

EMOTIONAL HEALTH & WELLNESS STUDENT WORKBOOK



PRAIRIE SKY RECOVERY
CENTRE INC.



Publisher's Note

It is the intention of Prairie Sky Recovery Centre to provide support to the students, parents, and teachers of Saskatchewan by sharing some of our materials that pertain to anger, anxiety, self-esteem and depression. While intended for adults suffering from substance abuse disorder and both mental and emotional disfunction, we believe the information is relevant to our youth and hope that it can help with their fears and concerns during these unusual times.

Care has been taken to confirm the accuracy of the information presented and to describe generally accepted practices. However, the author, editors, and publisher are not responsible for errors or omissions or for any consequences from application of the information in this book and make no warranty, express or implied, with respect to the contents of the publication.

Sources

Emotional Health & Wellness, Prairie Sky Recovery Centre Inc.

Anxiety Workbook for Teens, Lisa M. Schab

Disclaimer

Self-help information and resources in this workbook are provided for informational purposes only, it should not be used to replace the specialized training of health care or mental health care professional. Please seek professional help immediately:

- if you have thoughts of killing (or otherwise harming) yourself or others.
- if you are abusing substances.
- or if you or someone else is in any danger of harm.

Introduction to Emotional Health & Wellness!



What is Emotional Health and Wellness?

Emotional wellness inspires **self-care**, relaxation, **stress reduction** and the development of **inner strength**. It is important to be attentive to both positive and negative feelings and be able to understand how to handle these emotions. Emotional wellness also includes the ability to learn and **grow from experiences**.

Why would do we need Emotional Health and Wellness?

Life can be up and down, and that can make us also feel up and down. Sometimes we are dealing with things at home or at school that is out of our control. When that happens, we feel emotions that can be hard to handle. We turn inwards to help ourselves- which is called coping. To cope means to face and deal with responsibilities, problems, or difficulties, especially successfully or in a calm or adequate manner.

Some people do not have good coping skills. We often adopt the coping skills that our parents have. In some families, we might see adults cope with anger, disappointment and stress with exercise, therapy, talking with friends or family. Some adults cope by using drugs, alcohol, or take it out on others by being verbally or physically abusive.

By exploring Emotional Health and Wellness, we can build the skills have both positive and negative feelings and handle them without feeling so overwhelmed that we need to hide, hurt ourselves or turn to drugs or alcohol to manage our emotions!

So let's jump in!

Anger: What It Is



Anger is:

- An emotion that is as much a part of a person as any of the five senses (sight, touch, taste, hearing, and smell)
- A response to being either physically or psychologically stopped from doing what you want to do (frustration)
- A response to having your personal security or adequacy threatened
- A response to having expectations not being met (resentments)
- A normal part of the human experience
- Neither “good” not “bad” (the emotion itself, not the outcome/ behavior)
- Sometimes a way to hide other emotions that are not easy to accept
- Influenced by the way you feel about yourself

Anger often seems to exist in isolation. However, other emotions are often associated with or masked by anger. These include fear, hurt, confusion, rejection, embarrassment, shame, guilt, disappointment, hopelessness, humiliation, anxiety or feelings of injustice persecution and jealousy. Therefore, anger can be thought of as a “secondary emotion.”

Although anger seems to be a response to something outside us, it most often is an interpersonal event; that is, we make ourselves angry. If you don’t agree with this, think about the fact that two people can respond to the same external event very differently. For example, one person will get angry and another will stay calm. When we blame other people by saying that “they make us angry,” we give away our personal power. Part of personal power is taking responsibility for our choices, our actions and of course, for managing our feelings. Anger is a security blanket, it is familiar, safe, and blinding for many.

Anger Checklist

Check the number that indicates how often you use the following method of dealing with your anger.

Negative Ways of Handling Anger:

	None	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
Yelling	0	1	2	3
Throwing things	0	1	2	3
Threatening Another person	0	1	2	3
Hitting, slapping or pushing others	0	1	2	3
Arguing	0	1	2	3
Breaking or Smashing things	0	1	2	3
Swearing	0	1	2	3
Speaking without thought	0	1	2	3
Boil inside and Hold it in	0	1	2	3
Take it out on someone else	0	1	2	3
Pout or sulk	0	1	2	3
Banging on the table	0	1	2	3
Say nasty things	0	1	2	3
Withdraw from others	0	1	2	3

Anger: Identifying Your Warning Signs

Physical Signs of Anger

Because the physical signs of anger are caused by a part of the nervous system, they happen automatically. They are temporary and will rapidly fade if you allow yourself an opportunity to cool down. When you are feeling angry, you may have a few or all of these signs:

- The pupils of your eyes open up to let in more light. You may notice that things seem suddenly brighter.
- Your heart beats faster and harder than normal.
- Your blood sugar level rises rapidly. You may suddenly have a lot of energy and feel like doing something physical.
- Your body produces extra sweat to cool you off. You may become sweaty; your hands get clammy.
- Your muscles become tense, perhaps especially in your face or hands. You may become red in the face. You may suddenly feel hot or cold or get a knot in your stomach.

Emotional Signs of Anger

People have different emotional experiences when they are angry. Some people feel inadequate and insecure; some become aggressive and hostile. Others feel victimized.

When was the last time you were angry?

Can you identify other feelings that were going on for you (hurt, insecurity, guilt, shame)?

What were you thinking about?

Behavioral Signs of Anger

People have different behavioral reactions to anger. Some explode in fits of rage and yell at or hit other people. Some people become silent and go off alone.

The last time you were angry, what did you do?

What did you say to others?

How did it make you feel at the time?

How do you feel about it now?

Situations Associated with Anger

It is important to examine the situations that seem to be associated with your getting angry. You may be able to identify certain patterns and learn to avoid them.

What was going on during the past few times that you were angry?

What was the situation?

What happened?

Who was involved?

Anger Management Questionnaire

The following questionnaire will help you to further explore your experience of anger.

1. How has anger been a problem for you?

2. What do you do when you are angry that creates a problem for you?

3. Which behavior would you most like to change?

4. What support is there in your life that will help you manage this change?

5. What anger management strategies do you know about that will work for you

Anger:

People learn to deal with anger in different ways. In Cate’s family, anger was expressed by shouting and breaking things. It made Cate extremely uncomfortable, and she tended to either ignore her feelings of anger or hold them in

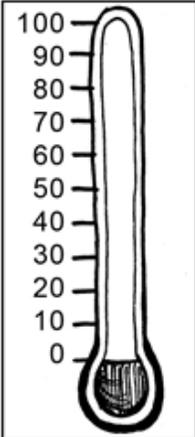
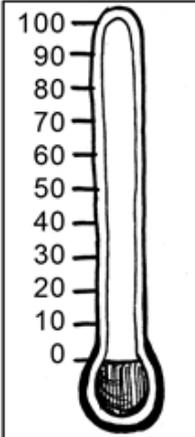
In Evan’s family, people were encouraged to take their anger outside to the basketball hoop or to the treadmill in the basement. Evan learned to let his anger out when he played sports at school

In Vanessa’s family, no one showed anger. They kept their feelings to themselves. Vanessa wasn’t sure what to do when she was angry. Usually she wrote about it in her diary, and sometimes she cried

Anger should be expressed in safe ways, such as appropriate verbal expression, physical activity, or exercise, writing, drawing, or playing music. When you practice paying attention to your feelings of anger and expressing them safely and completely, you may find that your anxiety level decreases

Directions

On the line in each space below, write the names of things, people, or situations that make you angry. For each item, color in the mercury of the thermometer on the left to show the level of your anger and color in the mercury of the thermometer on the right to show the amount of anger that you express. If you don’t think that anything makes you angry, ask yourself, “If something did make me angry, what would it be?” Then fill in the spaces and thermometers according to your answer.

<p>How Much Anger I Feel</p>		<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>		<p>How Much Anger I Express</p>
--	---	--	--	---

Describe how the amount of anger you feel about each item compares to the amount of anger you express.

Describe the ways people in your family usually express anger

Describe the ways you usually express anger.

Anger that is not expressed may come out as anxiety, headaches, stomach aches, or other emotional or physical symptoms. If you do not express all of your anger, describe where you think it comes out in you.

Tell what else you could do to let out anger that may not be expressed.

Describe anything that comes to mind that you could be angry about and may not even realize.

Here Are Some More Strategies for Managing Anger:

- Recognize when you are feeling angry and know how it shows in your body, thoughts and behavior.
- Identify the various factors that result in angry feelings.
- Identify the effects of the angry feelings and the ways you have coped
- Put things in perspective→ are little, insignificant things worth getting angry over?
- Learn to challenge yourself when feeling angry to figure out if your anger is really justified.
- Change your angry thoughts in order to change and stop angry feelings.
- Use anger as a motivator to solve problems and conflicts or achieve things in your life.
- Express your angry feelings to the person you are mad at when appropriate but do so in a controlled manner.
- Talk about your anger with a friend, family member or counselor or teacher.
- Don't let anger control you and make you say or do things that will hurt others or that you will regret. This will take time, ask people to be patient
- Leave situations in which you worry you will lose control of your anger and do something harmful to another person.
- If you have hurt others by lashing out angrily at them, make amends to them.
- Use physical activity as a means of releasing angry energy.
- Write about your feelings in a journal or anger log.

10 Characteristics of Healthy, Constructive Anger

1. You express your feelings in a tactful way.
2. You try to see things from the other person's point of view.
3. You communicate a spirit of respect for the other person even though you may feel quite angry with them.
4. You do something productive and try to solve the problem.
5. You try to learn from the situation.
6. You eventually let go of the anger.
7. You examine your own behavior to see how you may have contributed to the problem.
8. You believe that you and the other person both have valid ideas and feelings that deserve to be understood.
9. Your commitment to the other person increases.
10. You look for a solution where you can both win.

10 Characteristics of Unhealthy, Destructive Anger

1. You deny your feelings and pout (passive aggressive) or lash out and attack the other person (aggressive).
2. You argue defensively and insist there's no validity in what the other person is saying.
3. You believe the other person is despicable and deserving of punishment. You appear condescending or disrespectful.
4. You give up and see yourself as a helpless victim.
5. You don't learn anything new. You feel that your view of the situation is the only valid one.
6. Your anger becomes addictive. You won't let go of it.
7. You blame the other person and see yourself as an innocent victim.
8. You insist that you are entirely right. You feel convinced the truth and justice are on your side.
9. You avoid or reject the other person. You write them off.
10. You feel like you're in a battle or a competition. If one person wins, you feel the other will be the loser.

Anxiety



Intro:

If you are experiencing anxiety, you are normal. There is no one who doesn't feel anxious at some time. It is even more common to feel anxious during adolescence, because so many changes are taking place in your body, your mind, and your emotions.

Anxiety is a common and very treatable condition. Working through the activities in this book will give you many ideas on how to both prevent and handle your anxiety. Some of the activities may seem unusual at first. You may be asked to try doing things that are very new to you. Even if the suggestions seem really different from what you are used to. Please give them a try. The idea that seems the strangest may turn out to be the one that helps the most.

Anxiety: Talking it Out

Kelly felt a lot of anxiety whenever she was going to perform in a school play. She was a good actress with a beautiful singing voice, and she often got the lead role in the play. But even though people told her she was very talented, she still felt anxious every time she had to go on stage.

Kelly didn't like talking about her feelings. She was afraid that if she talked about the anxiety, she would feel it even more. She was also concerned that the other kids might think she was weird or wimpy if she told them how anxious she felt. So instead of saying anything, she just tried to ignore it.

By the end of the school year, Kelly had started to get bad stomach aches whenever she had to go on stage. Her mother took her to the doctor for a checkup, but he couldn't find anything physically wrong. Kelly had known her doctor since she was very young,

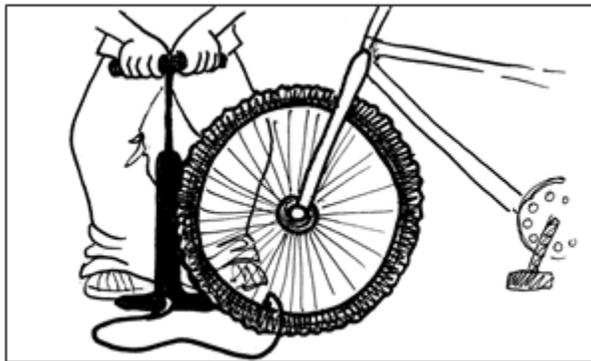
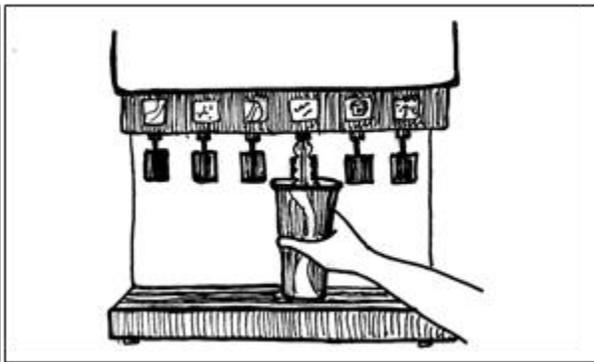
and she felt comfortable telling him about her anxiety. She explained that her stomach aches came only before she performed.

The doctor said Kelly's stomach aches were a result of holding her anxiety inside.

He said she needed to start letting it out, or the stomach aches would get worse. He suggested that she talk with her drama teacher about how she felt. When Kelly did, she learned that the other kids also felt anxious before a performance. The drama teacher started encouraging all his students to share their feelings of anxiety. Even just saying, "Wow, I'm a little nervous. Are you?" helped to release it. As Kelly learned to talk about her feelings, her stomach aches came less often and finally went away altogether.

Directions

Each of the following pictures shows something that is being filled. Describe what will happen in each case if the item is filled beyond its capacity.



Look at the pictures of the items being filled. What are some things that might happen when a person becomes too full of anxiety?

What are some things that happen to you when you do not let out your anxious feelings?

Why do you think Kelly was able to share her feelings of anxiety with her doctor when she hadn't wanted to share them with anyone else?

What do you think made Kelly change her mind about sharing her anxious feelings with her classmates?

How do you feel about talking about your anxiety with other people?

Circle any of the following people with whom you might feel comfortable talking about your anxiety:

- | | | | |
|------------------------|---------|------------------|-------------|
| Best friend | Father | Aunt | Doctor |
| Cousin | Coach | School counselor | Grandparent |
| Friend | Mother | Employer | Sibling |
| Professional counselor | Teacher | Worship leader | Uncle |

Write the names of anyone else in your life with whom you might feel comfortable talking about your anxiety.

Circle any of the phrases below that you might say to express anxious feelings:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| I am so nervous! | I am a little anxious about this. | I can feel my heart pounding; I must be nervous. |
| I am really anxious about doing this. | I am feeling a lot of anxiety right now. | I am really stressing about this. |

Write any other words that you could use to express your feelings of anxiety.

