**Balanced Thinking, Negative Self Talk, Understanding Your Strengths**

*Prior to starting, ensure that you have viewed the homefun assignments so you can confidently review them with the client.*

***Hi \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

Welcome back to the session today. We are currently on session 8 of 12 sessions. Today we will talk about balanced thinking, negative self talk, and understanding your strengths. Before we begin with our warm up exercise, I would like to check in with you. How are you feeling in this moment, what sensations, thoughts, and emotions come up for you right now? Can you rate your mood from 1-10?

***Let’s start off with our warm-up based on positive psychology….***

* *(If needed: The reason why we do this is to help us focus, highlight, and identify some of the positive things that you do and are doing to manage your social-emotional well-being.)*
	+ *How has another person shown that they care about you within the past week?*
	+ *What has happened this week that has been exciting?*
	+ *Describe something fun that you did today.*
	+ *What was something nice you said to someone this week?*
	+ *Describe something that made you laugh this week.*
	+ *Describe something you were thankful for this week.*
	+ *What was a challenge you overcame this week?*
	+ *What was something that made you feel happy this week?*

**Ok so let’s spend some time discussing the worksheets from last week:**

* Cognitive Distortions- Decatastrophizing,
* Activity List
* Activity Behavioural Activation

**Activity List:**  **Q)** What were some of the activities you chose? **Q)** Were there some new ones you wanted to try?

**Activities Behavioural Activation: Q)** What were some of the activities you rated? **Q)** Were they as easy or rewarding as you expected?

**Cognitive Distortion: Q)** Were you able to notice some of your own cognitive distortions in the past week? **Q)** Are there any that you are confused about?

**Ok so let’s spend some time discussing the videos from last week.**

**VIDEO: Balance Thinking Video summary- 8 MINS**

<https://www.bouncebackvideo.ca/videos>

***Let’s review the balanced thinking video… what stood out to you as important points?***

* The video is about how to recognize the negative thoughts that make you feel bad and replace with balanced helpful thoughts
* When we are **depressed/anxious**, we’re more likely to **assume the negative**.
	+ (For example: When someone doesn’t answer your call, we assume it means they no longer like us anymore, or worse… they hate us)
* When we are not feeling well, we are self critical and see the world from a darker lens
* We blame ourselves and feel guilty for things that are not our fault and take responsibility for other people’s problems.
* We use language such as ‘always’ or ‘never,’ or use extreme statements such as “this always happens to me,” “people always let me down.”
* Some **thinking traps** are:
	+ all or nothing attitude
	+ biased against yourself- self-critical
	+ catastrophic thinking- bias
	+ expecting ourselves not to improved
	+ over personalizing
	+ mind-reading
	+ generalizing
	+ globalizing
	+ The MAIN POINT was “ALL OR NOTHING” or “BLACK AND WHITE”
* To change negative thoughts that produce negative feelings and behaviours – we need to recognize and name negative thoughts and replace them with healthy more balanced thoughts.

***Q) How do we deal with unhelpful thinking and replace it with balance thinking?***

1. Recognize your thought for what it is – an unhelpful thought
2. Let the thought just be- don’t challenge it or give it attention
3. Move your mind onto more positive things- onto a positive event, breathing.
4. Unhelpful thoughts try to alter what you do and how your behave- make a choice not to let this happen and keep doing what you were going to do

***3 DO’s***

1. Keep doing what you were planning to do
2. Face your fears
3. Do an experiment to test the negative thoughts or positive actions

***3 DONTs***

1. Don’t let negative thoughts or cognitive distortions push you into not doing things
2. Don’t live your life based on feelings
3. Don’t use substances to block your thoughts.

**Q) What were some of the main points you learned from this video?**

* Were you able to identify with the all or nothing attitude or the black and white thinking?
* Have you tried to replace these unhelpful thoughts with balanced thinking as the video laid out in steps?
* What was easy, what was hard?

**Q) Are there any unhelpful behaviours that you are aware of in your own life?**

**CHANGING NEGATIVE SELF\_TALK**

***We are often very hard on ourselves unnecessarily.***

* Most likely we would not speak to someone that we love the way that we speak to ourselves.
* Changing critical self-talk can be a challenge, but with motivation and practice, it can be done.
* The following two steps can help reduce self-criticism and cultivate a more compassionate relationship with the self.

**Step 1**

* Increase awareness of self-criticism: in the upcoming week, try to notice when you use self-critical talk or become critical of yourself as much as possible.
* Pause and take three deep breaths.
* Notice what you say to yourself when you fail or have made a mistake.
* Are there key phrases that you say to yourself?
* What is the tone of your voice when talking to yourself?

**Step 2**

* Take action, soften your critical voice
* After noticing self-critical talk, think about what you would say to a loved one in the same situation. Now use these words to rephrase what you say to yourself.
* Also pay attention to the tone of voice. How would you like to talk to yourself?
* Practice the tone that you want to use with yourself when you are feeling great about yourself.
* Identify what you are criticizing yourself for. The *inner critic can provide useful feedback* but most often the way this feedback is presented is far from constructive. Try to take a “learning stance”: What can I learn from this feedback? How can I talk to myself as I would a young child who is learning about this for the first time? How can I use the inner critic’s feedback in a more motivating and constructive way?

