**The Blues Program**

**6-Session Cognitive-Behavioral Adolescent Depression Prevention Intervention**

**Group Facilitator Script**

Updated October, 2023

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**General Notes for Facilitators**

**Virtual Implementation Is Allowed**

This curriculum may be implemented in-person or virtually. When implementing the program virtually, use the chat feature or share screen to write key points and participant comments.

**Please Follow the Script**

Try to follow the script as closely as possible. This is the intervention that has been found to be effective in previous research and deviations from the script may make it less successful.

**Manage Time Carefully**

It is very important to manage the session time so that all exercises and activities can be completed. There is quite a bit of material to cover in every session.

It doesn’t happen very often but if you find out you have extra time at the end of a session, please use that time to review more examples of positive counter- thoughts the adolescents developed last week or additional fun activities they have done in the past week (students often mention just 1 or 2 activities but always do many more than that if they focus on it).

**Make Reminder Calls**

Due to the nature of depression (e.g., lack of motivation), attendance at group sessions can be poor. In order to increase attendance, contact participants the night before to remind them that they have a group session the next day.

**Plan Ahead**

If you are working with a co-facilitator, plan which sections of the session each person will lead before the session starts. Use transition statements when your

co-facilitator begins a section, such as “Now John will talk about our home exercises for this week”.

**Make the Sessions Dynamic**

Frequently write the key points and comments for the group. For virtual implementations, share Handouts on the screen so that everyone can see what you’re covering.

Call on individual group members directly. This is especially important in a virtual setting. When it’s time for participants to share home exercises or answer a question, switch up the direction in which you call on people to share.

Maintaining eye contact with participants during the entire session and using first names helps encourage discussion as well. For virtual implementation, eye contact can be tricky because of the different location of the camera versus the screen. Look at the individuals on the screen as much as possible, as opposed to switching to other programs or looking at things off screen, to convey interest and attention.

**Asks Questions about Home Exercises**

The home exercises are very important to the success of the intervention. When assigning home exercises, ask participants how and when they will complete their assignments. When reviewing home exercise completion at the beginning of each session, ask what participants did and what it was like. Did it improve their mood? Why or why not? If students have not completed the home practice, ask them to complete as much of it as possible in session during the review time.

**Have Participants Reflect on the Last Session**

Before you review the concepts that were introduced in the previous session, ask group members what they remember about the topic. This is a good sign of how well the previous material was presented.

**Don’t Assume, Define**

Be sure to define the terms that you’re using. Participants may have limited verbal skills and it may take them a while to get a firm grasp on some of the words that you’ll be using. Frequently write the important terms and concepts or refer to them on session handouts.

**Ask Is That Feeling Really a Thought (or Vice Versa)?**

Distinguish between feelings and thoughts. When asking for a Feeling or a Negative Thought in the 1-2-3 Diagram, clarify whether you are asking for an emotion or a thought. People often think they are describing a feeling when it’s really a thought (e. g., “I feel criticized” is actually a thought, while “I feel sad when I’m criticized” describes the feeling that results from the thought”).

One trick to differentiate feelings from thoughts: If someone says “I feel that…..”,

it is almost always a thought.

**Ask Participants for Examples**

When in doubt about participants’ understanding of a concept, ask them to

provide examples to illustrate that concept.

**Icons in This Book**

Throughout this document there are two icons to alert you to the different kinds of activities that occur during the group sessions:

**Whiteboard:** This icon indicates when something should be written and shared with the group.

**Handout:** This icon indicates when a new handout is introduced for the first time and is to be provided to students. All titles of handout and forms

are written in **bold blue text**.

**Shaded Text**

Text that can be read by the facilitators is shown in shaded italicized text such as this:

Note that it is not required to read this text word-for-word. Boxed text is provided as an example to help facilitators easily lead group sessions. As you become more familiar with the intervention, it is preferable that you put the boxed text in your own words.

**NOTE:** Key points/topics in the text that are used for rating adherence are underlined.

# SESSION 1

**Materials needed for Session 1**

1.**Attendance & Home Practice Tracking** form

**Session 1 Handouts**

1. **Home Exercise**
2. **Triangle of Thoughts, Feelings, and Behaviors**
3. **1+2=3 Method of Analyzing Your Emotions**
4. **Identifying Negative Thoughts**
5. **Having More Fun**
6. **Mood Journal** (Session 1)

Before session begins, write the agenda on the board or in the chat:

Welcome & Overview Confidentiality Introductions Triangle diagram Changing Thinking Changing Doing Benefits

Home Exercises

**Welcome and Overview (5 minutes)**

My name is and I want to welcome each of you to this group! I am glad that you signed up for this group, which we call the Blues Program.

The purpose of this group is to learn a variety of skills, or tools, that each of you can use to feel better – happier, more relaxed and confident, less sad, irritated or worried. This program has been found to be very successful in helping young people overcome feelings of sadness or irritability both right now and in the future. We are very excited to have the opportunity to deliver this group to you!

I will share the agenda before each meeting and briefly discuss it. Today, we will introduce ourselves and discuss the importance of confidentiality. The main idea of this group is that everyone’s personality consists of a triangle of our thoughts, actions, and feelings. By changing our thinking and actions, we can change our feelings to make them more positive. Each session ends with some simple home exercises, since real change is going to happen if you do things differently outside of group!

This group will meet for 6 one-hour sessions. Let us know if you are not able to

make a session and we can do a make-up session to keep you up to date with what we are learning in group.

**Optional** – use if possible [usual prize is a $10 gift card or comparable]

Students who attend all six sessions (or do make-up sessions) will get a small prize at the end of group.

As I mentioned, this group has “home exercises”. These might sound like homework but they are very different from school work. First, the assignments are brief, usually taking just a few minutes each day. Second, they don’t require any study or memorization. Third, they are not graded; there are no wrong answers. Most importantly, these assignments are for YOU, not ME! They are meant to help you use the tools we talk about in your real life.

Progress happens mainly between our sessions through practicing the skills you learn here – people get the most out of group if they complete all of the assignments.

We will go over the home exercises at the beginning of each group, to see how they worked for you outside of group!

These groups have helped many other young people and we know that they can help each of you. It took courage and optimism for you to be here today—good for you!

**Confidentiality (5 minutes)**

Who can say what “confidentiality” means?

Get their responses and add more explanation, if necessary.

Confidentiality is very important so that each of you feels comfortable sharing your thoughts and feelings. What is said in the group should stay in the group.

Keeping confidentiality is a sign of respect.

I will also keep what you say in group confidential. There are, however, a few exceptions to this. If you say that you are going to hurt yourself or someone, or if you tell us about past or ongoing child abuse, we are required by law to report this. We want to do this to make sure that you and others are as safe as possible. Are there any questions about this?

**Making Connections (10 minutes)**

Before we start discussing the skills that are taught in this group, we want to have everyone briefly introduce themselves. I’d like each of you to share your name, what grade you’re in, what you are hoping to get out of group, and one thing that you do well or like about yourselves. I’ll start!

Have the introduction questions written on whiteboard or in chat. Throughout the activity, facilitators should respond empathically as individuals describe feelings of sadness or experiences that have prompted them to attend the group. Reiterate that they are in the right place and point out commonalities between group members.

Facilitators should **write down what each adolescent says that they are hoping to get out of the group** so you can review that at in Session 6.

Thanks everyone for sharing. I noticed that several of you were dealing with similar issues.

Point out any common problems, such as sadness, stress over school, conflict with parents.

One reason we do this program as a group is so that each of you can learn from and support each other. Also, I have written down what each of you is hoping to get out of group and we will review that at the last session to see what has changed.

