They want to save you from negative consequences
- They want to teach you skills that they value
- They have gone through similar experiences and want to share what they have learned.

Why do some people act distant or not offer to help in the ways you want them to?

- They might want to encourage independence and empowerment.
- They might want you to face the consequences of your actions, both good and bad
- They trust that you can succeed without their help

These people may need to be asked to step in and assist you in your goals.

It helps to remember that both these styles of relating are ways people in your support system are trying to demonstrate their concern for you, and show that they have your best interest at heart. The trick is to find a way of relating that works for you both.

# Communication & Motivation

Worksheet

9A

Who is involved in getting your goal achieved?

Is there anyone who you wish would help more or less?

Clarify exactly what behavior you want from that person:

Use the **DEAR MAN** structure to make a request:

**D(escribe):**

**E(xpress your emotions):**

**A(assert your request):**

**R(einforce good behavior):**

# Session 10

# 7 Ps of Pro-Motivation

**Objective:** Patients should have new vocabulary for several different motivational strategies.

**Materials:** Worksheets 10 A  B and C

**What to Say:**

*Beginning a task that you may not be interested in or which may be overwhelming can be hard to do. There are some strategies that you can use to get yourself started on these sorts of tasks in addition to chunking and ESMART. Let's read through a list of these strategies and see if any of them might be helpful to you when you are feeling unmotivated, overwhelmed or stuck.*

**Exercises:** Read through the **Worksheet 10 A** "7 Ps for Pro Motivation". For 1-4 elicit examples of each strategy from the group.

Depending on how much time you have you can do one of the following exercises to further demonstrate two of these strategies; pros and cons or presents.

- For Worksheet 10 B "Pros and Cons" create a "decision cube" (aka the four point pros and cons exercise) on the board for a goal or task that a group member is ambivalent about. (You can use Worksheet 10 C as an example). If the group is engaged enough in the exercise you can have them rank each item by importance (1-5, 5 being extremely important) and then have them calculate how much each box adds up to.

- For Presents have the group watch the marshmallow experiment video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yo4WF3cSd9Q). Describe that each child was given the instructions that they could either eat one marshmallow right away or wait until the teacher comes back and get two marshmallows. The study followed each child as they grew into an adult and found that "marshmallow eaters" were less likely to be successful, have higher rates of divorce, are fired more often and are more likely to have substance abuse problems. The public mistakenly took this to mean that you are either born with will power or you're not. However, the study's principal investigator was so upset that these results were presented without the essential information that self-discipline can be ***taught and practiced*** that he wrote an entire book to correct this misunderstanding.

# PRO MOTIVATION SKILLS – THE SEVEN Ps

1. **Piggy Backing:** Combine a tedious activity with one that you're already going to do

> *Examples: while checking email search for all of the correspondence related to medication management, check your planner and schedule your day while you're having your morning coffee, etc.*

2. **Pleasurable Pairing (aka the Karaoke Dishwashing principle)**: Combining a tedious activity with one that's fun.

> *Examples: watch my favorite shows while working out, fold laundry while listening to your favorite podcast, chew on your favorite hard candy while paying bills, etc.*

3. **Partnering:** have someone do the activity with you or in be in the same room while you do it.

> *Example: invite a friend over to read magazines and chat while you clean up your room, plan to meet a friend at the library to look for job postings, etc.*

   a. Another variant of this is **"slip streaming"**, which is when you latch onto someone else's routine and use their already existing schedule to motivate yourself.

> *Example: leaving your apartment at the same time your roommate does in the AM, even if you don't have to be out, to ensure you get places on time.*

4. **Preparation:** take the first step by setting out all the materials that you will need for the task and putting them in a place you'll be sure to see them.

> *Example: organize all your bills so that you can make a budget, collect packages you need to mail out and put them next to the front door.*

Another valuable way to think about preparation, especially for something which you are anxious about facing, is to make the first chunk **"awareness".**

> *Example: If one of your long-term goals is independent living and your short-term goal is better money management, you may find yourself dreading the prospect of having to "cut back" and feel the deprivation you predict budgeting will bring. A preparatory step would be to first just raise your awareness of spending by tracking the amount spent on cabs or delivery food. At this point, you're not expecting yourself to make a radical behavior change, just to begin observing your own behavior and face the reality of the current situation. Many group members have found that this makes future behavior change more feasible.*

5. **Pros and Cons:** Use this exercise to better understand (and ideally resolve) ambivalence you have about the task.

   *Examples: see page 43-44.*

6. **Presents/Rewards:*** plan a reward that is appropriate to the task. If you complete something that was very difficult you might want to give yourself a bigger reward, if you complete a task that is relatively easy for you, the reward would be something smaller.

   *Example: take a stretching break during cleaning the tub (easier task reward), go get a smoothie after paying a lot of bills (medium task reward), go to a movie after completing a your budget for the month ( a reward for a more difficult task).*

7. **Projection (aka Doing Future You a Solid):** Consciously conjure an image of how your future self will appreciate your taking action now. This is not the same as daydreaming about reaping the rewards of taking action (e.g. imagining moving into your own apartment when you're procrastinating about submitting a job application), which is an activity that can actually reduce your motivation to get started.

   *Example: Envision how it will feel to return home and see that your laundry is put away.*

   Or think about what a night of movie watching will be like if you have the job application submitted.

***A word about presents/rewards:**

Many people have difficulty delaying rewards until after the task is completed. One illustration of the difficulty involved in delayed gratification, also known as impulse control or self-regulation, is the "Marshmallow Test." Your group leader will show you a video of this experiment.

Sometimes we determine that the reward is inherent in the completion of the task (e.g. going to get groceries is enough of a reward by itself). Sometimes that's not enough to "pull you through" the task and a more tangible reward is necessary.

It is important that you make sure rewards are equal to the task. On the next page are some suggestions for different "levels" of rewards, with space for you to fill in your own personalized rewards.

Another idea to consider is making sure that you are rewarding yourself for your chunks (e.g. your progressive completion of the goal) rather than just the final result.

Rewards work for some situations and not for others. Carrot and stick rewards work best with tasks that are mundane, routine and unchallenging. In fact, rewards can actually drive down your intrinsic motivation for more complex, creative and challenging tasks.

# Motivation for Change Exercise: Pros & Cons

**Worksheet**

**10B**

New Strategy to be considered: ____________________

| | PROS | CONS |
|---|---|---|
| Staying the Same | 1 | 2 |
| Changing Behavior | 4 | 3 |

# Motivation for Change Exercise
# Pros & Cons: Example

**Worksheet**
**10B**

## New Strategy to be considered:

Specific Example: Wearing a watch/attempting to be on time

| | PROS | CONS |
|---|---|---|
| Staying the Same | 1<br>-Less effort<br>-Less stressful/keep easygoing lifestyle<br>-Avoid discomfort of change | 2<br>-People get mad at my being late<br>-Have to make up excuses and sometimes lie<br>-Could cause problems at my program<br>-Feel incompetent |
| Changing Behavior | 4<br>-Relationships would get better<br>-Would feel more confident that I could handle school/work/relationships/the program<br>-Would feel proud of my accomplishment<br>-I'll be glad I can be more truthful with people (e.g. no excuses) | 3<br>-People may expect me to show up on time all the time<br>-I'll have to do extra work to figure out how to get places in time<br>-I'll miss having a more relaxed approach/doing things on my own time |

*People do things for a reason.
As you can see from the above examples there are certainly some good reasons for *not* trying a new behavior. But when you take a closer look, a lot of those reasons don't win out against the strong gains you might have if you tried to learn new skills.

# The Motivometer: Putting It All Together

## Session 11

**Objective:** : Learn to use the "motivometer" to help figure out how to better motivate yourself. This worksheet asks you to look at how you value different aspects of the task.

**Materials:** Each participant will need a copy of Worksheet 11A, "The Motivometer." Use a board for writing the example done as a group.

**What to Say:**

*The "motivometer" is a device that you can use in order to better figure out how to motivate yourself. This worksheet asks you to look at how you value different aspects of the task. Let's complete one together. Would someone identify a task they wish they would be more motivated to do? Ideally a group member will identify a task like start exercising and be willing to be the "example" discussing the variables listed below. The variables it helps you consider are interest, meaningfulness, usefulness, confidence, caring, and empowerment. Let's look at how [group member] uses these to motivate him/her to [start exercising].*

*Interest: Do you enjoy the task? Is it intrinsically motivating to you? Is the process pleasurable? If exercise is the example, ask how much interest they have in it.*

*Meaningfulness: Will completing this task help you become the person you want to be? Will it bring your behavior closer to what you identified as your value system?*

*Usefulness: Will completing this task bring you some sort of reward or benefit?*

*Confidence: What is your expectation of being able to do this task well? To tolerate the discomfort it might require?*

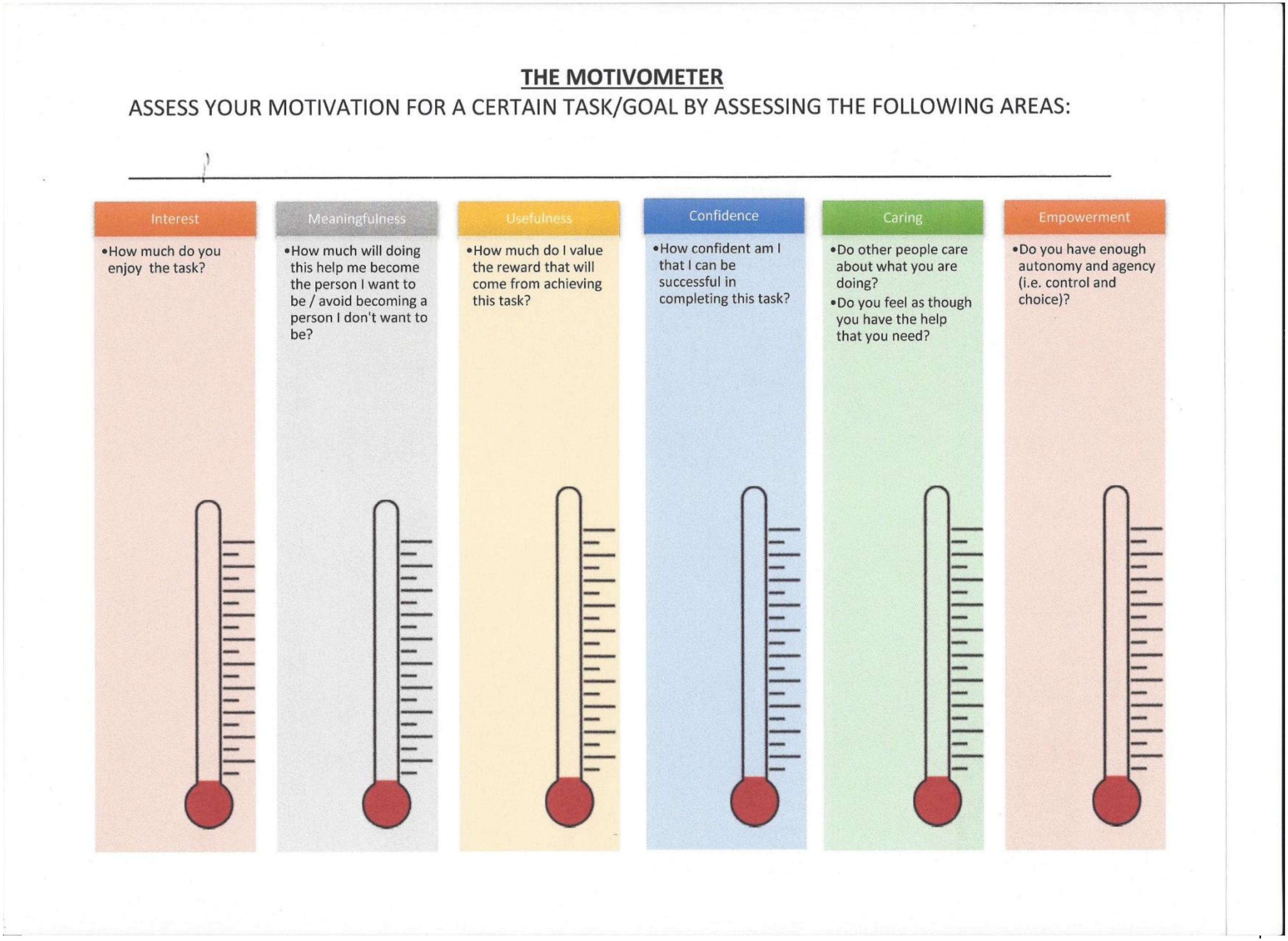
*Caring: Do other people care about what you do? Do you feel as though you have the help you need?*

*Empowerment: Do you have enough autonomy and agency? Do you have a degree of control over how the task is done? Do you have choices about how to complete it?*

*Now, we have done this as a group everyone can complete the motivometer for a task that matters to you.*

E**xercises:** Have group members complete the worksheet 11A "Motivometer".

