

**ACTIVITIES 2--RELAXING AND PLANNING  
TO DO PLEASANT ACTIVITIES**

**GOALS FOR LEADERS**

- Teach participants a relaxation exercise and help participants understand the benefits of relaxation.
- Review the connection between mood and doing pleasant activities.
- Help participants identify activities that they enjoy.
- Do a relaxation exercise.
- Help participants learn a strategy to deal with the dilemma that pleasant activities will make you feel better, but when you are depressed, you don't feel like doing anything.

**MATERIALS NEEDED FOR THIS SESSION**

- 1) Pens
- 2) Dry erase board, chalkboard or large sheets of paper to present material to group

# **COGNITIVE-BEHAVIORAL TREATMENT FOR DEPRESSION**

PART II: Lecture Notes for Instructors: Activities 2

Version 2000: May, 2000

- I. Agenda and Announcements
- II. Review
- III. Personal Project Review
- IV. New Material: Planning to Do Pleasant Activities
- V. Take Home Message
- VI. Personal Project
- VII. Preview and Feedback

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## I. AGENDA & ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Go over the agenda and ask participants whether they have any topics they would like to add to the agenda. Make any announcements.

## II. REVIEW:

Begin by reviewing the material covered in Activities 1. Use the review to check on how much participants remember from the last session, reinforce what they have learned, and educate group members who were absent last session.

[sample review statement]

*Last week we talked about how pleasant activities affect our mood. What are some of the things that you remember most from last week?*

Elicit material from the participants. It is important to try and understand whether they now believe that doing pleasant activities can have a positive effect on their mood and to see how they see the relationship between their mood and their activity level. Review how pleasant activities can change both their external reality and their internal reality.

Make sure that you review the reciprocal relationship between depression and engaging in activities. If necessary, ask participants how depression affects their desire to do pleasant activities and then ask how not doing pleasant activities affects their mood. Go over the diagram found on the top of page 55 of their books and have a group member read the statement shown on the top of that page.

*Depression affects our interest in doing things. We have less interest in doing anything. Doing fewer pleasant activities can also lead you to feel more depressed.*

## III. PERSONAL PROJECT REVIEW:

Review the personal project assigned from the previous session. Check in with participants as to which optional projects they did. While reviewing the personal projects, try to draw a clear connection between how doing activities affected their mood. Try to identify any problems participants may have had with the personal project

### WEEKLY PROJECT

- Mood Scale and the number of pleasant events they did each day
- Think about the dilemma: doing pleasant activities will make me feel better but when I am depressed I often don't feel like doing anything.  
(Let group members know that you will talk about this later on in today's session)
- Think about the activities you enjoy doing by looking at the list of pleasant activities in your book

### OPTIONAL PROJECT

- New pleasant activities they did

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- Pleasant activities they increased
- Pleasant activities they identified from the "Fun and Free in San Francisco" booklet

#### **IV. NEW MATERIAL**

**BRIDGE:** Introduce this week's material, linking it to material taught in previous sessions.

[sample bridge]

*As we mentioned last week, we are going to spend the next three weeks, including today, talking about how what we do affects how we feel and looking at how we can make changes in this area to improve our mood. We have an exercise that we can do that will remind us of the connection between what we do and how we feel.*

#### **1. HOW DOES WHAT WE DO AFFECT HOW WE FEEL?**

**ACTIVITY: CHAINING ACTIVITY**

[sample introduction to the activity]

*I would like to do a group activity that we call the "Chaining Activity." The purpose of this activity is to show how what we do affects how we feel. First let's take a neutral statement, a statement of fact.*

You may need to educate group members as to what a statement of fact is. It can be the statement at the top of a depressive spiral. Some examples are: 1) it is raining; 2) I have diabetes; 3) I have no energy.

Quickly draw the mood scale on the board. Explain the mood scale or have a veteran explain the mood scale to new members. Write the statement of fact on the line next to the 5. We often brainstorm statements of fact with group members, writing them all down on the line representing a mood of 5 and then we have the group pick one statement of fact for the exercise.

