

Stress Busters: A Combined Cognitive-Behavioral Family Education Program for Depression in Children

Manual for Children's Group Sessions

Joan Rosenbaum Asarnow, Ph.D. & Cynthia Val Scott, Ph.D.

© Joan Rosenbaum Asarnow

Do not copy or reproduce without permission.

Note. There were multiple source materials for this manual. See materials below for additional information and evaluation data.

Asarnow, J.R., Scott, C., & Mintz, J. (2002). A combined Cognitive-behavioral family education intervention for depression in children: A treatment development study. *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, 26, 221-229.

Scott, C.V. (1999). Evaluation of Cognitive-Behavioral Group Therapy in Prepubertal Children: A Pilot Study. Dissertation. Fullter Theological Seminary.

Table of Contents

S1 Problems Mean Choices 3

S2 Problem Solving Has Steps 11

S3 Turning Problems into Goals 17

S4 Taking Your Emotional Temperature 21

S5 Emotional Spirals 25

S6 Turning Downward Spirals into Upward Spirals: Having Fun 34

S7 Turning Downward Spirals into Upward Spirals: Controlling Your Thinking 40

S8 Negative Thoughts and Beliefs 49

S9 It Feels Good to Say Good Things to Others 52

S10 Family Night 56

Certificate of Achievement 63

Session I

Problems Mean Choices

I. Goals:

1. To teach group entry skills
2. To build group cohesion and begin to establish a supportive group environment
3. To help children conceptualize the treatment approach and how it will benefit them
4. To identify the kinds of problems that commonly occur in children's lives

II. Activities:

1. Conduct introductory get-acquainted warm-up exercises
2. Introduce purpose of the group
3. Establish group rules and confidentiality
4. Begin to identify real-life problems that kids have
5. Homework
6. Select a group name.
7. Review

III. Materials:

1. Easel/chalkboard
2. Video clips
3. Team notebook
4. Stickers/small incentives

IV. Procedure:

1. Introduction and get acquainted warm-up exercises:

As each child arrives the leader(s) welcomes them and makes introductions with the goals of making the child feel comfortable and establishing a rapport with the child. Name tags and markers are made available so that the child can make a name tag for them self while waiting for everyone to arrive. Once everyone has arrived the leader shows appreciation for their participation acknowledging the obstacles they may have had to face prior to coming (eg. tired at the end of the day, hungry, stressed-out, too much homework). The leader clarifies the meeting time and place emphasizing the benefit of starting on time and giving directions regarding where their parents will be picking them up after the group. A possible introduction could include:

*We want to welcome you to the **I COPE** group. We appreciate the fact that everyone made it here today even though some might be feeling tired or stressed out after a day of school. But that's exactly what we are going to be talking about: how to deal with stress and feel better! We are going to learn some new things and have fun while we do it! We'll be meeting every _____ and _____ from _____ P.M. to _____ P.M. for the next few weeks. Then we'll switch to meeting once a week on _____ for awhile. I know it's really hard to get to places on time, but really try hard to get here by _____ P.M. The group will always end by _____ P.M. and your parents can pick you up at _____.*

If the children are responsible for getting to a location on the school campus after being dismissed from class, offering a snack to those who are on time provides an excellent incentive.

The children can decide with the leader about the best way to remember the next group meeting. Sometimes the kids prefer a reminder note be sent to their classroom. Some prefer a reminder buddy system or a group member can volunteer each week to remind everyone.

The leader begins the "Getting to Know You" game. The group members should be seated in a circle. Leaders begin by introducing themselves first, then each child takes a turn. The second time around, each person names his/her favorite food, and the third time, tells the group about a favorite thing they like to do. Leaders can comment on the similarities of members (e.g., "I see one thing many of us have in common is that we love pizza!")

Other options for warming-up and beginning to build group cohesion:

- * Have the members make a group poster
- * Pair up the children and have them interview their partner as if they were a *LIVE* TV reporter, and then in a few minutes ask them to make their report back to the group. The leader can model the dramatic presentation by using a fake microphone and acting like a TV reporter. A paper for interview notes can be provided (see end of chapter) emphasizing that they are not limited to the questions on the sheet.

2. Leader introduces the purpose and goals of the group.

The leader may introduce the goals by leading a discussion related to the following points:

Now we are going to talk a little bit about what this group is about. Does anyone have an idea about what this group is and how you were chosen to participate?

This question will give the leader an opportunity to gain an understanding of why the

participants think they are there and to dispel any misconceptions such as they are there because they are crazy or it is a form of punishment. A simple explanation of the referral process can be described in nonpathological terms so that they group can have a common framework for understanding why each person is there.

The purpose of the group is to look at some ways to handle stress and the things we can do to help ourselves feel better when we feel "down in the dumps", and to have some FUN too!!

Does anyone know what "stress" is? (Let the children come up with a number of definitions)

*"Stressed-out" is a word we use to describe how we feel sometimes when we are facing a problem or a bunch of problems. Who has problems or stress? Of course, **everyone** has problems or difficult times during their day. That is something we all have in common whether you are old or young. We all have stress because it is a normal part of life.*

*Does anyone remember what **I C.O.P.E.** stands for? **I Can Overcome Problems Effectively!!***

What is a problem? (Allow kids to give their ideas) Anytime you have to come up with a solution or figure out what to do, you have run into a problem.

With any problem you have choices. You have choices about how you are going to solve the problem or cope with it. When you make some choices you are likely to feel good about how things turned out, but if you make other choices you may feel unhappy.

Summarize:

So in our next few weeks together we are going to look at different kinds of problems that kids have, the different choices they have for coping with problems, and how the choices you make can affect your mood and how you feel.

One of the things that we will be doing as we learn about coping with stress is making a cool video about what we have learned. You will get a chance to present this video to your parents at the end and teach them some lessons about coping with stress.

So hopefully at the end, we'll all be a little better at coping with different life situations in ways that make us feel better about ourselves and help us enjoy life more.

3. Establishing group rules and confidentiality.

It is important to develop some behavioral guidelines to facilitate a smooth running session. If these are established from the beginning, chances are they will become a natural part of the group process by the end.

Before we talk more about the kinds of problems that kids have, I need your help in establishing some rules for our group to make sure that everyone feels comfortable and respected.

What are some rules that you would like for the group to help us with that? (Have the group brainstorm some rules for the group)

The group rules can be kept simple and should include the following:

A. Confidentiality: This is an important aspect of developing a safe environment where children can discuss personal feelings and problems. Take a moment to discuss the meaning and rationale for respecting each other's right to confidentiality and making certain that children understand the importance of not disclosing other members's personal matters outside the group. While the group is confidential, it is important to assure children that it is acceptable and desirable for them to discuss their own group experience with parents or friends.