***Ask the client to reflect on this.***

**Understanding Your Strengths**

**Another key part of this program is helping you to identify your strengths.**

One way that we can help avoid unhelpful behaviours is by understanding and focusing on our strengths. Why is it important to know our strengths? We will be doing a worksheet this week.

Let’s focus on what you do well, as it is important to take some time to acknowledge your strengths and apply these strengths in the coming weeks and beyond. Let’s identify an issue you are currently facing, one that you are hoping through counselling and support you will be able to reduce. Take a moment to think about it. Now I would like to ask you: *Was there a time when this problem was not a problem, or when it presented as less severe?* (Additional prompt: *What has worked, even a little bit?*)

**What was it like at that time?**

* What were the specific steps that you took to try to cope with it? Let’s draw a chart with 4 columns: Thoughts, Feelings, Body, and Actions…. Walk me through your thoughts and actions...Was there anyone else who helped you with this problem?
* Again, the point is to help you identify the strengths you already possess and that you can turn to in times when you are struggling. It’s totally normal to struggle with identifying strengths, and we will come back to practice again during this program. Between now and the next time we meet. Record and pay attention to those times when the problems are non-existent, or when they appear to be less severe.
* Specifically, pay attention and note: *what is different about these times*? How are your thoughts or behaviours different leading up to them?

**Q) Can you think of answers to the following questions (pick 2 or 3 from the worksheet to discuss in the session)**

Ask the client to pick two or three other questions that were not discussed in session to think about more deeply for next week’s discussion.

**People Who Have Loved You Into Existence**

We are near the end of the session, so it is time to facilitate another short exercise with you, one that you can ideally continue to incorporate into your day-to-day activities. Like previous exercises, these activities are based on positive psychology or mindfulness principles.

1. Think about your life and the journey you have been on.
2. Bring to mind one person who has cared for you, nurtured you, honoured you, loved you for exactly as you are. It might be a person that showed up in your life momentarily, or someone who has been a part of your life for a long time
3. Reflect in the ways that this person has contributed to your sense of well being
4. Reflect what it has been like to feel completely accepted just as you are
5. In your mine or out loud, count to 3. Say this person’s name in your mind or out loud and feel their presence. Stay in this moment for however long you like
6. What feelings and sensations occurred during this exercise for you?

**Homefun for Next Week:**

**Videos:**

**Dealing With Unhelpful Behaviour** - **8 MINS**

<https://www.bouncebackvideo.ca/videos>

**Sleeping Better (Chapter 6)- 5 MINS**

<https://www.bouncebackvideo.ca/videos>

**Worksheets:**

* Challenging negative thoughts, Strengths Discussion Questions

**Check out –** Mood 1-10 Takeaways

**End of Session 8**

# EMAIL Client

**MFFS 12-Week CBT course – Session 8 Videos and Homefun**

Hi \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

It was great to be with you for session 8 today. The goal of this program is for you to obtain skills and strategies to manage and reduce depressive and anxious feelings and thoughts so that you gain confidence and mental wellness in your day-to-day life.

**Our homefun this week is:**

1. Watch:
	1. **Dealing with Unhelpful Behaviour- 8 MINS**

<https://www.bouncebackvideo.ca/videos> (using access code **bbtodaybc**)

* 1. **Sleeping Better- 5 MINS**

<https://www.bouncebackvideo.ca/videos> (using access code **bbtodaybc**)

* + 1. ***What are the main points of these videos?***
		2. ***What skills/strategies did I learn?***
		3. ***How can I apply these skills to my own situation?***
1. **Read and work on:**
	1. Challenging Negative Thoughts
	2. Strength Discussion Questions

**CHANGING NEGATIVE SELF\_TALK**

***We are often very hard on ourselves unnecessarily.***

**Step 1**

* **Increase awareness of self-criticism:** in the upcoming week, try to notice when you use self-critical talk or become critical of yourself as much as possible.
* **Pause** and **take three deep breaths**.
* **Notice what you say to yourself** when you fail or have made a mistake.
* Are there **key phrases** that you say to yourself?
* What is the **tone of your voice** when talking to yourself?

**Step 2**

* Take action, **soften your critical voice**
* After noticing self-critical talk, think about **what you would say to a loved one** in the same situation. Now **use these words to rephrase what you say to yourself**.
* Also **pay attention to the tone of voice**. How would you like to talk to yourself?
* **Practice the tone that you want to use with yourself** when you are feeling great about yourself.
* **Identify what you are criticizing yourself for**. The ***inner critic can provide useful feedback*** but most often the way this feedback is presented is far from constructive.
**Try to take a “learning stance”**: What can I learn from this feedback?
How can I talk to myself as I would a young child who is learning about this for the first time?
How can I use the inner critic’s feedback in a more motivating and constructive way?

**Do what you can, you do not need to do all of it at once. Breaking it down and doing about 5-10 mins a day can sometimes make it easier. Please reach out to your counsellor if you need support.**

Warm regards,

Your Name