Instruct group members that you now want them to think of ways that they might act, given the statement of fact, that would make them spiral down. Ask them to spiral down in stages. So first, you would like someone to suggest some behavior that would lead them to a mood of about a 4 and then a 3 and then a 2 and then a 1. Let participants know that on page 56 of their books there is a worksheet where they can write down the exercise.

*So now what I'd like you to do is to think about something you could do that would bring you down to a mood of a 4. What would bring you down just one step?*

Elicit answers from the group. If the answer seems too drastic, ask group members whether they would rate that as a 4 or perhaps lower. Then place the item where the group feels it belongs. If someone in the group gives you a thought, write it down and then ask how they might act or behave if they had a thought like that. Write down the behavior next to the thought.

*Now what would be an activity or behavior that would bring us down to a 3.*  
Repeat for moods of 2 and 1.

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Once participants have done this, ask them how they are feeling after doing this part of the exercise. Process what it is like for them to see how what you do can affect how you feel. Process how their mood may have changed by just doing the exercise.

Next, have the participants go back to the statement of fact and now think of behaviors that would lead them to spiral up, one step at a time.

*Now, let's return to the statement of fact (repeat statement). What's a behavior that might make our mood become a 6?*

Repeat the process for moods up to 9. It is important to tell them that when we are spiraling up, we may never really get to a 9 but that we are trying to think of things that will make us progressively feel better. After they are done, again process their thoughts about how doing pleasant activities or self care activities can make them feel better and how their mood may have changed by doing this part of the exercise.

We have included examples from our previous work with using this technique with groups below.

### SAMPLE CHAINING EXERCISE

9	I'm going to make myself a bowl of soup or some tea. I'm going out for some "sopa"
8	It's nice outside. I'm going to take a walk around the block. I'll take a different route to do something new, have new scenery
7	I'm going to do something. I'm going to make a commitment
6	I will force myself to do something, even wash the dishes, dust, or shower
5	I have no energy
4	So I'm going to bed. I feel useless
3	I'm not even going to get up to eat. Life sucks.
2	I'm going to stay in bed for two days
1	I'm going to have a "pity party" and think about all the things that bother me. I'm not going to talk to anyone

### SUMMARY: SO HOW DOES WHAT WE DO AFFECT HOW WE FEEL?

At the end of the exercise elicit from the group the links they see between activities and mood. Try to cover the following points:

- When people do pleasant activities, they often feel happier. (in part because their external reality is actually better than if they did not do them)
- When people do pleasant activities, they are more likely to have positive thoughts about themselves and about their lives. In other words, their internal reality is also getting better.

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- When people do pleasant activities they are more likely to have contact with other people, but there are also pleasant activities that people can do alone
- When you are feeling down or tired, it is often hard to get the energy to do pleasant activities but doing one may help you feel better and less tired.

Other topics to consider include:

1) how these examples apply to their own lives.

2) how events tend to chain, meaning when you do one activity you often start a chain so that you are more likely to do more activities. For example, if you go out for a walk, you may bump in to someone and then you may decide to do something with them. Then, that night you may have pleasant thoughts about what you did together. And, in the future, you are more likely to go out for a walk again.

3) Internal and external reality - When we behave differently we change our external reality. In the example given above, the person has limited their external reality as they spiral down but when they spiral up, their external reality is broadened to include new experiences, new places, and perhaps even new people. As you change your external reality, you also change your internal reality (your thoughts). In the story above, the reality of the person's day truly changed by going out for that walk.