# Worksheet 11A



## THE MOTIVOMETER

ASSESS YOUR MOTIVATION FOR A CERTAIN TASK/GOAL BY ASSESSING THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

| Interest | Meaningfulness | Usefulness | Confidence | Caring | Empowerment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| •How much do you enjoy the task? | •How much will doing this help me become the person I want to be / avoid becoming a person I don't want to be? | •How much do I value the reward that will come from achieving this task? | •How confident am I that I can be successful in completing this task? | •Do other people care about what you are doing?<br>•Do you feel as though you have the help that you need? | •Do you have enough autonomy and agency (i.e. control and choice)? |

# Creating Manageable Goals: Chunking & ESMART

## Session 12

**Objective:** Help group members learn how to break down large goals into smaller, more manageable and more specific tasks to increase successful goal completion.

**Materials:** Worksheet 12A & 12B

### What to Say:

*One of the biggest problems people face in achieving their goals is that they do not give themselves good instructions on how to take action.* Ask group members to create a brief "to do" list and read them aloud. If you hear items that are too vague or too large, for example, "groceries", or "housing paperwork", help the participant be more specific, eg " buy groceries for next three days of meals". *Today, we will learn how to give ourselves very clear marching orders when we need to take action on larger tasks. The two skills we will learn to do so are called chunking and using ESMART criteria.*

*Chunking is a way to break down an overwhelming task either by limiting the amount of time you will spend on the task or by creating a very specific smaller task that you will complete. Chunking by* ***time*** *usually works for long term projects without hard and fast deadlines (e.g. finding work, cleaning your house, developing a skill), whereas chunking by* ***task*** *is best for when you have to complete a task by a certain date or when you need to clarify what your next step is.*

*Once you start using chunking, another strategy that can help you take action is to create an "ESMART" chunk. ESMART is an acronym that gives you criteria for how to create a chunk that is easier to take action on.*

***E*** *stands for "**emotionally charged**". This is easy to figure out when you're working on practicing something you care about or something you want to get, but it can be harder for things you just have to do. For example, people rarely enjoy completing paperwork, but it has to be done in a lot of situations. In order to make paperwork for a new doctor "emotionally charged" you would try to think of the value the appointment has. For example, perhaps you value taking* *care of your teeth and not having bad breath. This would be the "emotional charge" you would use to get yourself to complete dentistry paperwork.*

***S*** *stands for "***specific***". This is a fairly broad term, but it can be very useful to simply ask people to make their goals more specific. Chunking by time or task helps clarify this part of the criteria.*

***M*** *stands for "***measurable***". You can ask yourself if the goal is measurable in terms of how well it was done or how much was completed. Usually in our EF groups we are dealing with tasks that should be measured in terms of completion rather than quality, but sometimes this does come up. For example, someone might say they cannot stop studying for their driver's exam unless they get a passing grade on their sample tests.*

***A*** *stands for "***achievable***". Essentially, you should ask yourself if you are having unrealistic expectations of productivity. Even though you might want to do all your laundry from 4 months in one weekend is it realistic to expect yourself to be at the laundromat from 8AM-4PM daily?*

***R*** *stands for "***relevant***". This criteria helps you stay on track towards your larger goal, as opposed to starting new projects , getting distracted or starting something you don't have the resources to finish.*

***T*** *stands for "***timely***". Ask yourself how much time it will take and when you will do the chunk. Some people prefer a degree of flexibility or freedom when figuring out when they will do tasks. For these individuals you might ask what window of time they plan to complete the task in.*

*You don't need to fulfill all of these criteria, but if you find yourself not getting to a certain task or being overwhelmed by a certain task, you may want to consider if you're assigning yourself chunks that are too large. Using ESMART can help you break things down even further than chunking.*

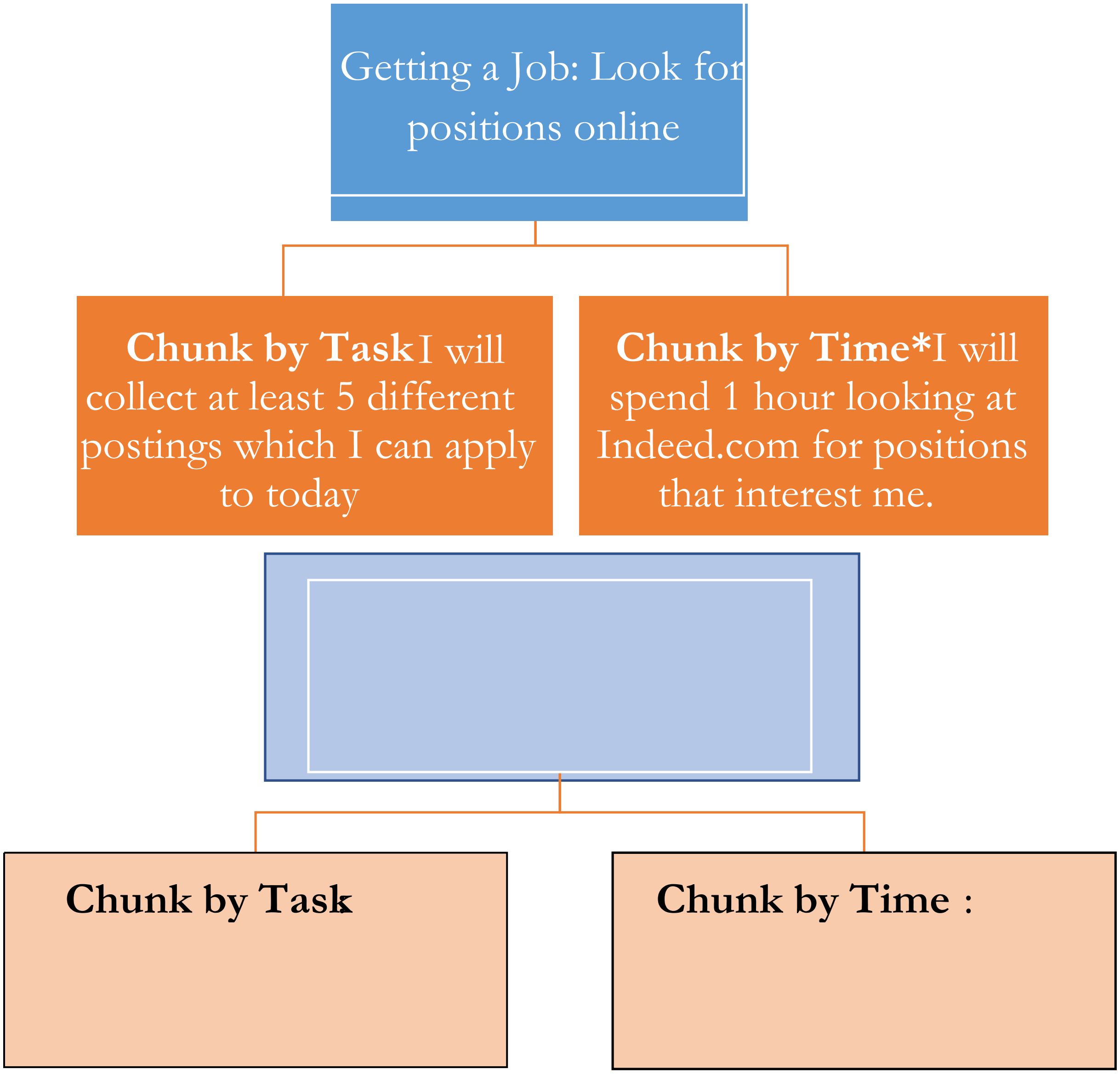
**Exercises:** Have group members read the top of Worksheet 12A and review the concept of chunking. Give several additional examples to the one on the page and then ask them to complete a time & task chunk on a large goal that they would like to complete.

Next, have group members read through the ESMART description on Worksheet 12B and have them apply this criteria to the large goal they broke down into a chunk in Worksheet 12A.

**Worksheet 12A**

# FEELING OVERWHELMED: CHUNKING

One of the most valuable skills you will learn in this training is to "CHUNK" larger goals down into smaller ones. Many times the items on our to-do list are simply too broad and unmanageable for us to get started. For example, if I write "look for job" on my to do list, what do you think my response will be to seeing that? I haven't given myself any "foothold" to get started on the task. Instead, I have a huge, multi-faceted (and potentially unappealing) task that I will most likely want to avoid. You may not even be aware of the fact that you are avoiding the task, but unconsciously you will avoid it since you haven't identified the next action you need to take.



Getting a Job: Look for positions online

**Chunk by Task** I will collect at least 5 different postings which I can apply to today

**Chunk by Time*** I will spend 1 hour looking at Indeed.com for positions that interest me.

**Chunk by Task**

**Chunk by Time :**

# ESMART GOALS

## Worksheet 12B

The acronym **eSMART** can help you to break down big task into more manageable chunks:

**E: Emotionally Charged:** Make sure there is some desire in you to complete the goal. If it is an undesirable goal, think about creating a sense of competence or self-image as someone who does not quit.

**S**: **Specific**: Make sure the goal is clear and simple.

**M**: **Measurable:** Make sure that progress towards the goal will be measurable. If the goal is not measurable, there's less of a chance you'll be able to track your progress and that can lead to lowered motivation and feeling discouraged.

**A**: **Achievable:** Make sure that the goal is realistic. If you are feeling like you need to make up for lost time because of procrastination, or if your perfectionistic self is expecting too much, then these are times you want to stress achievable goals over desirable but unrealistic goals. Why? Because if you consistently set unachievable goals your motivation will dip and you will probably start having negative thoughts about your capabilities (a good time for a thought record!).

**R**: **Relevant:** Is the goal relevant to what you want to accomplish?

**T**: **Timely:** Have you identified the time frame in which you can accomplish the goal?

**Consider the goal that you've created. How does it fit into the ESMART criteria?**

Emotionally Charged:

Specific:

Measurable:

Achievable:

Relevant:

Timely:

# Habit Building

## Session 13

**Objective:** The objective for this session is to provide information about effective ways to make new behaviors stick so that they can become habits.

**Materials:** Worksheets 13A "Creating New Habits" and 13B "Habit Worksheet". Pencils and pens

### What to Say:

*We have been talking a lot about motivation and how to get ourselves to do things that we have to do and things that we want to do. Today we are going to talk about how to create ongoing motivation for behaviors that you want to do regularly such as exercising consistently, going to bed at a regular time, or cleaning your home so it doesn't get overwhelmingly messy. Habits are tricky to start, so we are going to share some strategies that have been proven to help you have the highest chance of success.*

*What are some of the habits that you want to keep up?*

*Are there any habits that you've been successful in keeping up?*

*If so, what helped?*

*Let's read through some of the things that can be helpful in building a routine. .*

**Exercises:** Have group members take turns reading aloud the numbered sections on Worksheet 13 A, and stop after each point to have participants give examples from their lives that illustrate the point. Alternatively, ask participants to read a point and then discuss it. If they have children you can ask them if they have ever used these strategies with their kids. See if you can get participants to reflect on times that they were able to persist after a setback.

Then ask participants to complete Worksheet 13A, the Habit Worksheet. At the end of the session encourage participants to take the worksheet with them and tape it on their refrigerator or bathroom mirror, or another place where they are likely to constantly see it.

# CREATING NEW

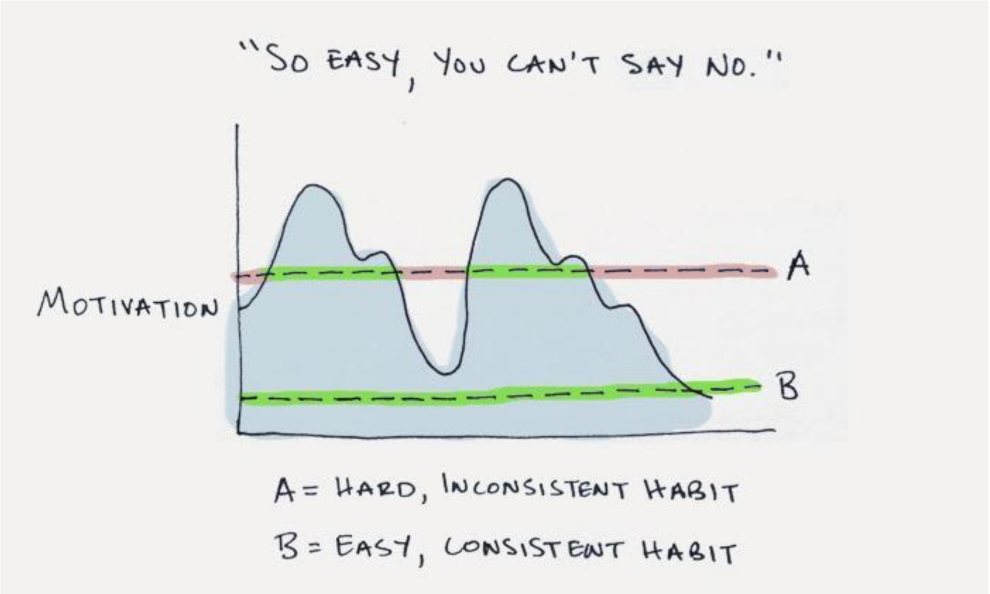
Worksheet

13A

***A few things to remember about starting a new habit:***

1. **Eliminate choices:** Research shows that making lots of choices depletes our mental energy, even if the choices are mundane and pleasant (e.g., what to eat, what to wear). If you want to conserve willpower, routinize certain aspects as much as possible. (e.g., President Obama only wore blue and gray suits, Anderson Cooper eats the same thing every day, etc.)
2. **Think about the plan not just the result:** We tend to focus on the "cash and prizes" (i.e., the rewards of our labor), rather than thinking about the work that needs to be done to get there. Research shows that getting stuck in the visualization of just the outcome can actually be detrimental to making the habit stick. For example, think about tidying up your apartment for five minutes when you get home, not just how the apartment will look when it's clean.
3. **Use "If-Then" planning:** In this tactic environmental cues are used as reminders for other tasks, something we call it "piggy backing". (e.g., "If I am on my way to the gym I will take out the garbage", or "If it is lunch time, then I will check my voicemail.")
4. **Think big but shoot small:** In order to keep up your sense of motivation for the task, you have to care about the long-term goal. However, in order to get there, you have to create smaller benchmarks of success, rather than just dreaming big.