B. Arrive on Time

C. One person talks at a time

D. Use listening behaviors:

Look at the person talking

Listen

Body still and quiet

E. No put-downs

Incentive System(optional): To engage the students cooperation quickly, an incentive system can be established at the beginning to reward the group for behaving according to the guidelines that they have established. A chart for stars ("All of the kids are stars in this show") can be posted at the front of the room. At variable times the leaders can look at the group and determine whether they are choosing to use their listening and cooperating behaviors. If they are, the group is awarded a star, and if not, a minus can be placed on the chart. An emphasis on rewarding the positive behaviors with many stars at the beginning can set the tone for the entire group process. The chart can also be carried into the video staging area to assist with the transition into video taping. At the end of the session, if the number of stars are greater than the number of minuses, each child is given a small reward/incentive.

4. Identifying real-life problems that kids have.

Let's take a look at some different kinds of problems people have. We are going to watch some video clips. For each clip, we want you to see if you can answer two questions: 1) what is the problem? (what has to be solved in the situation); and 2) how do the characters feel?

Videos: use some clips from common T.V. programs that illustrate a problem and a feeling. Examples include shows such as "I Love Lucy," "Beethoven," "The Wonder Years," and "ET." (Remember to honor all copyright laws).

Discuss each problem after the clip has been shown. Refer to a feeling chart to help the children increase their feeling vocabulary.

5. Homework.

Introduce homework in the following way:

We showed you some pretend problems. But now it's your turn. We want to make a really great movie in this group and to do that we need situations from real life. During the next week we want you to be a PROBLEM DETECTIVE. Watch what happens during the week and see if you can find real problems that kids face every day, write them down on your "Problem Detective List" (See handout at end of chapter). Then next week we should have some interesting situations to use in our film making.

Let's take a look at someone else's PROBLEM DETECTIVE LIST.

- A. You don't have time to do your homework*
- B. You really hate what your mother made for dinner.*
- C. You want a new game or toy.*
- D. You have to decide what you want to eat at a restaurant.*
- E. You have to decide if you are going to play sports.*
- F. You are bored.*

You may find some of these same problems this week, or others

Hand out PROBLEM DETECTIVE LIST.

Let's begin by having everyone think of one problem that they noticed today. I can think of one that everyone in this room experienced. Remember problems are times when you have choices and you have to figure out what to do. Didn't everyone come to a new group where they didn't quite know what to expect and didn't know who would be here? That's a problem because you had choices. You could come in and act friendly, come in and be silent, come in and act mad or goof around. Each of you can get a head start on your

homework by listing a problem for number One.

Now that you've seen how easy it is to identify problems, do you see the box at the bottom of the page, with the word GOAL next to it? Everyone knows what a goal is, right. A goal is something that we want, or something we want to achieve. Set yourself a goal: How many problems do you want to think up. Write that number in the box. If you want an easy goal you can write 1, and you've already met that goal. Or you can set a harder goal.

Let's see how many problems our group can find this week!

6. Select a group name.

Now that the group has begun to interact and each one has a better understanding of the purpose of the group, have the members select a special name for their group. Brainstorm together and write everyone's suggestions on the board and then vote.

7. Review.

What is stress?

What does ICPS stand for?

What is "confidentiality"?

What is the homework?

T.V. Reporter Interview

1. Who do you live with?
2. What do you do for fun?
3. What are some things you are good at doing?

(This is _____ reporting to you live from the PCS Library where I've had the opportunity to interview a very important person. _____ (name) is in the 5th grade and lives . . . etc.

PROBLEM DETECTIVE LIST



Real Problems that Kids Have:

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

Name: _____

Date: _____

Goal: _____

Session 2

Problem Solving Has Steps

I. Goals:

1. To introduce the concept of structured step-by-step problem-solving as a means of achieving personal goals and avoiding conflict and distress.
2. To illustrate the value of deautomatizing emotional and behavioral reactions.
3. To introduce "Friendly Skills".

II. Activities:

1. Collect Homework.
2. Review Rules/Incentive
3. Present the five basic steps for solving problems.
4. Application: illustrate how the problem-solving steps are used.
5. Play a problem-solving game to reinforce knowledge of steps.
6. Children are introduced to role playing and use "friendly skills" in a role play to model successful social problem-solving.
7. Begin video preparation
8. Review

III. Materials:

1. Problem-Solving Poster (Steps written out on poster board)
2. VCR (optional)
3. Game or paper for teams

IV. Procedure:

1. Collect Homework

The leader welcomes each child and gathers up homework and gives a group star for each completed homework collected. If a child has not completed the homework, the leader matter-of-factly allows the child to finish it while eating their snack so that they too can contribute a star to the group chart. If the child is having difficulty, the leader can sit with the child and help him/her to complete it. This allows for each child to successfully complete the assignment and contribute to the group process. The homework is collected for use later in the group.

The total number of problems generated are counted and written on the board to show the group's progress. The group is reinforced for effort and participation.

Example: *Wow, the _____(group's name) are terrific problem*

detectives. You were able to come up with ____ problems! This is a great start! I can tell that you guys already have some experience in dealing with problems.

2. Review the Group Rules and Incentive System

Ask the children if they remember what the group rules were that they established the week before and praise them for remembering.

3. Leader presents the five basic steps for solving problems

The leader presents and explains each problem-solving step to the group using a poster board with the steps prominently displayed. This poster can be used in future group meetings. The steps can be introduced in the following way:

Today we are going to talk about the problem-solving steps and how we make decisions. What decisions have you made today? (What to wear, how to fix your hair, what you'll eat for lunch etc).

On the board write two words:

Decision Problem

We make lots of decisions every day, about what we do and how we are going to behave. Most of the decisions that we have to make are pretty easy, like what we're going to wear. But sometimes it's hard to decide what to do. A decision becomes a problem when we aren't sure what to do, or what decision to make.

On the board add:

Goals (with connecting arrows to problem)

A goal is something we want. Imagine that you want to go down a street to a friend's house and a tree has fallen in the road. What is your goal? (Get to friend's house). What is your problem? (tree)

*****Solving a problem is easiest if we do it one step at a time.*****

STEP 1: What is the Problem?

First you have to stop and think. This gives you time so that you can decide what to do. That way you stay in control of the problem, rather than the problem controlling you. Ask yourself: "What is the problem and how do I feel?" Your feelings can make a big difference in the way that you will handle the problem. How you define the problem actually

determines the goals. The problem needs to be stated in specific behavioral terms rather than vague ideas. When you define the problem accurately you leave open the possibility to find a solution.

Write examples on the board and have the children select which statement is most specific and the goal that is implied in the statement:

I got a bad grade (goal: to get better grades)
or
I had bad luck

I'm not popular
or
I have a hard time making friends
(goal: to learn how to make friends)

STEP 2: What are my choices?

This next step is to think of as many solutions as you possible can. Ask yourself, "What are all the things I could do?" This is the time for brainstorming without judging the quality of the solution. This is the time to free up the imagination and be creative without any critical evaluation of consequences. You can think of choices that are silly, far-fetched, bad or sensible.