## 2. WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO?

*We have just been talking about how when we do a pleasant activity, we often feel better, but, what exactly is a pleasant activity?*

*Imagine for example that I said that I liked doing the dishes. Is this a pleasant activity?*

Begin a group discussion highlighting the following information:

- 1) Differences across people
  - a) We don't all like the same things
  - b) We don't all need the same number of pleasant activities to feel good
- 2) Differences in what we enjoy at different times(variety) - even within the individual there may be times when the activity is more or less pleasant. For example, I don't like loud music in the morning, but I like it when I am vacuuming the house. Sometimes we need to not only choose the activity but also figure out under what conditions it is likely to be enjoyable.
3. Some pleasant activities take just a second. These brief pleasant activities are often the most useful ones especially when it's hard to find time. Brief pleasant activities give us a glimpse of the beauty of the world around us. You can also do more of them during the day

## ACTIVITY

**Option 1:** Brainstorming a List of Pleasant Activities

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We recommend that you do the following activity to help participants identify those activities that are pleasant for them. We have selected this activity because it is interactive but other useful substitute activities are shown in the addendum to this session. Substituting one of these activities may be preferable depending on the education level or characteristics of the participants. This option is low in structure and can be used with participants from a variety of educational backgrounds.

It may be easier to do if participants have already displayed a tendency to participate actively during the group and, during past discussions, have disclosed that they are already engaging in a wide variety of pleasant activities. Although you will not be able to list as many items as are on either the Pleasant Activities List or Pleasant Activities Card, participants may come up with pleasant activities that are specific and more relevant to the city or town where they are. In addition, after making up their own list of pleasant activities, participants may feel a sense of accomplishment. The other exercises, may however, contain items that participants might not consider.

Before you begin the actual activity, you may want to mention how making a list of positive activities has helped other group members, clients, or even you in the past.

[sample script]

*Last week we asked you to look at the list of pleasant activities in your book and identify those that you enjoy as part of your personal project. I thought we might now share our ideas. It may also be helpful for us to think in terms of categories.*

Brainstorm as a group all the different kinds of activities that they identified as pleasant. It is often useful to write their ideas down on the board under two separate categories: 1) activities that are free, and 2) those that cost money. You can also split the categories by looking at activities you can do alone and those you do with others. Sample activities in each category are shown below.

Put the table (shown below) on the board and explain it. Then ask them to share their pleasant activities and place them in the appropriate category.

	<u>Free</u>	<u>\$\$</u>
<u>alone</u>	walk in Golden Gate Park drink tea museum on a free day	movie haircut
<u>with others</u>	street fair play with a pet	out to eat movie with a friend cook a good meal with a friend

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As you can see, some of the activities are specific to San Francisco where this program was developed. For each group it is important to identify activities specific to the location where the program is being run.

After you have finished brainstorming, process what it was like to do the exercise.

- What was it like for them to do the exercise
- Individual differences in terms of the activities they find pleasant
- How did the group's mood change just doing this exercise
- What is the ratio of free to \$\$ activities (in previous groups, participants are often surprised by the number of free activities we identify)

Why is it good to have activities you can do by yourself?

- You control when you do them and are not dependent on anyone else
- Time to think and enjoy our own thoughts

Why is it good to have activities you can do with others?

- Pleasant contacts with people often make us feel better
- Others may sometimes increase our motivation to do the activity
- Can build and improve our relationships with others: doing fun stuff together helps people enjoy each other more

What are some examples of brief pleasant events?

- As you walk somewhere, notice flowers on the way. Take time to smell them, notice the sky, the clouds, the fog, whatever about your surroundings that brings good feelings to you.
- Remember a song you like, hum it, sing it aloud to yourself.
- Have a cup of tea.

Before moving on, you can point out the "Fun and Free in San Francisco" booklet and suggest that they can look through it at home for more ideas of things to do in San Francisco. (If you are leading this program in another location, you may want to brainstorm with participants things that they can do for free in their geographical region.)