This graph illustrates how starting with a difficult habit will likely lead to inconsistency, which will not help you build the mastery you need in order to keep working. Alternatively, we see that the easier habit could be done more consistently, helping you to build confidence and eventually, if you so desire, increase the expectation you have on yourself.



5. **Catch yourself and identify the "Ah, Forget It" moments:** There will almost certainly be times where you will be tempted to scrap the new routine for an easier or more rote path. Be curious about when those moments occur so you can apply skills to keep up the new routine.

For example, one group member was trying to build the habit of writing the day's to do list every morning for ten minutes. When she kept rolling over and going back to sleep the group got curious with her about what was happening. We helped her realize that, since it was winter, she was dreading being cold and getting out of bed. She figured out how to set her coffeemaker to brew before she woke up and left a large cozy robe next to her bed and she was able to get into her new habit more easily.

Also, beware the "cascading error", which happens when you allow one slip up in your plan to dictate the rest of the day/week. One slip up will **not** dictate whether you can make long term progress. In fact, this is a very toxic belief because it doesn't allow you to keep trying and have compassion with yourself, it expects immediate success and doesn't allow you to brush yourself off and start fresh. If you notice yourself saying something like; "See, I couldn't even get up on time when I have an interview. I'll never be able to pull myself together". Science shows us that using this approach predicts you will have more difficulty in giving yourself another shot at building the routine. A more effective response is "OK, that didn't work out. I can figure out where things fell apart, but right now the most important thing for me to do is not give up and to keep trying to get this right".

# HABITS

**Worksheet**

**13B**

*"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit."*
*-Aristotle*

What does this quote mean to you?

What is a new habit or routine you have been meaning to build (be specific)?

What has stood in the way? What is unappealing about routines?

What do you think might be the way the "Ah, Forget It" temptation would creep in?

What is your INTRINSIC motivation to begin this behavior?

What could you latch this behavior on to (If-Then)?

What can you see as the long-term benefit of making this behavior a habit?

# Time Management Introduction to Sleep Hygiene

## Session 14

**Objective:** This session provides education about sleep difficulties, a common problem for people with psychiatric disorders. In addition, group members learn to identify barriers to healthy sleep hygiene and strategies to track and regulate sleep.

**Materials:** Worksheets 14A, 14B, 14C and Sleep Diary

### What to Say:

*We are starting a new module today, and the focus is on how to manage your time. Time management is all about taking control of how you use your time. Did you ever plan to do something—say, go food shopping and somehow the store was closed by the time you were ready to go? Did you ever arrive late for an appointment?* (Allow participants to tell about instances when time was not well managed.) *We will be talking about ways to be the boss of your time so you get everything done without being stressed. That is what we call Time Management. Being the boss of your time starts with being rested and making sure you manage your time so you have a good sleep. Today we are going to talk about sleep. Sleeping well is the foundation of time management and feeling self-reliant to stick to your schedule.*

You can normalize that sleep regulation is difficult for many people with a mental illness and that it may take more energy and attention to get it under control than it would if they were not depressed/anxious/psychotic/obsessive, etc.

Worksheet 14A lists reasons people have trouble sticking to healthy sleep patterns. Go through each item on the list and ask if group members identify with any of these behaviors. They can put a check by the ones they identify with.

For Worksheet 14B, have members circle their habits and count how many they have in the good and bad habits columns. Talk about whether any of the good habits are implementable in their lives. You can also ask members if they have anything they would add to either column to communicate how much the group values their own self-knowledge and wisdom about these issues.

*Additional Exercise: If group members find that they rationalize staying up late, you can have them tell some of the rationalizations to the person to their left and have that person offer a way to encourage regular sleep.*

Last, you can discuss how having set routines for winding down and winding up in the morning can help make sleep hygiene easier to follow. You can review Worksheet 14C and ask members to complete what they already do (if they feel successful in time management) or to identify what they would like to see themselves doing for these routines.

**Exercises (take-home):** If group members want, they can take Worksheet 14C (AM & PM Routines sheet) and the Sleep Diary sheet to track their progress. You can encourage them to begin just with raising their awareness of their sleep cycle without trying to change it right away if the person is hopeless or ambivalent about change.

# Sleep Hygiene

**Worksheet**
**14A**

Sleep Hygiene: The controlling of all behavioral and environmental factors that precede sleep and may interfere with sleep.

**What makes sleep hygiene difficult to master?**

**Screens!** A recent *New York Times* article reported that computer, phone and T.V. screens mimic daytime and thus make it more difficult for users to feel ready for sleep.

**It's hard to stop doing what you're doing.** Maybe you're hyper-focused on an art project, maybe you're with friends and having fun, maybe you're on the internet playing games or reading messages.

You've **napped** and don't feel ready to go to bed.

You're enjoying **"you-time"** since you haven't had much. Maybe this is because your roommate is asleep and you have more time to yourself. Maybe you tend to get more work done at night since there are fewer distractions.

You have a **mood disorder** that makes it difficult to feel ready for bed.

**What are other reasons that make it difficult to get adequate and regular sleep?**

**1.**

**2.**

**3.**

Worksheet

14B

# Sleep Habits

**Good Sleep Hygiene Habits**

- Exercising regularly
- Shutting off TV/computer screens an hour before bed (sometimes it's helpful to set an alarm to remind you when things should be turned off since it's easy to get into a web-trance)
- Doing relaxation exercises (see next page)
- Following a bedtime routine (see next page)
- Putting your alarm clock across the room so you have to get up to turn it off

**Bad Sleep Hygiene Habits**

- Napping during the day
- Watching TV or using the computer in bed
- Consuming caffeine (determine what your "cut-off" time is for coffee/energy drinks/soda)
- Drinking alcohol (though it may initially make you sleep, it causes interrupted sleep)
- Eating a heavy meal 3 hours before bedtime
- Staying in bed even when you can't fall asleep
- Taking certain medications too late in the day (e.g., stimulants)
- Multi-tasking before bedtime
- Drockling*****: the more you snooze, the more you lose

*Drockling means dipping in and out of sleep in the early morning, such as when you keep hitting the snooze bar.

Worksheet
14C

# AM & PM Routines

## MORNING ROUTINE:

(Examples: check calendar, eat breakfast, shower, meditate, etc.)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

## NIGHTTIME ROUTINE:

(Examples: drink hot tea, stretch, watch a video, wash face, set out clothes for next day, consult calendar, etc.)

Note: Many people have found it helpful to set an alarm that tells them it's time to start their bedtime routine because without it, they might get hyper-focused on the internet or some other engrossing activity.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

## Sleep Diary

| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Complete in the MORNING** | | | | | | | |
| I went to bed last night at (time) | | | | | | | |
| I got up this morning at (time) | | | | | | | |
| I slept for a total of (hours) | | | | | | | |
| I woke up during the night (# times) | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| **Complete in the EVENING** | | | | | | | |
| Number of caffeinated drinks today | | | | | | | |
| Time of last caffeinated drink | | | | | | | |
| Exercise completed today (minutes) | | | | | | | |
| What I did in the hour before I fell asleep | | | | | | | |
| Mood today? (0=awful, 10=great) | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

PSYCHOLOGYTOOLS PRO

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Session
15

# Module: Time Management
# Micro Time Management

**Objective:** To ensure members have a calendar system that they have committed to and to begin utilizing the calendar on a regular basis.

**Materials:** Worksheets 15A & 15B

## What to Say:

*There are a lot of different ways to keep track of appointments and figure out when to do certain tasks. We will go over some suggestions for how to make your calendar work for you. As we mentioned in the orientation, many of you may have had bad experiences with calendars in the past. You may have started them with strong intentions and systems in mind, only to find that you could not keep up the routine. Alternatively, you may not keep a calendar because you don't feel you have enough to put in it or don't want to see how little you have to do. Another thing that people face is that they feel overwhelmed if they put down all the places they have to be and things they have to do. We respect that you may have had bad experiences with calendars but hope that you can try to have a fresh start in this group and work through any problems that you run into in utilizing the calendar.*

*Let's look at the four "Calendar Commandments" that a researcher who studies calendar use has come up with. Read through Worksheet 15A and elicit responses from members about how feasible these behaviors are for them.*

**Exercises:** Leave time during the group for individuals to plug in all appointments they are "keeping in mind" so that their calendar reflects what their actual expectations are for the day. If members say they can hold everything in mind or that they don't think the calendar would help try to, without getting into a battle of wills, explain that:

a) putting the tasks down in the calendar has the effect of freeing up working memory/brain space so that you can think more clearly,
b) you will have a better sense of where your free time is,
c) you will be able to see visually where your time goes and if there is a proportion you would like to change (e.g. if you see that almost all your appointments are treatment perhaps you'd like to see more social events on your calendar).
d) as their lives get more complicated when they transition from program (and ideally are working or going to school) they will already have a system in place to organize their days.

# The 4 Commandments of Calendar Use

Dr. Mary Solanto, an expert trainer of executive functioning suggests the following "commandments" for calendar use:

Calendar
SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY
2 3
4 5 6 7 8 9 10
11 12 13 14 15 16 17
18 19 20 21 22 23 24
25 26 27 28 29 30

1. **I may have one calendar and one calendar only.** You must choose one planner; commit to it and stick with it.

2. **I must carry my calendar with me at all times.** The planner must be something you can carry and you must have it with you at all times to check appointment times, enter items to do, and so on. If you run into someone on the street and the opportunity arises to schedule an appointment you want to have your planner available.

3. **I shall enter every appointment and task into my calendar!** This is when one makes the **commitment** to completing the appointment or the task. Unless and until it is entered into the planner, it does not exist and therefore surely will not get done!

4. **I shall consult my calendar every morning, every midday, and every evening! (In other words, you may not start your day without a plan!)** What's in the planner will have no impact on your life unless you consult it regularly- as regularly as you brush your teeth. It must become a thrice-daily habit. You consult it at night to make plans for the morning for travel, wardrobe, office materials, and so on that you need to bring the next day. You consult it in the morning to remind yourself of what is scheduled for the day so as to "hit the ground running" as the day begins and to ensure that nothing is forgotten. You need to consult it at midday to revise and reprioritize the activities for the afternoon, given the events of the morning. At least once a day, you must update the planner and reschedule the uncompleted items. Set a "cue" for yourself to remember to check your planner – for example, when you're making your coffee in the morning, during your lunch break, and when you're setting your alarm clock at night.

**REMEMBER: If it's not in the planner, it doesn't exist!**

**Worksheet**

**15B**

# What to put in your calendar:

- **Appointments:** lunch with friends, clinic appointments, classes/groups, etc.
- **Deadlines:** registration deadlines (e.g. register to vote), pharmacy orders
- **Events:** birthdays, holidays, paydays
- **Time Sensitive Errands:** picking up medication at pharmacy, buying a necessity before store closing
- **Focus Time:** time you set aside for working on important tasks such as cleaning apartment, sorting the laundry or making a grocery list.

# What doesn't go in the calendar?

- Eliminate all unnecessary or irrelevant alarms and activities. If, in a fit of optimism, you set an alarm to do yoga at 6AM every morning and you haven't been up before 9AM in months then erase it!
- Putting all your tasks for the day will create too much "noise" on your calendar, making you feel overwhelmed when you look at your day. Also, this can cause a "cascading error", for example, when the first task doesn't get done or gets delayed it throws the rest of your day off.

# A simple rule of thumb:

- If an item must be done at a certain time on a certain day, then put it on your calendar.
- However, if an item can be done at *any* time on a day, then use your task list.