**Triangle of Feelings, Thoughts, and Actions (5 minutes)**

Triangle diagram: The facilitator will share a diagram of triangle that illustrates the way feelings, thoughts, and actions influence one another.

Ask participants to turn to **The Triangle of Feelings, Thoughts, and Actions** (P. 2).

We think of everyone as being made up of feelings, thoughts, and actions. I’ve drawn a triangle on the screen that connects these three things. There are arrows going from each point to the other – why do you think that is?

Ask group members for answer.

That’s right! Each of these things affects the other. When I have a negative thought or do something negative, I tend to feel more negative. If I have a positive thought or do something positive, I tend to feel better.

Who is willing to give us an example of a time this week when they had a negative thought?

Wait for example and then call on individual group members. If no one provides one, give one of your own.

Thanks! How did having that negative thought change what you did? How did it change how you felt?

Help group see connection between negative thoughts, actions, and feelings.

Who will give us an example of a time this week when you did a positive activity or had a positive thought?

Wait for example but quickly call on individual members. Provide one of your own, if no one volunteers after 3 tries.

Thanks! How did that positive action or thought change the other two points of the triangle?

Establish connections between positive thoughts, feelings, and actions.

The purpose of this group is to learn new ways of changing THOUGHTS and ACTIONS, with the goal of feeling better. It is very difficult to change our feelings directly but by thinking more positively or realistically, and by doing more positive activities, we CAN improve how we feel.

Get as many personal examples from group members as time allows. If group members cannot come up with examples, facilitators should provide some examples for the group. Write examples next to the corresponding component of the triangle on the whiteboard or shared screen.

**Changing Thinking (10 minutes)**

123 diagram: facilitator will share **The 1 + 2 = 3 Method of Analyzing Your Emotions** form. Ask participants to turn to **The 1 + 2 = 3 Method of Analyzing Your Emotions** (P. 3).

Now that we’ve gone over the triangle of feelings, thoughts, and actions, we are going to start focusing on how to change our thinking. We call this the “1+2 = 3” model.

1 = the Trigger is what happened in our life.

2 = the Negative Thought is what we think about the trigger, ourselves, our life or the future.

3 = the Negative Feelings result from the trigger and the negative thoughts.

We call this model “1+2=3” because our feelings are the result of BOTH the trigger PLUS our thoughts afterwards. Many people believe that “1” (the trigger) MADE us feel “3” (the negative emotion), but it’s really a combination of both “1” plus “2” (the negative thought) that adds up to “3.”

Who will please read the example on this form?

After the form is read and explained, if necessary.

Who will give us an example of a negative trigger they had this week?

Identify the trigger, the negative thought, and the negative feeling. When the example is being reviewed, write the three parts on the board in boxes corresponding to 1, 2, and 3.

If no one offers an example, give a hypothetical one. [e.g., (1) you get a bad grade + (2)

you think, “I am so stupid!” = (3) you feel sad]

Great job! Who else can give me an example of a negative trigger they have had recently, maybe even today?

Go through one or two more personal examples from group members. Ask participants to turn to **Identifying Negative Thoughts** (P. 4).

We all have negative thoughts – it’s a part of being human. It’s important to identify the negative thoughts we are having because we need to become aware of them before we can change them, which we will work on starting in our next session.

Look over this form, which contains a list of common negative thoughts. Put a check mark next to all of the thoughts that you’ve had recently. If you often have other negative thoughts that are not on this list, write them in at the bottom of the page.

After most of the group is done.

Would each of you share one negative thought you have had recently?

Ask each to share.

What are some potential costs of having these negative thoughts?

How do you think a person would feel if they kept saying these things to themselves over and over?

**Changing Doing (10 minutes)**

Remember the triangle of thoughts, feelings, and actions? We are now going to focus on the connection between what we do and how we feel. Who will give us an example of a time this week when their feelings affected what they did (or vice versa)?

Get one or two examples from the group.

Often when we are feeling down, we lose our motivation to do things, even things we used to enjoy. What happens when we stop doing fun things?

Ask for answers.

That’s right! We get less enjoyment in life and feel even worse.

If you’re down or angry or annoyed, you can just wait until you feel better and you’ll probably just naturally do more fun things OR you can make yourself do more fun things, even if you don’t feel like it, and it will probably bring your mood up, at least a little bit.

One type of fun activity that has a huge effect on people’s mood is physical activity (moving our body, breaking a sweat). Research has shown that regular physical exercise is a very powerful treatment for clinical depression – for some people it can be as powerful as therapy or taking an antidepressant medication! The trick is that you need to keep doing the exercise, even if you don’t “feel like it.”

Ask participant to turn to **Having More Fun** (P. 5-6).

Who will please read the paragraph at the top of this form?

After reading…

Thank you. I would like each of you to fill out this form, listing at least a few activities in each of the categories on these two pages. Let me know if there are

any questions. The activities should be things you can do at least once a week, things that are under your control, don’t cost a lot, and don’t get you into trouble. Be sure to include some activities that are physical.

Go around the group, checking to see if there are questions. After most teens are done,

ask

Would some of you share some of the activities on your list? This can give other group members ideas of fun activities they could do.

After hearing some examples.

Does anyone need some help coming up with fun activities? Let me know and we can brainstorm some possibilities together.

Ask the group to help generate new ideas. If the teen is resistant to suggestion, don’t

debate.

If these suggestions don’t seem like good ideas to you, just add new ideas later this week when you think of them.

**Benefits (5 minutes)**

Write “**pros of coming to the group”** on whiteboard or on virtual screen.

You have a good sense of what this group is going to be like (although we talked more in this first session and future sessions will give you more time to share). I’d like to make a list of some of the pros of coming to the rest of this group. What are some benefits that you could get from being in this group? What are some problems that you could get some help with?

Generate a written list in the chat. Try to get at least one ‘pro’ from each group member.

We hope that each of you sees some benefits to this group that are meaningful to you and that you come back next session!

**Home Exercises (10 minutes)**

Each session has some short exercises for you to complete between sessions. These exercises help you really learn these tools and change. Doing the home exercises helps you apply the things we talk about in group to your own life— that’s where real change happens!

Ask participants to turn to **Mood Journal** (P. 7-8).

As part of your home exercises this week, we would like you to identify and record triggers and negative thoughts throughout the week, recording at least one trigger and negative thought each day. Who will please read the top paragraph on this form?

After reading…

The purpose of the mood journal is to practice becoming aware of your negative thoughts so that we can change them. We are not working on changing our thoughts yet—we’ll start doing that next week!

The mood rating scale goes from 1 to 7. A “1” is when you feel very, very sad; maybe the saddest you have ever felt. A “7” is when you feel very, very happy. Can each of you think of when you felt a “1” and when you felt a “7?”

Ask for some examples, especially of a “7” (very happy time).

Every day this week, we would like you to write down a trigger that you had, the negative thought you had at the time, and then what your mood was like after that trigger and negative thought. We would also like you to rate your overall mood each day – take an average of your mood for the whole day.

How will you remember to complete the Mood Journal each day?

* When are you going to do this?
* Where are you going to keep the form?

Past participants have found that leaving the mood journal out in a place that you will see it every day, such as your desk or nightstand, or setting an alarm on your phone to remind you to fill it out, to be really helpful.

Ask each person

You should also complete one activity from your Having More Fun list before our next session.

* What are each of you planning to do for fun this week?
* When are you going to do this?
* Is there anything that could get in the way of you being able to do your fun activity?

Ask each group member what they will do, when, and whether there are any potential barriers - troubleshoot to resolve any barriers they mention.

It’s easy to do fun activities when we feel good. That’s important but we would like you to “make” yourself do a fun activity when you are feeing down, annoyed, angry, scared, or just bored. The goal is to change what you are doing to feel better.