### 3. HOW CAN I GIVE MYSELF A BREAK?

#### OPTION 1: DEEP MUSCLE RELAXATION

*[sample script]*

*Last week we mentioned that we would be doing a relaxation exercise. Let's do it now. We can relax in many different ways, by listening to music, taking a walk, or just sitting in one place.*

*This is just one other way to relax. Many people have told us that they find it very pleasant and that it has helped them with their depression and their anxiety. We will begin by doing some*

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*deep breathing but then we will be doing a specific technique called progressive deep muscle relaxation. We do this by tensing different muscle groups and then relaxing them. When we do this, you'll see that tensing and relaxing cannot occur at the same time. Let's go through the muscle groups now to show how we would tense them. If you have any physical problems in any of these areas, do not tense your muscles just study the natural tension and then try to relax them.*

Caution: ). Adapt the exercise to the population with whom you are working and the physical limitations that they may have. You may choose not to do this exercise with individuals who have breathing difficulties or serious physical problems or with those who are pregnant (depending on the trimester

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Go through the different muscle groups listed below (from Miller & Muñoz, 1982).

<b>Hands</b>	Tighten your right hand by making a fist and squeezing. Do this twice. Repeat with the left hand.
<b>Forearms and back of hands</b>	With your right arm resting on the chair and the back of your hand facing up, bend your hand at the wrist, pointing your fingers straight up. Study the tension this creates in the back of your hand and forearm. Repeat. Now do it with the left hand and arm.
<b>Biceps</b>	Flex large muscles in your upper arm by trying to touch your right shoulder with your right fist, tightening the biceps. Repeat. Right arm first, then left.
<b>Shoulders</b>	Bring your shoulders up, as if to touch your ears with them. Repeat.
<b>Forehead</b>	Wrinkle up your forehead by bringing your eyebrows up as far as they will go. Repeat.
<b>Face</b>	Wrinkle your nose and close your eyes tightly. Repeat
<b>Lips</b>	Press your lips tightly together. Repeat
<b>Tongue</b>	Push your tongue into the roof of your mouth. Repeat
<b>Neck</b>	Press your head against the back of the chair. Repeat
<b>Chest</b>	Take a breath that is so deep you can feel it stretch your chest muscles. Hold it. Release it slowly. Feel yourself relax as the air leaves your lungs. Repeat
<b>Stomach</b>	Suck in and tighten your abdomen, as though preparing to receive a punch in the stomach. Repeat
<b>Back</b>	Arch your back away from the chair. Repeat
<b>Legs and thighs</b>	Lift your legs up from the chair, holding them straight out in the air. Repeat.
<b>Calves.</b>	Point your toes back toward your chest, creating tension in your lower legs. Repeat.
<b>Feet</b>	Curl your toes downward, as if digging them into sand. Feel the tension in your arches. Repeat

Go through the muscle groups in the following way:

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- 1) tense for 5-10 seconds
- 2) study the tension
- 3) relax (about 20 seconds). Let the muscles go totally loose and let the tension go completely.
- 4) notice the difference between tensing and relaxing
- 5) OPTIONAL: tense again and repeat the process (either fully or 1/2 way for discrimination training)

As an option, you can ask group members to rate their mood before and after doing the exercise

At the end of the exercise, discuss as a group what it was like to do the exercise. If participants liked the exercise and feel that it is useful, the exercise can be repeated each week. As members become more familiar with the exercise, you can ask them to lead the rest of the group.

You may also decide to tape the relaxation sessions and give tapes to group members so that they can practice these exercises at home.

### OPTION 2- DEEP BREATHING AND DEEP MUSCLE RELAXATION

Adapted from the following sources:

Wherever you go there you are by Jon Kabat-Zinn

Psychological Treatment of Panic by Barlow, D.H. and Cerny, J.A.

Jacobson's Progressive Relaxation

*Get yourself in a comfortable position with your feet flat on the ground. Now take a full breath in. . . . Try to focus on your breath, the feeling of it coming into your body . . . . and then the feeling of it leaving your body. . . . . Notice the cool air as you breathe in . . . . and the warm moist air as you exhale. . . Go at your own pace. Try to keep your mind open and free, just breathe. . . . . For now, forget all thoughts about the past or about what you have to do. Just keep returning to your breath whenever your mind wanders. . . . feel your breath come in. . . . and then out. . . Now as you exhale mentally repeat the word "relax," . . . . inhale, . . . exhale, relax. . . . inhale. . . . exhale, relax.*

### 4. HOW CAN WE INCREASE THE CHANCE THAT WE WILL DO PLEASANT ACTIVITIES?

[sample script]

*As we mentioned earlier, we realize that doing pleasant activities is not always easy. We asked you to think about the dilemma that doing pleasant activities will make me feel better but when I am depressed I often don't feel like doing anything. What are some of the things that you thought of?*

Elicit participants' thoughts on this subject. Comment on their thoughts, if possible linking it to the material we are about to cover.