# Module: Time Management
# Micro Time Management

## Session 16

**Objective:** To have group members create a master to do list and learn skills to determine what to do on a daily basis. Group members will learn several techniques to improve time awareness. They will learn to prepare their calendars in a way that increases realistic timing, facilitates setting aside time for transitions and protects time for important personal goals.

**Materials:** Worksheets 16A, 16B, 16C; pens and pencils.

**What to Say:**

*Now that we've talked about the importance of watches, clocks and keeping a calendar, we are going to talk about some more specific time management skills that can help you feel more in control of your day. Time spent planning with a calendar and to do list can actually prevent problems in the present and save you time and energy in the future.*

**Exercises:** Worksheet 16A. As a group go through the calendar. Before analyzing what is wrong you might start by saying: What is GREAT about this schedule is that this individual has started using her planner and has plugged all her appointments in.

Then discuss what is wrong:
What IS wrong is that there's a lot of "wishful timing" going on.

What you can't tell from this schedule is that Lydia lives about 25 minutes away from the group program. She's leaving herself 20 minutes (if she wakes up when her alarm goes off) to complete her morning routine & get out of the house. At that point, if everything goes smoothly, she'll arrive just on time for the group rather than giving herself a few minutes to pick up a coffee, get settled in, and say hi to friends.

Also, there's a lack of adequate transition time throughout the day. [Her PROS group is on 108th Street] but Dr. Grant is on 59th Street and the travel time for that is 25- 30 minutes. The same is true for the trip back uptown to meet Kim.

Can you imagine how Lydia feels in the midst of this day? Maybe you can relate to the feeling of rushing from one place to another, the feeling of barely catching up with your schedule, and of having to defend yourself against accusations of disrespect when you show up late? Many people with time management problems are very aware of the issues their lateness and scheduling problems have on themselves and those around them, and they can also be extremely hard on themselves.

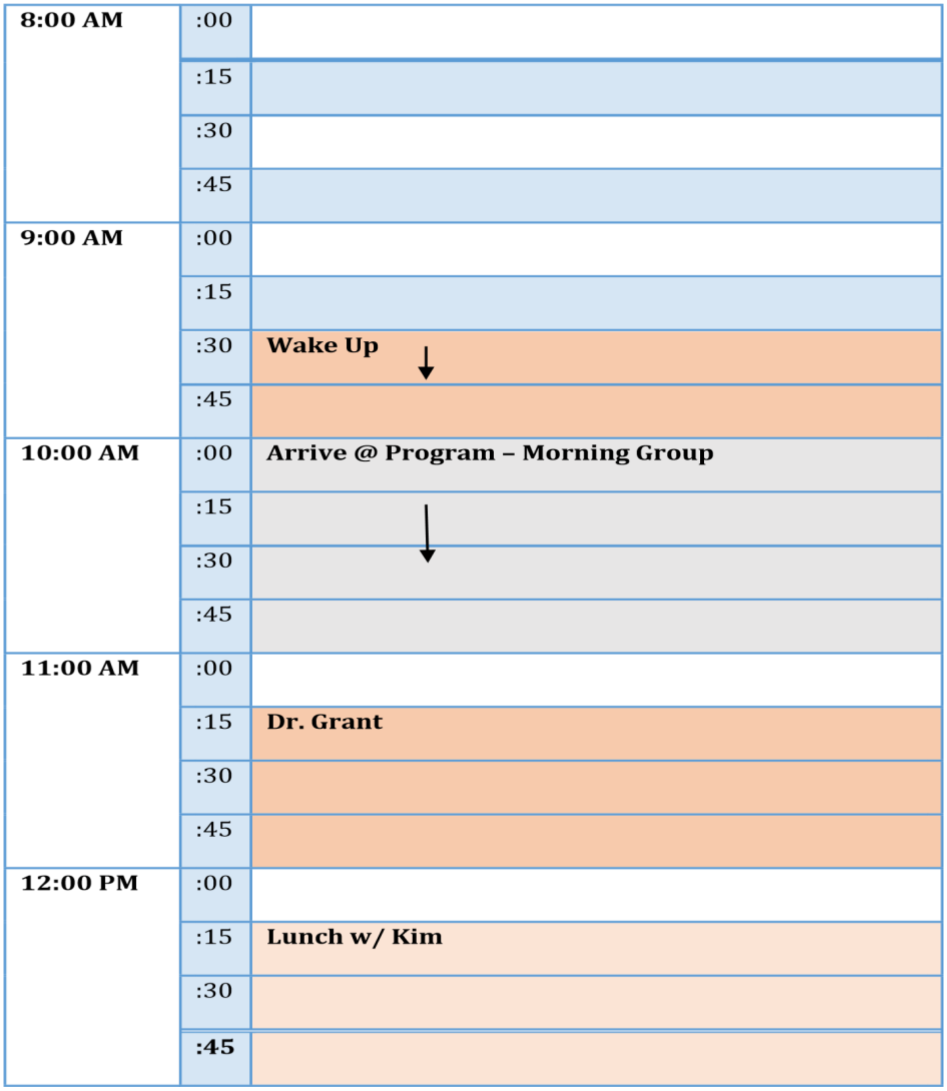
Some group members are very against the idea of keeping a calendar, stating that they "keep it all in their head". If this comes up you can refer to the "Zeigarnik Effect" supplemental page (worksheet 16C). Explain that keeping your appointments and to do list items in our heads instead of on paper or on cellphones actually slows down our thinking and makes decision making harder than it is when we use tools to help us.

Read through Worksheet 16A & Worksheet 16B. Have group members take out their calendars and have them plug in where they need to plug in extra time for transitions and travel. Finish by reading together Worksheet 16C

Worksheet

16A

# Lydia's Schedule: What is wrong with this calendar?



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **8:00 AM** | :00 | |
| | :15 | |
| | :30 | |
| | :45 | |
| **9:00 AM** | :00 | |
| | :15 | |
| | :30 | **Wake Up** ↓ |
| | :45 | |
| **10:00 AM** | :00 | **Arrive @ Program – Morning Group** |
| | :15 | ↓ |
| | :30 | |
| | :45 | |
| **11:00 AM** | :00 | |
| | :15 | **Dr. Grant** |
| | :30 | |
| | :45 | |
| **12:00 PM** | :00 | |
| | :15 | **Lunch w/ Kim** |
| | :30 | |
| | **:45** | |

Note : It takes 25 minutes to get to the PROS group and 30 minutes from PROS group to Dr Grant

**So, what is the solution to this problem?** The first thing is to be aware of what your pitfalls might be. Some of the typical pitfalls of time management are:

- Inadequate Travel Times
- Inadequate Transition Times (i.e., giving yourself time to get ready to leave your house, say goodbye to friends after lunch, get your things together at the end of the workday).
- Overly Optimistic Expectation of Productivity (often as a response to having procrastinated).

## Worksheet 16B

# Time Padding

What is time padding? Time padding is when you build in or plan for all the things in life that take extra time in our day. For example, someone might plan to get to their group just as the clock hits 10 o'clock but they haven't left time to stop and get a cup of coffee. If we were using time padding, we would plan to get to group at 9:55am so that they could easily pour a cup of coffee and still be in the group room at 10am.

If Lydia used time padding her schedule might look more like the following:

(Note: She may have to adjust her appointment times when she starts to take travel time into account.)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **8:00 AM** | **:00** | |
| | :15 | |
| | :30 | **Wake Up – Snooze 3x** |
| | :45 | |
| **9:00 AM** | :00 | **Morning Routine** |
| | :15 | |
| | :30 | **Leave House – [1] R TRAIN** |
| | :45 | |
| **10:00 AM** | :00 | **Arrive @ Program – Morning Group** |
| | :15 | |
| | :30 | |
| | :45 | |
| **11:00 AM** | :00 | **Socialize** |
| | :15 | **Leave for Dr. Grant – C TRAIN** |
| | :30 | |
| | :45 | |
| **2:00 PM** | :00 | |
| | :15 | **Dr. Grant Appt.** |
| | | |

Time padding can be helpful in helping you have a realistic sense of time, and it allows you to give yourself time for transitions and the little interruptions life throws in our life every day.

Another positive aspect of using "time padding" is that it leaves you with a sense of just how busy you are (which can be validating) and also allows you to see when you truly are free because you've accounted for all the time that you're are actually unavailable.

However, if there are little spots of time on your calendar, like a 15-minute sliver of time, you may want to consider using those tiny bits of time useful to knock out tasks that you usually might avoid doing, like checking email or voicemail.

# Why Should You Use These Systems?

Worksheet

16C

## THE ZEIGARNIK EFFECT: YOUR BRAIN LIKES PLANNING!

SLEEP
DONUTS
DUFF
BEER
SEX
DOH

Have you ever had the feeling that unfinished tasks are renting space in your mind? Sometimes if we started work on a goal but didn't finish our brains begin to nag us about things we haven't completed. This is called the "Zeigarnik Effect".

The Zeigarnik Effect gets us moving in two ways. One, it prompts us to remember goals we set for ourselves, particularly ones that we haven't yet completed. And two, it encourages us to create a strategy to complete the task. This is essentially one part of your brain asking the planning part to take action so that it doesn't get dragged down by the extra chore of remembering all your appointments and tasks.

In one experiment students who were asked to create specific study plans, including details like the ones described in the ESMART criteria, were less distracted and had clearer minds for new tasks than those who summarized the progress they had already made.

**The Takeaway: Creating plans helps free up your brain space by decreasing the "Zeigarnik effect."**

*A Caveat: While thinking about the process of planning is helpful, just imaging future success can sap your motivation to complete the goal. Picture yourself doing the hard task as well as finishing it and enjoying that success.

# Session 17

# Module: Time Management

# Micro Time-Management (Cont'd)

**Objective:** Improve group members' awareness of how long tasks take and have their calendars reflect that knowledge. Promote better control of their use of time and more independence in getting places on time.

**Materials:** Worksheets 17A, 17A1, 17B, 17C

**What to Say:**

*Last week, we talked about improving our time awareness and using time padding to keep a more realistic calendar. Today we are going to continue to keep ourselves aware of the passage of time and practice being protective of our time. (In order to reinforce learning, consider having group members discuss what it is like to look at their calendars, whether they paid attention to their transition times, and whether the calendars represented their real life).*

**Exercises:** Have the group members read Worksheet 17A and have them generate a list of activities that they are curious about how long it actually takes to complete (many will be curious about their morning routine). Use the example on Worksheet 17A1 to demonstrate how the time estimator works. Worksheet 17B is for them to take as homework.

Next, move on to Worksheet 17C, the "Time Tether" skill. You can say: This skill can be used in two ways. It can be used to help you not get trapped in "hyper-focus," which is a state of mind in which you may have started an activity and then not noticed time passing. For example, I might look up from my computer at 11PM and realize that I had started an Internet search for a toy for my niece around 8:30PM, intending for the search to only take 15 minutes. Somehow, I got "caught in the web of the Internet" and needed a way to help me have more awareness of the passage of time. (Together, read #1 on Worksheet 17C) By setting a time tether like this, I am setting an intention to not get stuck and, when the alarm goes off, I am giving myself an interruption where I can choose to move on to another task.

Next, look at the second example. This sort of "time tether" functions more like a cuckoo clock. It works like a little tug on your sleeve reminding you of the passage of time. (Together, read # 2 on Worksheet 17C) This is meant to help people that tend to lose track of time overall, not just for one especially interesting or focused task.

## Discussion Questions:

What are some of the things that you get "hyper-focused on"?

How could you use a time tether to help you not get stuck in this?

Could either of these skills be helpful to you?

Worksheet

17A

# Time Estimator

Often, we miscalculate how long things will take. I might underestimate how long it will take me to leave the house (which might lead to my leaving the house in a rush and forgetting my wallet), or I might overestimate how long it will take me to do the dishes (which might make me avoid the task more).

What are some tasks that you do regularly each week?

**Examples:**

- Getting out the door in the morning
- Checking daily emails
- Cleaning your room/apartment
- Running a specific errand
- Getting to ______________
- Taking a shower

The purpose of this task is to take a scientific approach to determine how long these things USUALLY take to complete. This exercise is not especially useful for tasks that are either open ended or have a lot of steps such as finding a job. (Don't worry, we'll go over other strategies to manage tasks like that.)

**Note:** This exercise will only work properly if you do it several times in order to get a sense of how long things USUALLY take. For example, if I only track my commute on Monday and it's rainy and the subway is delayed, then I won't get an accurate picture of how long things usually take because Monday took 15 minutes longer than usual. For a more accurate picture. I need to track my travel time for the whole the week to see how long it USUALLY takes.

If you're competitive or you like games, you may especially like this activity.

