

**ACTIVITIES 3 -- IDENTIFYING AND OVERCOMING
ROADBLOCKS TO DOING PLEASANT ACTIVITIES**

GOALS FOR LEADERS

- Help participants identify potential roadblocks to doing pleasant activities
- Help participants problem solve to figure out ways to overcome the roadblocks
- Help participants understand how doing pleasant activities can help them manage problems in life

MATERIALS NEEDED FOR THIS SESSION

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

- I. Agenda and Announcements
- II. Review
- III. Personal Project Review
- IV. New Material: Identifying and Overcoming Obstacles
- V. Take Home Message
- VI. Personal Project
- VII. Preview and Feedback

COGNITIVE-BEHAVIORAL TREATMENT FOR DEPRESSION

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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 2. 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 what we do affects how we feel. We also identified activities that we each enjoy, and we talked about how we could plan in order to increase the chance that we do pleasant activities. 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 are now trying to engage in more pleasant activities and to try and identify some of the obstacles, either internal or external, to doing them.

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 and changed their reality at the time they were doing them. 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.
- Follow the plan developed in class and do the pleasant activity.

OPTIONAL PROJECT

- Planning to do a new pleasant activity
- Teaching someone what they learned in group
- Practicing relaxing
- New pleasant activity they did

IV. NEW MATERIAL

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

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[sample bridge]

Last week we mentioned that we would continue talking about how to handle the dilemma that doing pleasant activities will make us feel better but when we are depressed we often don't feel like doing anything. That's what we're going to do today.

RELAXATION EXERCISE

[mention this only if they chose to do the relaxation exercise last session]

We also talked about doing the relaxation exercise, would you like to do it now or later in the group?

Add it to the agenda and then do the exercise when it is time. Instructions for the relaxation exercise are shown in Activities 2.

1. WHAT IS KEEPING ME FROM DOING PLEASANT ACTIVITIES?

As many of you have mentioned, there are lots of obstacles or roadblocks to doing pleasant events. When people are depressed they often have more roadblocks. Today we are going to be talking about overcoming them.

Note: Some group members may have brought up specific roadblocks during the personal project review. For example, they may not have completed the personal project due to a roadblock. Whenever possible, bring up examples that group members have already shared.

The first step is to figure out what they are. In other words, we need to answer the question, What is keeping me from doing pleasant events? To do this, I want us all to think about things that have served as roadblocks for us in the past. We can do this by trying to finish this sentence.

"I would have done it BUT. . . ." or "I can't do it because. . . ."

On the left side of the board, write up or draw pictures of, the roadblocks that group members are describing. A sample board is shown below. If you have group members who do not read well, you may want to include pictures of the roadblocks whenever possible. Make sure you try and elicit every "BUT" that they have.

[sample board]

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PROBLEMS/ROADBLOCKS	
1. No time 2. No money 3. No energy (don't feel like doing them) 4. Forget what we like to do 5. Our thoughts 6. No one to do them with	

2. HOW CAN I OVERCOME THESE ROADBLOCKS?

NOTE: Below are a number of ways people can overcome roadblocks to doing pleasant activities. Depending on the characteristics of your group, you may want to emphasize different skills presented below.

ACTIVITY A: PROBLEM SOLVING

Keep the problems/roadblocks on the board.

[sample script]

Congratulations on identifying so many roadblocks. We've just taken the first step toward overcoming these roadblocks. Let's turn to page 69 in the books, so we can see what other steps we can take.

You may want to let the group know that you are using a technique called problem solving. Here are some other points you may want to make.

- They probably already use aspects of problem solving
- Sometimes we forget to use problem solving skills when we are under stress. At these times having a clear understanding of the steps can be useful.
- Many therapists use problem solving to resolve problems between parents and children and between couples. We will be talking about how to use problem solving to reduce conflict between people in the people section of the program.

The first letter of each step spells out "ITCH."

Step 1: **Identify the problem (They have already done this)**

Step 2: Think about all the possible solutions, without evaluating them. There should be a number of different possible solutions. Go back to the board. Go through each problem and elicit possible solutions from the group. On the right side of the board, write down the solutions the group comes up with for each problem. Remind them that at this stage of brainstorming, it is important not to evaluate the solutions.