Writing it out

Sean's counselor suggested that he start keeping a journal so he would have a private place to express his feelings of anxiety. Sean didn't know if he liked that idea. English had never been his best subject, and he hated having to write outlines and remember correct grammar and punctuation. His counselor said that Sean didn't have to worry about any of those things in his journal. Journal writing is personal. No one else has to be able to read it, so the writing doesn't have to be clear or organized or correctly punctuated. He said the journal was one place where Sean could write without using any of the rules he had learned in English class.

Sean decided to give it a try. The next time he felt anxious was right before gym class. They were starting a unit on volleyball, and Sean thought he was the worst volleyball player in the world. He thought his serve and his aim were poor, and he always felt like such an idiot when he missed the ball. He could feel his jaw muscles getting tight just thinking about it. Before going to gym, he took out his journal and started to write down what he was feeling. He did not pay attention to how his writing looked; he just focused on getting his anxiety out. He found himself writing pretty fast at first, but as the emotion lost some of its power, he started slowing down. After a couple

of paragraphs, Sean realized that he felt more peaceful. He still wasn't excited about volleyball, but he thought he could handle it. He was surprised when he missed fewer shots than usual on the court that day. His counselor said that was probably because he wasn't feeling as anxious, so he had better focus and control over his body.

Directions

In the first space below, write all the English composition rules you can think of. In the second space, try writing a paragraph or two about your anxious feelings without using any of those rules.

Anxiety: Writing it out

People are so used to following English rules when they write that sometimes it is hard to write without them. Describe what it was like for you.

Try writing about your feelings the next time you feel anxious. Or at one time during the day, take the time to write about your anxious feelings in the past twenty-four hours. Tell how it felt to express these feelings on paper.

When you write to release anxiety, you can use any kind of writing materials you like. The only important thing is that you are comfortable. Some people like to write in spiral notebooks with blue ink, some like to write on unlined paper with pencils or felt-tipped markers, and some like to write at the computer. What writing materials are you most comfortable with?

Sometimes people are afraid that if they write about their anxious feelings, someone else will find and read what they have written. If that is true for you, you will need to find a way to maintain your privacy. Here are some options:

- | | |
|---|--|
| Shred your writing after you're done. | Keep your writing where no one will find it. |
| Keep your writing in a locked drawer. | Throw your writing away when you're done. |
| Write so messily that no one can read it. | Write in code. |

Circle any of the above ideas that might work for you. Write any other ideas you have here.

Anxiety: Positive affirmations

Joshua's daily anxiety level was pretty high, even when nothing especially stressful was going on. He didn't understand how his friends could be so carefree when there were so many things, he felt anxious about. His counselor suggested that Joshua work on changing his affirmations. Instead of telling himself things that raised his anxiety, he could tell himself things that helped him feel more peaceful. First, Joshua had to identify his current affirmations. Here are some of the messages he noticed that were constantly running through his head:

- "I've got so much homework; I'll never get it all done."
- "Everyone is so much more confident than me; I'm so insecure."
- "I don't have good enough grades; I'll never get into a good college."
- "Those kids are laughing; they must be laughing at me."

Joshua didn't realize how often he played these affirmations in his head until he started paying attention to them. He also noticed that whenever he heard one of them, he felt a pang of anxiety. He talked with his counselor about his wish to change his affirmations from negative to positive. Together, they decided on the following changes:

- "I can get my homework done because I use my time wisely."
- "I have a lot to be confident about! I'm a kind person, a good friend, and a great soccer player."
- "My grades are definitely good enough to get me into college; I know there will be a good match for me."
- "People laugh about a million different things. It doesn't have to be about me."

Joshua practiced these new, positive affirmations and found himself feeling happier and less anxious. He continued to monitor his self-messages on a regular basis and made a conscious effort to change them from negative to positive.

Directions

Pay attention to your own affirmations for the next two days. Using the chart below, record the messages you hear, how many times you hear them in one day, and whether they are negative or positive. Then rewrite any negative messages, changing them to positive.

My Affirmation				
Times Heard				
Negative or Positive				
New Message				

Look at your first list of affirmations. Tell how long you have been sending yourself these messages and where you think you first got these ideas.

Describe how these messages affect your anxiety level.

Describe how each of the rewritten positive messages affects your anxiety level.

Changing thought process doesn't happen overnight. Many of them may have been with you since you were very young and will take a while to change. Sometimes people feel a little anxious about changing their affirmations. Describe any concerns you have and tell why.

If you never changed your negative affirmations, how do you think they would continue to affect your anxiety level?

Less Anxiety

Megan was having a hard time getting along with her family. It felt like her parents were constantly nagging her and her brother and sister were constantly bothering her. It made her so anxious that sometimes she felt she would explode. One afternoon at home, everyone seemed to be irritating her at once. She knew she had to get away from them before she said or did something impulsive that would get her into trouble. Megan walked out the front door of her house and started jogging down the street.

By the time she got around the block, she noticed that she felt better. Her anxiety had decreased. She was breathing more deeply, and her mind was clearing. Megan continued to jog for ten more minutes until she felt completely calm. As she walked the last block home, she realized that she felt more peaceful than she had in a long time. Her whole body was relaxed, she felt healthy and strong, and her irritation had subsided. She went back into the house and was then able to talk calmly with her family. She even shared with them how much better she felt after her run.

Megan's mom was a physical education teacher. She explained to Megan that when we feel anxious, our glands send a hormone called adrenaline into our bodies. Adrenaline is what makes our muscles tense and our heart beat faster. When we exercise, the adrenaline is expelled, our muscles relax, and our heart rate slows down again. She explained to Megan that regular exercise was one of the best ways to keep daily anxiety at a lower, manageable level.

Megan started running three times a week, whether she was feeling anxious at the time or not. She noticed that she always felt great for a few hours after her run and that it was then easier for her to feel peaceful for the rest of the day.

Directions

A wide variety of physical activities are listed below. Put a star next to any activity that you know you really enjoy. Put a “T” next to any activity you have never done but would really like to try.

Baseball	Basketball	Skiing	Swimming
Hiking	Tennis	Biking	Snow Boarding
Football	Karate	Running	Bowling
Gymnastics	Wrestling	Archery	Golf
Paintball	Laser Tag	Dance	Race Walking
Volleyball	Badminton	Judo	Waterskiing
Tubing	Lacrosse	Soccer	Bocce Ball
Weightlifting	Aerobic Dance	Kickboxing	Racquetball
Diving	Rappelling	surfing	Wind Surfing

Looking at the activities you starred, write down those that would be easiest for you to do on a regular basis. What time of day and where would be most realistic for you to do these?

Write down one or two times and days over the next week when you can exercise. Write them in your schedule book or on your calendar, and then follow through on your plan.

Notice your anxiety level both before and after you exercise. Describe what you notice.

Which exercises from the list might you be able to do right at the moment you are feeling anxious?

Describe a recent situation that made you anxious and tell how you could have performed some exercise at that time to relieve your anxiety.

From the list of activities, you put a "T" next to, choose one or two you could try in the next couple of weeks. Write your plan here for how you can realistically make it happen.

After you try these new activities, write about your experience and whether you would like to do these activities again. Its ok if you didn't enjoy the activities, not everything is for everybody keep trying until you find what is right for you.

Problem Solving

Using problem-solving skills means that instead of becoming overwhelmed or anxious when you encounter a challenging situation, you use your body and mind to help you find a solution. You can remember how to problem solve by using this three-word reminder: **Stop, Breathe, and Think.**

1. **“Stop”** means that you have to take a time-out from your initial anxious reaction to the situation. You literally stop whatever you are doing and remain still for a moment. Then, you...
2. **“Breathe.”** Now is the time to take a long, deep breath, moving your mental focus away from anxiety and onto your breathing. It helps your heart rate to slow down and sends necessary oxygen to all parts of your body, releasing tension in your muscles. When you breathe deeply, you receive more oxygen in your brain, which allows you to...
3. **“Think”** more clearly and effectively. Now you can look at the situation and think carefully about what you need to do first, second, and third, to solve the immediate problem. Once you identify these steps, you can put them into action.

Directions

Pretend that you have just encountered each of the situations below. Look at the scene in front of you. Then practice problem solving by following these steps:

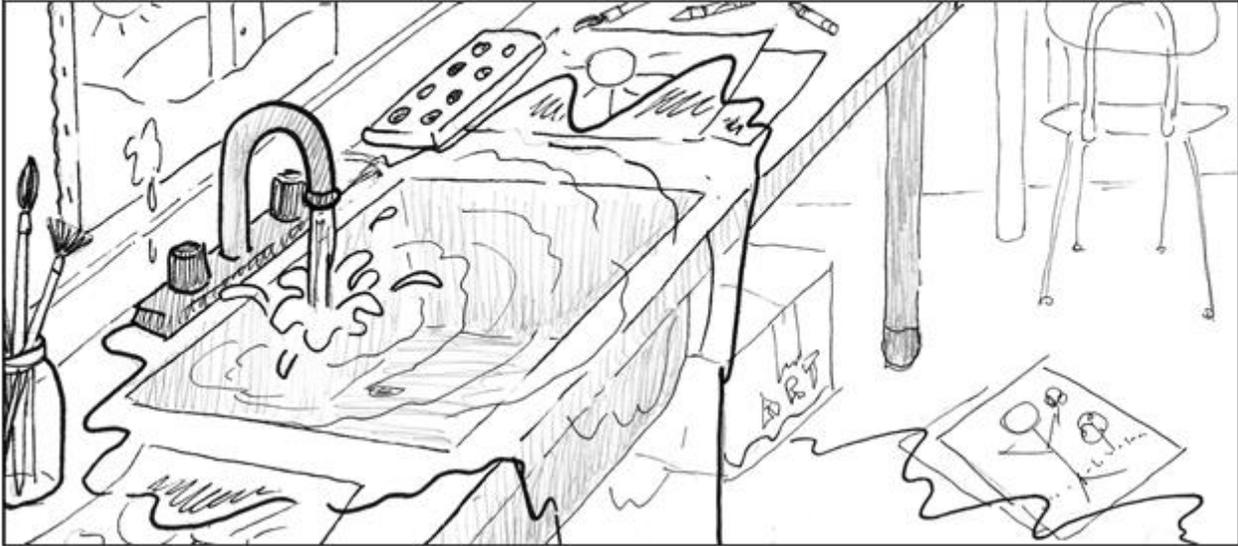
1. Close your eyes and **stop** looking at the scene.
2. Take a deep **breath.**
3. **Think** carefully and clearly about what you need to do first, second, and third to help solve the problem.

Write your step-by-step problem-solving plan under the picture.

You are babysitting your younger sister. You walk into the room and see...



You walk into the art room at school and see...



Some people think problem solving is a skill that would be hard to learn, but most of us problem solve in many ways every day. A few problem-solving activities are listed below. Circle any that you already know how to do. Then write some more of your own.

Playing a video game

Organizing friends to go to the movies

Planning a party

Making your lunch

Writing a paper

Resolving a disagreement

Cleaning your room

Using a computer

No matter how simple they seem, all of these activities involve thinking clearly and making and following a step-by-step plan. Choose two of the activities above and list the problem-solving steps you would use to complete them.

Sometimes people think they would not be able to problem solve if a situation was too unfamiliar or seemed too big for them. Most of us underestimate ourselves in this way. Think back to problems that you have already encountered and solved in the past. These problems might have to do with school, home, relationships, or activities. Make a list of them here.

Describe a situation that happened to you recently in which you were feeling very anxious. Tell what steps your problem-solving plan would have involved if you had been able to stop, breathe, and think.

Sometimes a situation will be so complicated or difficult that you will not be able to handle it by yourself. In those cases, part of your problem-solving plan should be to find someone to help you. Describe a situation that you might encounter in which you would need to ask for help. Tell whom you would find to help you.

Managing Panic

for you to know

A panic attack is a short period of very intense anxiety that causes much discomfort. People can learn to manage panic attacks by following some simple guidelines. If you have panic attacks regularly, you should be sure to tell an adult and also your doctor.

Tony had his first panic attack when he was visiting his mother in the hospital. His mom had just had surgery to remove a tumor. As Tony walked into the room and saw his mother asleep in the hospital bed, looking pale and with tubes in her arms, he felt himself becoming light-headed. His heart began to pound, and his stomach was queasy. He began to perspire, and it felt like his arms were tingling. Tony's father noticed that something was wrong. He had Tony sit down in a chair and he called a nurse. The nurse told Tony to take long, deep breaths, which he did for a few minutes, until the feeling subsided. He soon felt better but was shaken up by what had happened. The physical discomfort had come on so fast that it scared him. He didn't know why it had happened and was afraid it might happen again. The next day, Tony was nervous about going to school, but his father said he had to. Tony felt himself worrying all morning, and during his lunch break he went to the school nurse's office.

When Tony told the school nurse what had happened the day before, she said it sounded like he had experienced a panic attack. She told him that people may have panic attacks when they are under strong stress, and seeing his mother looking frail and weak in the hospital could certainly trigger stress. She told Tony that panic attacks are not dangerous and can be handled very simply. Finally, she gave Tony a printed handout with a list of things he could do if he ever felt that way again. Tony felt better knowing that there was a name for what had happened and that he could manage it if it happened again.

The handout the school nurse gave him read as follows:

Using Your Mind and Body to Manage Panic Attacks

Using Your Mind

1. Remind yourself that you are not in danger. You are just having an exaggerated experience of a normal reaction to stress.
2. Remind yourself that you can manage the uncomfortable feelings.
3. Instead of thinking thoughts like, "Oh my gosh, this is awful! What's going to happen to me?" think, "Okay, I recognize these feelings. I know exactly what to do to release them, and I'll do it now."

Using Your Body

1. Find a place where you can sit down. If you are outside, lean against something solid.
2. Begin to slow your breathing by taking long, deep breaths. Remember that breathing deeply will bring the needed oxygen back into your body, stop your heart from racing, and eliminate any tingling or dizzy feelings.
3. Look around and notice all the normal things going on around you. Focus on that normalcy as you allow the fearful symptoms to pass.
4. To relieve your symptoms, do other things that feel comforting to you. Some people sip cool water, some lie down and close their eyes, and some put a cool cloth on the base of their neck.

Directions

Circle any of the symptoms below that you have experienced during a panic attack:

pounding heart

chest pains

sweating

light-headedness

nausea

tingling

numbness

fear of dying

dizziness

stomach problems

chills

flushes

shortness of breath

shaking

feeling of unreality

feeling out of control

feeling of smothering

feeling of choking

In the space below, draw a picture of yourself calmly managing your panic symptoms. Use detail to show the comfortable position you are in, the relaxation of your muscles and breathing, and the clarity of your mind. Add a thought balloon, and write in the peaceful, reassuring, confident thoughts you are thinking to relieve your feelings of panic.