Who will tell the group what the home exercises are for this week?

Answer: (1) track mood, triggers, negative thoughts daily and (2) one new fun activity.

Thanks! If you ever forget, the very first page of your packet (P. 1) has a handout that lists the home exercises for each week. Does anyone have any questions before the group ends today?

It’s great that each of you participated in our first session today! I hope you found it helpful and we’re excited to see you again next week.

**Attendance & Home Practice Tracking (post-session)**

After participants leave, complete the attendance and participation sections of the **Attendance & Home Practice Tracking** form.

**SESSION 2**

**Materials needed for Session 2**

1. **Attendance & Home Practice Tracking form**

**Session 2 Handouts**

1. **Thinking More Positively Sample Interview Questions**
2. **Challenging Negative Thoughts:**

**What’s the Alternative?**

1. **Practice with “What’s the Alternative?”**
2. **You Deserve a Reward**
3. **Mood Journal** (Session 2-6)

Write **Agenda** on the board or in the chat before session begins:

Review & Check-in Changing Thinking

Thinking more positively

What’s the Alternative?

Changing Doing Home Exercises

**Review and Check-in (15 minutes)**

Welcome back! Today, we will briefly review what we talked about last week and check in about the home exercises. In the “Changing Thinking” section of the group, we will come up with positive statements about each other and talk about the first way of challenging negative thinking. In the “Changing Doing” section, we’ll talk about the value of rewarding yourself for changing. We’ll end with the home exercise assignments for this week.

Who remembers the triangle diagram? What are the three parts of the triangle?

Answer: Actions, Thoughts, and Feelings.

What do the lines in the triangle mean?

Answer: Each point on the triangle affects the other two points.

Which parts of the triangle are easier to change?

Answer: It’s easier to change our thoughts and actions than to change our feelings.

Who remembers the “1+2=3” diagram? What do 1, 2, and 3 represent?

Answer: 1 = Trigger, 2 = Negative Thought, 3 = Negative Feeling.

What was your first assignment for this week?

Answer: Mood Journal to track our triggers, negative thoughts, and mood each day.

Did each of you complete your Mood Journal each day this past week? Can you hold up your forms? We will go over some examples later.

If you did not fill in your Mood Journal every day this past week, can you fill it out now? Try to remember a negative trigger for each day, the negative thoughts you had, and your mood at that time. Also, think of what your mood was each day this past week.

Our goal is that all group members complete at least 1-2 Mood Journal examples each week.

What was the other home exercise?

Answer: Do one fun activity.

Do one fun activity from your Having More Fun list—that’s right! What did each

of you do this past week for fun?

Ask each group member what fun activity they completed, adding the questions below as each youth responds.

Did you do the fun activity when your mood was a little down? Did doing the fun activity help bring your mood up?

If anyone forgot, ask them what they did do for fun even if it wasn’t planned.

Complete the Attendance & Home Practice Tracking Form indicating how much of the home exercises each adolescent completed.

**Changing Thinking: Thinking More Positively (12 minutes)**

Ask participants to turn to **Thinking More Positively** (P. 9).

Who will read the top paragraph on this handout?

After reading…

I’m going to set up pairs of two people so that you can interview each other. You can use the questions on this form or make up your own. You’ll have 4 minutes to do this. I’ll tell you when we’re almost out of time. When you’re done, you’ll rejoin the group and share 2 positive things about the other person and 2 positive things about yourself. Any questions?

Let’s get started!

Assign group members into pairs. For virtual implementation, put the participants in breakout rooms. Give the group a 1- minute warning before the interviewing is over.

Let’s come back together. We’d like each of you to share 2 positive things about the person you interviewed and 2 positive things about yourself. Then the other person will share 2 different things about you and themselves. Who will go first?

Have all group members share. If participants state facts about the other person, ask “what does that mean about that person?”. For example: if he has a dog it means he likes animals, or if she has nice nails means she likes to take care of her appearance.

As we talked about last week, positive thoughts tend to improve our mood. For most people, it’s easier to give compliments to other people than to give compliments to ourselves.

Ask for the students to give a thumbs up if they agree with that statement.

The purpose of this exercise (in addition to getting to know each other) is to help you come up with positive thoughts you could have about yourself. Even if you don’t completely agree with the positive things the other person said about you, you might consider that it is how they see you. One of our main goals in this group is to increase the number of positive thoughts you have and decrease the number of negative ones.

Optional if you have time:

Did anyone get a new positive thought from this exercise?

**Changing Thinking: What’s the Alternative? (20 minutes)**

Ask participants to turn to **Challenging Negative Thoughts: What’s the Alternative?** (P. 10).

Think about the kind of things you say to a friend who is struggling with something. For most of us, we try to be encouraging and focus on the positive things because we think they are a good person and they deserve good things. Often we are much nicer to our friends than we are to ourselves.

Last week, we started keeping track of the negative thoughts we have. The techniques we are going to learn next have to do with changing negative thoughts so that a trigger doesn’t make us feel so bad. This technique is called a positive counter-thought.

Write the phrase “Positive Counter-Thought” on the whiteboard or screen.

There are two things that make up a positive counter-thought. First, it needs to be on the same topic or trigger as the original negative thought. Second, it needs to be more realistic and positive!

Write on the board or in the chat:

“1. Same topic.

2. More realistic/positive”

Can someone please read this handout?

After reading…

Thanks. So the first way of creating a positive counter-thought is to ask, Is there another way of looking at this situation? You can ask yourself any of the questions on this form. Let’s practice this with the next handout.

Ask participants to turn to **Practice with What’s the Alternative?** (P. 11).

Who will please read the paragraph at the top of this handout?

After reading…

Let’s go through these examples as a group and fill them out together.

Possible answers to example:

1. Negative thought: “He’s going to dump me.” Feelings: mad, really upset
2. Possible counter-thought: “I don’t know for sure what he thinks. He could be just busy. I can ask him and then deal with what he says.”
3. How might feelings change: less mad and upset but still nervous about it.

Do at least the first example. If most get the concept, move on to 1-2 real-life examples.

Now that we know how to use the “What’s the Alternative” technique to come up with positive counter-thoughts, I’d like to work on some real-life experiences that happened to you recently. Who is willing to share a trigger and negative thought they had this past week? Then we’ll develop a positive counter-thought.

Go through 1 or 2 examples depending on time, encouraging group members to help one another generate positive counter-thoughts.

There is not a single right counter-thought to a given negative thought. There could be many different possibilities to any one trigger and negative thought. It is up to you to figure out whether a particular new thought makes sense to you. The counter-thought should be believable and helpful.

Can we list the benefits of having positive thoughts?

Write benefits on whiteboard or screen.

That’s great. What are some of the costs of negative thoughts?

Write costs in a separate column.

Hopefully it is clear to you that overall there are more benefits to having thoughts that are more positive and realistic rather than looking at things negatively. We learned one tool today, “What’s the Alternative?,” and we will

learn two more ways of coming up with positive counter-thoughts in the next two sessions.

**Changing Doing (8 minutes)**

Now we are going to shift our attention to ways to change our actions or “changing doing.” One of the most powerful ways to change our actions is to use reinforcement or rewards. Who has ever tried training a dog or other animal? How did you do that?

Get some examples.

Animals change their behavior with treats or praise, and the same thing holds true for people!

When someone is trying to learn a new behavior, it is really important to reinforce those changes. Rewards will strengthen these new behaviors. Plus, the rewards should be positive and that by itself will improve our mood. Once the new behavior is learned, if it is positive and fun, it will become rewarding on its own.

Ask participants to turn to **Practice You Deserve a Reward!** (P. 12).