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[sample board]

PROBLEMS/ROADBLOCKS	SOLUTION
1. No time	1. Pleasant activities don't have to be big 1. Make time, schedule them into your life.
2. No money	2. Pleasant activities don't have to be expensive 2. Look through the Pleasant Activity Cards and pick a free activity 2. Look through the Fun and Free in S.F. booklet and pick a free activity. 2. Save money for a special activity.
3. No energy (don't feel like doing them)	3. Remember the cycle. You may have more energy after doing the activity. 3. Try this as an experiment
4. Forget what we like to do	4. Make a list of activities you like to do.
5. Our thoughts	5. *see notes below
6. No one to do them with	6. Some activities do not involve other people We will talk more about the role of others in the Social Support section of the program

*thoughts as a roadblock - Acknowledge the role of thoughts as roadblocks and let participants know that you will be talking more about how thoughts interfere with what we do and how we can change our thoughts in a future module. For those who have already completed the thoughts module, you can ask them to talk about how they learned to change their thoughts. Note that this is a good example of how our internal reality can affect our external reality.

Key Point: Pleasant activities do not have to be big, expensive, involve other people or even really special.

It is often the little things that make us feel better.

Step 3: Choose the best solution or combination of solutions (the ones that are best for you) and try them

As a group, pick the best solution for each problem. Remind them that they may each have their own ideas about which solution is best.

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Step 4: How well does it work? Try it and find out. Then reevaluate the problem and consider additional alternatives.

Return to group next week and report back as part of your personal project on how well your solution worked.

After finishing this exercise, elicit participants reactions. How did it feel to try to really look at things that have been roadblocks for them and then try to find ways to overcome them.

ACTIVITY B: PACING YOURSELF

Introduce the idea that similar to all or nothing thinking we may need to think about levels of activity that we can do.

[sample script]

When the roadblock is that you feel too tired, you don't have energy or time, or you just don't feel like it, it may be important to think about pacing ourselves. What does this word mean to you?

Elicit responses from participants. Possible responses are listed below:

- Go at your own speed.
- You don't have to do everything at once.
- Do things in small steps.

When we are pacing ourselves, what are important factors to consider?

Elicit responses from participants. Possible responses are listed below:

Factors to consider when pacing yourself include:

- Energy level
- Time
- Health/Pain
- Interest
- Last time since you did the activity or a similar activity
- Demands of others

If you think it would be helpful, you can ask the group to do the pacing exercise, which is on page 70 of their books. Otherwise, you can point out the exercise and let them know that if they want more practice with pacing they can do it as an optional personal project.

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ACTIVITY C: JUMPSTARTING YOUR ENGINE

Present the metaphor that we are similar to cars. When we don't use our cars, our battery runs out. With cars, we can do a couple of things to get them started. We can get a jumpstart from someone. We can also push them, then pop the clutch. The car then starts, and as you use it, the battery recharges itself.

Ask participants how they think we might be similar? You can also have them turn to page 71 in their books where there is a picture of a person lying in bed with a broken down car inside them. Talk about how they might jumpstart their own engine. Possible options are listed below:

- Get help to jumpstart your engine (by coming to group or seeing a therapist)
- Get medication to jumpstart your engine
- Get help and support from friends and family
- Doing activities (at first you have to push yourself but then it recharges your batteries)
- Identify thoughts that drain your energy.

ACTIVITY D: PLEASURE PREDICTING

[sample script]

We can't always just wait until we "feel like doing something" to do it. Sometimes we have to make ourselves do pleasant activities. When we do them, we often find out that we enjoyed them more than we thought we were going to, and we may feel better after doing them.

When we find ourselves feeling like we don't want to do something even though we might really enjoy it or we remember that we used to like doing the thing, it is often useful to do an exercise called Pleasure Predicting.

Ask the participants to turn to page 72 in their books and go over the steps of pleasure predicting and the pleasure predicting workshop.

- Step 1: Pick the activity. Try to make sure it is something would be pleasant for you.
- Step 2*: Pick the conditions that would make it most pleasant (i.e. If it's a movie you want to see, do you prefer to see it alone or with someone? Do you prefer to see a romantic comedy, a drama, or a horror film?)
- Step 3: Write down how enjoyable you think it would be. Use the star rating scale below.
- * not at all ** a little bit *** moderately ****quite a bit *****extremely
- Step 4: Do the activity using the conditions that you decided would increase the chance that it would be fun for you. THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART
- Step 5: Think back and write down the amount of enjoyment that you actually experienced. Use the star rating again.

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Step 6: Now look at the two ratings, how do they compare?

Step 7: Do this with other activities. Do you see a pattern? What have you learned?
What thought do you have about yourself or others after doing the activity?

*NOTE: In our experience, we have found that many people choose activities that could be seen as pleasant and then set themselves up to fail by picking conditions that would make it fail. For example, they might do activities that others like but that they do not. They might decide to go to a movie but then see a movie that depresses them. It is important not only that they choose an activity that THEY like but that they choose conditions that will maximize the likelihood that it is enjoyable.

