

**HEALTH 1 – UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN DEPRESSION AND HEALTH**

GOALS FOR LEADERS

- Welcome new participants.
- Review group rules.
- Have participants and group leaders introduce themselves.
- Review the cognitive behavioral treatment model.
- Introduce the idea that health problems are connected to mood. Discuss the reciprocal relationship between health and mood problems.
- Explain the difference between acute and chronic health conditions.
- Help group members assess their own health problems.
- Identify members of the group who will be graduating at the end of this module and begin the termination process.

MATERIALS NEEDED FOR THIS SESSION

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

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SAMPLE SESSION OUTLINE

- I. Welcome
- II. Agenda and Announcements
- III. Group Rules
- IV. Introductions
- V. What is Depression?
- VI. Review of the Model
- VII. New Material: Health Problems and Mood and Relaxation Exercise
- VII. Take Home Message
- IX. Personal Project
- X. Preview and Feedback

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I. WELCOME

II. AGENDA AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Identify those group members who will be graduating at the end of the module.

III. GROUP RULES

IV. INTRODUCTIONS

V. REVIEW THE SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

VI. REVIEW OF THE MODEL

These sections are covered in the introduction section of the Manual for Group Leaders.

VII. NEW MATERIAL

1. UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HEALTH PROBLEMS AND MOOD?

PURPOSE: The purpose of this section is to provide participants with information about how depression affects health (physiologically and functionally) and how certain medical illnesses can influence mood.

ACTIVITY A: DIAGRAMMING THE RELATIONSHIP

In this section ask participants to talk about the relationship between physical health and depression.

[sample introduction to this section]

Over the next 4 weeks we will be talking about the connection between mood and physical health. Let's begin by talking about how the two are related.

This section is covered on page 145 in the participants' books. Write the words "depression" and "physical health": on the board.

Use the following questions or similar questions to begin a group discussion regarding how depression affects physical health. Write their answers on the board (see end of this section).

- How does your medical condition affect your mood?
- When you feel depressed how well do you take care of your medical condition?
- Do you think depression affects your body? If so, in what way?
- What do you think of the phrase "the mind body connection?"

Key points to address include:

Depression and other negative emotions can cause changes in:

- Changes in bodily functions, such as hormone levels (adrenaline and cortisol)
- Changes in blood pressure, heart rate, and immune functioning
- Changes in sleeping patterns and energy level
- Decreased ability/desire to care for self

Certain medical conditions can cause mood problems, such as:

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- congestive heart failure
- hypothyroidism
- arthritis
- certain infections

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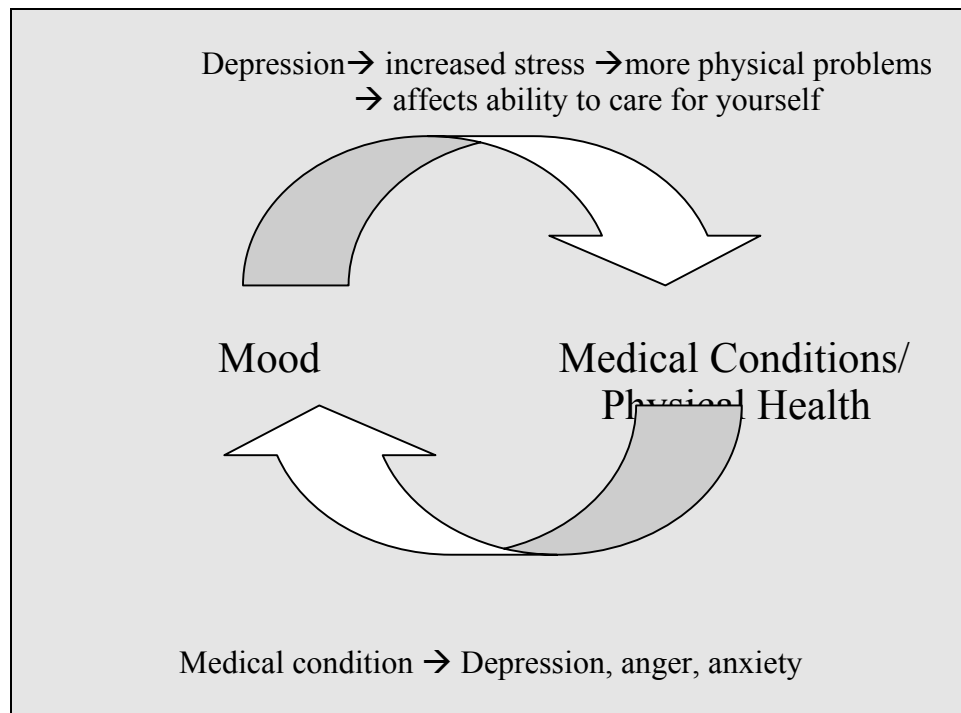
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Health problems can also affect emotion health:

- Feel alone
- Feel sad
- Worry more
- Feel angry
- Feel like no one cares
- Feel depressed

The relationship between depression and medical problems is reciprocal.

[sample board]



ACTIVITY B: IDENTIFYING YOUR HEALTH CONDITIONS AND UNDERSTANDING HOW THEY AFFECT YOUR MOOD

Ask group members to list their health problems. Put them the board. They can write down their medical conditions in the chart on page 147 of their books.

What medical conditions do you have?

Common medical conditions that can cause depression, anxiety, and other psychiatric symptoms include:

- Endocrine disorders
- Cardiopulmonary problems
- Viral infections
- Connective tissue syndromes

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- Autoimmune syndromes
- Neurological disorders
- Anemia
- Sleep disorders
- Substance use

As a group brainstorm ways that their specific health problems affect their mood. It may be helpful to identify specific symptoms that individuals have. There is often overlap between symptoms resulting from a medical condition and the symptoms of depression.

What symptoms do you have as a result of your medical condition?

How do you think your medical condition and the symptoms you have affect your mood?

Common symptoms of medical conditions include:

- Pain (which can trigger mood problems)
- Difficulty breathing (also a symptom of anxiety)
- Sleep problems (also a symptom of depression)
- Low energy (also a symptom of depression)
- Reduced appetite or weight loss (also a symptom of depression)

In addition, treatment for medical conditions can involve medication side effects, like nausea, loss of energy, etc., all of which can contribute to mood problems.

2. SELF ASSESSMENT

PURPOSE: To help group members gain a better understanding of the nature and course of their medical problems and identify antecedents and consequences (thoughts, behaviors, and feelings) associated with their medical problems.

[Sample introduction to this section]

You have already identified the medical conditions that you have and talked about how they affect your mood.

Give examples of medical conditions that group members have shared. Highlight commonalities.

We hope to provide you with information to help you better manage these medical conditions. Let's begin by understanding the nature and course of your medical conditions.

ACTIVITY A: STRATEGIES FOR MAINTAINING HEALTH

[sample introduction to the activity]

Taking care of our health is a life long process. At different points in our lives, we may use different strategies to care for our health. These strategies are listed on page 146 in your books.

Have the participants turn to page 146 in their books. Go over the strategies listed there and elicit participants' reactions to the strategies. You may find it helpful to define the following terms using examples that pertain to group members' specific health problems.

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1. Prevention and maintenance

Key points:

- Prevention means engaging in behaviors prior to the onset of a specific problem.
- It is usually easier and cheaper to prevent a problem than to treat it.
- There are some things that we can all do to maintain good physical health (such as exercising and eating healthy)
- People who are at high-risk for certain disorders (such as cancer or heart disease) due to family history or other risk factors, may benefit from a specific plan to prevent the disorder. Such a plan might include:
 - Reducing identifiable risk factors
 - Screening to allow for early detection

Identify examples of behaviors that group members may engage in now or may have engaged in before as a way to prevent health problems. Examples include:

- eating low fat, low cholesterol food
- watching your weight
- exercising regularly
- quitting smoking
- reducing stress

(All of these are ways to prevent heart disease as well as other medical conditions.)

2. Intervention and Treatment

Key points:

- We may sometimes develop a medical condition even when we have done all that we can to prevent the condition.
- Treatment may include medications or surgery.
- Treatment may also include developing a plan to reduce identifiable risk factors (similar to the plan you might develop if you were trying to prevent the disorder).
- Treatment may focus on conditions or factors that contribute to the medical condition that you are targeting. For example, treatment for heart disease may include reducing anxiety and/or depression.
- Treatments do not work if we do not follow through. For example, when we are prescribed medications, it is important to take them as directed. We always have the right to decide not to take a medication or follow through with a prescribed treatment, but we should do so in consultation with our doctors.
- Treatments for some problems may be lifelong. For example, some people with diabetes have to continually take insulin.