# Time Estimator example

Worksheet

17A

| TASK | HOW LONG YOU THINK IT WILL TAKE | START TIME | FINISH TIME | HOW LONG IT ACTUALLY TOOK |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Waking up since first alarm** | 10 Minutes | 8:00AM | 8:45AM | 45 Minutes |
| **Getting to clinic in the morning (door to door)** | 20 Minutes | 9:15AM | 9:45PM | 30 Minutes |
| **Getting home from clinic in the afternoon** | 30 Minutes | 6:00PM | 6:25PM | 25 Minutes |
| **Getting ready for bed** | 20 Minutes | 8:45PM | 8:52PM | 7 Minutes |

For some tasks, you may find that you have a pretty accurate sense of how long they take. For others, you may realize you've been way off. Depending on what sort of commitments you have, you can then either: a) rearrange your schedule so you have enough time to meet them, or b) simplify your schedule so you can meet your obligations.

In Worksheet 17B it is going to be your turn to estimate the time it takes to complete a task. Remember: you need to time a task for 5 days to get an accurate sense of how long something will take to complete.

# Time Estimator Worksheet

Worksheet

**17B**

Example:

**TASK:___Traveling to Clinic____________________________**

| Estimate | Start | Finish | Reality |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1. 35 min** | 9:15am | 9:52am | 37 min |
| **2.** | 9:15am | 10:00am | 45 min |
| **3.** | 9:15am | 9:55am | 40 min |
| **4.** | 9:15am | 10:05am | 50 min |
| **5.** | 9:15am | 10:00am | 45 min |
| **6.** | 9:15am | 9:57am | 42 min |

**Conclusion:**
**Average Time To Block Off ___45 min____________________**

*Note: to figure out the average time to block off for a task, look to see if there is an amount of time that happened more than once or a group of times that are very close in range. You can also add up the times and divide by 6 if you'd like to use math skills to find the average

**TASK:________________________________________**

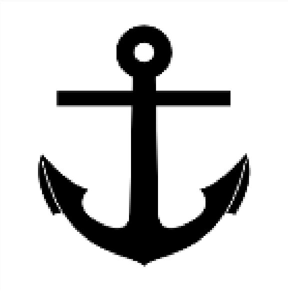
| Estimate | Start | Finish | Reality |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | | | |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |
| 4. | | | |
| 5. | | | |
| 6. | | | |

**Conclusion:**
**Average Time To Block Off ________________________**

# Time Tether

Worksheet

17C



Next, you may want to consider implementing a "Time TETHER."

There are two ways you can use a time tether:

1. **Set an alarm when you are about to start an activity that you think you could become hyper-focused on, like researching something on the Internet, playing a video game or watching TV**. The alarm won't guarantee that you will stop the activity, but it will provide you a chance to make a conscious decision whether you want to continue with the activity or whether you should reassess your priorities.

2. **Set an alarm that goes off at regular times throughout the day to help anchor you to time**. A cellphone works great as a time tether. For example, you might set a time tether alarm at 8:15AM, which is the time you usually need to be leaving your apartment in order to get to program on time. Alternatively, you might set an alarm an hour before the time that you'd like to start going to bed so that you can start your wind-down routine.

## Questions:

What would be good times for you to have a time-tether alarm go off?

What are ways that you might keep these alerts from becoming background noise?

# To Do List and Prioritization

## Session 18

**Objective:** Participants learn the reasons for keeping a to do list , and typical problems that occur when trying to create and maintain a to do list By creating a to do list members learn at least two ways to organize their lists .

**Materials:** Worksheets 18 A-C & paper for creating to do lists if clients do not have a notebook or digital system already in place.

**What to Say:**

*Now that we have developed some skills around time management the next thing we will be working on is creating and using a to do list.*

**Exercises:** Go to worksheet 18A and have group members take turns reading through the paragraphs. Ask them if they can relate to the typical pitfalls discussed at the top of the page. Elicit examples of specific situations and ask members how they have worked on these problems in the past. Honor the work they have already done in working on these problems and let them know we will give them more potential solutions to consider.

Then show them Worksheet 18B. Discuss the parameters of the to do list and the potential ways to organize their to do list. Ask if they have any other ways that they have organized their to do list. Emphasize that these are just two suggestions and honor that they may have systems already in use that work for them.

Using Worksheet 18C or their electronic planners if they prefer, have each person work on a master to do list and a to do list for a designated time period.

If there are group members who are hesitant to keep a to do list you can remind them of the Zeigarnik effect and how it can draw down their mental energy, which they could be using for other more important things.
See clinician notes for suggestions about how to handle common concerns about to do lists.
Finally, have group members do a “brain dump” to get off their minds all the things that they need to do in the next two weeks.

Worksheet

18A

# Prioritization & Common Pitfalls

Time management is all well and good, but if you're not able to prioritize your tasks then it will still be very difficult to reach your goals.

Some of the problems associated with difficulty in prioritization:

- Putting Out Fires: Attending to what is right in front of you rather than tending to long term projects
- Pseudo-efficiency: Doing tasks that, while potentially important, aren't necessarily urgent. We sometimes call this "procrastination with a top hat" since it *looks* like you are being productive.
- Lack of Completion: Starting numerous projects but having difficulty bringing any to completion, leaving lots of loose ends.

**YOUR TO-DO LIST**

First, start with building a master list. This may mean that you'll have to put together all the lists you've been keeping in separate places like your phone, your notebook from school, stickies on your desk, etc. Consolidating all the tasks you want to accomplish into one place will help you to stay on top of things and feel less scattered.

In the future the idea will be to keep your to do list **in one place always**.

Another thing to keep in mind when you're creating a to do list is to consider the "horizon" of the to do list…how far ahead do you want to think? For most people having a list that is just for one week or two weeks works best. You may need to keep another list for long term plans, but your to do list shouldn't be for tasks that you need to do in 1-2 weeks.

Some of you may already have a system that works for you and so, as the saying goes, "if it ain't broke don't fix it." However, some of you may be sitting with a blank page (or screen) in front of you, you may need some prompts to help you organize your list. Some people keep just one list, others have sections for different tasks. One way to do this is to organize your list by the type of task you need to do. For example, I might organize my list by all the errands I have to make, phone calls I have to make, chores I need to do etc. Another option is to organize your to do list by the area of your life that the tasks falls under.

Worksheet

18B

# Different Types of To Do Lists

## By Task:

**Errands**

Pick up laundry detergent

Deliver housing form To Front desk

Mail rent check (due 6/4)
Groceries for week

**Calls**

Call Chris about going to street fair

Call care manager for forms for new group

Call SSD re: approval

**Chores**

Clean bathroom sink & tub
Laundry
Clean out fridge

**By Category:**

**People**

Call Chris about going to street fair

Call Aunt about her appointment

**Treatment/**

Call pharmacy about medication refills (pick up by 4/15)
Call care manager about forms for new group

Call SSD re: approval

**Work**

Prepare resume to review with counselor
Visit 3 websites to look for potential positions and highlight skills I have

Contact NYCares re: volunteer application

# My To Do List

**Worksheet**

**18C**

**I will organize my list by__________________________**

**Circle the Time Frame: _______days, One week, Two weeks**

**Master List:**

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

**To Do List:**

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

# Clinician Notes & Suggestions

During the group you may hear two common concerns about creating and maintaining a to-do-list. Below are suggestions for responding to these common concerns.

1. **Concern:** "there's hardly anything on my list."

   **Clinician response*:*** If that's the case several things may be going on:

   ***You may not want to take on too much lest you feel overwhelmed or fail at those tasks.***

   - If this is the case then this is a good time to do a thought record. Another option is to do a pros and cons exercise about whether taking action is worth it to you right now.

   ***You may not really have a sense of what your goals are and so don't know what to put down.***

   - If this is the case, you may want to refer back to your answer to the Miracle Question. What do you want to see change in your life? In your day to day existence? Is there anything you've been meaning to do but haven't had a chance to? Is there anything that, if you don't take care of it soon, will cause more problems for you down the road (e.g. not cleaning your room)?

2. **Concern:** "there's way too much on my list to ever get done."

   **Clinician response** If that's the case then several things may be going on:

   ***You may be the kind of person with lots of big goals.***

   - The only problem with this is if those goals overwhelm you, you may never get to complete them. In this sort of situation you may want to work on breaking down your goals into smaller more manageable "chunks." We explored this skill more on pg. 34.

   ***You may have fallen behind and have a lot to catch up on and feel like you have to make up for lost time.***

   - If this is the case then we will have to take a look at right-sizing your expectations of yourself and determining which tasks are higher priority.

***You like writing lists and you keep including items on your to do list because it feels good.***

- Writing down your to do list, especially by hand, is an effective way to encode the information in your memory and increase commitment to the task. However, if this activity tips into pseudo-efficiency territory, you will be spending more time making lists than taking action. Consider setting a time limit on your list making or taking breaks and doing small tasks in between items.

# Prioritization of To Do Lists

Session

19

**Objective:** Members identify which tasks on their to do lists need to be done first and learn one way to organize their to do lists.

**Materials:** Worksheet 19A & worksheet 19B Daily Schedule

### What to Say:

*We are going to continue to work on to do lists. Let's first discuss your list from last week. Did you look at it since we met last week?*

Discuss how to problem solve making the list something they use more often if they don't look at it very much. Ideally, you could have them brainstorm on the board by having members come up to the board and write down their ideas about how to remind themselves to do this. Some suggestions have been to set a reminder on your phone or an alarm at home that reminds you to check it. Other ideas are to put it in a place that you're likely to see it, like in front of your TV, computer or fridge.

Begin a discussion about how people prioritize what needs to get done first. Ask group members how they decide what to do that day. Bring up the importance of having a daily to do list, not just a master to do list. The reason for this is so that they don't get overwhelmed by looking at the master list all day long. The daily to do list should help them elevate 2-4 different tasks that need to get done that day.

**Exercises:** their lists. Next, show them worksheet 19A. Have them organize the to do list on the board using the ABC method. Notice what questions they each other about each task. Emphasize that the two things they are essentially asking themselves are "is this task important?" and "is this task urgent"?

Have the group organize their own to do lists with the ABC method. Hand out copies of worksheet 19B. They will be using this sheet to plan tomorrows "A" tasks as well. This is a reinforcement of the time management skills.

Remind them that if the task on the list is too big they have the skills to "chunk it" so that it's more manageable. (When they do that the larger task remains on the to do list so they can be prompted to make the next chunk when they look at it). Also make sure they consider when they are going to do the A tasks for the following day.

**Worksheet**

**19A**

# ABC PRIORITIZATION

Let’s take a look at your current master list and categorizing it into three different sections:

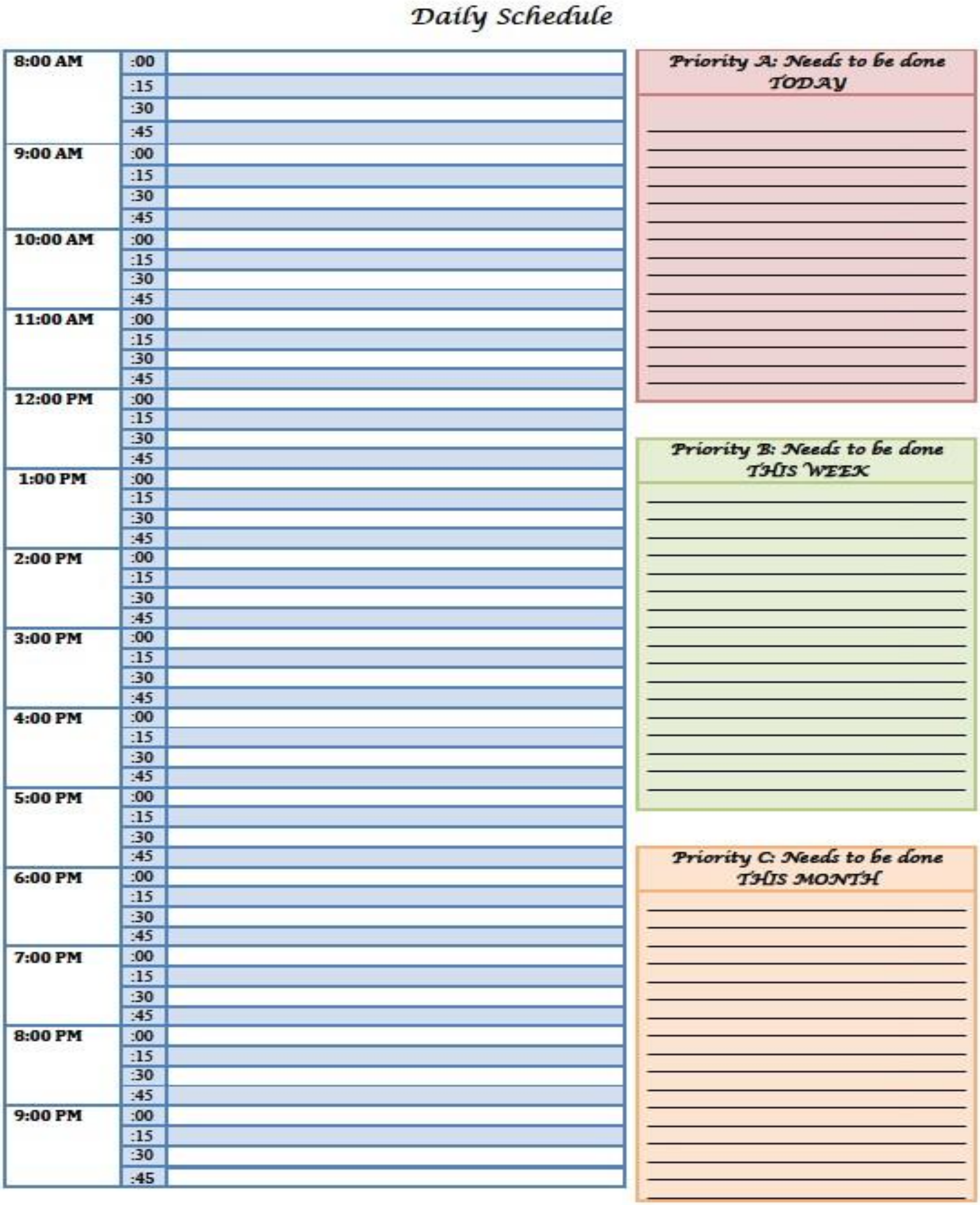
**A:** Things that need to be done today (i.e., things that are important and urgent)

**B**: Things that need to be done this week (i.e., things that are important but not urgent)

**C:** Things that need to be done this month

**D:** Things that need to be done in the long term

- Some people find it helpful to rank within the ABCD system (e.g., A1 = complete math homework, A2 = pay late phone bill, etc.).
- Some people find that just sticking to a “HOT” or “NOT HOT” system works better for them if they’re having difficulty with prioritization.