Please refer to the You Deserve a Reward handout to help you develop a list of possible rewards and complete it before next session. Let’s take a minute now to start jotting down some ideas. We will use that list of rewards next week.

As a type of reward, I want to thank each of you very much for coming to group and thank you for doing your home exercises. Keep up the good work!

 You can also give participants a small candy or stickers or other treat as a reinforcer.

**Home Exercise (5 minutes)**

Please refer in your packet to the new Mood Journal (pages 13-14) to complete each day. It is different from the one you did last week because now we are going to ask you to generate a positive counter-thought to your triggers. Who will please read the top paragraph?

After reading…

Every day, track a trigger you had and the negative thoughts that went along with that trigger. Rate how you felt after that trigger and negative thought. Then come up with a possible positive counter-thought, using the “What’s the Alternative?” approach. Try to rate what your mood would be if you had that new thought.

We would also like you to choose and complete one physical activity from your Having More Fun list. Choose something you are not already doing but could do during the coming week. What are each of you planning to do this week?

Ask each group member.

Remember, our goal is that you do both the fun activity from last week and the new physical activity this week.

Also remember to write down some rewards that are meaningful to you on the

“You Deserve a Reward” Handout.

Does anyone have any suggestions for how to remember to do the assignments?

Why do you think we are asking you each week to work on the skills that we talk about in group? What could be the value of practicing these skills between sessions?

See what their answers are.

That’s right. As we discussed last week, if you practice the techniques we talk about in group throughout your day, they can help you improve your mood. What you do outside of group is much more important for your mood and stress level than what you do here.

Thanks for coming today! I hope each of you found something in today’s session that was helpful. Next week we’ll talk about other ways to change our thinking and increase the fun activities in our life. I look forward to seeing how you start to use the tools of this group and I look forward to seeing each you again.

**Attendance & Home Practice Tracking (post session)**

After participants leave the session, complete the attendance and homework sections of the **Attendance & Home Practice Tracking** form.


# SESSION 3

**Materials Needed for Session 3**

1. **Attendance & Home Practice Tracking** form

**Handouts**

1. **Challenging Negative Thoughts:**

**Where’s the Evidence?**

1. **Practice with “Where’s the Evidence?”**
2. **Contract**
3. **Mood Journal** (Session 2-6)

Write agenda on the board or in the chat before session begins:

Review & Check-in Changing Thinking Changing Doing Benefits

Home Exercises

**Review & Check-in (15 minutes)**

Today we will review what we talked about last week and check in about the home exercises. In the “changing thinking” section of the group, we will learn a second way of challenging negative thinking. In the “changing doing” section, we’ll talk more about the value of rewarding yourself for changing and make a contract with ourselves to do more fun things. We’ll talk about benefits of being in this group and end with the home exercises for this week.

What is a positive counter-thought?

Answer: It’s a thought that is on the same topic as the original negative thought but it’s

more positive.

Who remembers what technique we learned last week to challenge our negative thoughts?

Answer: What’s the Alternative?

What did we learn about rewards? What do rewards do?

Answer: Rewards help us learn new behaviors.

What was your first assignment for this week?

Answer: Mood Journal to track our triggers, negative thoughts, and mood and come up with a positive counter-thought each day.

*Please give a thumbs up if you completed your Mood Journal each day this past week. Can I see your forms? We will go over some examples later.*

If you did not fill in your Mood Journal every day this past week, can you fill it out now? Try to remember a negative trigger for each day, the negative thoughts you had, and your mood at that time. Also, think of a positive counter- thought.

Who was able to use the “What’s the Alternative?” technique to think of a positive counter-thought for the negative trigger? Did anyone find that a positive counter-thought helped them feel better?

Our goal is that all groups members complete at least 1-2 mood journal examples each week.

Look for 1 or 2 examples where a group member changed their thinking to improve their mood.

What was the other home exercise?

Answer: Do two fun activities, with one that is physical.

Do a fun physical activity and the other fun activity from your Having More Fun list—that’s right!

What did each of you do this past week for fun?

* Did doing the fun activity help improve your mood?

Ask each group member what activity they completed and how it made them feel.

If anyone forgot, ask them what they did for fun even if it wasn’t planned (everyone does something enjoyable weekly).

Changing our thinking and doing more enjoyable activities are still new tools for you, and these tools will take lots of practice until they become more automatic and natural.

* Can anyone tell that they are thinking about the tools of this group

during the week?

* Who has been able to apply the skills in their day-to-day life?

Hear any examples.

Great!

Complete the Attendance & Home Practice Tracking form, indicating how much of the home exercises each adolescent completed.

**Changing Thinking (20 minutes)**

Let’s start by hearing an example from someone in the last week of the 1+2=3 model, including the positive counter-thought you used. The example can be from your mood journals or from other events from your week.

Review 1 example, reinforcing the teen for sharing and using these skills in their real life. If you have a small group, do a second example.

Thanks for sharing! We will go over more examples later.

Ask participants to turn to **Challenging Negative Thoughts: Where’s the Evidence?** (P. 15).

Last week we discussed “What’s the Alternative?” as a way of creating a positive counter-thought. Now we are going to learn a second tool for creating counter- thoughts, called “Where’s the Evidence? Who will please read this handout?

After reading…

Thanks. So the second way of creating a positive counter-thought is to act like a detective and look for clues that support or challenge a negative thought.

Let’s practice this skill with the next handout. Now please turn to page 16 of

your packet: Practice with “Where’s the Evidence” handout.

Ask participants to turn to **Practice with “Where’s the Evidence”** (P. 16).

Who will please read the paragraph at the top of this handout?

After reading…

Let’s go through these examples as a group and fill them out together.

(Possible answers to example:)

Negative thought: “She doesn’t care about me anymore.”

Feelings: sad, hurt, angry

Possible counter-thought: “It’s pretty typical for people to spend a lot of time with someone when the relationship first starts. Once they have been together awhile, things will probably go back to the way they were.”

How might feelings change: less hurt and happier for my friend.

Do first example. If most get the concept, move onto 1-2 real-life examples.

This exercise shows that when you look for evidence of your negative thoughts, it often turns out that they aren’t really true! That makes it easier to come up with positive counter-thoughts that are more realistic and true.

Now that we know how to use the “Where’s the Evidence” technique, I’d like to work on some real-life experiences. Who is willing to share a trigger and negative thought they had this past week? Then we’ll come up with a positive counter-thought – remember that you can use the questions on the “Where’s the Evidence?” handout for ideas.

Go 1-2 examples, preferably with group members who haven’t already shared. Ask the group members if they can believe their positive counter thought; it is important that these are realistic.

**Changing Doing (15 minutes)**

Next I would like to talk more about rewards we can use to motivate positive behavior change.

Rewards come in many forms. They can be

* material things like clothes or books
* behaviors you do for yourself or that others do for you
* or even positive thoughts that you tell yourself.

Rewards can be small to reinforce small changes or large to reinforce bigger or more difficult changes.

Even imagining a reward that you will get in the future can help motivate you to get through a difficult situation or stick with your plans to change what you are doing.

Ask participants to turn to **Contract** (P. 17).

Who can say what a contract is? You can refer to page 17 of your packet which

is the “Contract” handout.

Ask for answers.

That’s right—a contract is an agreement with someone. We’re going to make a contract with ourselves to do the home exercises and learn tools for feeling better. The purpose of this contract will be to reward yourself for changing your thinking and doing. Who will please read what this contract says?

After reading…

Let’s fill out this contract.

* First write in the day (Monday, Tuesday, etc.) in the box labeled “Day 1”

starting with today.

* Then write in the remaining days of the week.
* Next, think of what fun activities you could do this week to feel better and what rewards you will give yourself for meeting this contract. Write those activities and rewards on those lines in the contract.
* During this week, we would like each of you to circle “yes” every day that

you complete your Mood Journal.

* Write in a fun activity you did every day that you do one!
* In the last column, write down the reward you give yourself if you do both the Mood Journal and your fun activity.

Fill in the pieces that you can do now, and let me know if you have questions.

Work with each group member to complete as much of their contract as possible

It may seem strange to give yourself a reward for doing more fun activities. I know that doing fun things is a reward in itself, but we are asking you to do more fun activities than you normally would. We are asking you to reward yourself for taking steps to live your life differently. Remember that whatever you reward or reinforce is likely to happen again and become habit without

having to think about it as much, and will help you remember to use these tools. Does that make sense?

See if there are any questions.

**Benefits (5 minutes)**

In the next few weeks we’re going to continue to learn more techniques to challenge negative thoughts and handle stress in your life. We KNOW these tools work but they take practice so that you learn them so well that you remember to use them when negative triggers occur.

Let’s talk again about the pros of continuing to participate in this group. What are some benefits that you have gotten or could get from being in this group?

Try to get at least one benefit from each group member.

We hope that each of you sees some benefits to this group that are meaningful to you and that we see you back next session!

**Home Exercises** (5 minutes)

On pages 18-19 you’ll find your new Mood Journal to complete for this week. Just like last week, we want you to track a trigger you had every day, the negative thoughts that went along with that trigger, and your mood. Then, using both “What’s the Alternative?” and “Where’s the Evidence?”, come up with a positive counter-thought. Try to rate what your mood would be if you had that new thought.

Also, choose one person you enjoy spending time with but have not seen lately. I would like you to spend time with that person this week. Can each of you tell me who you are planning to spend time with or talk to?

Ask each person.

Write that person’s name down on your contract somewhere as a reminder to plan a get-together or talk with them.

We would also like you to continue doing the other fun activities you have done from the first two weeks. These are optional but should have a good effect on your mood!

Ask each person.

Can each of you mention at least one of the fun activities from last week that you plan to do again this week?

Ask each person.

Also remember to write down what you did each day on your Contract and give

yourself the reward when you’ve earned it.

Who will tell the group what the home exercises are for this week?

Get response (Mood Journal, fun social activity, other fun activities, Contract) and make any necessary corrections/additions. Remind the group that there is a home activities “cheat sheet” with all the activities listed; it is the first page of the handout packet.

Thanks! Does anyone have any questions?

It’s great that you came to the third session! I hope you found something that

could be helpful to you and we’re excited to see you again next week.

**Attendance & Home Practice Tracking (post session)**

After participants leave the session, complete the attendance and participation sections of the **Attendance & Home Practice Tracking** form.


# SESSION 4

**Materials Needed for Session 4**

1. **Attendance & Home Practice Tracking** form

**Session 4 handouts**

1. **Challenging Negative Thoughts:**

**What if it’s True?**

1. **Practice with “What if it’s True?”**
2. **Practice Finding New Ways of Coping**
3. **New Ways of Coping**
4. **Mood Journal** (Session 2-6)

Write the agenda on the board or in the chat before session begins

Review & Check-in Changing Thinking Changing Doing Home Exercises

**Review & Check-in (15 minutes)**

Today we will first review what we talked about last week and check in about the home exercises. In the “changing thinking” section, we will learn the third way of coming up with a positive counter-thought. In “changing doing,” we’ll talk about unhelpful coping solutions that are not working that well for us anymore. As usual, we’ll end with the home exercise assignment for this week.

Who remembers what technique we learned last week to challenge our negative thoughts?

Answer: Where’s the evidence?

Who can tell me why it’s important to look for the evidence that your negative thought is true?

Answer: A lot of the time our negative thought is very exaggerated and is not true.

Last week we wrote a contract. What was the purpose of the contract, why did we write it for ourselves?

Answer: To increase the chances that we do the home exercises and reward ourselves for learning new behaviors.

*What was your first assignment for this week?* Answer: Mood Journal to track our triggers, negative thoughts, and mood and come up with a positive counter-thought each day.

Please give a thumbs up if you completed your Mood Journal each day this past week. Were you able to come up with a positive counter-thought? Can you hold up your forms? We will review them later.

If you did not fill in your Mood Journal every day this past week, can you fill it out now? Try to remember at least 1 or 2 negative triggers for the week, the negative thoughts you had, and your mood at that time. Also, think of a positive counter-thought you could have used.

Our goal is that all group members complete at least 1-2 mood journal examples each

week.

What was the other home exercise?

Answer: Do at least one social fun activity.

That’s right—do something social with someone you haven’t seen in a while! I’d like to hear from each of you who you spent time with and how that felt for you. Who will go first?

Ask each group member what activity they completed and how it made them feel.

Did you specifically do those activities to help improve your mood?

Ask for examples and see who is trying to increase their activity to feel better. Praise positive efforts.

Did anyone do some physical activities to improve your mood? Remember that research shows that physical activities really help improve your emotional and physical health.

If anyone forgot, ask them what they did for fun even if it wasn’t planned.

Who remembers the last home exercise?

Answer: Fill in the contract and reward yourself for doing it.

Who filled in your contract? Did you do it every day?

Also, if you completed your contract, did you reward yourself?

Sometimes people forget that part or don’t think they deserve a reward. You do! You worked hard and you earned it. Why do you think it is helpful to reward your positive changes?

Ask each group member whether the contract was completed and, if so, whether they gave themselves the reward they had earned.

Does anyone have any questions about the home exercises?

Complete the Attendance & Home Practice Tracking form, indicating how much home exercises each adolescent completed.

**Changing Thinking (20 minutes)**

Who will share an example from your life in the last week of the 1+2=3 model? The examples can be from your mood journals or from other things that happened this week.

Review 1 or 2 examples, making sure to ask for the positive counter thought for each trigger, and how that new thought changed the way they felt. Encourage and reinforce the teen for sharing and for using these skills in their real life. If you have time, review one example with each group member.

Thanks for sharing! We will go over more examples from each person later.

Ask participants to turn to **Challenging Negative Thoughts: What if it’s True?** (P. 20).

Last week we discussed the second way of creating a positive counter-thought, by asking “Where’s the Evidence?” Today, we are going to learn a third way of creating counter-thoughts. It’s called “What if it’s True?” Some negative thoughts are true but some people have a tendency to think the bad event is worse than it is. Please find this form in your packet on page 20. Who will please read this handout?

After reading…

Thanks. So this third way of creating a positive counter-thought is to step back and ask yourselves how you are going to cope with this negative event and how important is it in the big picture.

Sometimes, especially regarding past events or problems involving other people, we just have to accept things that we may not like and learn how to cope with them. Sometimes coping means changing our thoughts about the

situation, while other times, it means changing our actions so we avoid the bad situation or try to prevent it from happening again.

Let’s practice this skill with the next handout. Please refer to the “Practice with ‘What if it’s True’” handout in page 21 of your packet.

Ask participants to turn to **Practice with “What if it’s True?”** (P. 21).

Who will please read the paragraph at the top of this handout?

After reading…

Let’s go through these examples as a group and fill them out together. We need to think what it would mean if these negative thoughts were true and how the person could think about the trigger differently.

Possible answers to example:

Negative thought: “He should not treat me this way! Someone should make him stop!”

Feelings: angry or scared

To come up with a positive counter-statement, let’s turn back to What if it’s True? handout (p. 20). Which of these questions might make sense for you to use in this situation?

Possible counter-thought: “It isn’t fair or nice what he’s doing. I need to get some help with this and will ask my friends for help or talk with a teacher. I also will try to avoid him as much as possible.”

How might feelings change: maybe a little less angry or scared.

Who has an example from your Mood Journal last week of a negative thought that is true? Look over your Mood Journal and see which negative thought might be a good situation to use “What if it’s True?. If you can’t think of a negative thought you had this past week that is about something true, think of one from the past.

Go over 1-2 examples, preferably with group members who haven’t already shared.

**Changing Doing (20 minutes)**

Sometimes we use ways of coping that worked for us in the past but are no longer helpful. This is why it’s great to have several coping strategies to use.

* For example, every time you have a problem you go to your best friend, tell them the problem, and do whatever they suggest. They may sometimes have a good suggestion but other times they give you advice that is not as helpful.
* Or another example is when your only solution to being stressed out is to go to your bedroom, shut the door, and listen to music. Sometimes that calms you down, but other times you end up lonely and stuck in a bad mood.

If someone only has one solution to their problems, how can they fix that?

Ask for answers.

That’s right. The person needs to think of new solutions to that problem.

It is hard to change the ways we deal with problems that used to work but aren’t anymore. Sometimes we have been using the same unhelpful coping strategy for such a long time that it can be hard to think of new ones.

* What coping strategies are you using now that are no longer working?
* What are some other ways of solving problems that might work better?

Ask several group members for suggestions. You can mention any ideas to the group member that you might have and also ask the group for their ideas.

Sometimes it is very hard to see that the ways we commonly try to solve problems are no longer working -- good job recognizing this!

Ask participants to turn to **Practice Finding New Ways of Coping** (P. 22).

Before we start working on coming up with new coping strategies for triggers in our lives, I’d like us to go over these examples in the handout on page 22 and brainstorm possible new ways of thinking or acting. Let’s work on this as a group. Who is willing to read the first example?

Read all examples and complete as a group.

Possible answers to example:

What is the unhelpful coping strategy? Always talking to your friend to get help. What else can you try?

1. Talk with your mom, if you feel comfortable with her.
2. Talk with your boy/girlfriend directly.
3. Go out for a walk or run—get some exercise and cool off!
4. Write down your negative thoughts and come up with a positive counter- thought.
5. Do nothing about it until tomorrow—maybe watch a funny movie to distract yourself until you calm down.

Ask participants to turn to **New Ways of Coping** (P. 23).

Now let’s work on coming up with new coping strategies for our own situations. Who will please read the top of the handout in your packet on page 23?

After reading…

Can each of you write down an example of a problem that you are having that you would like to have new solutions for? After you have written this down, start thinking of things you could do differently to solve that problem (including new ways of thinking about it). I’ll give you a few minutes and help anyone who needs some assistance.

After most have filled out the form, ask group to share.

Now that most of you have completed the handout, I would like some or all of you to share the problem that you listed, an unhelpful way of coping you have tried, and new ways you might deal with the problem. Who is willing to share first?

Review 1-3 examples, depending on time and reinforce suggestions that seem most effective.

Remember that it may be important to try different ways of coping with a problem. What you have been doing might not be working any longer, but it may take some practice before you find out what works better. Finding a new

solution involves either doing something differently or thinking differently about a situation.

**Home Exercises (5 minutes)**

You can find a new Mood Journal to complete for this week in your packet on pages 24-25. Like you’ve been doing, keep tracking a trigger you had every day, the negative thoughts that you had about that trigger, and your mood. Then using any of the three techniques for creating a counter-thought (What’s the Alternative? Where’s the Evidence? What if it’s True?), come up with a positive counter-thought. Try to rate what your mood would be if you had had that new thought.

Also, choose two new fun activities to do this week. Will each of you tell me what you plan to do?

Ask each person. As each group member shares the fun activities they plan to do, ask:

When are you going to be able to do these things?

After everyone has shared, ask the teens to

Write those activities down somewhere on the form as a reminder.

We would also like you to continue doing the other fun activities you have done from the first three weeks.

Continue to follow your contract each day and give yourself that reward when

you’ve earned it!

Lastly, we’d like you to try one of your new solutions to coping with a problem or trigger. Is the trigger or situation likely to happen this week? If so, what do you want to do to act or think differently?

Review with each group member.

I know that’s a lot to remember! Who will tell the group what the home exercises are for this week?

Get response (Mood Journal, 2 new fun activities, other fun activities, Contract, new Ways of Coping) and correct if needed.

It can be helpful to list all of the Home Exercises on the whiteboard or screen. Remind the students that these are listed on the Home Activities “cheat sheet” on the first page of their handouts.

Thanks! Does anyone have any questions before the group ends today?

Thanks for coming again today. It’s great that you are here! I hope that you continue to find things in this group that are helpful. I’m excited to hear about how things go next week.

**Attendance & Home Practice Tracking (post session)**

After participants leave the session, complete the attendance and homework sections of the **Attendance & Home Practice Tracking** form.


# SESSION 5

**Materials Needed for Session 5**

1. **Attendance & Home Practice Tracking** form

**Handouts for Session 5**

1. **Planning Ahead: Daily Hassles**
2. **Planning Future Fun**
3. **Mood Journal** (Session 2-6)
4. **Steps towards a Big Fun Event!**

Write the agenda on the board or in the chat before session begins:

Review & Check-in Changing Thinking Changing Doing Rewards

Benefits

Home Exercises

**Review & Check-in (15 minutes)**

Today we will review what we talked about last week and check in about the home exercises. In the “changing thinking” section of the group, we will talk about planning ahead – about anticipating future hassles or daily triggers that can bring your mood down – and how to respond to them, if they happen. In the “changing doing” section, we’ll make a list of fun things you could do in the future—next week, next month, next year!

Who remembers what technique we learned last week to challenge our negative thoughts?

Answer: What if it’s true?

What are some of the ways to cope with your negative thought if it is true?

Answer: Change what you’re doing – avoid the trigger, act differently around the trigger. Change your thinking – realize that you can cope with situation, plus it may not matter that much in one week, one year, ten years.

What was your first assignment for this week?

Answer: Mood Journal to track our triggers, negative thoughts, and mood and come up with a positive counter-thought each day.

Please give me a thumbs up if you completed your Mood Journal each day this past week. Were you able to come up with a positive counter-thought? Can you hold up your forms?

If you did not fill in your Mood Journal every day this past week, can you fill it out now? Try to remember at least 1 or 2 negative triggers for the week, the negative thoughts you had, and your mood at that time. Also, think of a positive counter-thought you could have used.

Our goal is that all group members complete at least 1-2 mood journal examples each week.

What was the other home exercise?

Answer: Do two fun activities.

That’s right—do two new fun activities! I’d like to hear from each of you about what you did and how that felt for you. Who is willing to go first?

Ask each group member what activity they completed and how it made them feel.

What other fun activities have you done this week? Did anyone specifically do an activity to help bring up their mood?

Ask for examples and see who is trying to increase their activity level to feel better. Praise all positive efforts. If anyone forgot, ask them what they did for fun even if it wasn’t planned.

Who remembers the last home exercise?

Answer: Do one of the “Coming up with new coping behaviors”

Who practiced acting or thinking differently to cope with or solve a problem? How did that go? Remember, it may not completely fix the situation the first time. Like anything new, you may need to practice it a while to get really good at it. Or you may need to try a different way of solving the problem.

Also, who continued to use their Contract?

Ask each group member whether they tried something different to solve a problem and whether they continued to use their Contract. Praise all efforts to change.

Complete the Attendance & Home Practice Tracking form, indicating how much home exercises each adolescent completed.

Who has a significant event to share from the past week? It would be especially great to hear about anyone who had an event that they handled really well!

Since our group will be ending next week, my hope is that some of the tools we have been practicing will become natural and automatic, so you will be able to handle the trigger better.

See who has a significant event to share, positive or negative. If it’s negative, ask them how they might be able to change their thinking and acting, if they wanted to feel better about the situation.

**Changing Thinking (16 minutes)**

All of us are going to have more negative thoughts in the future—that’s part of

being human. When are those negative thoughts most likely to happen?

See what situations group members suggest.

One common time when negative thoughts can happen are stressful situations, or situations that cause anxiety or fear. A second time is when you have a major change in your life, even if it’s a good change or something you want (like moving away to college or getting married, starting a new job or having a baby in the future—those are great but they can all cause some negative thoughts, too!).

We can predict some of the times in the future that could lead to negative thoughts. It is not helpful to worry a lot about future problems but sometimes anticipating a stressful situation we know will happen can help us plan how to handle any negative thoughts that might arise.

It can be really helpful to develop a “prevention plan” for triggers that we think will happen to us in the future and how we might deal with them. Our response plan almost always involves either changing what we do or what we think

(sometimes both!). Having a response plan will make it easier to deal with the negative situation when and if it should happen. Does this make sense or are there any questions?

We are going to talk about two kinds of stressors or triggers: Daily hassles and Major events. Daily hassles are stressful things that we have to deal with every day. They are not “terrible”, but they are annoying and can really get on our nerves if we don’t address them. Who can give some examples of daily hassles?

Possible answers: having to go to school, chores at home, not having as much money as I

would like, parents nagging me, kids teasing me sometimes at school.

On the other hand, major events are stressful experiences that happen only once in a while or maybe only once. Sometimes they are predictable but often they are not. Who can give some examples of major events?

Possible answers: car accident, death of a loved one, someone getting very sick, serious relationship breakup, moving to a new city, parents divorcing.

Ask participants to turn to **Planning Ahead: Daily Hassles** (P. 26).

This week, we are going to talk about daily hassles; next session, we’ll focus on major events. Please get out the handout on page 26 called “Planning Ahead: Daily Hassles”. Who will please read the paragraph on the top of this form?

After reading…

Thanks! Now we would like each of you to write down some daily hassles in your life. Think about possible hassles at school, at home, with friends, family, teachers, dating partners.

Who will give me an example of a hassle they are experiencing?

Get 2-3 examples.

Last, write down some ways in which you could change your thinking or doing

so that this hassle doesn’t bother you so much anymore.

After most of the group is finished.

I see that most of you are done with this. Great! Let’s get back together and share some examples. Who has an example of a daily hassle in their life and a good possible response plan?

Go over a few examples.

Did anyone have a daily hassle that they could not figure out how to handle? If

so, let’s work together to help that person.

Work as a group and have the other group members offer suggestions before you give your thoughts and suggestions

**Changing Doing (15 minutes)**

It’s important to continue to plan and do fun activities. Why do you think that is?

Answer: So we continue to feel better and have a way to feeling more in control of our mood and life.

Ask participants to turn to **Planning Future Fun** (P. 27).

We have been focusing on fun things that can be done daily or at least once a week. Those kinds of fun activities can really improve our mood, but it’s also good to think of bigger, more expensive fun activities that will take more time, planning, and money. Please get out the form in your packet on page 27 called “Planning Future Fun”. Write down some fun things you could do every day, once a week, once a month, and just once or twice a year. We’d like you to come up with at least 2 for each category! Once we’re done, I’d like you to share some examples from your list. Are there any questions?

Once most are done, review examples as a group.

Now I’d like to hear some examples. Who will share some fun things you could do every day?

Get several examples.

Great! Now, what are some examples of fun activities that could be done once a week?

Get some examples from other group members.

Who has some examples of things they can do only once a month?

Ask group members who haven’t shared much.

What are some really big events that you could probably only do once or twice a year?

Review examples.

These big fun activities are really special treats but they can take a lot of planning to happen. The good news is that planning for these big events can be fun itself!

Sometimes there are obstacles to doing the really big events. What could get in the way of your doing these big fun activities?

See what group says. Possible answers include money, other work and school demands, friends or family get in the way.

If there are any obstacles, what could you do to overcome them and get to do the fun activity?

Brainstorm solutions and encourage a “take charge” attitude.

If you have an obstacle that really can’t be fixed, you’ll need to come up with a different fun activity for that category. Remember that it’s important to have and do some of each of these kinds of fun activities!

**Rewards (4 minutes)**

Remember the idea of rewards? Completing an easy task deserves a small reward, while completing a big or challenging task deserves a big reward.

Do you think that completing this group next week is a small deal or a big deal?

Hopefully answer is a big deal.

I think it’s a big accomplishment! It involved several meetings, doing home exercises between group sessions, and trying to change yourself. Those are big things! How will you reward yourself for completing this group next week?

Ask group members for ideas.

**Benefits (5 minutes)**

*Next week is our last session. In this session we will go over all the tools that you have learned and see which ones are most helpful to you. You’ve all done a lot and hopefully have found this group has helped you learn how to tackle future problems.*

*Let’s talk about the pros of attending the last session. What are some reasons that it would be valuable or helpful or even fun to participate in next week’s session?*

Try to get at least one benefit from each group member.

We hope that each of you has gotten some good ideas and tools from this group that are meaningful to you and that we see you all next week!

**Home Exercises (5 minutes)**

In the packet on pages 28-29 you will find new Mood Journal. Like you’ve been

doing, keep tracking a trigger every day, the negative thought, and your mood.

Then use any of the techniques for creating a counter-thought (What’s the Alternative? Where’s the Evidence? What if it’s True?), come up with a positive counter-thought. Rate what your mood would be if you had had that new thought.

What fun activities would you like to do in the next week? Will each of you tell me what you plan to do and when you are going to be able to do these things?

Ask each person.

Write those activities down somewhere on the form as a reminder.

Ask participants to turn to **Steps towards a Big Fun Event!** (P. 30).

In addition to doing fun activities this upcoming week, we would like you to pick one bigger future fun activity (one of your activities that could happen once a month or even just once a year) and start to plan for that. Big fun activities take time to organize and sometimes cost money. Look at page 30, which is called “Steps towards a Big Fun Event.” We would like you to fill that out for next session. What do you want to try and do in the next few months? How will you start to make plans for that to happen? What could you do in the next week to increase your chances of doing that fun activity? Let’s take a minute now to start jotting down our ideas.

Like last week, we’d like you to use one of your new coping strategies for a problem you are having. It can be the same new way of responding as last week, if that worked well for you, or it can be something else. Is the trigger for this situation likely to happen this week? If so, what could you do to act or think differently?

Review with each group member.

You completed the Planning Ahead for Daily Hassles form and we’d like you to use one of the response plans for dealing with the daily hassle. Can each of you

think of a daily hassle you will probably have this coming week? What do you want to do to respond to it differently?

Review plan with each group member.

We are asking a lot this week, so it is important to reward yourself for doing these things. Keeping your contract and rewarding yourself is voluntary but WILL help! What could you give yourself if you do the home exercises this week?

Ask group members who want to use the contract to write down their rewards so you can ask about this next week.

Who will tell the group what the home exercises are for this week?

Get response (Mood Journal, do fun activities, plan for a bigger future fun activity, new ways of coping, new plan to deal with hassles, Contract) and make any necessary corrections/additions. Remind the students that there is a home activities “cheat sheet” at the front of their handouts.

Thanks! Does anyone have any questions before the group ends today?

Thanks for participating today. It was great to see you and I hope that you continue to find things in this group that are helpful to you and that I see you all again next week.

**Attendance & Home Practice Tracking (post session)**

After participants leave the session, complete the attendance and homework sections of the **Attendance & Home Practice Tracking** form.

# SESSION 6

**Materials Needed for Session 6**

1. **Attendance & Home Practice Tracking** form
2. Prepared **Summary Statements**, see Session 6 Lesson Plan

**Session 6 Handouts**

1. **Planning Ahead: Major Life Events**
2. **Positive Emotions Toolbox**
3. **Exit Questionnaire**

Write agenda on the board or in the chat before session begins:

Review & Check-in Changing Thinking Changing Doing Hopes & Goal Review Group Ending Summary

**Review & Check-in (15 minutes)**

We’re glad you are all here today for our last session! We will review what we talked about last week and check in about the home exercises. In the “changing thinking” section of the group, we will continue talking about major events and how to respond to them. In the “changing doing” section, we’ll talk about making plans for doing lots of fun things next week and into the future. We’ll review the hopes and goals each of you stated in the first session and end with some last thoughts about the group.

What are the two different types of stressful situations we talked about last week?

Answer: Daily hassles and major life events.

How can you respond to a daily hassle?

Answer: Change what you’re doing. Avoid the hassle, act differently around it. Change your thinking about it.

Who remembers the triangle diagram? What are the three parts of the triangle?

Answer: Actions, Thoughts, and Feelings.

What do the lines in the triangle mean?

Answer: Each point on the triangle affects the other two points.

Which parts of the triangle are easier to change?

Answer: It’s easier to change our thoughts and actions than to change our feelings.

What was your first assignment for this week?

Answer: Mood Journal to track our triggers, negative thoughts and mood and come up with a positive counter-thought each day

Give me a thumbs up if you completed your Mood Journal each day this past week? Were you able to come up with a positive counter-thought? Can you hold up your forms?

What was the other home exercise?

Answer: do a fun activity.

That’s right—do something fun! What did each of you do and how did doing that activity make you feel? I’d especially like to hear if you did something new. Who is willing to go first?

Ask each group member what activity they completed and how it made them feel.

What other fun things have you done this week? Did you specifically do those activities to help bring your mood up? We will talk about planning for bigger fun activities later in the session.

Ask for examples and see who is trying to increase their activity level to feel better. Praise all positive efforts. If anyone forgot, ask them what they did for fun even if it wasn’t planned.

We also talked about trying new coping strategies to solve our problems. Who practiced a new way of acting or thinking to help cope with or solve a problem?

How did that go?

Ask each group member whether they tried something different to cope with a problem. Praise efforts to change.

Who remembers the last home exercise?

Answer: Develop a response plan to deal with a daily hassle.

Who had a hassle this week and practiced acting or thinking differently to not let it get to them? How did that go?

Ask each group member whether they tried something different to respond differently to a daily hassle. Praise efforts!

Complete the Attendance & Home Practice Tracking form, indicating how much of the home exercises each adolescent completed.

**Changing Thinking (15 minutes*)***

As we discussed last week, we will have negative thoughts in the future. By planning ahead for these events, we can develop a prevention plan to not feel so bad. Does that idea make sense to you?

See whether most of the group believes that planning can be helpful, at least for some events.

We can’t plan for everything but if we do think a little bit about some negative events that are likely to happen, we will be less likely to get upset.

What’s a major event? Who can define what that means?

Possible answers: big events that do not happen very often. Some are predictable; others are not.

Ask participants to turn to **Planning Ahead: Major Life Events** (P. 31).

Last week, we talked about daily hassles; this week we are focusing on the big things that can happen to us. Who will please read the paragraph on the top of the handout on page 31 called “Planning Ahead: Major Life Events”?

After reading…

Now, please let’s go over the two examples of possible major events listed on this form. Can you think of anything else you could do as a response plan?

Possible additional answers to “moving”: join a club or sports team, plan more fun activities that you can do by yourself, remind yourself that you have made new friends before and can do it again.

Possible additional answers to “cancer”: continue to take good care of yourself (getting enough sleep, eating, exercising), remind yourself that you are not going through this alone.

The rest of this form contains major events that can happen to young people. Please fill out this form now for at least 2 major events that could happen to you in the next few years and come up with a response plan. Remember to use the tools from this group in your plan! Ask me any questions you have while you are all doing this.

After most of the group is finished…

I see that most of you are done with this. Great! Let’s get back together and

share some examples. Who has an example of a good possible response plan?

Go over a few examples.

Did anyone have trouble with one of the major events and could not figure out how to handle it? If so, let’s work together to help that person.

Work as a group and have the other group members offer suggestions before you give your thoughts and suggestions.

**Changing Doing (10 minutes)**

Last session, we discussed planning for future fun activities. I would like to have each of you share 1 or 2 fun activities you could do next week. Given that this is our last session, it might be great if the fun activity was something you could do at this same time next week.

Ask each group member to share at least one fun activity to do next week.

Last session, we also discussed the value to planning for big fun activities, which generally take more time to organize and sometimes cost a lot of money. You were asked to pick a fun activity for the future and start to make some plans for

how that could happen (Handout page 30). Who will share first what they would like to do and the steps they took to make that happen?

Ask each group member to share the steps they took to plan for a bigger fun activity. If it seems that they will not be able to do that activity, help them shift to a different activity that seems more likely to happen.

**Hopes & Goal Review (10 minutes)**

Who remembers the hopes and goals you had for this group from our first session? I also have them written down if you do not remember.

Review your list of their hopes and goals that you recorded in session 1.

Did you accomplish this goal? If it wasn’t completely accomplished, did you

make some good progress towards the goal?

Who has seen positive change in other group members during our time together? Who would be willing to share what changes you have seen in other group members?

Facilitators should also congratulate each group member on his/her accomplishments.

**Summary Review and Statements (10 minutes)**

Ask participants to turn to **The Positive Emotions Toolbox** (P. 32).

Please see the handout that summarizes the tools that we covered in group on page 32 of your packet, called “The Positive Emotions Toolbox”. Who will please read all or part of it?

After reading…

This handout could be posted somewhere as a reminder of all of the various coping tools we covered in this group.

Can each of you say which tool from the Changing Thinking side and which tool from the Changing Doing side has been the most helpful to you personally?

Ask each group member for one or two examples.

**Summarize what you appreciated about the group as a whole, and, if time allows, what you appreciated about each group member.** [Develop these before the session]

* Example group statement:

*“I want to thank you all for trying hard to use some of the concepts that were introduced in the group. I’ve seen changes in all of you since you started the group.”*

* Example individual statements:

*“Sean, you really asked a lot of really good questions and did a great job with the skills. It was especially great how many more fun activities you did as part of your home exercises.”*

*“Ellen, I know you were a little quiet and shy about talking at the beginning of group, but you came and worked really hard and I appreciate that. I think you did a great job on practicing and using the skills in the group. I especially like how you learned the “What’s the Alternative” technique!”*

That’s it – you’ve made it! We are done with the Blues Program. Each of you did a great job and I’m proud of your accomplishments. These skills work—I know it and I hope you do, too. Use them in the future when you want to feel better.

Keep up the great work you’ve all done here!

At this point you can remind the participants that they will be receiving an incentive if they

attended all 6 sessions (or something like this…).

You can also tell participants that they will receive their Graduation Certificates in an email or the mail if they attended all of the sessions.

**[*OPTIONAL*] Exit Questionnaire**

Provide Participants with the **Exit Questions** handout (P. 33), if you are collecting their feedback. Have students fill out the questions and email or mail it to you.

**Attendance & Home Practice Tracking (post session)**

After participants leave the session, complete the attendance and homework sections of the **Attendance & Home Practice Tracking** form.