Identify examples of treatments that group members may be receiving or may have received in the past for specific medical conditions. As you identify the treatments, assess group members' reactions to the treatments and the degree to which they complied with the treatment.

3. Recuperation and Rehabilitation

Key points:

- Even after a medical condition has been fully treated, there is a lot we can do to prevent future problems (such as future heart attacks).

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- After the onset of a medical condition, we may not return to the way we were before, but we may still be able to make positive changes in our physical health and abilities.
Note to leaders: It is important to check for the presence of all or nothing thinking in group members' view of the changes they can make in their health. Some participants feel that if they cannot return to their former health status, they have made no positive improvements.
- The development of medical conditions can serve to make us aware of unhealthy patterns that we may want to change so that we can be healthier in the future.

Identify examples of recuperation and rehabilitation efforts that group members are making or have made.

Have group members turn to page 147 in their books and identify which strategies they are currently using to manage the medical conditions that they have written down in that chart.

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ACTIVITY B: NATURE: ACUTE VS. CHRONIC

When we think about medical problems we can categorize them as either chronic or acute. If you turn to page 146 in your books, we have included descriptions of acute and chronic conditions.

Go over the descriptions shown on page of the participants book and elicit group members' reactions (these descriptions are shown below).

Medical problems may be acute or chronic

- Acute problems require immediate attention.
- Chronic problems require long term, steady attention.

Differences between acute and chronic conditions include:

Acute Conditions

Example:

A wound

Treatment:

Urgent

Characteristics:

Well localized
Cause is known
Short lived
Gets better

Chronic Conditions

Diabetes

Long term and steady

Poorly localized
Cause may or may not be known
Long lived
May not get better

Have group members turn to page 147 in their books and identify whether the medical conditions they have listed in the chart are acute or chronic.

ACTIVITY C: FEELINGS AND THOUGHTS ABOUT HEALTH PROBLEMS

[sample introduction]

In other sessions we have talked about the difference between our external and internal reality. Your external reality includes the parts of your reality that are observable and measurable. Your internal reality is the part of your reality that others cannot observe, like your thoughts and feelings. Both your external and internal reality are real. Both are important and both affect each other constantly.

When we think about health problems, the objective part of a medical condition, the external reality, is often referred to as the disease. By disease we mean that there are objective changes in your body. These changes may be acute or chronic.

Give specific examples of objective biological events that group members have experienced.

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Disease is defined as “an objective biological event that involves the disruption of specific body structures or organ systems caused by pathological, anatomical, or physiological changes.

Your illness is made up of both this objective, external reality and your internal reality, meaning the way that you perceive and react to your disease.

Ask participants to turn to page 148 in their books and go over the diagram found on that page. Elicit participants’ reactions and ask them to identify their objective disease, their internal reality, and the way that their internal reality affects how they cope with the disease.

Help participants identify feelings and thoughts that they have about their disease and understand how their thoughts and feelings affect how they take care of themselves and ultimately, the course of their illness.

ACTIVITY D: UNDERSTANDING HOW OUR INTERNAL REALITY AFFECTS OUR HEALTH PROBLEM

One way to clearly demonstrate how thoughts and feelings are related to health is by doing an activity that we call the chaining activity. This activity is repeated in the thoughts, activities, and people modules.

[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 help us really see how our internal reality, that is our thoughts, can affect our physical health. First let's take a neutral statement, a statement of fact about your health.

Use a statement of fact that is reflective of group members’ health problems, that is their disease. For example: 1) I have diabetes; 2) I have heart problems, 3) I cannot run as fast as I used to.

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 thoughts they may have, 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 thought that would lead them to a mood of about a 4 and then a 3 and then a 2 and then a 1.

So now what I'd like you to do is to think about your health, something you might say to yourself that would bring you down to a mood of a 4. What would bring you down just one step?

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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 behavior, write it down and then ask how they might be thinking if they acted like that. Write down the thought next to the behavior.

Now what would be a thought about your health that would bring us down to a 3.
Repeat for moods of 2 and 1.

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 your thoughts can affect your mood. 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 thoughts about their health 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 thought 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 thoughts that will make us progressively feel better. Given that group members often have serious health problems, it is important to emphasize that it is natural to feel a certain amount of sadness given their condition, but we can still see how certain types of thoughts can help us and can even cause us to take better care of our health.