## Daily Schedule

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **8:00 AM** | :00 | |
| | :15 | |
| | :30 | |
| | :45 | |
| **9:00 AM** | :00 | |
| | :15 | |
| | :30 | |
| | :45 | |
| **10:00 AM** | :00 | |
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| | :30 | |
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| **9:00 PM** | :00 | |
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| | :30 | |
| | :45 | |

*Priority A: Needs to be done TODAY*

*Priority B: Needs to be done THIS WEEK*

*Priority C: Needs to be done THIS MONTH*

# Attention & Distractibility

## Session 20

**Objective:** Participants learn that people with EF problems often have attention and concentration difficulties, which can be successfully managed with a variety of strategies.

**Materials:** Worksheets 20 A,B,C,D,E

**What to Say:**

*People with EF problems often have attention and concentration difficulties. Has anyone here found it hard to focus? Or that it is easy to be distracted?*

*Encourage participants to give examples. It is common for people to struggle with attention and staying on task. The good news is that there are things you can do about it- ways to improve your focus and attention. We will talk about that today.*

**Exercises:** Give everyone Worksheet 20 A and ask them to circle the areas where they have had problems. Encourage discussion to be sure everyone is understanding the different ways we use attention.

Move on to Worksheet 20B and take turns reading the material. Ask everyone to circle the steps they might take. Move onto Worksheets 20C , D and E as time allows.

This session can also be a good time to remind people about the cognitive remediation program, where they can work on exercises designed specifically to improve attention.

Optional activities: To demonstrate selective attention you can show this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vJG698U2Mvo

Worksheet

20A

# Circle ways you have trouble with attention:

1. Being able to focus on a task continuously for a certain amount of time without becoming distracted (a.k.a. concentration or vigilance)

2. Being able to zero in on the information that you want to focus on despite the presence of other information (e.g. scanning your room and finding your planner amongst other items.)

3. The ability to flexibly shift your attention between different types of activities (e.g. watch TV and folding laundry)

# IMPROVING YOUR ATTENTION

Worksheet

20B

There are several steps you can take to improve your attention:

**Mindfulness:** Mindfulness involves training yourself to observe your mind and notice when you have become distracted. This ability is crucial when you are striving to improve your attention. Example: Be mindful when you turn the stove off so you can be sure flames are not left on.

**Self-Talk:** Self-talk involves coaching yourself through a task by paraphrasing instructions, reminding yourself of what task you intend to complete, and reinforcing your intention to attend to the task.

**Breaks**: If you are too exhausted your effort towards a task is going to be misspent. It is often better to take a small break and then go back to the task.

**Sleep**: Without rest you will also be spending more effort trying to focus than if you got some rest and tried again.

**Circle the steps you would like to try.**

Worksheet

20C

# SOLUTIONS TO GETTING DISTRACTED

People with EF problems often have difficulty focusing. One of the ways to improve focus is to get rid of unnecessary distractions. Let's look at some of the most common sources of distraction and ways you can deal with it.

**Auditory Distractions**: Is the TV or radio on? Are people talking? Some people find it easier to focus when there is some noise but others need complete silence. Which kind of person are you?

*Problem solvers:* Noise cancelling headphones, earbuds to signal to others you're not "available," white noise machines.

**Visual Distractions:** Phones and TVs can be visually distracting.

*Problem solvers:* Turn your phone face down. Turn the TV off.

**Social Distractions:** Are people distracting you by coming up and interrupting you when you are trying to get something done?

*Problem solvers:* Tell people when you will be available and explain now is not a good time.

**Emotional Distractions:** Stress and feeling upset can be very distracting.

*Problem solvers:* Depending on the emotions that are distracting you, you may consider doing a thought record or a Distraction Dump (see pg. 110).

**Physical Distractions:** Uncomfortable clothing, uncomfortable chairs, being hungry and tired can make it difficult to focus.

*Problem solvers:* Think ahead when you set out to do a task that requires focus. Are you dressed comfortably? Did you eat and get enough sleep?

Circle the distractions you experience and the solutions you might try.

# DISTRACTION DELAY

## Worksheet 20D

1. Put a piece of paper next to you.

2. Set your timer for a specific length of time, either the length of time you can usually maintain your attention or, if you are trying to build this up, for slightly longer.

3. Start working on a task.

4. When a distraction pops into your head, write it down on your paper but don't do anything about it (e.g., don't get up and start making a phone call, putting something away, writing a check, and so on).

5. Once the distraction has been written down, you can use coping statements such as "I will worry about it later," "This is not an A-priority task," or "I will come back to this."

6. Return to the original task until you are finished with the chunk of work you had selected.

7. When the timer goes off, take a break. At this point, you can look at your distraction list and decide if you want to deal with them now or later.

8. When done working for the day, go back to the distraction list. Decide if these are actually important or if they are things that became more attractive only because they were not the task that you were working on.

9. If they are in fact important, either do them or add them to your task list.

*Potential Pitfall:* These skills may seem simple, but they aren't! Don't expect yourself to be able to use them effectively right away. The extra coping skills you are learning to help you overcome your short attention span and distractibility may take some time to develop. Remember, it took you many years to develop your current habits, and it will take some time to develop these more effective habits. Stick with this program; it will be worth it in the long run!

*(adapted from Safren et al, 2005)*

# DISTRACTION DUMP

**Worksheet**

# 20E

A distraction dump is a way to free up your mind so you can focus on the task at hand. It's a "dump" for what is bothering you. Get some paper and write down the thoughts that are causing you distress, without stopping or worrying about grammar or legibility. Tell yourself you will come back to deal with it after you finish the task you are trying to focus on. It is that simple!

Why does it help? For some, getting worrisome thoughts on paper brings a sense of relief.

*A word of warning:* For others, it can be distressing or seem hard to stop writing. You may want to practice doing this before doing a non-urgent task to see how you respond to it.

You can use the following space to practice:

# CBT Introduction

**Objective:** To introduce group members to the basic tenets of CBT therapy, to begin exploring which core beliefs resonate for them, and understand that CBT training can help them change some of these ingrained thinking patterns.

**Materials:** Worksheets 21 A, B, C, D, pencils & pens

**What to Say:**

*Today we are going to talk about how our beliefs and thoughts impact the way we feel and behave. How many of you have heard about Cognitive Behavior Therapy- CBT? How many of you had some lessons in CBT? Let's look at Worksheet A and learn more.*

**Exercises:** When everyone has Worksheet A in hand, explain the figure. Below is an explanation you can paraphrase.

Everyone has problems. When trying to solve these problems it helps to learn how your thoughts, feelings and actions (behavior) are connected. Imagine you need more money for rent and you think no one will be able to help you solve this problem. You start worrying about losing your home so much that you feel sick and do not want to talk to anyone about the problem. What might have happened if your thought was that someone could help you solve the problem? Now look at the bottom half of the triangle- "thoughts" and "behavior". The arrows next to the words show that these are the two ways to make a change. For example, changing your thought about whether people can be helpful might lead you to change your behavior and talk to someone who helps.

Why isn't there an arrow by "emotion"? As anyone who has had someone say to them "you shouldn't feel like that" knows, trying to change your emotions by willing them to change usually doesn't work very well. Emotions change when you change behavior and thoughts, but they usually don't change just by our wanting them to. That is why CBT teaches us to focus on both the behavior and thought areas of the triangle. Think back to the example about making the rent payment- changing the way we think about the problem may lead us to speak to a person that can help (behavior). Which in turn, can help you feel more hopeful about paying the rent, and reduce negative emotions.

Next give everyone Worksheet B and paraphrase the following explanation. While explaining core beliefs you can have group members identify their core belief and examine what information may not "get in".

Our Thoughts reflect something we call Core Beliefs. You can think of Core Beliefs as your "operating system." Core Beliefs are what create "Automatic Thoughts." Automatic Thoughts are things we say to ourselves; sometimes without even noticing we're saying them. For example, if I forget my keys in my apartment, when I realize this, before being conscious of it, I've already said to myself "Geez, you're such an idiot." My core belief might be that I cannot trust myself to take care of basic tasks. For people with Executive Functioning problems, their Core Beliefs may sound like the ones on Worksheet B. Of course, you may also have some positive Core Beliefs instilled in you by those who love you and believe in you, or because of strengths you have in other areas. However, when those negative Core Beliefs get a lot of airtime, they take over your thinking and can cause trouble. In discovering these belief systems and thinking patterns it will be important for you to practice self-compassion. These old ways of thinking probably served a purpose for you at some point; maybe they protected you from the dangerous feeling of hope, or maybe they helped maintain some defensive thinking that helped you feel a sense of control (e.g. if I know an event will be a disaster it is less threatening than if the outcome is unpredictable).

However, what happens is that you begin having Automatic Thoughts about yourself and about certain situations, which keep you from being able to perform at your best. Here are some examples of the ways your thinking might be distorted. Put a check next to the ones that "ring a bell" for you.

Below are more examples of core beliefs that you can use:

**Core Belief Example 1:** I cannot trust myself
Information that confirms the belief: I had to drop two groups when I kept being absent.
Thoughts that confirm the belief: I can't seem to feel better because I am not learning the skills I need to make a recovery.
(Information that disconfirms the belief: I was able to learn a lot in the groups I remained in.)

**Core Belief Example 2:** I am competent
Information that confirms belief: Receiving praise on a meal you made.
(Information that disconfirms the belief: Several burned dishes.)
Thoughts that confirm your schema: I may have to pay better attention when I cook, but I can produce something I'm proud of.

Note: Group members with perfectionistic standards will find the Unrelenting Standards information helpful. Group members with learning disabilities or cognitive problems may find the Vulnerability to Harm and Illness is validating.
(See Appendix for Questionnaire)

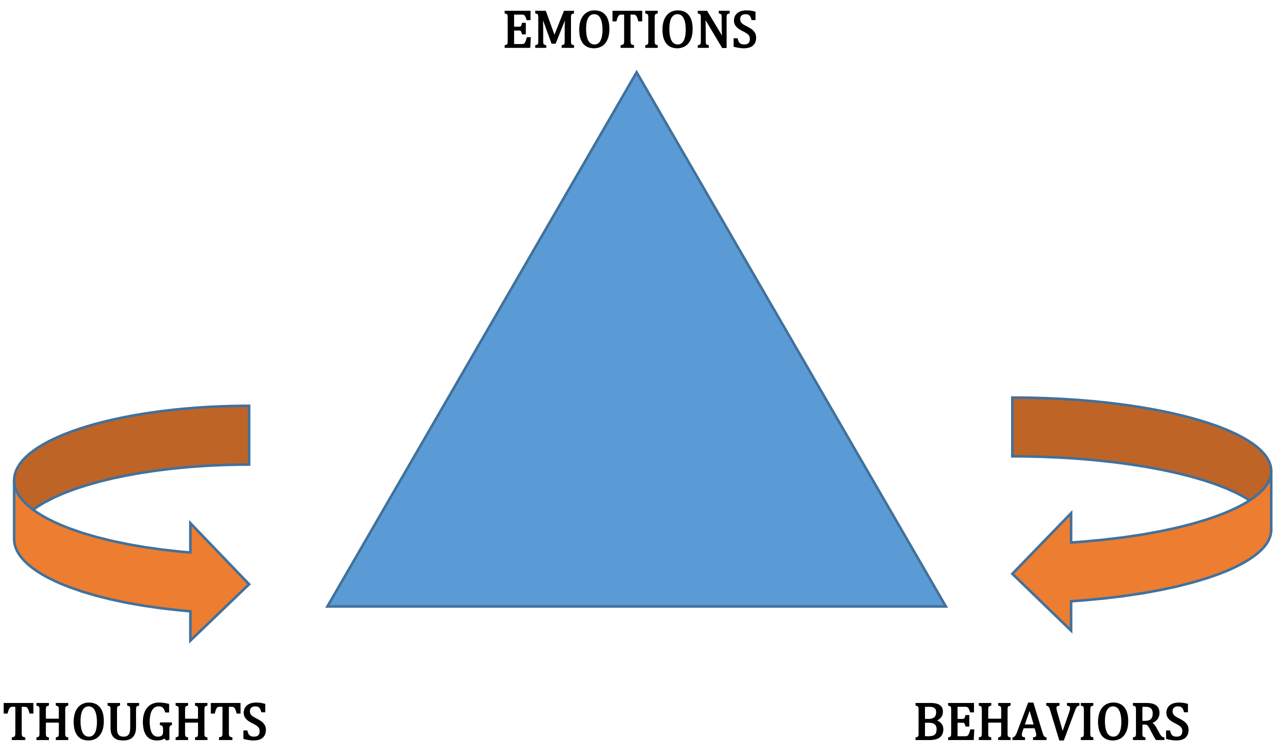
Then proceed to Worksheet C, which provides a listing of cognitive distortions. Select one example to review, using your assessment of which one is most likely to resonate with the majority of participants. Alternatively, they can read them all and check the ones that resonate for them.