We used this step when we were trying to decide on a group name. We brainstormed and thought of many possible names. Some were silly and some were good. The more we thought of, the better the ideas got. What would have happened if we just used the first name that someone thought of.

STEP 3: What might happen?

Ask yourself, "If I try a solution, what might happen next?" As you think about the possible consequences for your choice you can also ask yourself :

Will this solution will make me feel good about myself?
Is it responsible?
Will it make the people I care about happy?
Is it good for me?
Is it the most important thing to do?

STEP 4: Make a choice and do it.

The next step is to pick the best solution and carry it out in real life. Sometimes we can think of what we should do, but actually doing

it may take courage and practice.

STEP 5: Evaluate - How did it work?

Decide whether your solution worked. If it worked, it's important to pat yourself on the back. If it didn't work so well, consider the reason why and try another one of your solutions.

4. Application

Read a few of the problems that the children generated on their homework assignment or look at a video clip from a favorite T.V. program where someone is experiencing a problem. Lead a discussion using the 5 steps to determine if the children can apply the five steps to a specific situation.

5. Play a game to reinforce the problem-solving steps

There are a number of game formats that can be used to reinforce the concepts.

*Option 1: Have the children divide into two teams. The leader reads a problem from the "Problem Detective" sheets and each team tries to come up with as many solutions as they can and then choose one. Using a timer creates a fun challenge for the teams.

*Option 2: Play the "Road to Problem Mastery" by ChildsPlay

6. Introduce Role Playing using Friendly Skills

Practice role-playing using the following Problem:

Step 1: The problem is meeting new people and having positive interactions with them.

Step 2: One solution is LASS (1. look -make eye contact, 2. ask a positive question, 3. smile, 4. share something about yourself).

Step 3: What will happen if? If you do LASS, what do you think might happen?

Step 4: Try it. Have each child try out the skills.

Step 5: How did it work? How did it feel?

7. Homework

Hand out "Solution Detective" sheet. Have each child determine a goal of how

many problems they want to find solutions to this week and write down the steps they took for finding the solutions just like they did in class.

7. Video Preparation

The children can begin to talk about how they want to begin their video about dealing with stress. They can focus on how they want to introduce the group, and how they want to teach the steps for solving problems. This may be a good time to select a camera person and a director for the first scene. These can change each scene. One child may volunteer to write down the ideas for the first scene and bring them to the next session. Others may want to draw some posters for background artwork or to display of the group name and others may have ideas for props. Emphasis is placed on group cooperation and how the video will be used to teach some of the skills for coping with stress to their parents.

Usually this is a highly motivating aspect of the group process, and the kids may feel frustrated that more time is not allotted at the beginning for making the video. They can be reminded that it is important for them to first learn the skills, and then they can make a great video to teach their parents. Doing the video preparation at the end of the session injects energy and excitement at a time when they may normally be feeling fatigued or bored.

8. Review

What are the steps for solving problems?

If you want to be friendly, what steps could you follow?

Solution Detective



1. What is the problem?

I would feel _____

My goal is _____

2. What are my choices?

3. What might happen?

4. Which should I choose?

5. Did it work?

Name: _____

Goal: _____

Session 3

Turning Problems into Goals

I. Goals:

1. To consolidate Problem-Solving and Friendly Skills
2. To introduce Personal Goal-setting

II. Activities:

1. Review Homework
2. Setting Good Goals
3. Homework: Setting Personal Goals
4. Video Tape
5. Review

III. Materials:

1. Video Equipment
2. Easel or Chalk Board
3. Personal Problem-Solving Worksheet

IV. Procedure:

1. Review Homework

Greet each child as they arrive. Praise them for bringing in their homework or any effort they made during the week. For those who do not bring their homework sheet with them, give them a sheet to fill out at the beginning. Once everyone has arrived, ask how their homework assignment went and if anyone would like to share their problem and solution with the group. Emphasize the number of solutions and the pros and cons of each possible solution.

Divide the group into two and have each small group select a problem and solution to act out in front of the group.

2. Setting Good Goals

In step one of problem solving we ask "What is the problem". If we state the problem in specific behavioral terms that will help us decide what our goal will be. Today I want to talk about setting goals. In order for us to reach our goals they must be specific and realistic.

Prior to the session write on the board or easel the following:

Setting Reachable Goals

A. Goals should be specific

Poor Goals

I want to have more fun.

I want to do well in school.

Good Goals

I want to call my best friend every day.

I want to finish my homework carefully every day.

B. Goals should be realistic.

Poor Goals

I want to get straight A's

I want to be the most popular kid in the school.

Good Goals

I want to improve my grades by one letter grade.

I will start a conversation with someone who I would like to become better friends with.

First show the children the poor goals while keeping the good goals covered up, and ask them to come up with examples of better goals. Ask: *Which goals are most reachable?*

3. Homework

Now I want each of you to think of a problem you want to work on and think of one personal goal for this week. (Pass out "Personal Problem Solving" worksheet) First you will write down a goal and then write out your plan of action for this week.

Use one of the above "Good Goals" as an example and illustrate the plan that could be used.

Give the children a few minutes to fill out the top part of their worksheet and then ask each child to tell the group their goal and plan. As each child tells their goal, have the group help them to make it "specific" and "realistic". Modify the goal accordingly. Ask each child if they would be willing to work on this for a week. Praise each child for their effort and determination in setting great goals.

Ask each child to think of a time each day that they could stop to check their goal worksheet. This is how we can tell if the plan is working and if we are reaching our goals. Walk them through each section using a particular goal as an example. Pass out "stars" that the children can use on their charts for each part they completed that day:

GOAL:	Did I work on my goal?
PLAN	Did I remember my plan?
DO:	Did I do what I planned?
CHECK:	Did I check to see if my plan worked?

The leader could also select a personal goal of their own to work on and model for the group how they would write and follow the plan. It is suggested that the leader share their goal after the children develop their goals since they may be inclined to want to mimic the leader's goals instead of developing their own.

4. Video-taping

Begin rehearsing the introductory segment of the video: presenting the group and the steps for problem solving. If the group is ready, the segment can be taped. The children will love to view the tape immediately if possible. This gives them an immediate success experience; it serves as a self modeling tool for reinforcing the skills; and it also motivates the children to learn the material adequately in order to create the next segments of the video.

The leaders may need to write the children's ideas into a script and put the lines on to cue cards. If a problem comes up within the group (eg. conflict over who will be the director, frustration over a member that is disruptive), this is an excellent chance to use the steps and role play a solution to use on the video. This continues to personalize the video for the group.

5. Review

What are two things you can do to make goals reachable?
How can you know if your plan is working?

Personal Problem-Solving



PERSONAL GOAL:



PLAN:

Pick one time each day to think about your personal problem-solving. Then check to see if you used the "Goal", "Plan," "Do," "Check" steps. Give yourself a star if you used the step each day.

DAY	GOAL Did I work on my GOAL?	PLAN Did I remember my PLAN?	DO Did I DO what I planned?	CHECK Did I CHECK to see if my plan worked?
Mon.				
Tues.				
Wed.				
Thurs.				
Friday				
Sat.				
Sun.				