*As we talked about things like our energy level, our mood, and a lack of free time often make it hard to do pleasant activities. But there are some things that can help us do pleasant activities.*

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*If you turn to page 62 in your books, we have listed some helpful steps. Present the steps on the blackboard.*

Go through each of the steps with the group members and then do the activity.

Step 1: Consider that doing pleasant activities is important

- It helps improve our emotional, social, and physical health.  
It actually changes your external reality (the reality of your day).

Point out that they already have done this step.

Step 2: Decide/seek out what you would like to do. Choose your pleasant activity.

Point out that they have also done this step.

Step 3: Commit to doing the pleasant activity in order to improve how you feel.

*Last week we talked about how one of the problems with doing pleasant events is that people often feel too busy to do them. If we believe that doing pleasant activities is important, then it is important to make the time. Last week when we told you that we were going to do the relaxation exercise we committed to doing it. We told you we were going to do it, so we had to do it.*

*How do you commit to doing pleasant events?*

Elicit answers from the group and write their answers on the board.

Point out that one way that people often commit to doing things is by making a contract with themselves. Have them turn to page 63 in their books and point out and discuss the “Personal Commitment Form.” Let them know that they can complete one as a personal project if they want to.

Step 4: Plan ahead (make the activity do-able, simple, and low stress).

*The best way to make sure that you do the event is to plan ahead.*

- Schedule the event
- If others are involved, invite them
- Plan an alternative (e.g. in case of rain)  
Discuss the importance of flexibility.

Step 5: Get help from others when necessary

Discuss how others may be helpful.

- Emotional support
- Companionship during the activity
- Instrumental support - a ride, loan of money or car

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Step 6: Recognize the effort you are making to help yourself feel better.  
Give yourself a mental pat on the back.

## ACTIVITY USING THE 6 STEPS

Ask group members to select partners and then have them practice using the 5 steps to plan an activity that they will do over the next week as a personal project

## V. TAKE HOME MESSAGE

Pleasant activities are as necessary to being happy and healthy as eating and sleeping well.

But when I am depressed, it is often hard to get started.

So, I need to plan carefully how to increase my pleasant activities.

Once I get going, I'll get better, and it will be easier to keep doing healthy, fun activities.

## V. PERSONAL PROJECT ASSIGNMENT (Approximately 5 minutes)

### WEEKLY PROJECT

- 1) Continue tracking mood using the mood scale and track the number of positive events you do each day
- 2) Follow the plan you developed and do the pleasant activity.

### OPTIONAL PROJECT

select one of the following activities to do

- 1) plan to do another activity (use the personal commitment form)
- 2) teach someone what you learned in group today
- 3) practice relaxing (use the relaxation record)
- 4) do a new pleasant activity

## VI. PREVIEW AND FEEDBACK

Let the participants know that next week you will continue talking about how to handle the dilemma that doing pleasant activities will make me feel better but when I am depressed I often don't feel like doing anything. Ask them whether they would like to do the relaxation exercise again. If so, add it to the agenda for next week.

Before ending the group, encourage group members to provide feedback regarding today's session. Questions to encourage discussion are listed below.

- What was helpful about today's session?
- What was not helpful?

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## GROUP LEADER SELF EVALUATION FORM: ACTIVITIES 2

### INSTRUCTIONS

Content Covered: Rate the degree to which you feel this material was covered (0=not at all, 10=fully covered) If not done this session but done later, when it is done write in the date and rate how well you feel you covered it.

Satisfaction with Teaching: Rate the degree to which you are satisfied with the way you and your co-leader taught the material (0=not at all satisfied, 10=extremely satisfied).