Describe what happened the last time you had a panic attack.

Tell the things you thought or did that made the symptoms worse.

Tell the things you thought or did that made the symptoms diminish.

If you have had more than one panic attack, list the times of day, days of the week, and circumstances under which the panic attacks occurred, as best you can remember.

Do you notice any patterns in the information you have listed?

If you have panic attacks regularly, keep a diary of their characteristics for the next five to ten times you have them. Describe any patterns you see in the information.

Tell how you can use this information to avoid panic attacks in the future.

Look back at the picture you drew of yourself peacefully managing the panic. As you look at it, breathe deeply and really create the feeling of peacefulness in your body.

Close your eyes and picture yourself in your drawing, calmly handling the panic. Know that you can do this whenever you need

Emotions

Positive emotions

				
ecstatic	blissful	confident	happy	curious
				
pleased	triumphant	attentive	self-collected	dreamy
				
peaceful	delighted	loving	sleepy	lovestruck
				
hopeful	sheepish	withdrawn	thoughtful	surprised
				
good	glad	proud	jolly	assured
				
bashful	idiotic	innocent	admiring	kind
				
adoring	calm	strong-willed	engaged	excited
				
interested	jubilant	inspired	grateful	tender
				
satisfied	phlegmatic	optimistic	meditative	sympathizing
				
relieved	determined	apologetic	indifferent	amazed

Negative emotions

				
demure	cautious	guilty	frightened	tired
				
envious	unsure	disappointed	hurt	bored
				
insulted	sneaky	discontented	ashamed	wistful
				
nervous	humiliated	weak	astonished	jealous
				
enraged	speechless	depressed	upset	lonely
				
arrogant	anxious	aggressive	eavesdropping	hopeless
				
gloomy	heart-broken	contemptuous	impatient	prudish
				
shy	repentant	grieving	resentful	mean
				
regretful	annoyed	suffering	obstinate	negative
				
cynical	suspicious	shocked	sad	unhappy

“Emotions are just emotions.” They are not you, they are not facts, and you can let them go. The first part, “Emotions are just emotions,” may seem obvious, yet this is not how most of us live. We live in a culture that mainly deals with emotions on either end of a broad spectrum. On one end of the spectrum, we deny our emotions and the effect they have on our rational thinking processes, on our health, or on our experience of life. On the other end, we deify our emotions, investing way too much importance on the supposed messages that they are here to deliver and what they mean about who we are.

There are grains of truth in the perspectives of both acting rationally and not denying our emotions. However, most of us lose ourselves, and our ability to choose, in each perspective. Depending on how our rational mind is interpreting our sensory input in the moment, we can often swing wildly between the two.

Most of us tend to identify with our emotions as though they are who we are. This identification is even found in our language, such as when we talk about “being angry” as opposed to “feeling angry.” It is our identification with feelings that make it more difficult than it need be to let them go. We often cling to our identification with a feeling because we think, “It is who I am.” We believe, “I feel, therefore I am.”

When you find yourselves lost in identification with emotion, you can ask yourself, “Am I this feeling, or am I just having this feeling?” Inherent in all of us are nine emotional states: apathy, grief, fear, lust, anger, pride, courageousness, acceptance, and peace. These fall along a gradient scale of energy and action. In apathy, we have almost no energy available to us and take little or no external action. We have more energy and take more external action when we move up to grief. Each successive emotion on this scale, all the way to peace, has more energy and affords us greater capabilities for outward action.

Here is an analogy you might find useful. Imagine that your emotions are how you would experience an ocean of energy being channeled through a garden hose that represents your body and your mind. When you’re in apathy, the hose is almost totally crimped, letting very little energy through. In grief, it is a little more open. By the time you get to courageousness, it’s mostly open, so you can focus your energy on creating what you choose. In peace, there is no longer any constriction: you are at one with the ocean.

The nine emotional categories are a way to make sense of the large part of our mind that is below our conscious awareness. This part of our mind is like a junk drawer- you know, the place where you throw everything that you don't know what else to do with. Over time, we've tossed everything into this part of our minds that we didn't know how to handle or that remains unresolved in any way. Because of the accumulation of unresolved issues that most of us develop, it is often hard to remember what we consider important and far too easy to remember what we wish we could forget.

Refer to the list of words and phrases that describe each of the nine emotional states whenever you are having a hard time getting in touch with what you're feeling . For instance, if you find that you often give up, feel negative about yourself or others, or just having a hard time getting started, you're probably experiencing a state of apathy. Perhaps you find yourself thinking, "I'm not like them. I'm right. I'm smarter than everyone," or feeling smug or better than.... Thoughts and feelings of this nature indicate that you're probably experiencing a state of pride.

Apathy

In apathy, we feel as though desire is dead and it's no use. We cannot do anything, and no one else can help. We feel dense, heavy, and see no way out. We withdraw and play weak, so we will not get hurt. Our minds can get so noisy that we may go numb. The pictures we have are the most limited and destructive so that we see only failure and how we cannot and no one else can, as well. We have little or no energy to act on our pictures and thoughts because inwardly we are being pulled in so many conflicting directions.

Bored	Giving up	Numb
Can't win	Hardened	Overwhelmed
Careless	Hopeless	Powerless
Cold	Humorless	Resigned
Cut-off	I can't	Shock
Dead	I don't care	Spaced out
Defeated	I don't count	Stoned
Depressed	Inattentive	Stuck
Demoralized	Indecisive	Too tired
Desolate	Indifferent	Unfeeling
Despair	Invisible	Unfocused
Discouraged	It's too late	Useless
Disillusioned	Lazy	Vague
Doomed	Let it wait	Wasted
Drained	Listless	What's the use
Failure	Loser	Why try?
Forgetful	Lost	Worthless
Futile	Negative	

Grief

In grief, we want someone else to help us because we feel that we can't do anything on our own, but we hope maybe someone else can. We cry out in pain for someone to do it for us. Our body has a little more energy than apathy, but it is so contracted that it is painful. Our mind is a little less cluttered than in apathy but still very noisy and opaque. We picture our pain and loss in these pictures. Our thoughts revolve around how much we hurt and what we have lost and if we can get anyone else to help.

Abused	Hurt	Pity
Accused	If only	Regret
Anguished	Ignored	Rejected
Ashamed	Inadequate	Remorse
Betrayed	Inconsolable	Sadness
Blue	It's not fair	Sorrow
Cheated	Left out	Tearful
Despair	Longing	Tormented
Disappointed	Loss	Torn
Distraught	Melancholy-sadness	Tortured
Embarrassed	Misunderstood	Unhappy
Forgotten	Mourning	Unloved
Guilty	Neglected	Unwanted
Heartbroken	Nobody cares	Vulnerable
Heartache	Nobody loves me	Why me
Heartsick	Nostalgia	Wounded
Helpless	Passed over	

Fear

In fear, we want to strike out, but we don't because we think the risk is too great- they will probably hit us harder. We want to reach out but do not because we think we'll get hurt. Our body has a little more energy than in grief, but it is still so contracted that it is mostly painful. Feelings can rise and fall very rapidly, like water on a hot skillet. Our mind is a little less cluttered than in grief but still very noisy and opaque. Our pictures and thoughts are about doom and destruction. All we can think and see is how we will get hurt, what we may lose and how we can protect ourselves and those around us

Anxious	Horrified	Stage fright
Apprehensive- dread	Hysterical	Superstitious
Cautious	Inhibited- restraint	Suspicious
Clammy-damp, sticky	Insecure	Tense
Cowardice	Irrational	Terrified
Defensive	Nausea	Threatened
Distrust	Nervous	Timid
Doubt	Panic	Trapped
Dread	Paralyzed	Uncertain
Embarrassed	Paranoid	Uneasy
Evasive	Scared	Vulnerable
Foreboding- expectation of trouble or evil	Secretive	Want to escape
Frantic	Shaky	Wary- on guard
Hesitant	Shy	Worry
	Skeptical	

Lust

In lust, we desire possession-WANTING. We hunger for money, power, sex, people, places and things, but with hesitation. We may or may not reach out. We have an underlying feeling that we cannot or should not have. Our body has little more energy than in fear. It is still quite contracted, but the sensations now are sometimes quite pleasurable, especially compared to the lower energy emotions. Feelings can be very intense. Our mind is a little less cluttered than in fear but still very noisy and obsessive. We may try and medicate our pictures with positive fantasies, but, underneath, our pictures are really about what we don't have.

Our thoughts are about what we need to get and what we don't have. No matter how much we do get, we never feel satisfied and rarely enjoy what we have.

Abandon	Gluttonous	Obsessed
Anticipation	Greedy	Overindulgent
Callous	Hoarding	Possessive
Can't wait	Hunger	Predatory
Compulsive	I want	Pushy
Craving	Impatient	Reckless
Demanding	Lascivious- lustful	Ruthless
Devious	Lecherous- lustful	Scheming
Driven	Manipulative	Selfish
Envy	Miserly	Voracious-
Exploitive	Must have it	ravenous
Fixated	Never enough	Wanton- lewd
Frenzy	Never satisfied	Wicked
Frustrated	Oblivious	

Anger

In anger, we desire to strike out, to hurt and stop others, but with hesitation. We may or may not strike out. Our body has a little more energy than lust. It is less contracted, and the sensations can often be very intense and explosive. Our mind is a little less cluttered than lust but still noisy, stubborn, and obsessive. Our pictures are about what we are going to do to others and of destruction. Our thoughts are about what we can do to get even and how we are going to make others pay. This energy can frighten us and cause us to move into lower energy levels and to hurt ourselves. The actions we take are mostly destructive to ourselves and those around us.

Abrasive	Hatred	Revolted
Aggressive	Hostility	Rude
Annoyed	Impatience	Savage
Argumentative	Indignant- scornful anger	Simmering
Belligerent	Irate	Sizzling
Boiling	Jealous	Smoldering
Brooding	Livid	Spiteful
Caustic	Mad	Steely
Defiant	Mean	Stern
Demanding	Merciless	Stewing
Destructive	Murderous	Stubborn
Disgust	Outraged	Sullen
Explosive	Petulant-irritable	Vengeful
Fierce	Pushy	Vicious
Frustrated	Rebellious	Violent
Fuming	Resentment	Volcanic
Furious	Resistant	Wicked
Harsh		Willful

Pride

In pride, we want to maintain the status quo. We are unwilling to change or move, and therefore we stop others from movement so they don't pass us up. Our body has a little more energy than in anger, but it often becomes unavailable. Even though it is less contracted,

it is often muted and less visible. Our mind is a little less cluttered than in anger but still noisy, rigid and self-involved. Our pictures and thoughts are about what we have done and what we know. If we are even aware of others, we hope they will notice how great we are to cover over our nagging doubts.

Above reproach	Gloating	Rigid
Aloof- distant	Haughty- arrogantly self- admiring	Self-absorbed
Arrogant	Holier than thou	Self-satisfied
Bigoted	Hypocritical	Selfish
Boastful	Icy	Smug
Bored	Isolated	Snobbish
Clever	Judgmental	Special
Closed	Know-it-all	Spoiled
Complacent	Narrow-minded	Stoic
Contemptuous-scorn-ful	Never wrong	Stubborn
Cool	Opinionated	Stuck-up
Critical	Overbearing	Superior
Disdain	Patronizing	Uncompromising
Dogmatic- arrogant	Pious- devout	Unfeeling
False dignity	Prejudiced	Unforgiving
False humility	Presumptuous	Unyielding
False virtue	Righteous	Vain

Courageousness

In courageousness, we have the willingness to move out without hesitation. We can do. We can correct. We can change whatever, wherever needed. We have the willingness to let go and move on. Our body has a lot more energy than in pride, and it is available for constructive outward action. Our energy is high and available and clear. Our mind is much less cluttered than in pride and a lot less noisy. It is flexible, resilient, and open.

Our pictures and thoughts are about what we can do and learn and how we can support others in the same. We are self-motivated and self-reliant while still being willing for others to succeed. We can laugh out loud, even at our own mistakes. Life is fun.

Adventurous	Explorative	Positive
Alert	Flexible	Purposeful
Alive	Focused	Receptive
Assured	Giving	Resilient
Aware	Happy	Resourceful
Centered	Honorable	Responsive
Certain	Humor	Secure
Cheerful	I can	Self-sufficient
Clarity	Independent	Sharp
Compassion	Initiative	Spontaneous
Competent	Integrity	Strong
Confident	Invincible	Supportive
Creative	Loving	Tireless
Daring	Lucid- expressed clearly	Vigorous
Decisive	Motivated	Visionary
Dynamic	Non-resistant	Willing
Eager	Open	Zest
Enthusiastic	Optimistic	
Exhilaration- joy	Perspective	

Acceptance

In acceptance, we have and enjoy everything as it is. We have no need to change anything. It just is, and it's OK. It's beautiful just as it is. Our body has a lot more energy than courageousness, yet it is mostly at rest, available if we need it. Our energy is light, warm and open. Our mind is much less cluttered than in courageousness and it is mostly quiet and content. Our pictures and thoughts are in love with the exquisiteness of what is. Life is joyous.

Abundance	Friendly	Naturalness
Appreciative	Fullness	Nothing to change
Balance	Gentle	Open
Beautiful	Glowing	Playful
Belonging	Gracious	Radiant
Childlike	Harmonious	Receptive
Compassion	Harmony	Secure
Considerate	Intuitive	Soft
Delight	I have	Tender
Elated	In tune	Understanding
Embracing	Joyful	Warm
Empathy	Loving	Well being
Enriched	Magnanimous-generous	Wonder
Everything's OK	Mellow	

Peace

In peace, we feel “I am. I am whole, complete, and total unto myself. Everyone and everything is a part of myself. It is all perfect.” The body has a lot more energy than in acceptance but is totally at rest- still. The energy is quiet and calm. The mind is clear and empty, yet totally aware. There is no need for pictures or thoughts. Life is as it is, and all is well.

Ageless	Free	Quiet
Awareness	Fulfilled	Serenity
Being	Glowing	Space
Boundless	I am	Still
Calm	Light	Timeless
Centered	Oneness	Tranquility
Complete	Perfection	Unlimited
Eternal	Pure	Whole

Moods



MINDING YOUR MOODS

Learning how to feel better starts with seeing and watching ourselves clearly. This module will provide instructions for understanding the connection between your feelings, your thoughts, and the happenings in your life.

First, you watch your body's response to events. This information helps you become more aware of the physical feeling in your body. Next, you track your feelings. Then you notice how events, feelings, and body sensations go hand in hand. Finally, we show you how to become aware of how thoughts link up with feelings, events and bodily sensations. The path to feeling better starts with understanding these connections.