Session 4

Taking Your Emotional Temperature

I. Goals:

1. To introduce the idea that feelings are associated with what happens in our lives.
2. To discover how each participant deals with stress and begin to teach self-monitoring of stress levels.
4. To introduce relaxation techniques.
5. Continue video-taping.

II. Activities:

1. Review homework.
2. Have each person develop their own "Emotional Temperature" graph.
3. Teach and practice progressive relaxation technique.
4. Continue video-taping.

III. Materials

1. Chalk board/easel
2. Video equipment, cue cards
3. Snacks/incentives.

IV. Procedure:

1. Review homework

Now that you have been working on your personal goals this week , let me hear how your plan is going and if it is working or if we need to change it..

Check in with each child to see if they remembered what their personal goal and plan was for the week and if it was working. If the child was successful with their goal ask them how they feel. If the child appears stuck, use the group to brainstorm solutions together and design a better plan. Praise each child for their effort.

Have the children continue working on their goals until the next session. Some will need to modify their plan (make it more specific, realistic), some will continue to use their same plan, and others may want to try a new goal.

Have the children help summarize the process by asking:

So now that you have had some practice with solutions and goals, how

do you think problem solving and goal setting can help us?

Allow the children to come up with answers which may include: being more successful, feeling better, making my parents happy.

2. Developing your own "Emotional Temperature" graph.

Introduce the concept of mood monitoring:

How we feel is linked to the kinds of problems or situations that we are faced with every day. That is why we ask ourselves during the first step: "How do I feel?". Finding out how you feel is like taking your temperature. It often helps to figure out how you are feeling because feelings can help us sometimes. Sometimes feelings let you know that there is a problem, and sometimes the way you feel can be a problem. Sometimes you have to take care of the feeling first before you can solve the problem.

Pass out "Taking Your Emotional Temperature" chart. Have the children think of what they feel like and what is happening when they are the most stressed they have ever been, when they are a "ten" on the chart. Ask them to write down the feelings and kinds of situations next to the "10" on the chart. Emphasize that each person's chart may be different because each person may feel different when they are stressed out. Some may feel angry, nervous, upset etc.

Next have the children think of what they are doing and how they feel when they are a "1," when they are happy, peaceful, and not pressured. Write these situations and feelings at the bottom.

Next have the children describe how they feel at a '5" when they are between happy and stressed-out. If they can, have them complete the other numbers on the chart.

Ask if anyone felt stressed out today. If anyone says "yes", ask if they could rate them self. What was their stress rating? If the child wants to, have them share what was happening that made them stressed out. If they don't want to share the situation, focus on how great it is that they are developing the ability to monitor their own stress.

3. Relaxation

Introduce the concept of relaxation:

If you focus on your feelings first, you can check things out, and get some control over the situation before it controls you. For example, if you feel really tense, sad, or mad it may get in your way of solving the problem. Or it may just feel bad. What you can do is help yourself calm down.

Introduce the "stress meter" and pass around (a mood ring or a disk that is sensitive to skin temperature can be used). Explain the physiology of stress:

When you are really stressed-out, the blood rushes to your heart because it is beating faster and there is less blood in our hands and feet. This makes your finger tips cooler. Many times when your fingers are cold it is a sign that you are experiencing stress. The "stress meter" takes your stress temperature.

Then introduce the relaxation techniques.

I would like everyone to put down their papers and find a comfortable spot where your body can totally relax. When you are comfortable I'd like you to close your eyes.

Introduce two techniques. First have the children practice deep breathing and backward counting. The next technique is the Jacobson Progressive deep muscle relaxation technique that involves tensing and relaxing major muscle groups combined with deep breathing.

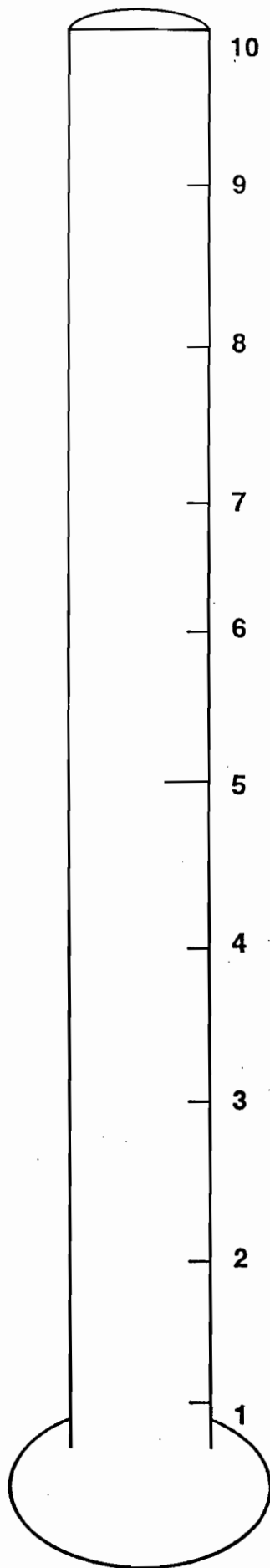
When the exercise is over, ask the children to tell how they are feeling.

When you are really stressed-out, this is one way that you can get control of the problem before it controls you. Once you are relaxed, then you can begin the steps for solving the problem. Some kids use these techniques to help them fall asleep at night. Some have even used them sitting at their desk in class: they use deep breathing and tighten their fist under the desk where no one can see.

4. Video-taping

Continue the video-taping process. Some may want to role play a scene where they felt really stressed-out and used relaxation to get their control back before solving the problem.

Taking Your Emotional Temperature



Session 5

Emotional Spirals

Goals:

1. To consolidate and reinforce information from first four sessions.
2. To introduce concept of emotional spirals.
3. To show how relaxation strategies can be used to control emotional temperature.
4. To show how problem-solving steps can be used to turn downward spirals into upward spirals.

II. Activities

1. Homework review.
2. Quiz
3. Introduce "Emotional Spirals" and reinforce through a role-play game.
4. Homework: Catch a Spiral.
5. Rehearsal and Video-taping.
6. Review

III. Materials:

1. Quiz
2. Chalkboard/easel
3. Emotional spiral handouts
4. Index cards with problems written on them.
5. "Catch a spiral" worksheet.

IV. Activities:

1. Homework review.

Review the GOAL, PLAN, DO, CHECK worksheets that the students completed during the week. Acknowledge each student's effort even if they did not complete the assignment. If they did not complete the assignment, determine if their plan was unrealistic or not specific enough. For those that completed some of the assignment, emphasize how they feel after completing a goal. The satisfaction one gets from working toward a goal can help us feel better.

Leader collects homework and keeps each child's work in a folder that will be given back to them at the end of the group.

2. Quiz

Pass out quiz and allow the students 5 minutes to complete. Each person can grade their own as the leader reviews the answers.