Depending on your group, you can also do one of the following options:

- Ask them to think about a pleasant activity they did over the last week. How pleasurable did they think it was going to be? How enjoyable was it actually?
- Ask them to choose a pleasant activity they can do during the next week. Ask them to specify the conditions that will maximize their enjoyment and then have them rate how enjoyable they think the activity will be. Check in next week to see how enjoyable it was.

2. HOW CAN DOING PLEASANT EVENTS HELP ME MANAGE PROBLEMS IN LIFE?

Depending on the amount of time you have and the participants in the group, you can either choose from the following activities or do them all.

ACTIVITY A. SEESAW ACTIVITY

Have the participants turn to page 74 in their books. On top of page 74 there is a picture of a seesaw. On the left side are a variety of shapes, each containing a different life stress. There is nothing on the right hand side. In the middle is a person holding on to the middle, but he/she is slowly falling down toward the side with all the problems. On the bottom of the page is another picture of the seesaw. This time the problems on the left are balanced by pictures of pleasant activities on the right hand side. The person is sitting comfortably in the middle. Have the participants discuss this picture.

Also, have them turn to page 75 in their books and discuss the importance of balancing the tasks you have to do with pleasant activities and the importance of committing to both.

If you have enough time, you can have them complete this page. Otherwise, it can be an optional personal project.

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ACTIVITY B: DIVERSIFY YOUR PIE

[sample script]

Another way to think of balancing our lives is by thinking about our lives as a pie.

Draw a circle on the board.

Our pie is made up of different slices. For example, we may choose to have 35% devoted to work, 30% devoted to family, 20% devoted to friends, and 15% devoted to hobbies.

Draw these divisions on the circle.

The point is that we can decide how large each slice is and what kinds of slices we will have in our life.

We also know that at different points in our lives we may change the size of the slices.

For example, when we are younger, in our 20s and 30s we may devote more of our life to our work than we may when we are 60. Circumstances in life may also cause us to reevaluate our pie. By having a diverse pie, meaning by having many different kinds of slices, we are able to balance our lives when one of the areas may be having problems.

If you turn to page 76 in your books, you can draw a picture of your pie. Think about how your pie used to be. What kind of changes would you like to make?

Discuss this diagram with the participants and elicit their reactions.

ACTIVITY C. SHAPING YOUR REALITY

[sample script]

Much of what we have accomplished in the past and what we hope to accomplish in the future takes time. Like the saying "Rome was not built in a day," our reality is also not constructed by one single action. Please turn to page 77 in your books. On this page we have a series of dots. Each dot represents a single moment in time, a thought or an action. Let's say that you start at the circle. With each move you make you can go up or down. At first the moves that you make, will not take you far away from where you began, but imagine where you could be 10 moves later.

Discuss this diagram with the participants and if necessary, diagram it on the board.

V. TAKE HOME MESSAGE

At each moment in time, I can choose what I will do and how I will react to what is happening.

If I consciously choose to do or think something that will improve my emotional and physical health, I will gradually improve my personal reality.

This is how I can shape my life.

By taking many small steps, I can improve my life and my reality.

VI. PERSONAL PROJECT ASSIGNMENT

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WEEKLY PROJECT

1. Do the mood scale
2. Track the number of positive events you do each day.
3. Think about a goal you would like to set in the future.

OPTIONAL PROJECT

- 1) Do a new pleasant activity
- 2) Use one of the strategies you learned to overcome a roadblock.
- 3) Write out my To Do List, including things I have to do and things I want to do
- 4) Help someone else to do a pleasant activity
- 5) Talk to someone about what I have learned
- 6) Practice the relaxation exercise

VII. PREVIEW AND FEEDBACK

Let the group members know that next week you will continue talking about activities. Next week you will talk about how to set and reach goals.

Ask group members whether they would like to do some type of relaxation exercise next week, either the one you did during the session or a new one. If they would like to do either of these, schedule it 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 3

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	_____	_____	_____
What is keeping me from doing pleasant events	_____	_____	_____
A: Problem solving	_____	_____	_____
B: Pacing yourself	_____	_____	_____
C: Jumpstarting your engine	_____	_____	_____
D: Pleasure predicting	_____	_____	_____
A: Seesaw activity	_____	_____	_____
B: Diversify your pie	_____	_____	_____
C: Shaping your reality	_____	_____	_____
Take Home Message	_____	_____	_____
Personal Project Assigned	_____	_____	_____
Preview and Feedback	_____	_____	_____

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