Understanding Body Signals

Your heart may race, or your hands may sweat when you feel anxious. Changes in appetite and sleep may accompany feelings of sadness and depression. These physical reactions signal that something important is going on internally. Monitoring your bodily sensations gives you an early warning that a storm of emotional distress is brewing.

Below is an example of Tyler's body response tracking sheet. On the following page is a blank body response tracking sheet.

- Review the body responses in the left-hand column. If you experienced a reaction in a given category, elaborate and specify how your body reacted (middle column).
- Record when the body response happened and what was going on at the time. This information should help you connect the dots between events and responses.
- Think of how you respond to assigned homework, fighting between parents or siblings, an upcoming sports activity that may require physical and emotional endurance.

Tyler's Body Responses tracking Sheet		
Body Response	How did my body feel?	When did this happen? What was I doing?
Muscle tightness	I felt pain in my shoulders and back	Monday morning. When I was writing my science test that I didn't study for
Breathing/Increased heart rate	I could tell my breathing was rapid and shallow.	When I was getting ready to jump off the high diving board at the pool
Stomach symptoms	None	
Fatigue	My body feels heavy. It feel like I'm walking through mud.	Lately, when I have been walking to school
Headaches	None this week	
Posture	I noticed I'm walking around stooped over. and I have been slumped at my desk a lot	After I got in trouble for lying to my parents about doing my homework
Other: Dizziness, sweating, lightness, tingling, constriction in the throat or chest or feeling spacey and disorientated	Spacy and light-headed	When I got up in front of the class to present my science project

My Body Responses tracking Sheet		
Body Response	How did my body feel?	When did this happen? What was I doing?
Breathing/Increased heart rate		
Stomach symptoms		
Fatigue		
Headaches		
Posture		
Other: Dizziness, sweating, lightness, tingling, constriction in the throat or chest or feeling spacey and disorientated		

After completing the tracking sheet, take some time to think about what you see. Write a few reflections.

Connecting the Mind and Body

After you become more observant of your body's signals, it's time to connect your mental and physical states. Feeling words connect and label these states. If you're unaccustomed to describing your feelings, spend some time looking over the list of words in the following chart and ponder whether they apply to you. Take your time, and don't rush the process.

Daily Unpleasant Emotions Checklist				
Day	Sadness	Fear	Shame	Anger
Monday	Despondent, miserable, hopeless, gloomy, grief, joyless, dispirited, dejected, sad	Panicked, nervous, tense, afraid, timid, terrified, apprehensive, worried	Guilty, regretful, remorseful, embarrassed, disgraced, dishonored	Outrages, bitter, furious, resentful, mad, annoyed, irritable, indignant
Tuesday	Despondent, miserable, hopeless, gloomy, grief, joyless, dispirited, dejected, sad	Panicked, nervous, tense, afraid, timid, terrified, apprehensive, worried	Guilty, regretful, remorseful, embarrassed, disgraced, dishonored	Outrages, bitter, furious, resentful, mad, annoyed, irritable, indignant
Wednesday	Despondent, miserable, hopeless, gloomy, grief, joyless, dispirited, dejected, sad	Panicked, nervous, tense, afraid, timid, terrified, apprehensive, worried	Guilty, regretful, remorseful, embarrassed, disgraced, dishonored	Outrages, bitter, furious, resentful, mad, annoyed, irritable, indignant
Thursday	Despondent, miserable, hopeless, gloomy, grief, joyless, dispirited, dejected, sad	Panicked, nervous, tense, afraid, timid, terrified, apprehensive, worried	Guilty, regretful, remorseful, embarrassed, disgraced, dishonored	Outrages, bitter, furious, resentful, mad, annoyed, irritable, indignant
Friday	Despondent, miserable, hopeless, gloomy, grief, joyless, dispirited, dejected, sad	Panicked, nervous, tense, afraid, timid, terrified, apprehensive, worried	Guilty, regretful, remorseful, embarrassed, disgraced, dishonored	Outrages, bitter, furious, resentful, mad, annoyed, irritable, indignant
Saturday	Despondent, miserable, hopeless, gloomy, grief, joyless, dispirited, dejected, sad	Panicked, nervous, tense, afraid, timid, terrified, apprehensive, worried	Guilty, regretful, remorseful, embarrassed, disgraced, dishonored	Outrages, bitter, furious, resentful, mad, annoyed, irritable, indignant
Sunday	Despondent, miserable, hopeless, gloomy, grief, joyless, dispirited, dejected, sad	Panicked, nervous, tense, afraid, timid, terrified, apprehensive, worried	Guilty, regretful, remorseful, embarrassed, disgraced, dishonored	Outrages, bitter, furious, resentful, mad, annoyed, irritable, indignant

Putting Events, Feelings, and Sensations Together

As you work through this, you will become more aware of how your body reacts to events in your life. Using the Daily Unpleasant Emotions Checklist from the previous section, you have feeling words to label your mental and physical states. It's time to connect these body sensations and feeling words to the event that triggered them.

Mood Diary

- For at least a week, pay attention to your body's signals and write them down whenever you feel something unpleasant.
- Search for a feeling word that captures your emotion and jot it down (you can use Unpleasant Emotions Checklist or any word from the 9 Emotions module).
- Ask yourself what was going on when you started noticing emotions and body's signals. The corresponding event can also be in the form of a thought or image that runs through your mind. Be concrete and specific; don't write something over general such as "I hate School." Instead, ask yourself what happened at school that you didn't like.

My Mood Diary		
Day	Feelings and Sensations	Corresponding Events
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		

Thought Query

Sometimes people say they really don't know what's going on in their heads when they feel distressed. They know how they feel and they know what happened, but they simply have no idea what they're thinking. You may experience this problem. If so, ask yourself the following questions about an event that accompanied your difficult feelings.

1. What meaning does this event have for me in my life?

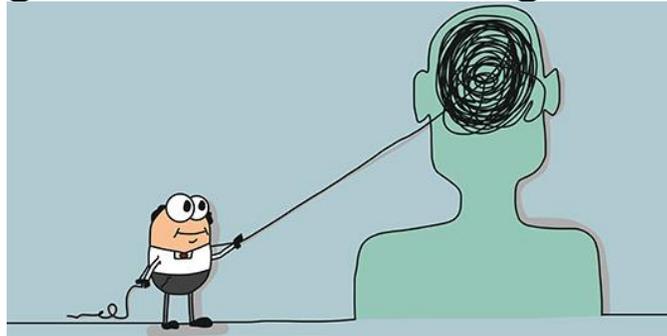
2. Will this event affect my future in any way?

3. What bothers me about the event?

4. Does this event say something about me as a person?

5. What passed through my mind as I noticed the event?

Untangling Twisted Thinking



Today we are going to cut to the chase and help you apply the principles of cognitive therapy, which is based on the premise that the way you interpret or think about events largely determines the way you feel. The great thing about cognitive therapy is that changing the way you think changes the way you feel.

All human beings have some distorted thinking. Distorted means that your thinking does not accurately reflect, predict, or describe what's going on.

Have you ever heard a noise in the night that woke you up and scared you? Perhaps your mind filled with thoughts of dread and images of someone breaking into your house. Only rarely are such thoughts accurate. Often, the noise results from wind or creaking floorboards. But when you hear a bump in the night, your fear is very real. Your thoughts, while understandable, are distorted.

Distorted thinking can be overly positive as well as negative, Yes !!!

For example, someone may have a dog they think is beautiful, but most of their friends and neighbors think he's a peculiar-looking mutt. **No doubt their perception is slightly flawed**; it is understandable because they love their dog, but it's a distortion, nevertheless.

Distorted thinking is a problem when it leads to depression and anxiety.

There are many times when negative feelings are healthy and appropriate. Learning when to accept these feelings and how to cope with a realistically negative situation is just as important as learning how to rid yourself of distorted thoughts and feeling.

Forms of Distorted Thinking

The following is a list of forms of distorted thinking, which can lead to negative moods. These warp your perceptions of your world and events occurring around you; they distort how you think about what's really happening. You may not know that these are affecting your thinking, but if you give it a little thought, you're likely to see that they do.

Magnifying + Minimizing → Enlarging + Shrinking

- Have you ever met anyone who does not, from time to time, make a mountain out of a molehill and dwell negatively on a situation long after it has passed?
- If you tend to magnify the negative, you are likely to blow unpleasant events out of proportion and dwell on them. You misuse a word, for example, and think that all listeners will view you as unintelligent and inarticulate. You can't let this thought go. You keep replaying the event in your head. That is MAGNIFICATION.
- Your mind magnifies the awfulness of unpleasant events, or when you look at our own errors, fears and imperfections, you exaggerate their importance, or minimize the value and importance of anything positive about yourself, your world or your future.
- When you think about your strengths, you may do the opposite, looking so things look small and unimportant. That is MINIMIZING.
- If you magnify your imperfections and minimize your good points, you are guaranteed to feel inferior.

Examples:

Magnifying:

"My god! I made a mistake. How terrible! How awful!"

"The word will spread like wildfire! My reputation is ruined; it's horrible that I made a mistake!"

Minimizing:

"I only have 2 pops a day." [Not owning up to the size or the amount]

Filtering

- Your mind searches for dismal, dark and frightening information while screening out more positive material. The not-to-surprising results? The world [or yourself] looks bleak or more frightening than it is.
- You tend automatically to separate out ideas and thoughts that do not conform to your depressive, anxious thinking. Through this process of selective insight, you increase the importance of your flaws, faults, and weaknesses.
- You pick out a single negative detail and dwell on it only, so that your vision of all reality becomes darkened, like a drop of ink that discolors a glass of water.

Example:

Kathy complemented Ben by saying, “You work so well with your hands. You do exquisite carpentry work.” Ben replied, “But I have calluses on my hands.”

Overgeneralizing

- You see a single event as a never-ending pattern of loss by using such words as “always” or “never”.
- You look at a single, unhappy event and decide that this event represents a general, continuous pattern.
- When this mind-set is started, you may think, “Everything is bleak and won’t improve.
- You randomly [based on personal choice rather than reason] decide that one thing that happened to you once will occur over and over again.
- One event doesn’t predict the outcome.

Example:

“I really blew up last night. I’ll never yell again.”

Black and White → All or None Terms

- Your mind views events and your character as either black or white, with 50 shades of grey.
- This reflects on/off, good/bad, right/wrong, black/white forms of thought. There is no middle ground.
- All or nothing thinking forms the basis for perfectionism. It causes you to fear any mistake or imperfection because then you will see yourself as a complete loser, and you will feel awful and worthless.
- You will set yourself up for questioning yourself endlessly because whatever you do will never measure up to your exaggerated expectations.
- If the situation falls short of perfect, you see it as a total failure.
- In this thinking, an over generalizing and magnified tone is unmistakable. You are good or bad, worthy or unworthy, intelligent or stupid.
- The problem with such polarized thinking is that it sets you up for inevitable failure, disappointment, and self-abuse. People are naturally imperfect, which is why thinking these thoughts set you up for failure. Those with this mind-set often go on a binge when they make the tiniest mistake. Realize that success comes in degrees and you can always pull back from the edge, even if you stepped over the line.

Example:

“Either I’m perfect or I’m a failure. Either I’m good or I’m bad. Either I’m really wonderful or completely terrible.”

Mind Reading

- Mind reading typically involves reading into a situation more than is actually there. Some people make a studied habit of trying to read other people’s motives, temperament, intentions and even what they are thinking.
- You assume that you know what others are thinking without checking it out.
- This can be a result of at – home treatment from parents, expect the worse from parents and expect it from everyone else.

Example:

Your teacher walks by you without saying hello, you automatically think, “He’s angry with me; I must have messed something up.”

Emotional Reasoning

- In this typical rounded form of reasoning, you act as though your emotions were evidence for your thoughts, beliefs and perceptions. If you feel like a failure, you may conclude that you are a failure, since that is how you feel. But you may feel anxious and therefore think failure thoughts. If you feel inadequate, and you believe that the feeling validates who you are, this is another circular thinking trap. The emotions you experience are real enough. The thoughts behind the emotion can be phony.
- You assume that your negative emotions necessarily reflect the way things really are.
- Your actions and your worth as a human being are two different things. You are not what you do. However you can change your behavior and your life for the better.
- One usual side effects of emotional reasoning is stalling out. You avoid cleaning up your desk because you tell yourself, “I feel so crappy when I think about that messy desk, cleaning it will be impossible.” You give up.

Examples:

“I feel guilty. I must be a rotten person.”

“I feel angry. This proves I’m being treated unfairly.”

“I feel hopeless. I must be really hopeless.”

Disqualifying the Positives

- An even more huge mental trick is the constant tendency of some depressed people to take neutral or even positive experiences and change them into negative ones. You don’t just ignore positive experiences; you cleverly and swiftly turn them into their nightmarish opposite.
- If you have been depressed, you may have developed the talent for transforming golden joy into emotional lead.
- If you constantly throw cold water on things that happen, no wonder life seems damp and chilly to you. You may not know that you are doing this!
- Disqualifying the positive is one of the most destructive forms of mental falsehood. The suggestion that dominates your depressive thinking is usually some version of “I’m second-rate.” Whenever you have a bad experience, you dwell on it and decide, “That proves what I’ve known all along.” In contrast, when you have a positive experience, you tell yourself, “That was a fluke. It does not count.” The price you pay for this is this tendency is extreme unhappiness and an inability to appreciate the good things that happen.

“Should Statements”

- “Should” involves putting yourself down by telling yourself that you should be or act different in some ways. It can refer to the past, present or future action.
- “Must,” “ought” and “have to” are similar offenders.
- You try to motivate yourself by saying, “I should do this” or “I must do that.” These statements cause you to feel pressured and resentful. Not surprisingly you end up feeling numb and unmotivated.
- “Should statements” that are directed against yourself lead to guilt and frustration. Should statements that are directed against other people or the world in general they lead to anger and frustration.
- Should statements generate a lot of unnecessary emotional trouble in your daily life. When the truth of your own actions falls short of your standards, your should’ s and shouldn’t’ s create self-hate, shame and guilt. When the all-too-human performance of other people falls short of your hopes, as will certainly happen from time to time, you’ll feel bitter and self-righteous.
- Many people try to motivate themselves with should and shouldn’t, as if they were delinquents who had to be punished before they could be expected to do anything. This usually doesn’t work because all these should, and musts make you feel rebellious and you get the urge to do the opposite.