3. Emotional Spirals

On the board or easel draw out a downward emotional spiral. Emotional spirals can be introduced by first reviewing last week's lesson on emotional temperature. The leader could say the

following:

Last week we talked about how your feelings or mood is affected by the kinds of problems and situations you have to deal with. Some of you shared that situations caused your stress level to be a nine or ten on the "emotional temperature chart" and other situations maybe raised your stress level to a just 3 or 4. We discussed how sometimes we have to get control of our feelings before we can actually solve the problem. What was one way we discussed to get control of the stressed feelings? (Through relaxation) That's right! Relaxing can help us get control of our stress before it controls us. Did anyone have a chance to practice relaxing this week?

Allow children the opportunity to share their experiences with stress and relaxation this past week.

Now I want to talk about "emotional spirals". Sometimes you can feel stress, sad or mad and those feelings become a big problem. (Handout emotional spiral charts and demonstrate using downward spiral chart on the chalkboard) For example: sometimes you can feel stressed out, then you feel crabby, and then maybe you get an attitude. When you feel that way sometimes you may withdraw or stay by yourself and do less fun things or say or do things that get you into trouble and make you feel worse. Then you feel even more stressed out and withdraw more or do more things that make you feel even worse. Has this ever happened to any of you? Write down some of the things you do that cause you to go on a downward spiral.

We also have the reverse or upward spiral (Demonstrate using upward spiral chart on chalk board). This happens when you do something well and then you feel good. When you feel good, you do fun things which makes you feel better. When you feel good, you tend to do things better which helps you to feel even better. Write down some of the things you do that cause you to go on an upward spiral.

What is great about problem solving and relaxation is that it can help you turn a downward spiral into an upward spiral!

So let's say that you are feeling sad or depressed and your goal is to feel happier. What kind of plan would you have? (List things that would create an upward spiral)

Role Play Game

The children are divided into two teams. The goal is to show how you can change downward spirals to upward spirals through problem-solving and relaxation to control emotional temperature. Problems have been written on index cards using the lists that the children came up with from the problem detective sheet and others generated by the leader that could include:

Overslept

Tom's little brother always bugs him while he is playing with his friend.

Forgetting homework

Joining a new group

The leader draws an index card and reads the problem. Each team is given 3 minutes to generate as many solutions as possible. One point is given for each solution. The team is then asked to pick one solution and role-play it. Each team gets five points for a completed solution.

4. Homework: Catch a spiral.

Pass out Catch a Spiral chart. Have the children identify moments when their emotional temperature is high and find moments when their emotional temperature is low. Set a goal as to how many situations each will rate before the next session. Identify: 1. What the trigger is (situation/problem) 2. Rate your emotional temperature 3. What are you feeling and thinking 4. What did you do? 5. Again rate your emotional temperature? Was this an upward or downward spiral?

Walk through one example with the children.

5. Rehearsal and video-taping

Continuing video-taping. A Role-play from the game could be used or one of the goals they worked on during the week can be dramatized.

6. Review

What is an emotional spiral?

How can we change a downward spiral into an upward spiral?

Name: _____
Date: _____

I C.O.P.E. Quiz

1. What does I C.O.P.E. stand for?

2. Anytime you have to come up with a solution, figure out what to do, or choose what you want to do you have a _____.

- a) stomach ache
- b) problem
- c) none of the above

3. Solving a problem is easiest and more likely to work out best for you if you _____.

- a) think about it one step at a time
- b) act without thinking
- c) forget about it

4. Solving a problem is easiest if we follow these steps:

- a)
 - 1. Spend time alone
 - 2. watch television
 - 3. go to sleep
- b) Ask:
 - 1. What is the problem?
 - 2. What are my choices?
 - 3. What will happen if?
 - 4. Which should I choose?
 - 5. How did it work?
- c) none of the above

5. If you want to be friendly you should follow these steps:

- a)
 - 1. look at the person
 - 2. ask a positive question
 - 3. share something about yourself
 - 4. smile
- b)
 - 1. look down
 - 2. don't say anything
 - 3. keep a frown on your face
- c) none of the above

6. When you set a good personal goal it should be _____ and _____.

- a) confusing and impossible
- b) long and hard
- c) specific and realistic
- d) none of the above

7. Taking your emotional temperature _____.

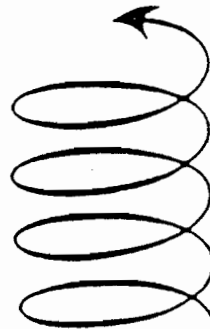
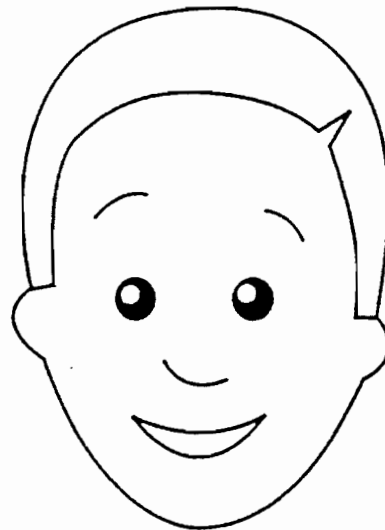
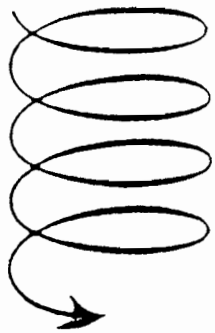
- a) is something only doctors should do.
- b) helps you to know how stressed out you are before you decide what to do.
- c) can only be done when you are alone.

8. Circle all of the things you can do to relax and get control of your feelings before they control you:

- a) pray
- b) yell at your mom
- c) count backwards and take slow deep breaths
- d) worry while thinking about the problem over and over
- e) tense your muscles and then relax them starting from your toes going all the way up to the top of your head.
- f) Think about beautiful things