Finally ask participants to complete the Worksheet D.

# Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

**Worksheet**

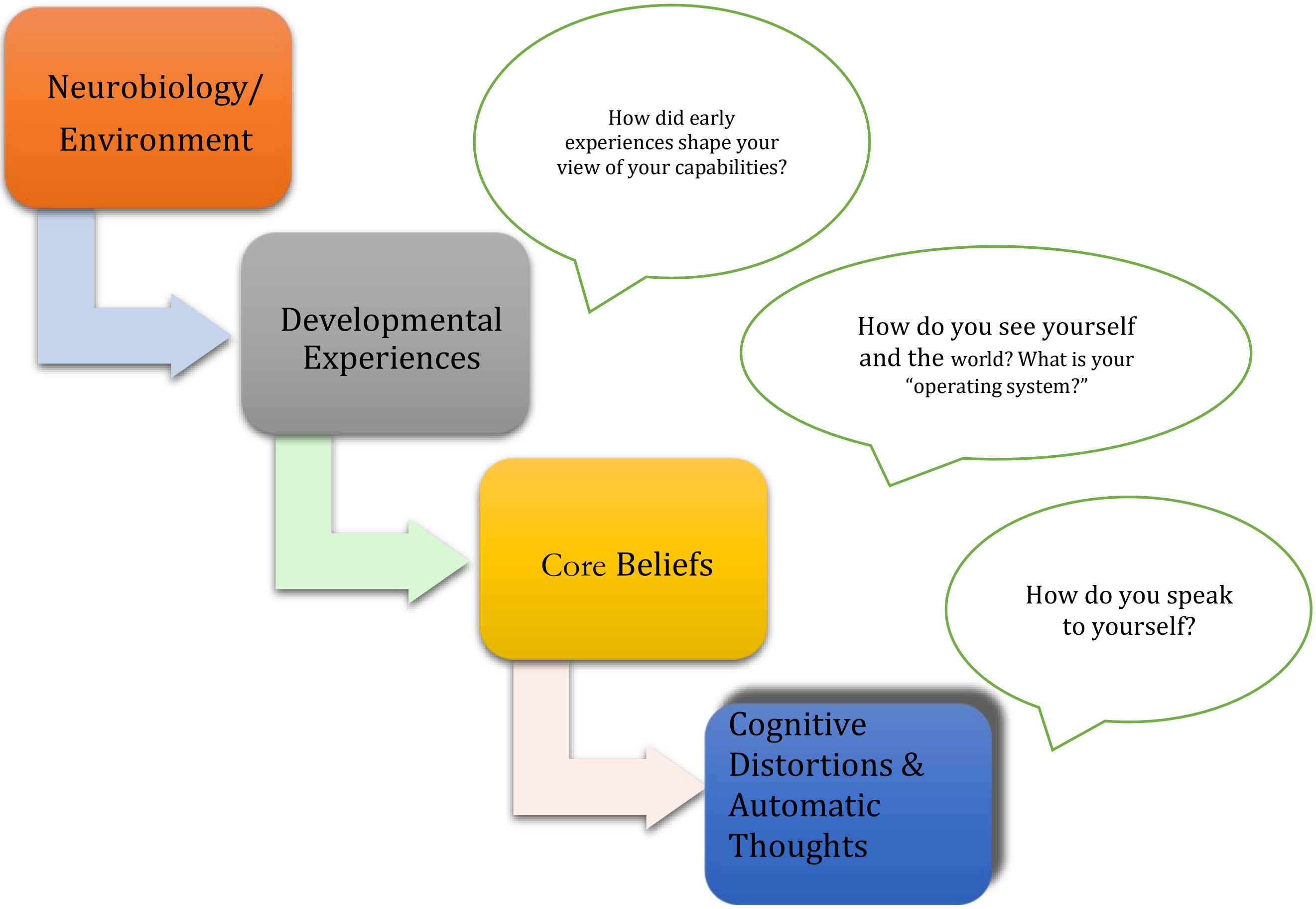
**21A**


EMOTIONS
THOUGHTS
BEHAVIORS

Worksheet

21B

# Core Beliefs Therapy (also called Filters)


Neurobiology/ Environment
How did early experiences shape your view of your capabilities?
Developmental Experiences
How do you see yourself and the world? What is your "operating system?"
Core Beliefs
How do you speak to yourself?
Cognitive Distortions & Automatic Thoughts

## Common Core Beliefs for Individuals with EFP

1. **Self-Mistrust:** "I cannot rely on myself to do what I need to do. I let myself and others down."

2. **Failure:** "I have not met expectations. I always have failed and always will fail at what I set out to do."

3. **Incompetence:** "I am too inept to handle the basic demands of life."

4. **Inadequacy:** "I'm basically a bad, flawed person."

5. **Instability:** "My life will always be chaotic and in turmoil."

Of course, there are also positive core beliefs as well. Here are some examples.

1. **Caring:** "I am a thoughtful and sensitive person to others."

2. **Self-Acceptance:** "I can appreciate that I have both strengths and weaknesses and have compassion for myself."

3. **Competence:** "I have skills and achievements which can help me move through difficulties."

4. **Independence: "**I can both reach out for help from others and develop my own capacity to help myself."

5. **Perseverance:** "When I set my intention and put forth effort I can make progress towards my goals."

- ✓ **Put a check next to the core beliefs that "ring a bell" for you.**

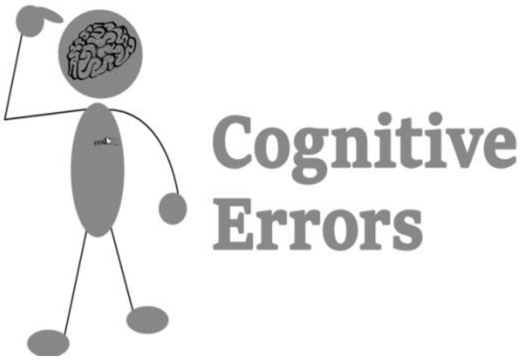
# Cognitive Distortions

**Worksheet**
**21C**

- **All or Nothing Thinking:** You see things in black and white categories with no grey areas.
    - *Example: ALL aspects of a project need to be completed immediately. Or, if your performance falls short of perfect, you see it as a total failure.*
- **Overgeneralization**: You see a single negative event as part of a never-ending pattern.
    - *Example: My boss got angry with me – everyone at the office must think I'm a bad worker.*
- **Negative Filter:** You pick out a single negative detail and dwell on it exclusively, overlooking other positive aspects of the situation.
    - *Example: When I was disorganized during my interview I ruined the entire thing!*
- **Disqualifying the Positive:** You reject positive experiences by insisting they "don't count" for some reason or other. In this way, you can maintain a negative belief that is contradicted by your everyday experiences.
    - *Example: Saying to yourself: "I've always been really scatterbrained" despite improving work on your time management & organization skills.*
- **Jumping to Conclusions:** You make a negative interpretation even though there are no facts that convincingly support your conclusion.

    **Subtypes:**

    - **Mind Reading:** You arbitrarily conclude that someone is reacting negatively to you, and you don't bother to check this out.
        - *Example: My friend thinks I'm not making any sense/ I'm not following what s/he is saying, despite their continuing to talk and positive body language.*



  - **Fortune Telling:** You anticipate that things will turn out badly, and you feel that your prediction is a predetermined fact.
    - *Example: This guy/girl will never want to be with me because I'm so ADD, it'll just never work out.*

- **Magnification/Minimization:** You exaggerate the importance of things (such as your mistake, or someone else's achievement), or you inappropriately shrink things until they appear tiny (e.g., your own desirable qualities or others' imperfections).
  - *Example: Yeah, I got a volunteer job, but my brother's got a high paying job at a law firm…he's got it all figured out.* OR *Yeah I showed up on time for group this week, but my roommate gets up every day at 7AM and works out, so it's not like I'm doing anything great* OR *So I'm a great painter, I still can't remember to pay my bills on time.*

- **Catastrophizing:** You attribute extreme and horrible consequences to the outcomes of events. One mistake at work is the same as being fired from your job.
  - *Example: One missed appointment and that psychiatrist is going to have me kicked out of group.*

- **Emotional Reasoning:** You assume that your negative emotions necessarily reflect the way things really are: "I feel it so it must be true."
  - *Example: "I feel so worthless and irresponsible – I must really be a failure if I feel this way about myself."*

- **"Should" Statements**: You try to motivate yourself with "shoulds" and "shouldn'ts" as if you need to be punished before you can be expected to do anything. With regard to others, you feel anger, frustration & resentment.
  - *Example: "I should have graduated by now…all of my friends have it so easy and school is so hard for me."* OR *"I shouldn't be having so much trouble filling out this application, it's only a one page and I can't do it."*

- **Labeling and Mislabeling:** This is an extreme form of overgeneralization. Instead of describing an error, you attach a negative label to yourself or others.
  - *Example: "I'm a total failure"* OR *"Everyone else has it together."*

- **Personalization:** You see negative events as indicative of some negative characteristic of yourself or others, or you take responsibility for events that were not your doing.
    - *Example: "My friend is really stressed out, it must be because I'm driving him/her crazy."* OR *"My mental illness is all my parents fault, they let me watch too much TV when I was younger".*

- **Maladaptive Thinking**: You focus on a thought that may be true but over which you have no control. Excessively focusing on one thought can be a form of self-criticism and can distract you from an important task or from attempting new behaviors.
    - *Example: "Because of my mental illness my attention is shot…it's no use to try to fix it."*

**Worksheet**

**21D**

**Name:**

**Date:**

**What Core Beliefs do you have?**
Example: It is better not to trust anyone.

**Name one type of cognitive distortion that resonates for you and the automatic thought that goes with it:**
Example: Catastrophizing
Example of Automatic Thought: My counselor is going to kick me out of program because I missed group.

**Name one type of positive core belief that resonates for you and the automatic thought that goes with it:**
Example: I am a persistent person.
Example of Automatic Thought: I will finish this job.

# CBT Thought Record

## Session 22

**Objective:** Group members learn to use the Three Cs to complete a CBT thought record.

**Materials:** Worksheet 22A, pens, pencils

**What to Say:**

*Now you know about thinking errors and automatic thoughts, let's put that knowledge to use. Today we will focus on how to respond to those thinking errors. I will teach you how to use a thought record to catch, check and change your thinking errors. We call this "The Three Cs." You can refer to the Worksheet 22A to see how this tool works.*

*Automatic thoughts can happen while we are trying to work toward a goal. Sometimes those thoughts can have a negative effect on our mood, sense of self-efficacy, and can affect our motivation to continue practicing new skills. When we can catch negative automatic thoughts and check them, we have the ability to change them. We have the ability to prevent our thoughts from causing problems or making us feel worse.*

*Let's review the first two steps using an example of All-or-Nothing Thinking: "If I can't do it perfectly, it's not worth doing at all."*

Ask participants to use "Catch It"

- What may have led to this type of thought?
- What emotion would you feel? Rate the feeling on a scale of 1 to 10: ____
- How would this impact what you do next?

Ask participants to "Check It" – Are you making a thinking error?

- Is it true to say that your performance on an exercise has to be perfect or else you might as well not do it at all?
- Is there a way to think about this thought in less absolute terms?