After they are done, again process their thoughts about how the way they think 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 can focus on what is positive in my life and make positive changes.
8		I am still capable of doing many things.
7		There are things I can do to take care of myself.
6		I need to learn more about my health problem.
5	↓	I have a serious health problem.
4		This is really awful.
3		Why me? Why am I being punished.
2		I'm not normal. I won't be able to do anything.
1		Everyone else is having fun. No one cares about me.

SUMMARY: SO HOW DOES THE WAY WE THINK AFFECT OUR HEALTH?

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

- We can make choices about the way we think.
- Our thoughts really do affect how we feel.
- Our thoughts also affect the way we behave. For example, certain thoughts can lead us to take care of ourselves, whereas others might cause us to ignore and not take care of health problems.
- Our thoughts can also affect our health.
 - If our thoughts lead us to not take care of ourselves, that will affect us in a negative way.
 - Increased depression, anxiety, or stress about our health problems can have a direct negative affect on health.

Other topics to consider include:

- 1) how these examples apply to their own lives.
- 2) internal and external reality - When we think in different ways, we change our internal reality. In the example given above, the person shows that they can change their internal reality, making it more negative or more positive. As you change your internal reality, you also change your external reality. Once you begin to think in different ways, you behave in different ways.

3. HOW CAN I MANAGE MY HEALTH PROBLEMS?

[sample script]

Now we would like to begin talking about what you can do to manage your health problems. Let's again look at the diagram on page 148 in your books.

Go through the different boxes that make up the diagram and talk about how group members might make changes in each of the areas. As you go through the exercise, group members may bring up obstacles to and factors that helped them to seek treatments and behave in an adaptive healthy manner. Track these thoughts and encourage other group members to provide support around making positive, healthy changes.

1. Making Changes that Affect the Disease

Let's start by looking at the first box, the one that focuses on the disease, which is the objective part of your medical condition. How do you think you could make changes in this box?

Elicit answers from the group.

Possible ways to make changes are listed below:

1. Take care of your health by learning about your illness and its treatments.
2. Work collaboratively with your medical providers and follow through with treatments.

2. Making Changes in Your Reactions

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Continue discussing with group members how they might make changes in each box of the diagram.

a. Changing Thoughts and Emotional Reactions

1. Learn how your thoughts and emotions affect your medical illness.
2. Learn to dispute unhelpful thoughts about your health (see the thoughts module).
3. Learn how to balance your thinking.

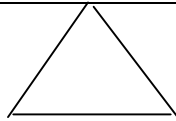
ACTIVITY: BALANCING YOUR THOUGHTS

[sample introduction to activity]

Depression and other negative emotions can get in the way of managing medical problems in the best way possible. One way to understand this is by thinking about a balance beam. On one side of the beam would be paying no attention to health problems. On the other side of the beam would be paying way too much attention to health problems.

The balance beam is also shown on page 150 of the group members' books.
Draw the balance beam on the board.

No attention to health



Too much attention to health

Ask group members where they think they fall on the continuum. Also, ask group members why they think they, or other people might fall on one side or other of the continuum. What thoughts or feelings might be related to paying no attention or too much attention to health problems.

Ask group members to think about how they might like to change and how they might go about making such a change.

You may also choose to ask group members whether they have other thoughts about their health problems that they might like to balance.

b. Changing the Way You Take Care of Yourself

1. Reduce stress.
2. Engage in pleasant activities. You are not just your disease. Even when your disease feels uncontrollable, find other aspects of your life that you can control.
3. Increase social support to help deal with the changes.

3. Other Changes

1. Understand how other conditions, such as depression and stressful life circumstances affect your medical condition.
2. Make changes in your thoughts and emotional reactions to other conditions and stressful life events.

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3. If necessary, get help for other factors that are affecting your health, such as depression, anxiety, and exposure to trauma.

ACTIVITY: RELAXATION EXERCISE

[sample introduction]

One way to make a change is by doing a relaxation exercise. A relaxation exercise, will help you reduce stress. It may make you feel less depressed, less anxious, and will positively affect your health.

We have listed two basic relaxation techniques below: 1) a deep breathing exercise, and 2) a mindfulness meditation exercise. We recommend you do both of them. There are of course numerous other relaxation exercises you can choose from. Other relaxation exercises are described on page 19 (Thoughts 2: Mindfulness exercise using an orange) and page 50 (Activities 2: Deep muscle relaxation).