Participant Process: Rate on average the degree to which participants seemed to participate, understand and complete the exercise (0=on average very poor no one understood or no one was able to complete exercise; 10=everyone seemed to understand keypoints and complete the exercise).

	Taught/ Done? (0-10)	Satisfaction with Teaching (0-10)	Participant Process (0-10)
Agenda and Announcements	_____	_____	_____
Review	_____	_____	_____
Personal Project Review	_____	_____	_____
Chaining Activity	_____	_____	_____
What do you like to do: brainstorming a list	_____	_____	_____
Relaxation exercise: (which one: )			
How can we increase the chance that we will do pleasant activities	_____	_____	_____
Personal Project Assigned	_____	_____	_____
Take Home Message	_____	_____	_____
Preview and Feedback	_____	_____	_____

ADDENDUM TO ACTIVITIES 2

**RECOMMENDED READING FOR INSTRUCTORS**

Control your Depression (1986) Chapter 6

**OPTIONAL REPLACEMENT EXERCISES**

**2. WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO?**

**Option 2:** Completing the List of Pleasant Activities

This option provides participants with a very comprehensive list of activities. The list may remind them of many things they used to enjoy doing and may encourage them to resume doing them. However, in order for participants to complete the list, they need to be able to read well and be able to tolerate a very long list of items.

The list and instructions are included in participants' manuals. If the members of your group can read well, you may consider assigning the list of pleasant activities as a homework assignment.

[sample introduction to the activity]

*To come up with an individualized list of activities, we have developed a questionnaire that lists many activities that people consider pleasant. Out of these activities you will select 100 that you will keep track of.*

Have the participants turn to the Pleasant Activities List in their books and go over the instructions with them. If possible, do an example on the board. (instructions and List of Pleasant Activities are attached below.)

After you are done with the instructions, provide them with information about how the lists were made.

*This list of activities was developed by asking large numbers of people living in Eugene, Oregon, to write down activities that they thought were pleasant. Activities people wrote down were placed on large lists, and more people were asked to rate the activities on these list in terms of how pleasant they thought they were. Based on their ratings, a list of 320 activities was developed. We have narrowed the list down to 300. Some of these activities will be pleasant for some people and not for others. Some of these activities will help you feel better. We want you to use this list to come up with your own list of activities that you find pleasant.*

Let the participants complete the lists. If possible, walk around the room and provide participants with individual attention and help.

**Option 3: Sorting Through Pleasant Activities Cards**

This option also provides participants with a comprehensive list of activities. This option may be useful for participants who cannot read well as the items are presented in pictures.

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(Pictures of the Pleasant Activities Cards are in the Addendum to Session 6. By photocopying these pictures onto the right color paper and then cutting up the cards, you can create sets of Pleasant Activities Cards. Before cutting up the cards, we cover each sheet with plastic. Most office supply stores can do this for you. This makes the cards last longer but is not necessary. You can also print them on cardstock)

Description of cards: Each card has a picture of a pleasant activity along with a written description of the activity. There are also some blank cards so that people can add activities that are not on the list. There are XX cards total. Cards are organized by color. Yellow cards show activities that people can do alone (yellow=yourself) Purple cards show activities that people can do with other people (purple=people).

ACTIVITY CARDS <u>Y</u> ellow = yourself <u>P</u> urple = people
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Ask the participants to get together in groups of 2-3 people. Give each group a stack of Pleasant Activities Cards. Ask participants to work together in their small groups and sort through the cards. Ask them to talk to one another about the events they each find pleasant. As they identify the activities they like, they can circle pictures in their book that match the cards. By doing this, they will have a visual list of the activities that they find pleasant. Remind them that they will not all like the same activities, but it may be interesting to see that different people have different preferences.

As participants do the activity, group leaders can circulate among the small groups.

At the end of the activity, discuss, as a large group, some of the activities participants found pleasant. You may also want to check in with participants as to the number of "by yourself" and "with other people" activities they selected and discuss the importance of having both.