The Should-On- Yourself Quiz

- I should have known better.
- I shouldn’t eat that much.
- I should be a better person.
- I should have been more careful.
- I shouldn’t have distorted thoughts!
- I shouldn’t be so crabby.
- I shouldn’t make so many mistakes.
- I should exercise more.
- I should be nicer to people.
- I shouldn’t get so upset about things.
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Alternate Statements:

I would like to: _____

I hope to: _____

Labelling and Mislabeleding

- Sticks and stones can break your bones and words CAN really hurt you.
- Labels erode your self- worth. They always involve overgeneralization and black and white thinking.
- Personal labeling means creating a completely negative self-image based on your errors.
- There is a good chance you are involved in a personal labeling whenever you describe your mistakes with sentences or thoughts beginning with “I am...”
- Labeling yourself is not only self-defeating, it is irrational. *Yourself* cannot be equated with any one thing you do.
- Stop trying to define yourself with negative labels they are overly simplistic and wrong. Would you think yourself exclusively as an “eater” just because you eat or a “breather” just because you breathe?
- When you label other people, you will create hard feelings. When someone does something that rubs you the wrong way, you may tell yourself: “He’s an jerk.” Then you feel that the problem is with that person’s “character” instead of their thinking or behavior. You see them as totally bad. You label them, they label you, around and around you go at each other. Focusing on every weakness as a proof of the other’s worth. This makes everyone feel hostile and hopeless about improving things and leaves little room for positive communications.
- Mislabeleding involves describing an event with words that are inaccurate and emotionally heavily loaded.

Which labels do you use?

I am inadequate

I am a failure.

I am unworthy

I am unlovable

Self-Esteem



HOW LOW SELF-ESTEEM DEVELOPES

Before we talk about what low self-esteem is, let's review our understanding of the term "self-esteem". You might have heard and seen similar words like "self-image", "self-perception," and "self-like". All these terms refer to the way we view and think about ourselves. As human beings, we have the ability to not only be aware of ourselves but also to place a value or a measure of worth to ourselves or aspects of ourselves. So, self-esteem refers to how we view and think about ourselves and the value we place on ourselves as a person. A dictionary definition reads: "confidence in one's own worth or abilities."

Low Self-Esteem

Everyone at some point or another, is uncertain about themselves, lacks self-confidence, doubts their abilities, or thinks negatively about himself or herself.

Have you ever been dissatisfied or unhappy with yourself on the whole?

Do you ever think that you are weak, stupid, not good enough, flawed in some way, inferior to other people, useless, worthless, unattractive, ugly, unlovable, a loser or a failure?

Everyone uses these words on themselves at times, usually when they experience a challenging or stressful situation. However, if you often think about yourself in these terms, then you might have a problem with low self-esteem.

Low self-esteem is having a generally negative overall “OPINION” of oneself, judging or evaluating oneself negatively, and placing a general negative value on oneself as a person.

Here are some examples of what people with low self-esteem might say about themselves:

- “I get nervous talking to people I don’t know at functions. I’m socially useless and I hate it!”
- “I couldn’t understand a lot of what the instructor was saying today. I must be really stupid.”
- “I’m overweight, I’m fat and ugly.”
- “I’m unimportant.”
- “I’m a loser.”
- “I’m unlovable.”
- “I’m not good enough.”

In essence people with low self-esteem usually have deep-seated, basic, and negative beliefs about themselves and the kind of person they are. These beliefs are often taken as fact or truth about their identity. As a result, low self-esteem can have a negative impact on a person and their life.

Impact of Low Self-Esteem

A person with low self-esteem probably says a lot of negative things about themselves.

They might criticize themselves, their abilities or joke about themselves in a very negative way. They might put themselves down, doubt themselves or blame themselves when things go wrong. Often, they might not recognize their positive qualities.

When compliments are given to them, they might brush such comments aside or say, “it was all luck” or “it wasn’t that big a deal.” Instead they might focus on what they didn’t do or the mistakes they made. People with low self-esteem might expect that things would not turn out well for them.

They might often feel sad, depressed, anxious, guilty, ashamed, frustrated, and angry.

They might have difficulty speaking up for themselves and their needs, avoid challenges and opportunities, or be overly aggressive in their interactions with others. Low self-esteem can also have an impact on many aspects of a person's life. It can affect a person's performance at work.

They might consistently achieve less than they are able to because they believe they are less capable than others. They might avoid challenges for fear of not doing well. They might work extremely hard and push themselves to do more because they believe they need to make up for or cover up their lack of skill.

In their personal relationships, people with low self-esteem might become upset or distressed by any criticism or disapproval, bend over backwards to please others, be extremely shy or self-conscious or even avoid or withdraw from intimacy or social contact. They might also be less likely to stand up for themselves or protect themselves from being bullied, criticized, or abused by their partners or family members.

People with low self-esteem might not engage in many leisure or recreational activities, as they might believe that they do not deserve any pleasure or fun. They might also avoid activities where they could be judged or evaluated in some way, such as competitive sports.

Personal self-care might also be affected. People who do not value themselves might drink excessive amounts of alcohol or abuse drugs. They might not bother to dress neatly, wear clean clothes, style their hair or buy new clothes. On the other hand, they might try to hide any inadequacies by making sure that every detail of their appearance is attended to and not allow themselves to be seen by others unless they look absolutely perfect.

Do you have a problem with low self-esteem? If so take a few minutes to write down how low self-esteem has affected your life.

We have said that people with low self-esteem hold deep-seated, basic, negative beliefs about themselves and the kind of person they are. These beliefs are often taken as facts or truths about their identity.

Let's first discuss the difference between facts, truths, and opinions.

A dictionary definition of FACT: “a thing that is known to be true.” A fact has evidence that says it is real — there is no doubt about it. “I have blue eyes” is a fact. “I am a mother” is a fact. **These statements can be checked out and verified. Facts cannot be challenged.**

A dictionary definition of OPINION: “a personal view not necessarily based on fact or knowledge.” An opinion is how someone “Perceives” something, and this view may be unique to them. “Having heaps of money is really important,” “There is nothing wrong with combining drugs and alcohol,” are opinions. Opinions can be biased, inaccurate, mistaken, and unhelpful.

A dictionary definition of TRUTH: “a fact or belief that is accepted as true.”

Our ideas of ourselves, the judgments we make of, and the value we place on, ourselves as people are OPINIONS, not facts. However, we often take these opinions as truths or facts and thus, believe in them very strongly. Therein lays the problem! Where do these beliefs and opinions of ourselves come from? How did we develop these beliefs about ourselves?

Life Experiences

Beliefs about ourselves are learned because of the experiences we have had in our lives, especially our early life experiences. Often, the beliefs we have about ourselves are conclusions we arrive at based on what happened in our life. This means that at some point in time, it made sense to have those beliefs.

We learn things in different ways. We may learn from direct experiences, the media, observing what other people do, and listening to what people say. This will continue throughout our lives but beliefs about ourselves are often (though not always) developed earlier in life. This means that our experiences in our childhood, family of origin, the society we lived in, schools we went to, and with our peers have influenced our thoughts and beliefs about all sorts of things, including ourselves. If we have arrived at negative thoughts and beliefs about ourselves, it is likely that we have encountered a variety of negative experiences that might have contributed to this.

1. Early Life

How we were treated earlier in life affects the way we see ourselves and who we are. If children are **mistreated, punished frequently in an extreme or unpredictable manner, neglected, abandoned, or abused**, these experiences can leave some emotional and psychological scars. It is not surprising, then, that a person who has had these sorts of experiences in their earlier life can come to believe very negative things about themselves.

2. Difficulty Meeting Parents Standards

If your parents, care giver, and family members often focused on your weaknesses and mistakes and rarely acknowledged your positive qualities or successes (perhaps saying things such as **“You could have done better,” or “that’s not good enough”**), or if **they frequently teased you, made fun of you**, and put you down, you might also come to believe some negative things about yourself.

3. Not Fitting in At Home Or At School

Some people may have experienced being the 'odd one out' at home or at school. They might have been less intelligent than their siblings at home or had different interests, talents, or skills to others in the family (such as being artistic, musical, sporty or love mathematics, science, arts). Although they might not have been criticized for their different interests or abilities, these might not have been acknowledged. At the same time, the activities or achievements of their siblings or peers might have been praised or celebrated. As such, they might have come to believe thoughts such as **"I'm weird," "I'm odd," or "I'm inferior."**

4. Difficulty in Meeting Peer Group Standards

During late childhood and adolescence, our experiences with our peers and people around our age can also influence how we see ourselves. This is a time when physical appearance may be very important to a young person. Together with messages conveyed by the media, an overweight, plump, or 'well-built' young person who has not had many positive experiences with their peers can come to believe **"I am fat and ugly," "I'm unattractive," or "I'm unlikeable."** Young people who have had other problems with their appearance, such as skin problems, can come away with negative beliefs about themselves if they have been teased or ridiculed for this by their friends or classmates.

5. Being on The Receiving End of Other People's Stress or Distress

Sometimes, when families experience stressful or distressing life events, parents may need to give their attention to dealing with the problems that have occurred. **As such, parents may not be able to give much attention to their child or children.** It is also possible that parents or care givers in such circumstances become frustrated, angry, anxious, or depressed and respond negatively towards their children or become role models of unhelpful behavior.

6. Your Family's Place in Society

How we view ourselves is not only influenced by how we are treated as individuals but also how our family or group is viewed and treated by others in society. If your family or the group that you belonged to was seen to be different, less socially acceptable, or was

on the receiving **end of prejudice or hostility**, these experiences can also influence how you see yourself.

7. An Absence of Positives

The absence of positive experiences on our lives can also affect our self-esteem. It might be that you did not receive enough attention, praise, encouragement, warmth, or affection. **It could be that your basic needs were just adequately met but no more was given. Some parents or care givers may have been emotionally distant, not physically affectionate**, spending a lot of time working (perhaps to meet the needs of the family) or pursuing their own interests and had very little time with their children. **These experiences might influence how people view themselves** especially if they compare their experiences with peers who might have had more positive ones.

8. Late Onset

Most of the time, the roots of or beginnings of low self-esteem can be found in the experiences people have had in childhood or adolescence. However, people with healthy self-esteem can also find their self-confidence being dented or chipped away at if they encounter negative experiences later in life.

A person can come to develop low self-esteem if they have experiences such as being bullied or intimidated at work, being in an abusive relationship, experiencing prolonged financial hardship, continuous stressful life events, traumatic events, or life-altering illnesses or injuries.

How the Past Affects the Present: Negative Core Beliefs

We have explored and discussed how different sorts of experiences can influence and shape how we view, and feel about, ourselves. Often, these are experiences that have occurred earlier in our lives. So, if these experiences happened long ago, why is it that we still see ourselves in a negative light today? After all, haven't we had adult experiences that are quite different from ones we had as children? Yet, we might still hear, in our minds, what our parents or other people had said to us years and years ago. We might hear ourselves saying things like "This is not good enough," "You could have done better," "You are so stupid."

Why we continue to experience low self-esteem today, even when our current circumstances are different from those of our past, is a result of our negative core beliefs. **Negative core beliefs are the conclusions about ourselves we have arrived at when we were children or adolescences, likely as a result of the negative experiences we have had.** For example, a child who was constantly punished and criticized may come to believe “I am worthless,” or “I am bad.” These thoughts are called negative core beliefs. These negative core beliefs are thoughts that are usually deep seated, firmly held, and strongly ingrained in our minds. **They are evaluations of ourselves and our worth or value as a person. These beliefs say, “This is the kind of person I am.”**

If you are not clear as to what your negative core beliefs are as yet, you need to pin them down and identify them, before you can start changing them. To uncover those negative core beliefs, you will need to think about the implications of the specific clues and information you already have, that is, think about what they say about the overall view you have of yourself.

Reflect on the previous eight life experiences you identified as contributing to your low self-esteem. Reflect on these experiences and ask yourself the following questions.

Did these experiences lead me to think there was something wrong with me in some way? If so, what was wrong

Do I remember specific situations that accompany the negative thoughts or feelings I have about myself? What do my memories of these situations say about me as a person?

Can I link a specific person I know to the way I feel about myself? Has that person used certain words to describe me? What does their treatment of me say about me as a person?

Examples of Negative Core Beliefs

- "I am stupid."
- "I'm not good enough."
- "I'm not important."
- "I'm unlovable."
- "I'm fat and ugly."
- "I'm unacceptable."
- "I am worthless."
- "I am inadequate."
- "I'm a failure."
- "I'm not special."
- "I am too much work."
- "I'm unattractive."
- "I'm odd."
- "I'm weird."

What are your negative core beliefs?

• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____

Tie This in With the Labels Used In Untangling Twisted Thinking

Protecting Ourselves: Rules and Assumptions

When we strongly believe these negative statements about ourselves, it is not surprising that we feel very bad about ourselves and experience strong negative emotions. While we were experiencing negative situations and coming to these negative conclusions about ourselves, the human survival instinct was also in operation. To ensure our survival and to keep functioning, we begin to develop assumptions, rules and guidelines for how we live our lives that protect our self-esteem. **They aim to guard and defend us from the truth of our negative core beliefs.**

In essence, low self-esteem is viewing yourself and valuing your self-worth in a negative way. This is reflected in the negative core beliefs you might have about yourself, such as, “I am unlovable,” or “I am not important.”

To help get by and manage from day to day, you might have developed rules and assumptions to help protect your self-esteem. Unfortunately, these rules and assumptions are usually **unrealistic, unreasonable, rigid, and inadaptable**. Let's say for example, that you have the belief, “I am incompetent.” you might have developed the rule and assumption “I must never ask for help, because if I do, people will laugh at me” or I must never take on a task that seems too difficult for me because if I don't do well, people will think I'm a total idiot.” If you are able to stick to, and carry out, these rules and assumptions, you might feel okay about yourself because then no one will know how bad you are at doing things

We might develop rules such as:

- “I must be the best at everything.”
- “I must never make mistakes.”
- “I must never show any emotion in public.”
- “I must always do the right thing.”

We might also develop assumptions such as:

- “If I ask for something I need, I will be put down.”

- “No matter what I do, I will never be good enough.”

Rules and assumptions can also be combined, for example:

- “I must do everything I can to gain others approval because if I am criticized in any way, it means I am not acceptable.”
- “I won’t try anything unless I know that I can do it perfectly, because if I can’t, it means I’m a total failure.”
- “I have to always be slim and dress well, or else I will never be accepted.”

What sorts of rules and assumptions for living might you have to help you feel better about yourself? Take a few minutes and jot them down.

I must never do anything that will allow other people to judge me

Rules & Assumptions Guide Behavior

The result of having these rules and assumptions is that they will guide your behavior. What you do on a day-to-day basis is largely determined by what rules for living you have. Makes sense, doesn’t it? So, depending on your rules, you will try very hard to do everything perfectly, avoid getting too close to people, restrict your food intake and exercise vigorously to stay slim, do whatever it takes to please people, avoid anything too challenging, avoid doing things you’ve never done before...and the list can go on.

Can you see how having such rules and assumptions for living might help you protect your self-esteem? What happens if one of your rules for living is “I must never make any mistakes?” The effect is that this rule will guide your behavior, making you become careful about your work, checking your work many times so it is likely that you don’t make many mistakes, if at all. This means that you are less likely to be criticized and so your self-esteem is protected.

