

Coping Skills Seminars

Managing Emotions Handout
Counselling Services

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The Big List of Pleasurable Activities

Adapted from The Dialectical Behaviour Therapy Skills Workbook by Matthew McKay

Talk to a friend on phone	Write a poem
Go out and see a friend	Take photographs
Exercise	Clean up your room
Go for a walk in nature	Play a music instrument
Cuddle with a pet/imagine your pet being goofy	Scrapbook
Listen to a relaxation CD or YouTube video	Open up your window and just breathe
Listen to music you love	Turn on loud music and dance
Dance	Join a club
Eat a comfort food	Reach out to a friend in need
Go for a drive	Try volunteering
Take a ride on a bus	Do a random act of kindness
People watch at a mall	Buy a coffee for person behind you in line
Sleep or nap	Write a loving letter to yourself when you're feeling good and keep it with you to read when you are upset
Take a shower	Text a friend
Ride your bike	Start a blog
Do yoga	Watch a funny movie
Go for a jog or run	Play outside
Play video games	Hop on a swing
Do a puzzle	Stretch your muscles
Bake muffins for someone	Sit by a stream and listen to the water
Bring a candy to someone	Volunteer
Go to a movie	Listen to sounds of silence
Read a comic book	Play chess with your computer
Surf the internet	Go shopping
Watch a cooking show	Make a video
Cook your favourite meal	Take a bubble bath
Listen to the radio	Talk to your mom, dad or sibs
Watch a good bad movie	Be just in the moment
Play solitaire	Do 5,4,3,2,1
Sing	Go to your favorite café
Draw	Unplug
Plant a garden	Listen to morning sounds of birds
Knit, crochet or sew or learn to	Do something goofy –Chicken Dance
Paint your nails	Hold a smooth rock in your hand
Read a book by an author you love	Watch the sunrise or the sunset
Go to the library	Just laugh at yourself
Have a bubble bath	Don't Sweat the Small Stuff: it's all small stuff
Journal	Remember a beautiful vacation spot
Pray	Wake up and smell the flowers
Meditate	
Go to church, synagogue or temple	

My Distraction Plan

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

My Relaxation/Self-Soothing Plan: Home

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

My Relaxation/Self-Soothing Plan: Away From Home

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Using Coping Thoughts

Adapted from The Dialectical Behaviour Therapy Skills Workbook by David McKay

	Upsetting Situation	Coping Thoughts
Example 1	I really can't stand my roommate.	It is only temporary. She is leaving at the end of term for co-op. I don't see her much at all anyways.
Example 2	My girlfriend broke up with me.	I have been through other break-ups before or This is my first break-up and I will learn how to handle it. It sucks but I know I will get through this. I don't want to be with someone who does not want to be with me. What I am feeling is temporary. I deserve better.
Example 3	I don't like my prof.	This class is only 12 weeks. I only have to do one class at a time. I can just focus on the subject and not on the prof. Maybe instead of focusing on what I don't like, I can look for what is good about him and the course.
Your example 1		
Your example 2		
Your example 3		
Your example 4		

Relaxation Strategy: Imagery

Imagery for Creating a Safe Place

Allow yourself to be in a comfortable position, either lying down or sitting up. Remember that if you feel afraid at any time, just open your eyes and ground yourself in today. You are safe and you are in control today.

Begin to take a couple of long, deep breaths all the way down into your diaphragm. [Inhale.]

Hold it, and as you exhale, let go of the tension. [Exhale] Letting go.... Take another deep breath all the way in. [Inhale.] Allow all the tension to move into your lungs, and then let it go, [Exhale.] just begin to let go.... And if you're still feeling tense, repeat that process a few times as you begin to let go, begin to relax....

Create a silent and healing space around you.... Focus only on your quiet breathing and the sound of my voice. . . allow yourself to begin to let go, to create a healing time, a time of peace and safety.... Relax your body, relax your mind, focus only on your breathing and the sound of my voice and letting go. Each breath allows you to become more and more relaxed.

You find yourself in a safe place outdoors. Perhaps it's not a place you've ever seen before except in the beauty of your own mind. You see a place outdoors that is beautifully safe....

Allow the images to come.... For in this place of safety, only you are allowed, no one can come without your invitation. In this place of safety, you are always at peace.... Allow the images to come....

Notice the color of the sky at your favorite time of day. And in this place, at this most perfect time of day, at the season and the temperature that you like on your skin, allow your senses to become more and more alive. Look around at the surroundings and allow yourself to see

Each time you come to your safe place, you may develop it and allow it to become more and more beautiful. Allow yourself to see what is here today....

Notice the color of the trees or flowers or grass, or perhaps sand or water. Let the colors and textures come alive for you in this beautiful and safe place.... Listen to the sounds of safety....

Perhaps you hear birds or splashing or the sound of wind in the trees or the grass.... Allow yourself to create a place of safety and peace that is always yours, always safe....

As you breathe in, notice the smells...perhaps salty air, or the sweet smell of a flower.... Breathe in the smells of your safe place.

Let yourself bask in the safety and the peace.... Allow yourself to walk around, to be in this place, to notice more and more, to create more and more in this place....

Now allow yourself to continue walking around your safe place.... You find a place for a healing garden, a place that is just for your healing. You can plant anything you would like.... You can plant wishes and dreams for the future. You can plant seeds of your healing. And you can weed out what you want to be finished with. Take some time to work with your garden now. [Long pause.]

And now, find your favorite place in all of safety. Walk around until you find just the right place.

[Long pause.] Sit down, and get comfortable.... Breathe in the safety and the peace. Breathe out the fear.... And just be in this place as you breathe and heal.... I will count from one to five.

When I reach the number five, your eyes will open. And you will be awake and alert, and feeling safe and at peace. One.... Two.... Three. Take a deep breath.... Four.... and five.