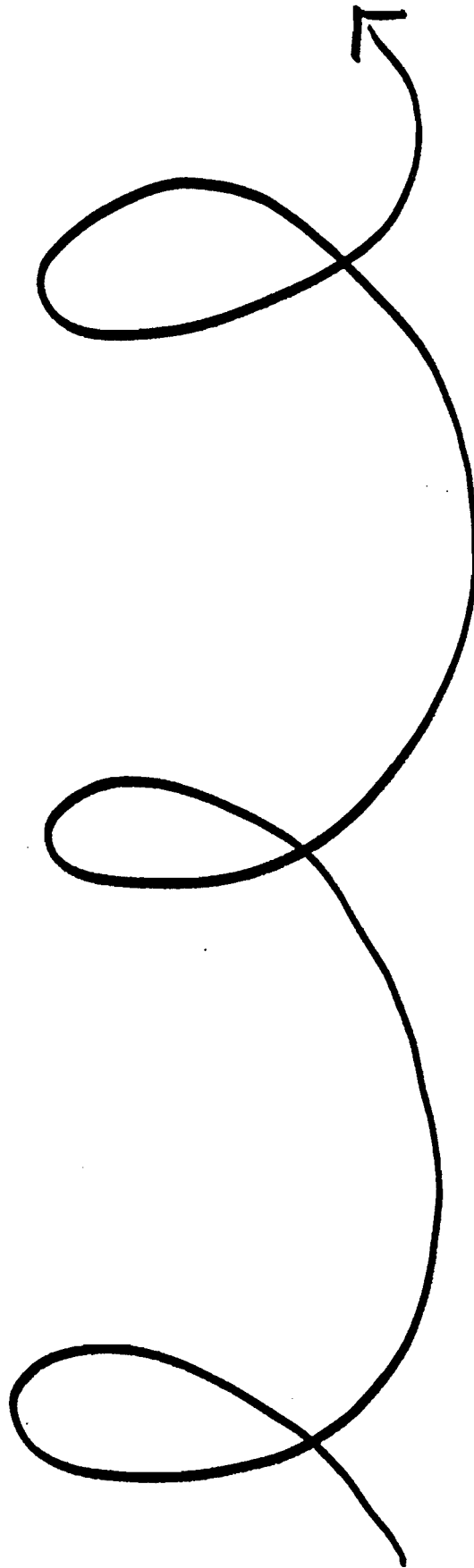
Congratulations!: You are on your way to feeling great and being an effective problem-solver !

Emotional Spirals

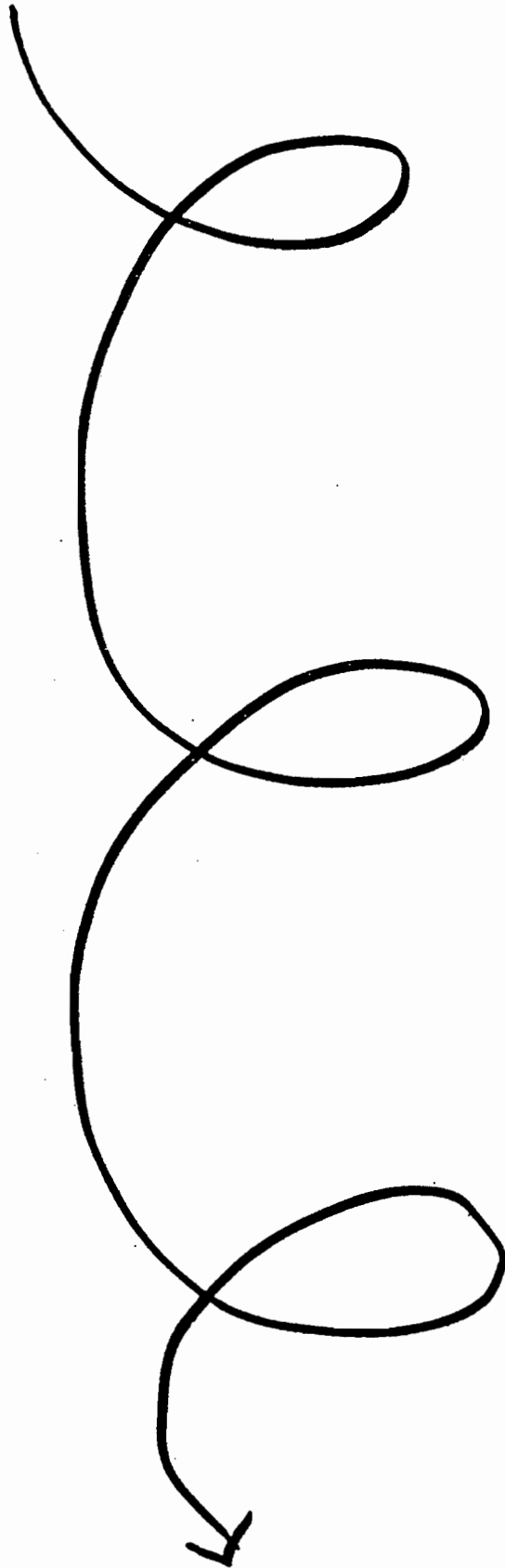


Name: _____

UPWARD SPIRAL

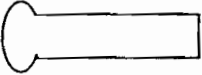
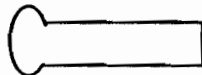

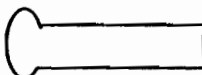
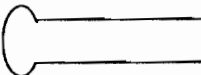
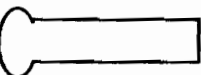
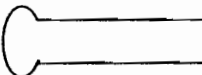
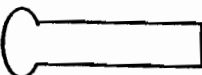


DOWNWARD SPIRAL



Catch a Spiral

Goal: upwar _____
downward _____

Situation	Rating What was your emotional temperature?	Feeling/Thinking What are you feeling and thinking?	Do What did you do?	Rating What is your rating now?	Up/Down Was this an upward or downward spiral?
					
					
					
					

Session 6

Turning Downward Spirals into Upward Spirals Having Fun

I. Goals

1. Introduce the idea that pleasant activities can help turn downward spirals into upward spirals.
2. Teach children to observe them self and gain baseline information that can help in setting goals.

II. Tasks

1. Review Homework
2. Introduce Baselineing of Pleasant Activities
3. Homework
4. Video-taping
5. Review

III. Materials

1. Chalkboard/easel
2. Fun Activities Chart
3. Baselineing Chart: How Much Fun Do You Have?
4. Video equipment/props

IV. Procedure

1. Review Homework

Have the children share what they found in their "Catch a Spiral" exercise. Emphasize the differences between upward and downward spirals with the goals of a) identifying situational triggers for upward and downward spirals, and b) identifying actions/behaviors that are associated with upward and downward spirals.

2. Baselineing: How Much Fun Do You Have?

Introduce the idea that having more fun in your life is one way to help turn downward spirals into upward spirals. Use examples from the children's homework. Lead a discussion about fun activities and ask such questions as:

How many here feel good when you are having fun?

What kinds of things do you do to have fun?

Do you have to go to Disneyland to have fun?

Psychologists have found that people who are sad or feeling down often do not have enough fun in their lives. If you were to set a goal to have more fun in your lives what are some things you might have to do to accomplish that goal? (Write children's answers on the board and make sure that the following ideas are included:

1. **Plan ahead.** Think of possible problems and use your problem-solving steps to plan for them. For example: who will drive you to the movies? Schedule activities in advance and make a plan of how you are going to do it.

2. **To Do List.** Make a "to do list" so that other things do not interfere with you plans. What do you really need to do before you can have fun: homework, chores. It is important to keep a balance between things that you have to do and things that you want to do.

3. **When & Where.** Set a time and place.

4. **Promise.** Make a commitment to another person.

Introduce the concept of baselining:

This week we are going to run a little experiment to answer two questions (These can be written on the board) 1. Is it really true that you feel better when you are having fun, and 2. Are you having enough fun in your life? In order to do this we are going to use a special detective technique called "Baselining". Baseline will help you keep track of how much fun you are having. The really important thing about baselining is that it gives us information and we can use that information to set goals. For example through Baselining you might find out that you are only doing 2 fun things a week, so the next week you might set a goal of doing at least one fun activity a day. Baselining involves two major parts:

- 1. You have to watch yourself really carefully.*
- 2. Count something specific.*

Each person is going to observe themselves this week and count how many fun activities they do each day.