This exercise is optional. (some group members may feel uncomfortable doing this exercise) Let them know that they can participate in all or just part of the exercise.

A. Deep Breathing Exercise

Keeping the Breath in Mind (Adapted from: Wherever you go there you are by Jon Kabat-Zinn)

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. 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. . . . feeling your breath come in. . . . and then out.

Give the participants time to complete this exercise and then at the end, discuss as a group what it was like to do the exercise. When they are ready, you can do the next relaxation exercise.

B. Mindfulness Meditation: Lake Meditation (Adapted from: Wherever you go there you are by Jon Kabat-Zinn)

Get yourself in a comfortable position. Some people like to do this exercise lying down. . .

Try to bring up the image of a lake in your mind. Picture the lake as a large body of water, cradled in a container made by the earth. Think about the lake. . . the way the water likes to pool in low places and crevices. . . The lake you imagine may be shallow or deep. . . it may be blue or green. . . muddy or clear. When there is no wind the surface of the lake is flat and like a mirror it reflects trees, rocks, sky and holds everything in itself for that moment. . . Wind stirs up waves on the lake from ripples to large waves. Sunlight may sparkle on the ripples and dance, and at night the moon dances on the lake

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as the stars sparkle in the reflection. In the winter the lake's surface may freeze over, yet below the surface life and movement continue.

Once you have a picture of the lake in your mind's eye, allow yourself to become one with the lake as you sit back or lie down. Take a few breaths as you allow yourself to become part of the lake. Experience the moments of stillness on the surface of the lake when the reflection and the water are completely clear and other times when the surface is disturbed. Notice the energies of your mind, your thoughts and your impulses which come and go as ripples or waves on the surface of the lake. Do your thoughts and feelings disturb the surface? Is that OK with you? Do you identify not only with the surface of the water but with the entire body of water. Sit for a moment cradled in awareness in the same way that the lake is cradled by the earth.

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.

VIII. TAKE HOME MESSAGE

Go over the take home message.

My mood affects my health. My health affects my mood.
I can make positive changes in both areas.

Even though I have health problems, I am not my health problems.
Even though I may have depression, I am not my depression.

IX. PERSONAL PROJECT ASSIGNMENT

WEEKLY PROJECT

1) continue tracking mood using the mood scale and track the number of things you do each day to take care of your health and physical well-being. Explain the mood scale to new members. The mood scale and explanation for how to use it are shown in page 152 of their books.

OPTIONAL PROJECT

Select one of the following activities to do:

- 1) ACTIVITIES: On page 153 of your books write down activities that you might do to take better care of yourself.
- 2) THOUGHTS: Using page 154 of your books, identify harmful/negative thoughts you have related to your health problems and think about ways of either disputing or altering those thoughts to make them more healthy.
- 3) PEOPLE: Complete page 155 in your books to identify important people in your life, understand the different types of health they might give you to help you manage your illness.

X. PREVIEW AND FEEDBACK

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Let the participants know that next week you will continue developing a plan to manage their health problems and that you will be talking about what people need to manage their health problems.

Congratulate group members for attending the group and acknowledge that coming to group is a big step in improving their mood.

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?
- What suggestions do you have to improve your therapy?

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GROUP LEADER SELF EVALUATION FORM: HEALTH 1

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)
Welcome	_____	_____	_____
Hand out CES-D	_____	_____	_____
Group rules	_____	_____	_____
Introductions	_____	_____	_____
Review of symptoms of depression	_____	_____	_____
Review of CBT treatment model	_____	_____	_____
New Material	_____	_____	_____
1. Understanding the relationship between health problems and mood	_____	_____	_____
A. Diagramming the relationship	_____	_____	_____
B. Identifying your health conditions and understanding how they affect your mood	_____	_____	_____
2. Self assessment	_____	_____	_____
A. Strategies for maintaining health	_____	_____	_____
B. Acute vs. chronic	_____	_____	_____
C. Feelings and thoughts about health problems	_____	_____	_____
D. The chaining exercise	_____	_____	_____
3. How can I manage my health problems	_____	_____	_____
Activity: Balancing thoughts	_____	_____	_____
The relaxation exercise	_____	_____	_____

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Take Home Message

Personal Project Assigned

Preview and Feedback

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

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Optional: What health problems does this person have.
Name:
Name:
Name:
Name:
Name:
Name:
Name:
Name:
Name:
Name: