

GROUP THERAPY MANUAL
FOR THE
AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN'S GROUP

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1997

Revised Version of Group Therapy Manual for
Cognitive-Behavioral Treatment of Depression
(Muñoz & Miranda, 1986; Revised, 1996)

**This manual is dedicated to the African-American
Community of San Francisco.**

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.

Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.

It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us.

*We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented,
and fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be?*

You are a child of God. Playing small doesn't serve the world.

*There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other
people won't feel insecure around you. We are born to make
manifest the glory of God that is within us. It is not just in
some of us; it is in everyone. And as we let our own light
shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the
same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence
automatically liberates others.*

~Nelson Mandela, 1994 Inaugural Address

Group Information:

What: African-American Women's Group

Where: Cognitive-Behavioral Depression Clinic
Division of Psychosocial Medicine
San Francisco General Hospital

When: Tuesday 2:00pm - 4:00pm
February 11, 1997 to May 27, 1997

Co-Leaders: Laura P. Kohn, Ph.D. **206-5116**
Tatia M. Oden, B.A. **206-4960**

In case of emergency:

Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 5:00pm
Call the Division of Psychosocial Medicine Clinic
206-5189

Evenings (after 5:00pm) and/or Weekends call the
Psychiatric Emergency Service - SFGH
206-8125

GROUND RULES FOR GROUP THERAPY

MAKE A COMMITMENT TO THE GROUP

- come one time--do not keep others waiting.
- come every week.
- call the Clinic (206-5189) if you can't make it.
- come to the group clean and sober.

BE CONSTRUCTIVE AND SUPPORTIVE

- avoid criticism; give constructive feedback.
- help each other find the good side of things.
- don't put pressure on each other (no "shoulds").
- focus on solutions, not on how bad things are.

BE RESPECTFUL

- give everyone a chance to talk.
- one person talks at a time--no side conversations.
- respect differences in background, experiences, and beliefs of other members in the group.
- avoid making comments that may make other group members feel unsafe or unwelcome.

DO THE THERAPEUTIC EXERCISES!!!!

- practice what you learn.
- these methods can help you control your depression, but only if you practice.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- do not discuss **personal** things with people outside of the group.
- you can discuss what you are learning about depression with others.
- do not talk about other people who are in group with you.

TELL US IF YOU ARE UNHAPPY!!

- bring concerns up in the group.
- don't stay mad at the group without letting us know.
- Don't drop out! Let us know how you feel--we can work things out.

HOW WE THINK ABOUT DEPRESSION

The kind of therapy we provide in this group is called

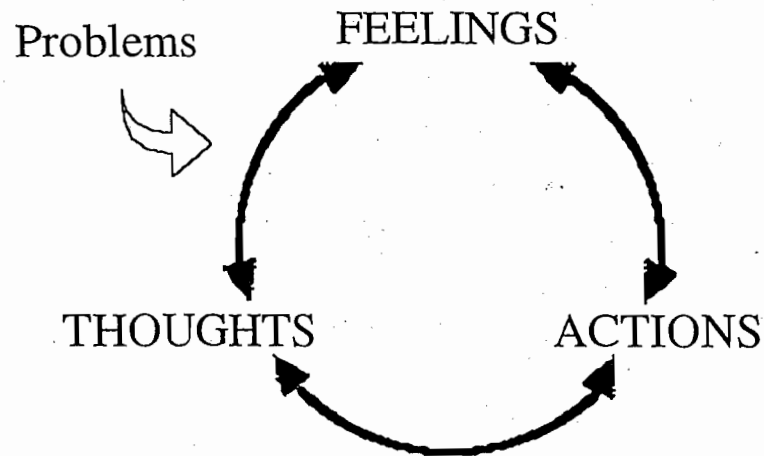
“COGNITIVE-BEHAVIORAL THERAPY”

“Cognitive” refers to our thoughts.

“Behavioral” refers to our actions.

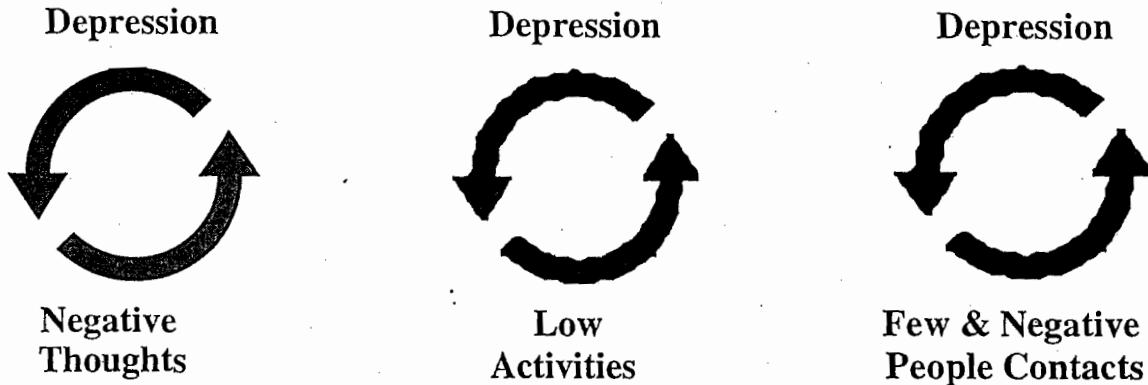
Depression has most to do with our feelings.

By learning how our thoughts and actions influence our feelings, we can learn to get more control over our depression.



Our treatment for depression consists of sixteen sessions. We focus on what is going on in one's life right now. This group will provide plenty of support and sharing for 16 weeks, but what is equally important are the strategies you will learn that will help to continue coping after the group is over.

We will be working on breaking the following three cycles:



The sessions are divided into several sections.

- 1) How thoughts affect our mood. (4 sessions)
- 2) How your activities affect our mood. (2 sessions)
- 3) How contacts with other people affect our mood. (2 sessions)
- 4) Issues of importance for African-American women; Relationships, Families, Spirituality, Identity (4 sessions)
- 5) Review and Graduation (4 sessions)

All members of the group will determine the manner in which we will celebrate the group's Graduation.

The group meetings are helpful because they:

- allow time to share your concerns with others
- provide support from others in the group
- help members realize that they are not alone in having real problems.

However, we expect that the most important effect of the group will be to learn to understand and gain more control over what has an effect on your depression, and how you can avoid unnecessary suffering in your lives.

BEGINNING

All great accomplishments begin somewhere. There are lost fights, missed shots, contrived poems. The important thing is that there is a beginning.

We must allow ourselves the opportunity to make our starts. Some maybe false starts; we may lost interest in an endeavor. But another start might be the beginning of greatness or self-fulfillment. We are entitled. Let's not be afraid to make a start.

~Eric Copage, Black Pearls: Daily Meditations, Affirmations, and Inspirations for African-Americans.

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HOW THOUGHTS AFFECT OUR MOOD: Session 1 of 4: An Introduction

I. The purpose of the therapy group is to treat depression by teaching ways to better control our mood.

A. Four Goals:

1. To make the feelings of depression less intense.
2. To make the time we are depressed shorter.
3. To learn ways to prevent getting depressed again.
4. To feel more in control of our lives.

II. The purpose of today's meeting:

- A. To explain group therapy meetings.
- B. To introduce ourselves to each other.
- C. To learn what depression is.
- D. To learn a helpful way to think about depression.
- E. To learn how thoughts influence how we feel.

III. GROUND RULES (page 4)

IV. Introductions

(follow exercise on next page)

Introductions:

- A. Tell a little about yourself
(not about your problems--we'll get to that later).
1. Pair up with the person sitting next to you.
For 5 minutes, interview the person asking the following questions:
(write down their answers in the spaces below!)
 - a. *“What is your name?”*
 - b. *“Where did you grow up?”*
 - c. *“What kind of work have you done?”*
 - d. *“What are your main interests?”*
 - e. *“What are some things about yourself that you think are special?”*
 2. Introduce you interview partner to the group using the answers to the interview questions.

V. What is depression?

A. The word “depression” is used in many ways.

1. It can mean:

- a. a feeling that lasts a few minutes.
- b. a mood that lasts a few hours.
- c. a clinical condition that.
 - i. lasts at least two weeks and,
 - ii. causes strong emotional pain and,
 - iii. makes it hard for us to carry out our daily duties.

B. This therapy group is intended to treat **clinical depression**.


VI. The symptoms of **clinical depression** include:

- A. Feeling depressed or down nearly every day.
- B. Not being interested in or unable to enjoy things you used to enjoy.
- C. Appetite and/or weight change.
(eating either more or less than is usual for you)
- D. Big changes in how much you sleep.
(sleeping either more or less than is usual for you)
- E. Changes in how fast you move.
(either being fidgety and restless or slowed down)
- F. Feeling tired all the time.
- G. Feeling worthless or guilty.
- H. Trouble thinking, concentrating or making decisions.
- I. Thinking a lot about death, wishing to be dead, or thinking about hurting yourself (suicide).**

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VII. See "HOW WE THINK ABOUT DEPRESSION" (p. 5)

- A. What problems would you like to work on?
- B. What are your goals for therapy?

VIII. What is depression like for you? 

- A. What kinds of thoughts go through your mind when you feel depressed?
- B. What do you do when you are depressed?
- C. How do you get along with people when you are depressed?
- D. What do you think is the cause of your depression?

IX. THOUGHTS AFFECT MOOD: Certain kinds of thoughts make it more or less likely that you will become depressed.

- A. By "thoughts" we mean "things we tell ourselves".
 1. Thoughts can have an effect on your body.
 2. Thoughts can have an effect on your actions.
 3. Thoughts can have an effect on your mood.

- X. A good way to think about this type of group therapy is that you will learn specific methods to change your thoughts and actions, so that your mood will improve. The group provides support and sharing for 16 weeks, but you can continue using what you have learned long after the group is over.

THERAPEUTIC EXERCISES:



1. The Daily Mood Scale. See instructions on page 12.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THE DAILY MOOD SCALE

To begin to see how your own mood changes you will keep track of your daily mood, using the **DAILY MOOD SCALE**.

To make this a valuable exercise the **DAILY MOOD SCALE** should be filled out **every day**.

Directions:

Just before you go to bed, take out your mood scale.

Think over the day and decide what your mood was like today.

Circle the number which stands for how you felt today.

“9” means the best mood you can imagine
(This number would be used only on the “happiest days of your life”, so it is not likely to be used often.)

“5” means an average or neutral mood
(This is the kind of normal mood most people have most of the time. It is the kind of mood you have most days when you are not depressed.)

“1” means the worst mood you can imagine
(This number would be used only on the “worst days of your life”, so it is not likely to be used often.)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FUTURE “THOUGHTS” SESSIONS:

At the bottom of the scale, there is a place for you to write down the number of thoughts you have each day. By doing this, you will be able to see what kind of effect the things we are trying each week are having on your depression.

DAILY MOOD SCALE

Week Number _____

Name _____ Week Starting: _____

Day		_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
D A I L Y M O O D S C O R E	BEST	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
		8	8	8	8	8	8	8
		7	7	7	7	7	7	7
		6	6	6	6	6	6	6
	AVERAGE	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
		4	4	4	4	4	4	4
		3	3	3	3	3	3	3
		2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	WORST	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Number of
thoughts

Positive: _____

Negative: _____

MIND POWER

It is the mind that makes the body

~Sojourner Truth

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HOW THOUGHTS AFFECT OUR MOOD

Session 2 of 4: Healthy vs. Depressed Thinking

- REVIEW: 1. What is depression?
2. Therapeutic Exercises: The Daily Mood Scale.
3. Why is the homework important?

I. What are thoughts?

A. Thoughts are ideas that we tell ourselves.

1. We talk in our own heads all of the time, but we are not always aware of it.
2. It is helpful to think of thoughts as things that have a real effect on our bodies and our minds.

II. Thoughts affect mood:

A. Specific types of thinking make a difference in your mood.

1. Some thoughts make it more likely that you will become depressed.
2. Other thoughts make it less likely that your will become depressed.

III. Differences between depressed and healthy thinking

Here are some features of depressed thinking:

Depressed Thinking	Example
<u>Rigid</u> Focuses on things that cannot change	"I could never deal with stress. I was probably born this way."
<u>Judgmental</u> Makes judgments about who you are	"People don't like me because I'm a boring person."
<u>Unbalanced</u> Focuses only on the negative	"I'm a failure as a parent (or spouse, friend, etc.)."

Compare them with features of healthy thinking:

Healthy Thinking	Example
<u>Flexible</u> Focuses on things that can change or improve	"I am having trouble dealing with problems in my life right now, but things will get better."
<u>Non-judgmental</u> Focuses on what you do, now who you are	"I haven't been making an effort to socialize with people."
<u>Balanced</u> Focuses on positives as well as negatives	"I've made some mistakes, but I've also done a lot of things right."

IV. Becoming more aware of your own thoughts

- A. What are some specific thoughts that you have had?
- B. Are they examples of depressed or healthy thinking?

V. Mistakes in thinking*: Learning to recognize them

A. **Either - Or Thinking:**

1. You see things or people as completely good or completely bad.

B. **Mental Filter:**

1. You filter out the positive so that you see everything as negative.

C. **Jumping to Conclusions:**

1. Mind Reading

- i. When something negative happens between you and someone else, you assume that they don't like you or they are mad at you.

2. Fortune Telling

- i. You believe things will always turn out badly for you or that bad things “just bound to happen.”

D. **Thinking That Your Feelings Are Reality:**

1. You believe that the way you feel about yourself or the world is the way things really are.

E. **Shoulds:**

1. You tell yourself that you should do certain things or be a certain type of person, then you feel guilty when you don't do what you “should” have.

F. **Self-Blame:**

1. You blame yourself for things that you may not have been able to control, like the actions of others.

*From Burns (1980), Feeling Good.

THERAPEUTIC EXERCISES:



1. Continue the Daily Mood Scale.
2. Keep track of your thoughts. Make a list of positive and negative thoughts that you have each day. If you have trouble identifying specific thoughts, you can use the list of Examples of Positive and Negative Thoughts.
3. Add up the total number of positive thoughts and the total number of negative thoughts. Write these totals under each day in the Daily Mood Scale. Note the connection between the number of each type of thought and your mood.

DAILY MOOD SCALE

Week Number _____

Name _____ Week Starting: _____

Day		_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
D A I L Y M O O D S C O R E	BEST	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
		8	8	8	8	8	8	8
		7	7	7	7	7	7	7
		6	6	6	6	6	6	6
	AVERAGE	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
		4	4	4	4	4	4	4
		3	3	3	3	3	3	3
		2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	WORST	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Number of thoughts

Positive: _____

Negative: _____

Examples of Positive Thoughts:

1. It will be fun doing such-and-such today.
2. I've gotten good things in life.
3. The weather is great today.
4. I can do better than that.
5. Even though things are bad right now, they are bound to get better.
6. I'll learn to be happier as I live longer.
7. That was probably the best solution to a tough problem.
8. Life is interesting.
9. I deserve credit for trying hard.
10. That was a nice thing for me to do.
11. I really feel great.
12. This is fun.
13. I'm a good person.
14. I can do just about anything if I set my mind to it.
15. I have great hopes for the future.
16. I have good self-control.
17. That's interesting.
18. I really handled that situation well.
19. People are OK once you get to know them.
20. I like to read.
21. I'm easy to get along with.
22. If I can just hold on until such-and-such a date, I'll be OK.
23. A nice, relaxing evening can sure be enjoyable.
24. I have worked long enough--now it's time to have fun.
25. I'm considerate of others.
26. I have time to accomplish most things I want to do.
27. Someday I'll look back on today and smile.
28. I like people.
29. I always find the strength to handle whatever comes up.
30. I'm a good parent/friend/spouse, etc.
31. I'm a sensitive person.
32. I'm honest.
33. I could probably handle a crisis as well as anyone else.
34. I'm pretty lucky.
35. I'm responsible.
36. My experiences have prepared me well for the future.
37. That's funny.
38. I'm pretty smart.
39. I'm physically attractive.
40. I don't want to miss that event.

Examples of Negative Thoughts:

1. I will never be physically healthy.
2. I am confused.
3. There is no love in the world.
4. I have wasted my life.
5. I'm scared.
6. Nobody loves me.
7. I'll end up living all alone
8. People don't consider friendship important anymore.
9. I don't have any patience.
10. What's the use?
11. That was a dumb thing for me to do.
12. I'll probably have to be placed in an institution someday.
13. Anybody who thinks I'm nice doesn't know the real me.
14. Life has no meaning.
15. I am ugly.
16. I can't express my feelings.
17. I'll never find what I really want.
18. I am not capable of loving.
19. I am worthless.
20. It's all my fault.
21. Why do so many bad things happen to me?
22. I can't think of anything that would be fun.
23. I don't have what it takes.
24. Bringing kids into the world is cruel because life isn't worth living.
25. I'll never get over this depression.
26. Things are so messed up that doing anything about them is pointless.
27. I don't have enough willpower.
28. Why even bother getting up?
29. I wish I were dead.
30. I wonder if they are talking about me?
31. Things are just going to get worse.
32. I have a bad temper.
33. No matter how hard I try, people aren't satisfied.
34. Life is unfair.
35. I'll never make good money.
36. I don't dare imagine what my life will be like in ten years.
37. There is something wrong with me.
38. I am selfish.
39. My memory is lousy.
40. I get my feelings hurt easily.

Positive Thoughts

Negative Thoughts

Day 1 _____

Day 2 _____

Day 3 _____

Day 4 _____

Day 5 _____

Day 6 _____

Day 7 _____

THOUGHTS

Black folks fear that too much positive thinking is unrealistic. And yet we can't really name the benefits of negative thought patterns other than warding off disappointment. What would it mean for Black people to collectively believe that despite racism and other forces of domination we can find everything that we need to live well in the universe, including the strength to engage in the kind of political resistance that can transform domination? The messages of hope that were projected by Martin Luther King were important because he knew that through difficult times there had to be a positive foundation to sustain the impetus to struggle and sacrifice. No wonder the last piece of writing he did, published after his death, is called A Testament of Hope.

~bell hooks, Sister of the Yam: Black Women and Self Recovery

HOW THOUGHTS AFFECT OUR MOOD

Session 3 of 4: Increasing Healthy Thinking

- REVIEW: 1. Therapeutic Exercises: The Daily Mood Scale.
- What kinds of thoughts did you have last week?
2. The purpose of this section.

I. Ways to increase healthy thinking:

A. Increasing Thoughts That Make Us Feel Good

- Increasing the number of good thoughts in your mind.
 - Make lists of good thoughts about yourself and about life.
- Give yourself pats-on-the-back.


Most of the things we do are not noticed by others. Therefore, it is important for us to notice them and give ourselves credit for doing them.

 - For example, you could tell yourself, "I made it to group today, even though I felt like staying home."
- "Hold Everything!"

Give yourself a break by taking time out mentally.

 - Pause. Let your mind relax. Allow your body to feel at peace. This can give you energy.
- Time Projection.

Imagine yourself taking the steps to move toward a time when things will be better.

5. Come up with a list of positive thoughts. 

Positive things about me

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
- etc.

Positive things about life

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
- etc.

Read the list and see how you feel after reading the lists. Write the thoughts down on an index card so you can carry them with you.

B. Decreasing Thoughts That Make Us Feel Bad

1. Thought stopping.

When a thought is ruining your mood:

- a. Identify it.
- b. Tell yourself: "This thought is ruining my mood."
- c. Think of another thought. Use your card of positive thoughts to help you with this.

2. Worry time.

Schedule "worry time" each day so you can concentrate completely on necessary thinking and leave the rest of the day free of worry.

- a. Make your worrying practical. It doesn't help just to think that bad things might happen--make plans about what you can do if they do happen.

3. Balancing your thoughts: $\frac{+}{-}$

"Yes, but..." statements:

You don't have to ignore or deny your problems to decrease negative thoughts--you can balance thoughts about negative situations by adding a more positive or hopeful statement to them.

4. Keeping a sense of humor: Keeping a good sense of humor about life can help you deal with stress.

C. Talking back to your thoughts: THE A-B-C-D METHOD

1. When you feel depressed, ask yourself what you are thinking. Then try to talk back to the thought that is hurting you.

A is the **A**ctivating event (what happened)

B is the **B**elief or the thought you are having
(that is, what you tell yourself about what happened)

C is the **C**onsequence
(that is, how this thought makes you feel)

D is the way you **D**ispute or talk back to the thought

2. Example:

You feel depressed. You think about it and think it is because you have diabetes.

Here is how you might use the ABCD Method:

A: I have diabetes. (This is a fact.)

B: Thoughts I have about this fact are:

“No one can be happy if one has diabetes.”

“Diabetes will ruin my life.”

“I cannot stand having diabetes.”

C: The consequence of thinking these thoughts is feeling very depressed and hopeless.

D: I can talk back to these thoughts in this way:

“There are people who have diabetes who are as happy as people who don't have diabetes.”

“Diabetes is a burden I have to deal with, but it does not necessarily ruin every minute of my life.”



THERAPEUTIC EXERCISES:

1. Continue the Daily Mood Scale.
2. Continue to fill out the list of thoughts for each day.
3. Practice the ABCD Method to talk back to your thoughts.

DAILY MOOD SCALE

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Number of
thoughts

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Examples of Positive Thoughts:

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7. That was probably the best solution to a tough problem.
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Examples of Negative Thoughts:

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8. People don't consider friendship important anymore.
9. I don't have any patience.
10. What's the use?
11. That was a dumb thing for me to do.
12. I'll probably have to be placed in an institution someday.
13. Anybody who thinks I'm nice doesn't know the real me.
14. Life has no meaning.
15. I am ugly.
16. I can't express my feelings.
17. I'll never find what I really want.
18. I am not capable of loving.
19. I am worthless.
20. It's all my fault.
21. Why do so many bad things happen to me?
22. I can't think of anything that would be fun.
23. I don't have what it takes.
24. Bringing kids into the world is cruel because life isn't worth living.
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27. I don't have enough willpower.
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30. I wonder if they are talking about me?
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32. I have a bad temper.
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34. Life is unfair.
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Positive Thoughts

Negative Thoughts

Day 1 _____

Day 2 _____

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