3. Homework

Pass out worksheet on Social and Success activities, and have the children complete the questions together as you read them outloud. At the end find out how many feel happiest when they are participating in social activities or in success activities or both. Emphasize how each kid might be different as to what kinds of activities they find fun or pleasant. This will be important information when they are planning their homework or experiment for the week.

Next pass out the activities sheet and have each child circle ten activities that

FEEL GOOD: DO FUN THINGS
INCREASING PLEASANT ACTIVITIES

1. Write "soc" next to the activities below that are pleasant social activities. Write "suc" next to activities that are success activities. Leave the line blank if the activity doesn't fit either category.

- _____ Meeting a new friend
- _____ Doing a good job getting my homework done
- _____ Having a friend visit
- _____ Doing a job well
- _____ Being with someone you like
- _____ Learning to do something new
- _____ Solving a problem
- _____ Talking to a friend on the telephone

2. Which activities make you feel happiest?

- _____ Social activities
- _____ Success activities
- _____ Both social and success activities



Name: _____

Date: _____

Feeling Good: Do more fun activities!



Directions: Circle the 10 activities that you enjoy the most.

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Going to a movie | 2. Calling a friend | 3. Riding a bike |
| 4. Listening to music | 5. Watching TV | 6. Hanging out with friends |
| 7. Roller skating | 8. Playing sports | 9. Sitting in the sun |
| 10. Doing your nails | 11. Going for a walk | 12. Eating a favorite meal |
| 13. Reading magazines | 14. Taking a relaxing bath | 15. Playing a musical instrument |
| 16. Gardening | 17. Earning money | 16. Telling or hearing jokes |
| 19. Hiking | 20. Working on a hobby | 21. Planning or having a party |
| 22. Dancing | 23. Playing games or cards | 24. Swimming |
| 25. Drawing, painting | 26. Build something | 27. Singing or acting |
| 27. Writing stories | 29. Writing letters | 30. Playing with pets |
| 3. Listening to the radio | 32. Going to the beach | 33. Eating a favorite dessert |
| 34. Reading a book | 35. Solving a puzzle | 36. Drinking my favorite drink |
| 37. Doing crafts | 38. Listening to nature | 39. Calling a friend |
| 40. Getting a back rub | 41. Helping someone | 42. Shopping |
| 43. Wrestling | 44. Giving someone advice | 45. Using the computer |
| 46. Playing video games | 47. Being with my parents | 48. Cooking |
| 49. Going to a restaurant | 50. Giving hugs | 51. Writing in my diary |
| 52. Praying | 53. Doing someone a favor | 54. Running |
| 55. Walking barefoot | 56. Playing frisbee or catch | 57. Renting a videotape |
| 58. Sit by the fire | 59. Sleeping late | 60. Sewing or needlework |
| 61. Doing housework | 62. Going to the library | 63. Smiling at people |
| 64. Eating snacks | 65. Expressing my love | 66. Going to garage sales |
| 67. Going to church | 68. Reading cartoons, comics | 69. Riding in the car |
| 70. Looking at the moon/stars | 71. Going to a museum | 72. Teaching someone |
| 73. Having a picnic | 74. _____ | 75. _____ |

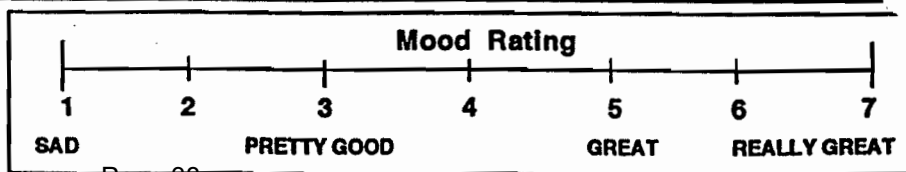


Name: _____

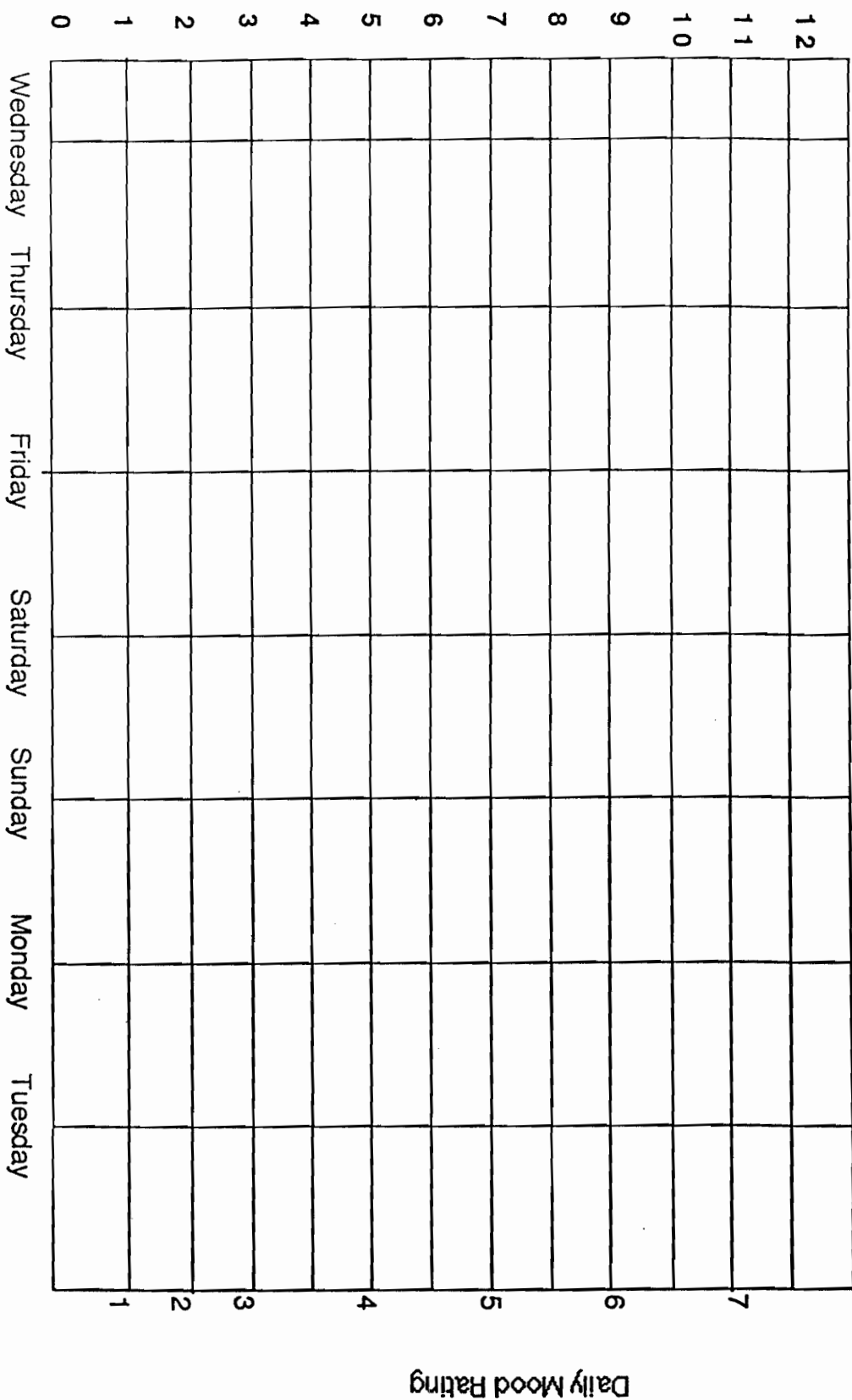
Date: _____

How Much Fun Do You Have?