Ask participant to try to "Change It" – Are there ways to rephrase the thought so that it is more balanced? For example:

- "Right now, I'm having a tough time with this exercise. Although there are some tasks I have a really difficult time with, there are some tasks that I've gotten better at over time."
- "I can use my mistakes to help me learn how to better approach this exercise next time."
- "What makes this task worth doing is not that I do it perfectly, but that I learn something each time."

How does this new way of thinking change the situation?

- How does this new thought make you feel?
- Rate the feeling on a scale of 1 to 10: ____
- How does this compare to the first thought?

Ask participants to come up with a personal example and guide them through catch it, check it, and change it. Use the handout to guide the use of the three steps.
You can also use the following example: "My therapist didn't acknowledge what I said in group today. She must think I'm stupid."

Catch It: How does this thought make you feel?

- Rate the feeling on a scale of 1 to 10: ____
- How are you likely to react when you think this way?

Check It: Are you making a thinking error?

- Is this way of thinking accurate?
- What is the evidence for/against this thought?
- If someone else had this thought, what would I tell them?
- Is there an alternative explanation?

Change It: Are there ways to rephrase the thought so that it is more balanced?

- "She usually acknowledges what everyone says in group discussions in some way –she's never ignored me in other group discussions. Maybe she didn't hear me. I don't' think this has anything to do with me personally. There must be some other explanation."

- How does this thought make you feel?
- Rate the feeling on a scale of 1 to 10: ____
- How does that feeling compare to the first?

**Exercises:** After completing the training have group members do a thought record together on the board. Next, have group members complete the first two columns (the "check it" columns) then have them switch with their neighbor. Their peer should complete the "check it" and "change it" sections.

Wrap-Up: When we feel a certain way, we can try to catch a thought that is causing problems and check it out using strategies which we can practice. As we practice checking out our thoughts, we will get better at reframing our thoughts so that we can cope or feel better. This is something you may want to practice while you are in this group, but it can also apply to other groups too. Catch it, check it, and change it is a valuable skill you can practice in everyday life.

# Thought Record

**Worksheet**

**22A**

MINDFULNESS

Trigger: Application was returned because it was completed incorrectly

| CATCH IT! | | CHECK IT! | CHANGE IT! | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Automatic Thoughts | Emotions | Cognitive Error? | Balanced Thought | Consequences |
| Anyone can do this, I’m struggling so much because I’m stupid. | Anger<br>Frustration<br>Shame | Generalization<br>Jumping to Conclusions<br>Labeling | This is challenging and I’m probably not the only one struggling. I may have to work extra hard but I’m not going to give up just because it’s difficult. | Increased motivation and acceptance.<br>Decreased focus on comparisons. |

# Graduation

## Session 23

**Objective:** To give group members a sense of accomplishment and acknowledge completion of the executive functioning curriculum; to review and reinforce concepts learned.

**Materials:** jeopardy questions, white board and markers, completion certificate. Examples of jeopardy questions are provided.

### What to Say:

*Today is our final group meeting and I invite you to think about the ways you have grown since our first group- either in terms of the goals you may have had when you entered the group or in the way you thought about getting things done. We have talked about many different topics and techniques to help us in our everyday lives. But before we say goodbye, let's play a game that will help us review all that we have learned here- Executive Functioning Jeopardy!*

**Exercises:** Write categories of the Jeopardy questions on the white board: Motivation, Skills, CBT, etc. and the corresponding value underneath in columns ($100, $200, $300, etc.). To begin to play, have a group member call out which category and dollar amount they would like to answer. The group is encouraged to use the group materials and worksheets for reference. They may play as individuals or be divided into teams. Whichever individual or team has the most points wins.

Next begin to wrap up the group, leaving time for group members to reflect upon their experiences and how they may view challenges and tasks now as opposed to the way they did before entering the group. Allow time for each member to review goals and what they may like to work on in the future. Give each member a personalized completion certificate.

Group members should take their folders with them when they leave the group. If there is time, consider stapling the goal sheets together and organizing the folders so it is easier to track what they did.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Motivation**<br>**$100** | Question: What are the two types of motivation?<br>Answer: Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation<br>BONUS: Give an example of each from your own life. |
| **Motivation**<br>**$200** | Question: What are three things that influence how motivated you will be to do something?<br>Answer any 3 of these: autonomy, competence, relatedness, interest, value, cost-benefit<br>BONUS: Give an example of how the presence or absence of one of these affected your motivation. |
| **Motivation**<br>**$200** | Question: What is the difference between a value and a goal? Give examples of each.<br>Answer examples: A value is a way you want to live your life/type of person you want to be. A goal is a specific achievement.<br>BONUS: Name one of your personal values and a current goal related to that value. |
| **Motivation**<br>**$200** | Question: What is radical acceptance?<br>Answer accepting reality as it is (willingness), rather than getting stuck in how things "should" be (willfulness)<br>BONUS: What is something in your life you have had to radically accept or would like to radically accept? |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Motivation**<br>**$300** | Question: What are 3 ways to get more motivated?<br>Answer any 3 of the worksheet 10A seven Ps e.g. piggybacking, partnering, pleasurable pairing, preparation, pros and cons, presents/rewards, projection.<br>BONUS: Give an example of one “P” that you have used to improve motivation. |
| **Motivation**<br>**$300** | Question: What are three examples of ways to ask for help so you maintain your sense of autonomy?<br>Answer examples: Ask for moral support, help with organization, brainstorming, check ins<br>BONUS: Describe a time when you felt respected and helped. Why? |
| **Motivation**<br>**$300** | Question: What are 3 ways to increase autonomy?<br>Answer examples: identify and correct pursuer-distancer dynamic, pre-emptively say what you will do, stop self- sabotage by reframing behavior as your own |
| **CBT**<br>**$100** | Question: How are the 3 points of the triangle labelled in CBT?<br>Answer: Thoughts, Behavior and Emotions<br>BONUS: Which angle can’t we affect directly? |

| | |
|---|---|
| **CBT**<br>**$200** | Question: What are three common negative core beliefs that people with EF problems have?<br>Answer examples: I am a failure, I am incompetent, I cannot trust myself to do things properly<br>BONUS: Describe at least one thing that creates a core belief (e.g. environment, development, experiences, neurobiology) |
| **CBT**<br>**$200** | Question: What do the 3 C's refer to?<br>Answer: Catch it, check it, change it.<br>BONUS: What are the two things you are meant to "catch" (answer: thoughts and emotions). Give personal examples of each. |
| **CBT**<br>**$200** | Question: Name two different types of "thinking errors".<br>Answer examples: all or nothing, overgeneralization, mental filter, disqualifying the positive, jumping to conclusions (mind reading/fortune telling), catastrophizing, magnification/minimization, catastrophizing, emotional reasoning, "should" statements, labeling, personalization, maladaptive thinking |
| **CBT**<br>**$200** | Question: What is an example of the catastrophizing thinking error<br>Answer examples: I did not get the application in on time so I will lose my housing. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **CBT**<br>**$300** | Question: What is an example of a positive filter?<br>Answer examples: caring, self-acceptance, achievement, competence, self-help, efficacy, growth mindset<br>BONUS: Give an example of one positive core belief you hold about yourself/the world. |
| **CBT**<br>**$300** | Question: What is an example of an adaptive thought to challenge the automatic thought, “I’m stupid.”?<br>Answer: This is hard- maybe others also struggle with it.<br>BONUS: Give an example of another adaptive response to the automatic thought “Getting this application done is so hard for me, I must be so stupid…I’ll never get a job.” |
| **Skills**<br>**$100** | Question: What skill do we use when a task feels very large and has many steps?<br>Answer: Chunking |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Skills**<br>**$100** | Question: Give a description of one of the following: time padding, time estimation or time tethering<br>Answer examples: (padding) adding transit time to your calendar, (estimation) tracking how long a routine task takes over time, (tethering) setting an alarm for a task you're likely to get hyper focused on or to alert you to regular times of the day (e.g. time to leave apt, lunchtime, wind down time) |
| **Skills**<br>**$200** | Question: What are the two different types of "chunks".<br>Answer: Chunking by task or by time.<br>BONUS: Give an example of how to chunk "clean apartment" by time and by task. |
| **Skills**<br>**$200** | Question: How does ABC prioritization work?<br>Answer example: Label "A" tasks are to be done today, "B" tasks are to be done within the week, "C" tasks are to be done within the month and "D" tasks are long term tasks |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Skills**<br>**$200** | Question: What does ESMART stand for?<br>Answer: Emotionally charged, specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, timely<br>BONUS: Using an example of a goal of yours create a poorly constructed goal and then make it more "ESMART". |
| **Skills**<br>**$200** | Question: What are 3 ways to create a new habit?<br>Answer examples: eliminate choice, focus on plan instead of result, use if- then planning (piggybacking) to reward small steps, benchmark small steps |
| **Skills**<br>**$300** | Question: Name 3 ways that improve one's ability to sleep well and 3 things that interfere with healthy sleep & waking.<br>Answer examples: (improvement) wind down time, consistent bedtime, regular exercise (interfere) screen time, alcohol/caffeine, snoozing |
| **Skills**<br>**$300** | Question: What are the four "commandments" of calendar/planner usage?<br>Answer: use one planner (planner monogamy), put everything in it, take it with you everywhere, look at it 3x/day |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Skills**<br>**$300** | Question: What is the Zeigarnik Effect?<br>Answer example: The concept that without writing things down our brains get "clogged up" and slow down because they're bogged down with too much information being held in working memory<br>BONUS: Name one solution to decrease the Zeigarnik Effect? (e.g. planer, to do list) |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Attention**<br>**$100** | Question: Name 2 different types of distraction<br>Answer examples: auditory, visual, social, emotional physical<br>BONUS: Give an example of a type of distraction |
| **Attention**<br>**$200** | Question: Name two ways to improve your attention.<br>Answer examples: Improve mindfulness skills, use self-talk, take breaks, improve sleep<br>BONUS: Give an example of something you already do to help you stay focused. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Attention**<br>**$200** | Question: Describe a "distraction dump" and identify a situation where you might use this skill to improve attention.<br>Answer examples: A distraction dump is a form of journaling to get things that are bothering you off your mind and onto a page so that you free up bandwidth to focus. Situations to use this would be: when you are in a fight with a partner but have to focus on completing a job application. |
| **Attention**<br>**$300** | Question: Describe how to use the "distraction delay" skill.<br>Answer examples: Set an amount of time you want to work for, put a notebook next to you and list any distractions that arise, always turning your attention back to the task at hand until time is up, at which point you can look at the notebook and see if you actually need to attend to the distractions or not. |

RESOURCES

# ENERGY ORGANIZATION:

When you are not feeling well it might make sense to organize your list according to how much energy it will take to complete each task. Energy could mean mental energy, physical energy, emotional energy, etc. This way, even when you're not feeling your best, you can take care of some of the things on your list. However, this strategy requires you are honest with yourself about how much you truly can complete at any given time. The danger is that you may be tempted to complete only low energy tasks rather than force yourself to complete the hard ones. The benefit of this system is that you "keep an oar in the water" as it were, by remaining active and building mastery, which may in turn help increase your mood and energy level.

Here are some examples:

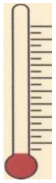
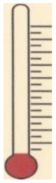
| **High Energy** | **Normal Energy** | **Low Energy** |
|---|---|---|
| Call boss about medical leave | Prepare materials re: medical leave | Put relevant emails and documents about leave in folder |
| Take Zumba class at gym | Do 20-minute yoga video at home | Walk around the block once |
| Clean Bathroom & bedroom | Clean bathroom floor and tidy bedroom | Throw out things in room for 10 minutes |

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING GROUP

# Weekly Goals

**Worksheet 2C**

Name: ______________________ Week of: ____________________

| Goal or Task | Motivation | Urgency | Values | Potential Pitfalls | Skills to Use |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| |  _High<br>_Medium<br>_Low |  _High<br>_Medium<br>_Low | | | |
| **Outcome** | | | | | |
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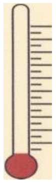
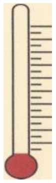
| Goal or Task | Motivation | Urgency | Values | Potential Pitfalls | Skills to Use |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| |  _High<br>_Medium<br>_Low |  _High<br>_Medium<br>_Low | | | |
| **Outcome** | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

**Upcoming Deadlines:**

**Goals:** Remember to make goals ESMART: emotionally charged, specific, measurable, achievable, relevant & timely. **Motivation:** L=Low, M=Medium, H=High
**Values:** Why is the goal important to you? **Skills to Use:** Chunking (by time or task), piggybacking, pleasurable pairing, partnering, preparation, projection, pros & cons, presents/rewards, radical acceptance/willingness, zombie/just do it method, pre-emptive strike, cleaning ninja, secret goals, carve out, sleep hygiene, time estimation, time padding, time tethering, time guarding, mindfulness, self-talk, breaks, attention gauge, distraction dump, distraction delay, CBT thought record.