Take a few minutes to jot down how your rules and assumptions might influence your behavior. What do you do, to try to live up to your rules or standards and assumptions for living?

What this means is that you can feel fairly good about yourself if you are able to meet these rules for living or live up to the standards you have set for yourself. For example, if you are able to always maintain your body shape and weight, you will feel good about yourself. As long as you never make any mistakes, always gain your friends, colleagues, or bosses' approval, always get extremely good results at school or work, you can maintain an adequate level of self-esteem

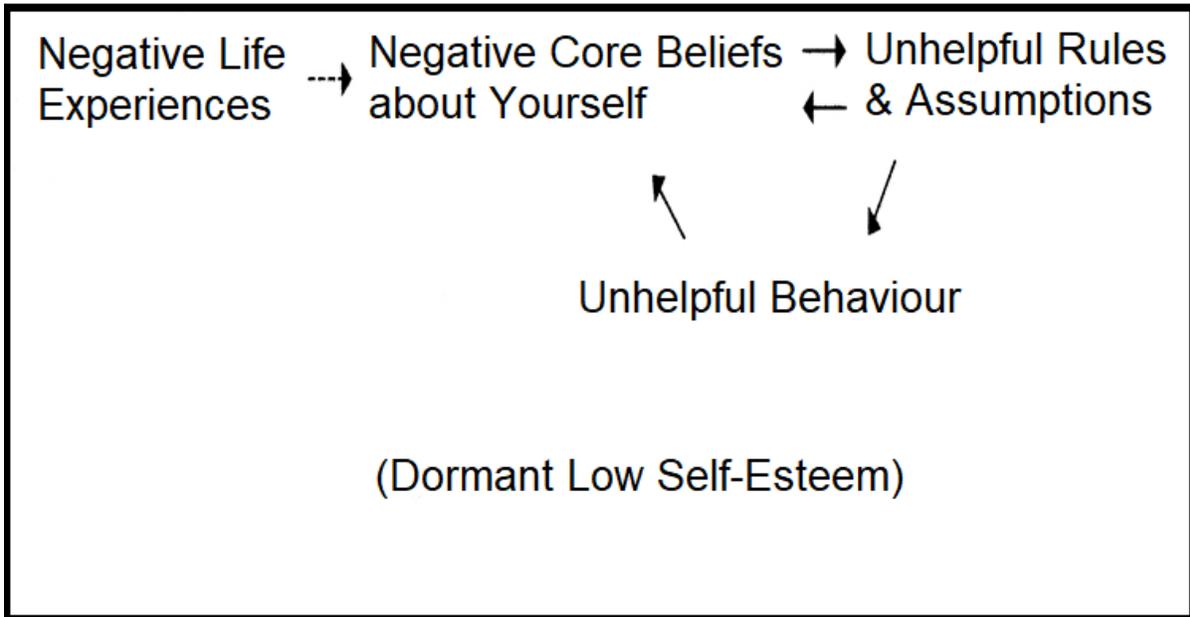
However, there is a disadvantage to having these rules and assumptions. You can run yourself ragged by trying to live up to these rules. Basically, you are putting yourself under a lot of pressure so that you manage your self-esteem and don't feel bad about yourself.

Actually, while things might seem to be going well on the surface, the negative core beliefs are still there. This is because the negative core beliefs have not been removed. In fact, they are still there because they have been protected by your rules and assumptions and your behavior. This is why these rules and assumptions and your behavior cannot really be considered to be helpful- because they serve to keep the negative core beliefs alive, as it were. **At this point in time, if you have been able to live up to your rules, you may be feeling fine, but the low self-esteem lies dormant.**

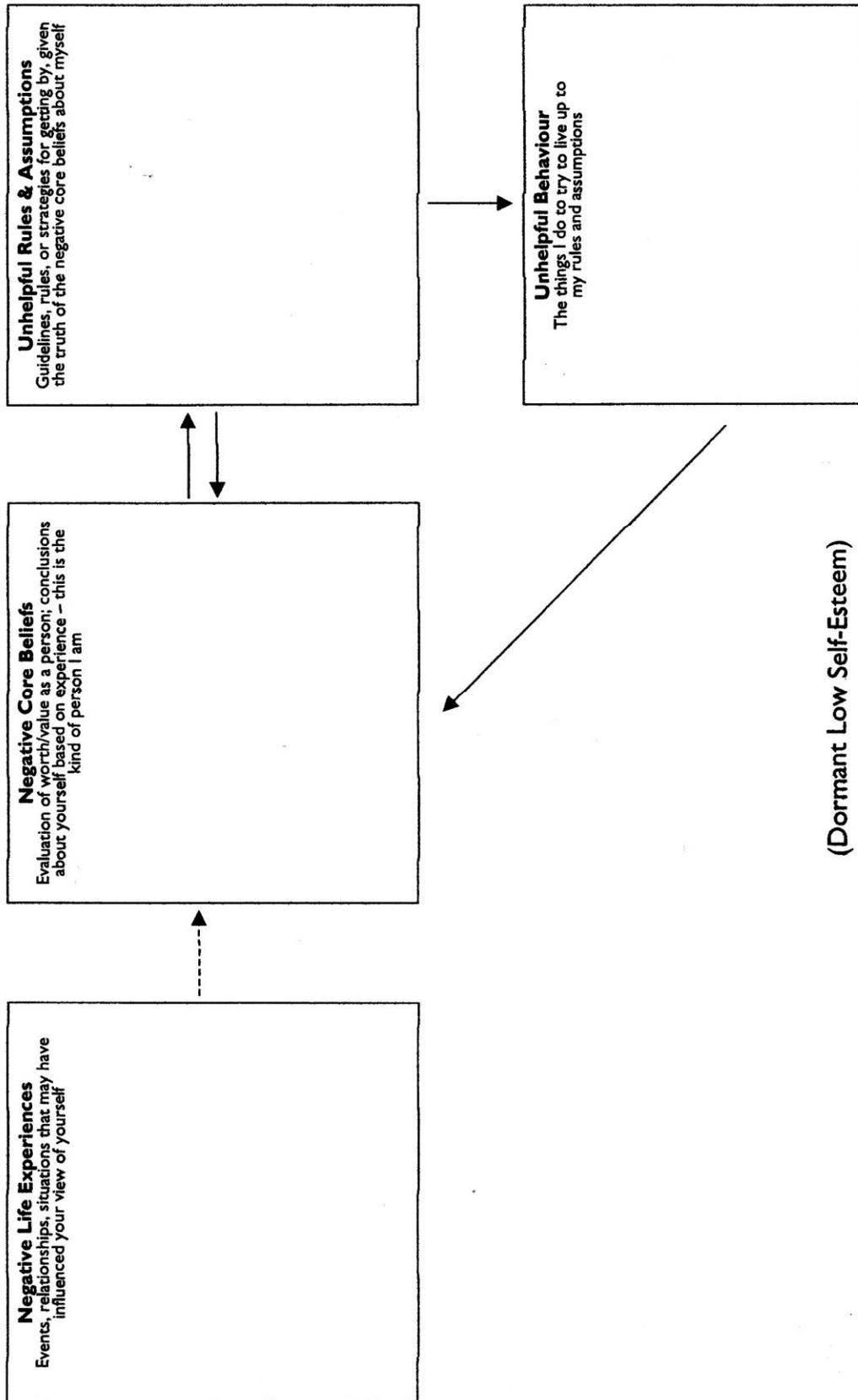


Model of Low Self-Esteem: How Low Self-Esteem Begins

What this model depicts, is a snapshot of what has been discussed in the module. Low self-esteem might begin with our having had negative life experiences, especially during childhood and adolescence. These negative experiences can influence how we see ourselves and we can come away with some negative conclusions about ourselves, which we call negative core beliefs. (The dotted arrow in the diagram signifies that negative life experiences do not automatically lead to negative core beliefs; it is just that they have some influence in their development.) In order to protect our self-esteem and continue to function from day-to-day, we develop rules and assumptions for living. These rules guide us to behave in ways that end up not being very helpful because they serve to keep our negative core beliefs intact. While we are able to stick to these rules for living, we can feel okay about ourselves, but the low self-esteem remains dormant.

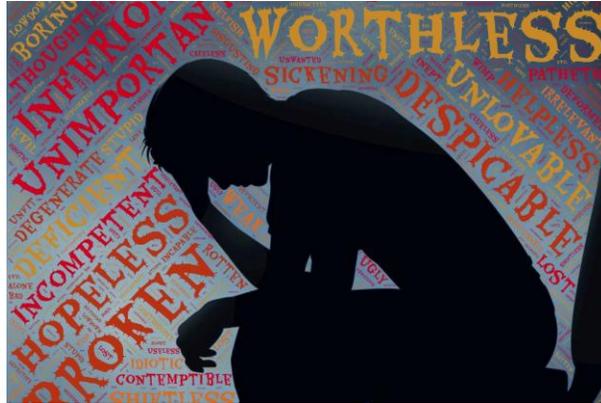


Low Self-Esteem: How It Begins



(Dormant Low Self-Esteem)

How Low Self-Esteem Is Maintained



To begin to tackle the problem of low self-esteem, it is important to understand how negative beliefs about ourselves are maintained, that is, why these beliefs persist, long after the experiences that allowed them to develop have passed.

Information Processing

The way we make sense of the things that happen around us (we call this “information processing”) plays a very big part in maintaining low self-esteem. There is so much happening in our environment at any one time - so much information- that to deal with or make sense of all of it is an impossible task. For this reason our brain tends to choose what we pay attention to and how we think about and make sense of things.

Often, what determines what we pay attention to and how we think about these things, are the beliefs we hold. We tend to pay attention to things we expect and interpret things in a way that is consistent with our expectations. As a result, we tend to remember only things that happen in our lives that are consistent with what we believe to be true.

This process of attending to and interpreting things in a manner that is consistent (rather than inconsistent) with our beliefs, is something all human beings do and not just those with problems with low self-esteem.

Let's look at this further, using an example of self-esteem. Let's say that your negative core belief is **"I'm a failure."** this is a conclusion you arrive at following certain experiences you had when you were younger, but how does this affect your information processing now? Holding the belief, **"I'm a failure," means you probably only focus on the times you made mistakes or don't do something well.** You probably ignore any successes, or play them down (i.e., "that was a fluke").

Also, **it is unlikely that you acknowledge the times when you had done an acceptable job- those times are never given a second thought because to you they are "no big deal."** You only pay attention to negative incidents that confirm you are a "failure." You probably also have quite an extreme view of what success and failure is, with no middle ground. As such, words like "I did okay," rarely enter your vocabulary. You might easily jump to the extreme conclusion that you have failed at something, when realistically you might not have done too badly at all ("I didn't get an A on the assignment- I'm a complete failure!").

You also tend to interpret the things that happen in your life as confirming your belief that you're a "failure" when there are likely to be other less harsh interpretations you could make.

The problem is that you seem to be always gathering evidence that supports your negative core belief, because you only ever pay attention to things and interpret things in a manner that confirms how you see yourself. In this way, your negative core beliefs are 'self-fulfilling'. Once they are in place, you will keep gathering information to keep them strong, and rarely gather information to challenge and expose them as biased and inaccurate opinions of yourself.

Unhelpful Rules & Assumptions Generate Unhelpful Behaviors

The problem with unhelpful rules and assumptions is that they restrict your behavior in such a way that you don't get an opportunity to put your negative core beliefs to the test and see if they are true. You never intentionally do a mediocre job and see if terrible consequences follow. You never get close to others to see if you really would be rejected. You never express your opinion and see if people still accept you. These rules make us behave in ways that are unhelpful to us.

Essentially, they stop us from putting ourselves ‘out there’ to see if the things we believe about ourselves are true or to see if the consequences we fear are true. In this way, the rules and assumptions we have limit our opportunities to have experiences that are inconsistent with our negative core beliefs and change them. Hence, the unhelpful behavior that is aimed at meeting our rules and avoiding our assumptions, also keep our negative beliefs about ourselves alive and well. In the previous module, we mentioned that as long as we are able to live up to our rules and assumptions, we might not feel bad about ourselves, but the low self-esteem lies dormant.

At-Risk Situations

Life is full of all sorts of challenges every day. When these challenges relate to your negative core beliefs and unhelpful rules and assumptions, they would become what we would call “at-risk situations” for low self-esteem.

These are situations where your rules and assumptions are at risk of being broken or are broken outright (i.e., you can’t or will have great difficulty living up to your rules or avoiding your assumptions). Such at-risk situations are always going to arise because our rules and assumptions are unrealistic, extreme, and inflexible, and so because of the high and often impossible standards that have been set, these rules will always be susceptible to being broken.

What happens when we are faced with an at-risk situation, this is when the underlying low self-esteem becomes active? When you come into an at-risk situation, your negative core belief about yourself is triggered and effects how you think, behave, and feel in the situation.

When a negative core belief is activated in an at-risk situation, you are likely to think that things will turn out badly or you become extremely hard on yourself. We call these two types of thoughts biased expectations and negative self-evaluations, respectively.

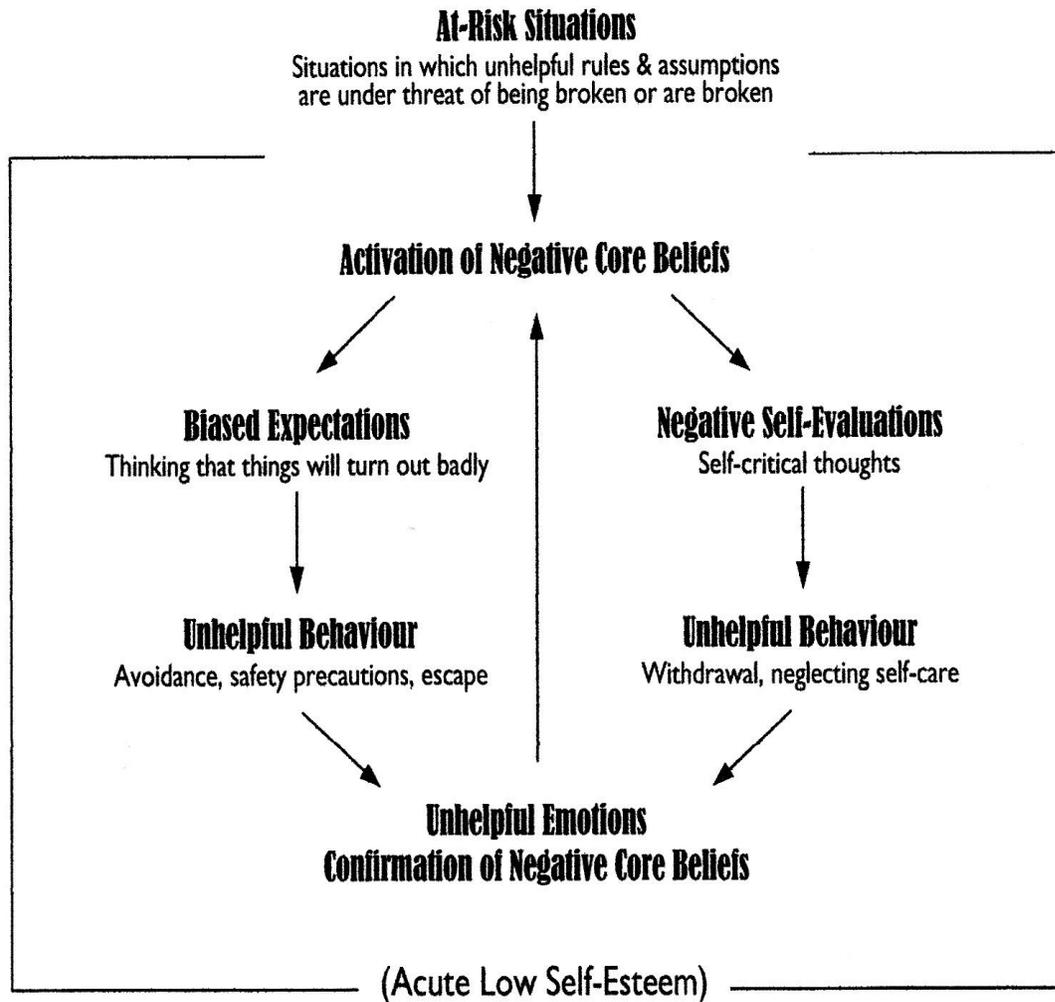
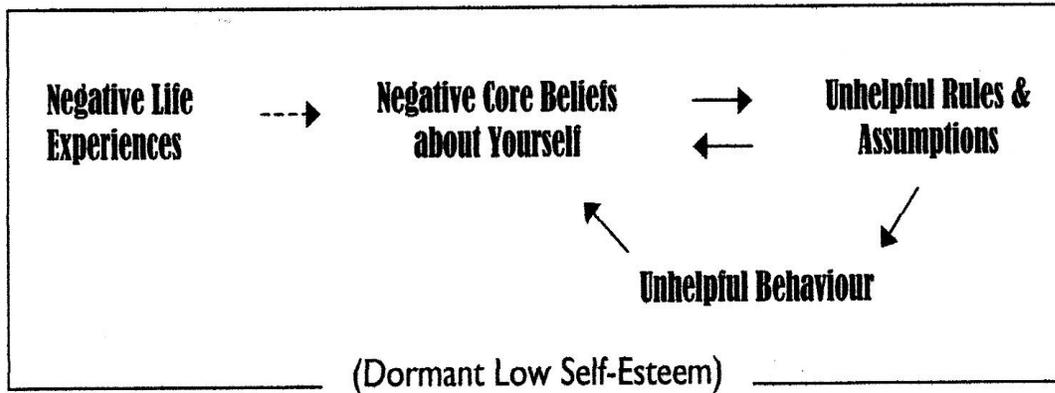
These types of thoughts will then influence how you behave. You might avoid doing certain things, try things out but quit when things get too difficult, take precautions to

prevent negative outcome, or withdraw from situations. These behaviors are unhelpful because they do not address the main issue or solve the problem.

Instead, they lead to negative unhelpful feelings (such as anxiety, frustration, depression, or shame) and confirm the negative core belief.

This also causes the negative core belief to remain activated and this time, the low self-esteem is no longer dormant- it is now acute low self-esteem.

MODEL OF LOW SELF-ESTEEM: THE FULL MODEL



The first part of the model shows that low self-esteem might begin with our having had negative experiences in our lives, which influence how we see and place worth on ourselves or aspects of ourselves. Because of this it is likely that we have made some negative conclusions about ourselves, which are called negative core beliefs. In order to protect our self-esteem and to continue to function from day-to-day, we develop rules and assumptions for living; these guide us to behave in unhelpful ways, which serve to keep our negative core beliefs alive.

The second part of this model shows that at some point in our lives, **we will encounter at-risk situations because it is extremely difficult to live up to our rules and assumptions, which are unrealistic and rigid.**

When rules are at risk for being broken, or have been broken, our negative core beliefs become activated and we engage in negative thinking. We expect that things will not work out (biased expectations) or criticize and blame ourselves (negative self-evaluations).

We also engage in unhelpful behaviors and together with the unhelpful thinking, lead to negative unhelpful emotions and our negative core beliefs remaining activated. It is then that low self-esteem becomes acute.

Here's an example. Let's say that your negative core belief is, **"I'm incompetent,"** and your unhelpful rule is, **"I must do everything 100% perfectly, without making mistakes, and without the help of others."** As long as you follow your rule, you might feel okay about yourself, because your incompetence is quashed or hidden for the time being. However, let's say you encounter a new and challenging experience- you are starting a new and difficult course of study. You are now in a situation where you are probably unable to do things 100% perfectly, without mistakes or without the help of others, because the situation you are in is new and challenging and you lack experience in this area. You are now in at at-risk situation for low self-esteem, because your rule is either broken or looks likely to be broken. When this happens, your belief, **"I am incompetent,"** is activated, and this belief is brought to the forefront of your mind and now affects how you respond to the situation.

Biased Expectations

If your rule is only threatened (i.e., it hasn't been broken yet, but looks likely to be broken at some point), your response might be to expect that things will turn out badly. We call this having biased expectations.

This means that the way you think is consumed by predicting the worst and jumping to negative conclusions about how the situation will pan out, saying things such as, "I'm not going to be able to do this," "I will fail," "Others will criticize me," or "I won't do a good job."

As a result of having these biased expectations, you might **behave** in certain ways. You might begin to avoid attending lectures or put assignments off until the last minute. You might become extremely cautious and over-prepared, such as staying up all hours of the night working on an assignment.

Instead, you might give the course a try but withdraw when the assignment seems too difficult. We call these types of behaviors avoidance, taking safety precautions, and escaping. These thoughts and behaviors contribute to you feeling anxious, nervous, tense, afraid, uncertain, and doubtful.

Your biased expectations, unhelpful behaviors, and anxiety may impair your performance, and confirm to yourself that you were right- **"I am useless."** Your negative core beliefs therefore remain unchanged and continue to be activated.

By avoiding things or escaping from difficult situations, you never test out your biased expectations to see if they are accurate. Even if your biased expectations do not come true and things go well, by taking safety precautions, you might believe that everything is a "close call" this time and that you might not be so lucky next time.

Again, your negative core beliefs are not changed. So you can see that the way you think and behave in at-risk situations leads to unhelpful emotions and maintains your negative beliefs about yourself.

Can you think of an event which you used biased expectations (predicting the worst, negative conclusions, avoidance, safety precaution, or escaping)?

Negative self-evaluations

If your rule is actually broken, your response might be to engage in negative self-evaluations. This means that the way you think is consumed by self-blame and self-criticism. You become very harsh on yourself, beating yourself up about perceived mistakes or inadequacies saying such things as, “I should have done better,” “if I can’t even do this,” “I must be really dumb,” “I knew I didn’t have it in me,” or “it just shows that I’m really lousy.”

Again, as a result you may behave in certain ways, such as isolating yourself, withdrawing, hibernating, not taking care of yourself, not doing much, being passive, not doing enjoyable things- because you think you don’t deserve positive things.

When you think and behave in this way, you will tend to feel depressed, sad, low, upset, dejected, and hopeless. Given that a sign of depression is negative self-talk, these feelings will also tend to keep your negative beliefs about yourself activated.

What then happens is that your negative self-evaluations, unhelpful behaviors, and depression all confirm to you that you were right- “I am incompetent,” and keep this belief alive, well after the at-risk situation has passed. So again, you can see that the way you think, behave, and feel in at-risk situations, means your negative beliefs gather further support and become even more unwavering.

Can you think of an event which you used negative self-evaluations (self-blame, self-criticism, isolating, withdrawing, or being passive)?

The Good News

While it can be helpful to understand how the problems we have today might have developed from our past experiences, it might also be discouraging, because unfortunately we cannot change our past. However, what we have seen in this module is that there are things we do on a day-to-day basis in the 'here-and-now' that maintain the negative core beliefs we have about ourselves, keeping them alive and active today.

This is good news, because given that these things happen on a daily basis, you can work on changing them. You can change the negative views you have developed about yourself. This means that things can be different, and you can overcome low self-esteem. What is important now is that you commit yourself to making the effort in addressing your unhelpful thinking and unhelpful behavior from day to day.

This approach of identifying and changing unhelpful thinking and behavior to overcome low self-esteem comes from a type of treatment known as cognitive-behavioral therapy. Cognitive-behavioral therapy is aimed at changing your unhelpful thinking patterns and beliefs (the cognitive part), as well as any unhelpful style of behaving (the behavioral part). This will bring about a change in how you see yourself and how you feel.

Healthy Self-Esteem



Putting it all together

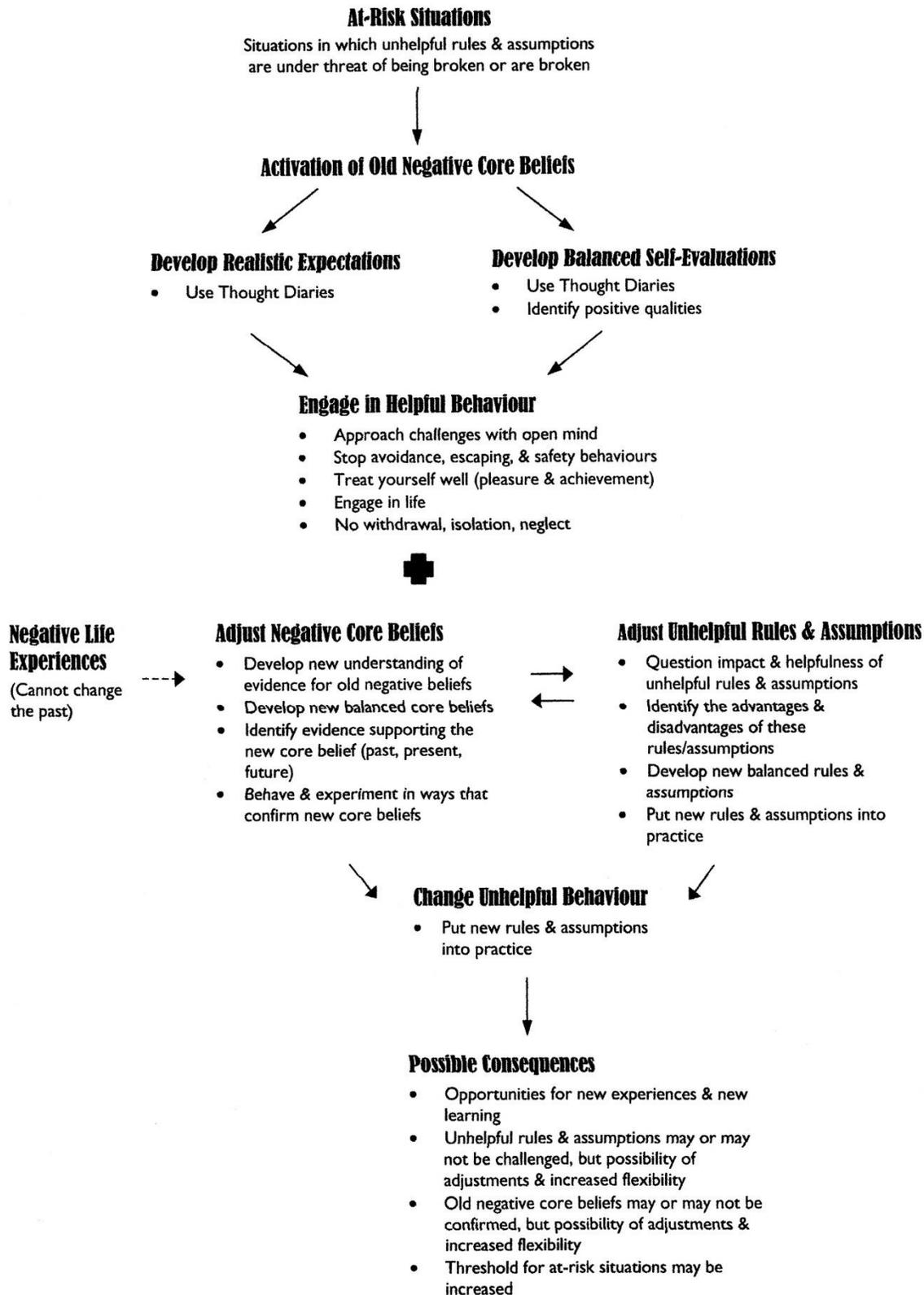
Just as we have provided a model to help you understand how low self-esteem developed and what kept it going, we will leave you with a model of healthy self-esteem. This model brings all the important ideas and plans you have learned together.

This model begins with an “at-risk” situation and the start of old negative core beliefs. Having healthy self-esteem doesn’t mean that you will never encounter an at-risk situation again. It also doesn’t mean that you will never again think of yourself in a negative light. Everyone might think of themselves in a negative way or get down on themselves at times. The important thing to remember is not to do it too often. Healthy self-esteem is about thinking about ourselves and our worth in a **BALANCED** way. It is absolutely okay and appropriate that we recognize our weaknesses. What we need to do is to accept that we all have weaknesses and make a decision about whether or not we want to improve on them. We also need to recognize, acknowledge, and celebrate our strengths and successes. Remember, it’s all about being balanced.

The reason we might still encounter “at-risk” situations is that we cannot change our past experiences. We discussed that some of these experiences, especially if they are negative, can influence how we see ourselves and the rules and assumptions that we have developed. So, it is because we cannot go back and change those experiences that they might have a lingering effect on our self-esteem. The important thing to remember is that the effect of your past experiences on how you see yourself can be worn down the more you practice those strategies in the previous modules.

You will have learned to identify and celebrate your positive qualities and recognize new achievements. It is also important that you engage in helpful behaviors, which means that you are dropping any avoidance, escaping, use of safety measures, approaching new situations with an open mind, engaging in life and doing pleasant activities, treating yourself kindly, and not withdrawing. If you then add to these, the adjusting of your old negative core beliefs and unhelpful rules and assumptions and put these new rules and assumption into practice...the possible consequences of all these actions are numerous. You might encounter opportunities for new experiences and new learning.

Model of Healthy Self-Esteem



Maintaining Gains

It is important to recognize the progress that you've made and as your self-esteem improves, it is helpful and appropriate to pat yourself on the back and celebrate your achievements. This will encourage you to keep going; to keep practicing and applying the new skills you have learned. Maintaining the gains, you have made relies on you continuing to practice these skills. Remember, developing new skills to challenge what may be years' worth of old habits takes time and persistence.

Preventing Major Setbacks

As you are progressing, try not to focus too much on small setbacks. If you are experiencing several small setbacks then there are some ways of preventing a major setback.

Identify Early Warning Signs

The first step is to look out for your own warning signs. Some common examples are:

- Spending increased time expecting the worst or being self-critical,
- Reverting back to unhelpful behaviors (i.e., avoidance, escape, safety behaviors, withdrawal, isolation, neglect, passivity, etc.),
- An increase in anxiety or depression.

Revise Skills

Think about the skills you have learned and what has been helpful in addressing your low self-esteem (i.e., challenging/experimenting with biased expectations and negative self-evaluations, paying attention to positive qualities, engaging in fun and achievement activities, treating yourself kindly, challenging/experimenting with your rules, challenging/experimenting with your negative core beliefs).

Have you stopped practicing these skills consistently?

Social Support

It is wise to find someone with whom you can sit down and have a good talk. Often, problems seem bigger than they really are when a person tries to deal with them on their own. Hearing yourself talk through something can help to put it into perspective.

Model of Healthy Self-Esteem

What is the "At-Risk" situation?

What unhealthy behaviors have you engaged in?

What healthy behaviors will you engage in to help improve your self-esteem?

What are your new balanced and flexible rules/assumptions?

What can I do to put these new rules/assumptions into practice on a daily basis?

What possible results could be attained by doing this?

What can I do if my new rules/assumptions don't attain the desired results?

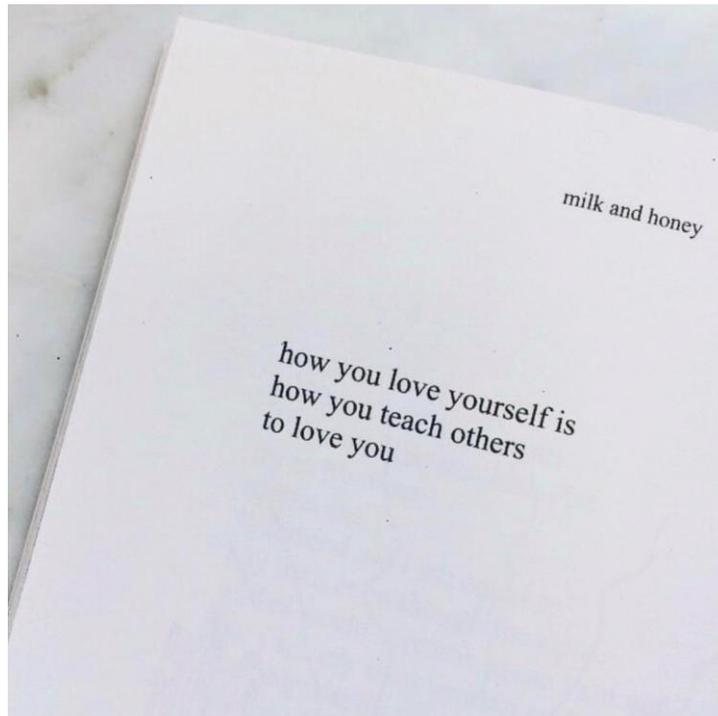
Can you identify any "Early Warning" Signs?

What are your new Balanced Core Beliefs?

What evidence do you have to support this Balanced Core Belief?

What is your plan in the event that new Balanced Core Beliefs don't meet your expectations?

Can you approach these situations with an open mind and learn from the mistakes you have made?



Healthy Relationships



Healthy relationships thrive on respect, kindness, and trust. Unhealthy ones revolve around an imbalance of power that's maintained through the use of controlling behaviors, emotional abuse, or physical aggression. Sadly, roughly 1 in 10 high school students report being physically hurt by a date. We would like to teach you to recognize and protect yourself from unhealthy relationships and dating abuse with the following activities.

HEALTHY	UNHEALTHY	ABUSIVE
<p>A healthy relationship means that both you and your partner are:</p> <p>Communicating: You talk openly about problems, listen to each other and respect each other's opinions.</p> <p>Respectful: You value each other as you are. You respect each other's emotional, digital and sexual boundaries.</p> <p>Trusting: You believe what your partner has to say. You do not feel the need to "prove" each other's trustworthiness.</p> <p>Honest: You are honest with each other, but can still keep some things private.</p> <p>Equal: You make decisions together and hold each other to the same standards.</p> <p>Enjoying personal time: You both can enjoy spending time apart, alone or with others. You respect each other's need for time apart.</p>	<p>You may be in an unhealthy relationship if one or both partners is:</p> <p>Not communicating: When problems arise, you fight or you don't discuss them at all.</p> <p>Disrespectful: One or both partners is not considerate of the other's feelings and/or personal boundaries.</p> <p>Not trusting: One partner doesn't believe what the other says, or feels entitled to invade their privacy.</p> <p>Dishonest: One or both partners tells lies.</p> <p>Trying to take control: One partner feels their desires and choices are more important.</p> <p>Only spending time with your partner: Your partner's community is the only one you socialize in.</p>	<p>Abuse is occurring in a relationship when one partner:</p> <p>Communicates in a way that is hurtful, threatening, insulting or demeaning.</p> <p>Disrespects the feelings, thoughts, decisions, opinions or physical safety of the other.</p> <p>Physically hurts or injures the other partner by hitting, slapping, choking, pushing or shoving.</p> <p>Blames the other partner for their harmful actions, makes excuses for abusive actions and/or minimizes the abusive behavior.</p> <p>Controls and isolates the other partner by telling them what to wear, who they can hang out with, where they can go and/or what they can do.</p> <p>Pressures or forces the other partner to do things they don't want to do; threatens, hurts or blackmails their partner if they resist or say no.</p>

DEFINING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships can all look different, but healthy relationships have a few things in common: open communication, mutual respect and healthy boundaries.

Communication is a key part of building a healthy relationship. The first step is making sure both partners in a relationship want and expect the same things—being on the same page is very important.

The following tips can help you create and maintain a healthy relationship:

Speak Up. In a healthy relationship, if something is bothering you, it's best to talk about it instead of holding it in.

Respect Each Other. Each partner's wishes and feelings have value. Let each other know they are making an effort to keep their ideas in mind. Mutual respect is essential in maintaining healthy relationships.

Compromise. Disagreements are a natural part of healthy relationships, but it's important that you find a way to compromise if they disagree on something. Both partners should try to solve conflicts in a fair and rational way.

Be Supportive. Offer reassurance and encouragement to each other in a relationship. Also, partners should let each other know when they need their support. Healthy relationships are about building each other up, not putting each other down.

Respect Each Other's Privacy. Just because someone is in a relationship doesn't mean they have to share everything and constantly be together.

Setting Healthy Boundaries: Healthy relationships require space. Creating healthy boundaries is a good way to keep relationships healthy and secure. By setting boundaries together, partners can have a deeper understanding of the type of relationship they each want. Boundaries are not meant to make anyone feel trapped or like they are "walking on eggshells." Creating boundaries is not a sign of secrecy or distrust—it's an expression of what makes someone feel comfortable and what they would like or not like to happen within the relationship.

Healthy boundaries shouldn't restrict someone's ability to:

- Go out with their friends without their partner.
- Participate in activities and hobbies they like.
- Not have to share passwords to their email, social media accounts or phone.
- Respect each other's individual likes and needs.

DEFINING UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS & DATING ABUSE

Relationships that are not healthy are based on power and control, not equality and respect. In the early stages of an abusive relationship, you may not think the unhealthy behaviors are a big deal. However, possessiveness, insults, jealous accusations, yelling, humiliation, pulling hair, pushing or other negative, abusive behaviors, are—at their root—exertions of power and control. Remember that abuse is always a choice and you deserve to be respected. There is no excuse for abuse of any kind.

Dating abuse is a pattern of destructive behaviors used to exert power and control over a dating partner. While we define dating violence as a pattern, that doesn't mean the first instance of abuse is not dating violence. It just recognizes that dating violence usually involves a series of abusive behaviors over a course of time.

Dating violence can happen to anyone, regardless of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, or background.

Drugs and alcohol can affect a person's judgment and behavior, but they do not excuse abuse or violence. Alternatively, if a person uses drugs/alcohol it does not mean they deserve abuse or assault.

Dating violence can be:

Physical:

- hitting, slapping, choking, kicking, grabbing, pulling hair, pushing, shoving

Emotional/Verbal:

- putting you down
- embarrassing you in public (online or off)
- threatening you in any way
- telling you what to do or what to wear
- threatening suicide
- accusing you of cheating

Sexual:

- pressuring or forcing you to do anything sexual you're not comfortable with and/or do not consent to, including sexting
- restricting access to birth control; unwanted kissing or touching

Financial:

- demanding access to your money; preventing you from working
- insisting that if they pay for you, you owe them something in return

Digital:

- sending threats via text, social media, or email
- stalking or embarrassing you on social media
- hacking your social media or email accounts without permission; forcing you to share passwords
- Constantly texting or calling to check up on you
- frequently looking through your phone or monitoring your texts/call log



Warning Signs of Abuse

Because relationships exist on a spectrum, it can be hard to tell when a behavior crosses the line from healthy to unhealthy or even abusive. The following are warning signs of a relationship going in the wrong direction:

- Constantly putting someone down
- Extreme jealousy or insecurity
- Explosive temper
- Isolating someone from their family or friends, dictating who they can see or hang out with
- Mood swings (nice one minute and angry the next)
- Checking someone's cell phone, social media, or email without permission
- Physically hurting someone in any way
- Possessiveness
- Telling someone what to do or what to wear

Questions

1. If your best friend were bossy, cruel, or aggressive toward you, you'd probably find a new best friend. But some people think it's OK to tolerate such behavior from a partner. Why?

2. The early stages of dating abuse usually involve one partner gaining control over the other through excessive attention, jealousy, and guilt. Why is this stage often hard for a victim to recognize? How can it lead to more serious forms of physical and sexual abuse?

3. Do you think it's easy or hard to leave an unhealthy relationship? What are some reasons why someone might stay in an unhealthy relationship?

4. If you saw a friend being abused, or abusing someone else, would you get involved? Would your gender influence your response? What about the gender of the person being abused or doing the abusing?

The RESPECT Hotline

Instructions: You're a volunteer at a teen dating abuse call center called the RESPECT Hotline. Choose two of the callers below. Please write a thorough, thoughtful response to each.

"My boyfriend used to be so nice to me, but lately he's changed. He makes jokes about my weight and calls me stupid, even in front of his friends. When I get upset, he laughs and says I'm too sensitive. If he loves me, why is he so mean?"

Response:

"My girlfriend is so jealous. She's always accusing me of cheating on her, even though I never have. If I even say hello to another girl, she goes nuts. Today she threw my phone against a wall just because she saw a text from someone she didn't know. Is this normal?"

Response:

“My boyfriend keeps asking me to text him nude pictures of myself, even though he knows I don’t want to. He says if I really loved him, I would do it. Should I do it?”

Response:

“Whenever my girlfriend doesn’t know where I am, she blows up my phone. Lately, she’s even started looking for me when I’m out with my friends. She says it’s just because she loves me and worries about me, but I’m sick of her stalking me. Tonight, I told her I was going to break up with her if this didn’t stop, and she said she’d hurt herself if I did. Now I feel trapped.”

Response:

“My sister used to have so many friends until she started going out with her boyfriend. Now it’s like he owns her. He decides who she sees and when, and even what she wears. The other day I saw bruises on her arm. She said she bumped into the door, but I know she’s lying. What should I do?”

Response:

“I love my boyfriend, but he’s constantly checking my phone and my Facebook & social media. I’ve asked him to stop, but he says I shouldn’t mind if I have nothing to hide. Is it wrong to want some privacy?”

Response:

Q & A

Instructions: Answer each question.

1. Three examples of emotional abuse are:
2. Three examples of physical abuse are:
3. True or false: Sexting is a good way to prove your love to your partner.
4. True or false: You can’t go to jail if you assault or rape someone with whom you’re in a relationship.
5. True or false: It can be hard to tell if you’re in an unhealthy relationship, especially early on.
6. True or false: If your BF or GF hits you in anger, but then promises never to do it again, it’s OK to believe him or her.
7. True or false: If your BF or GF hits you in anger, you probably did something to deserve it.
8. True or false: Physically abusive relationships almost always get better over time.
9. List three things you could do to help a friend who’s being abused.
10. List three people or organizations that can help you get out of an abusive relationship.

Q& A Answer Key

1. Three examples of emotional abuse are:

Any of the following: Teasing, bullying, humiliation, threats, intimidation, putdowns, betrayal, etc.

2. Three examples of physical abuse are:

Any of the following: Slapping, pushing, grabbing, shaking, smacking, kicking, punching, hair pulling, etc.

3. True or **false**: Sexting is a good way to prove your love to your partner.

4. True or **false**: You can't go to jail if you assault or rape someone with whom you're in a relationship.

5. **True** or false: It can be hard to tell if you're in an unhealthy relationship, especially early on.

6. True or **false**: If your BF or GF hits you in anger, but then promises never to do it again, it's OK to believe him or her.

7. True or **false**: If your BF or GF hits you in anger, you probably did something to deserve it.

8. True or **false**: Physically abusive relationships almost always get better over time.

9. List three things you could do to help a friend who's being abused.

Any of the following: listen to him/her, believe him/her, don't judge him/her, tell him/her it's not his/her fault, don't talk

badly about his/her partner, offer to help him/her get help, etc.

10. List three people or organizations that can help you get out of an abusive relationship.

Any of the following: parents, teachers, religious leaders, school nurses, teachers, school counselors, doctors, crisis centers, teen help lines, abuse hotlines, etc.

Articles for Teens:

Love and Romance [TeensHealth.org/en/teens/love.html](https://www.TeensHealth.org/en/teens/love.html)

Am I in a Healthy Relationship? [TeensHealth.org/en/teens/healthy-relationship.html](https://www.TeensHealth.org/en/teens/healthy-relationship.html)

Abusive Relationships [TeensHealth.org/en/teens/abuse.html](https://www.TeensHealth.org/en/teens/abuse.html)

How to Break Up Respectfully [TeensHealth.org/en/teens/break-up.html](https://www.TeensHealth.org/en/teens/break-up.html)

Getting Over a Break-Up [TeensHealth.org/en/teens/broken-heart.html](https://www.TeensHealth.org/en/teens/broken-heart.html)

Date Rape [TeensHealth.org/en/teens/date-rape.html](https://www.TeensHealth.org/en/teens/date-rape.html)

Should I Send My Boyfriend Naked Pictures? [TeensHealth.org/en/teens/sexting.html](https://www.TeensHealth.org/en/teens/sexting.html)