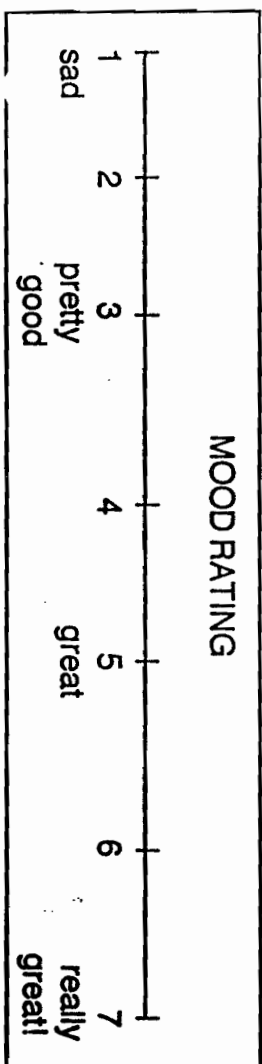
Choose 10 FUN Activities	Thurs	Friday	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
7.						
8.						
9.						
10.						
DAILY TOTALS						
MOOD RATING						



's GRAPH OF FUN AND MOOD



pen = Stress Rating
pen = FUN Activities



Session 7

Turning Downward Spirals into Upward Spirals: Controlling Your Thinking

I. GOALS

1. To help each student identify his or her most frequent negative and positive thoughts.
2. Introduce the idea of "thought stopping" to help each child to get control of their negative thinking.
3. Practice replacing each negative thought with at least two positive thoughts.

II. TASKS

1. Review homework
2. Introduce FAT
3. Recognizing negative thoughts
4. "Thought stopping"
5. Homework
6. Video-taping
7. Review

III. MATERIALS

1. Chalkboard/easel
2. Fun activity graph
3. Handout: cartoons, frequent negative & positive thoughts
3. Elastic wrist bands
4. Think Positive homework sheet
5. Video equipment/props

IV. PROCEDURES

1. Review Homework

We are going to use the results of your homework to test the hypothesis that your mood is better when you do more fun activities.

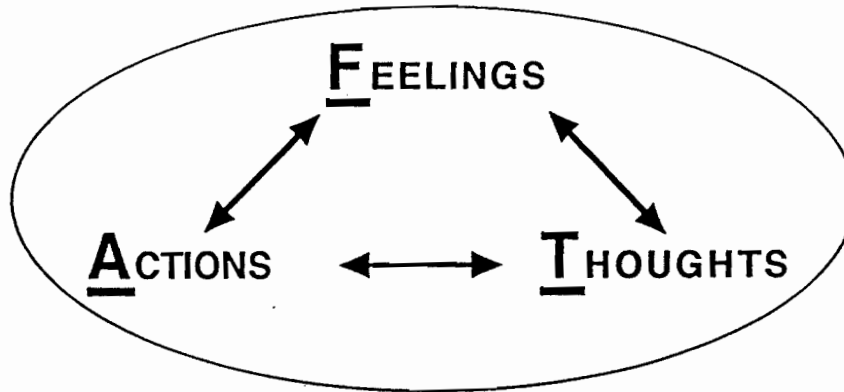
Have each child do their own graph. If time allows, do a large group graph on the board by averaging the group's total score for the day. Ask the questions:

*Is it true that your mood is better when you do more fun activities?
Does anyone think that they need more fun in their life?
What could your goal be for next week?*

2. Introduce FAT

We have been talking about how we turn our downward spirals into upward spirals. What are some ways that we have already discussed? (problem-solving, relaxing, having more fun).

The trick is FAT. (Write on the board)



Everyone's personality is made up of Feelings, Actions, and Thoughts. Each part affects the other part. We have been talking about the link between feelings and actions. We have looked at the kinds of actions that help us feel better and turn our spirals upward. Today we are going to discuss the second link: feelings and thoughts.

Thoughts also have a lot to do with how we feel. For example, let's say you are home alone and it's raining very hard and it's late at night. You hear a crashing noise in the other room. If you think: "it's a burglar coming to get me," how would you feel? That's right, you'd feel scared. Let's say that you are home alone late one night and it is raining hard. You hear a crashing noise in the other room. This time you think "my cat just knocked over a glass that I left on the counter in the kitchen and it broke." How would you feel? You wouldn't feel frightened, rather you might be upset with your cat or you might think, "I better go clean it up."

Let's try another example: Let's say you called a friend on the phone and asked them to go swimming with you and they say no, they can't go. If you think they said no because they think you are nerd, how would you feel? What about if the same thing happens and you think that their parents probably told him/her that they couldn't go because there was something else planned. How would you feel then?

That's right! How we think about an event has a lot to do with how we feel about an event. Kids that feel bad tend to have many more negative thoughts and fewer positive thoughts.

Everyone has negative thoughts sometimes, and sometimes there are good reasons for having negative thoughts. But negative thoughts become a problem, if you have too many of them because they make you feel sad, stressed out, or down.

*A **positive thought** is a thought that helps you to focus on the good things about yourself, another person, your life, a situation, or your future.*

*A **negative thought** keeps your focus on things that you don't like about yourself, things that bother you, things that bother you about other people, your life, and your future.*

*For the past week we have been focusing on our actions by increasing the amount of FUN activities in our life. **What kind of goals would you have if you were going to change your thinking?** (Increase positive thoughts, decrease negative thoughts)*

Do you believe that you can control your thoughts?

("No": We often believe that we can't control our thoughts, but it is possible. We'll be learning some way to help us do this today. "Yes": What are some ways to do this?)

3. Recognizing negative thoughts

Before we can control our thoughts, we must become aware of them. Sometimes feelings seem to just pop up and it's hard to tell where they come from. Many times the feelings actually come from thoughts we are having but it is often hard to notice these thoughts because they go so fast. We're usually unaware of them, but, with practice we can become more aware of them. In fact, you can learn to catch them and then control them before they send you on a downward spiral.

Let's look at some thoughts that kids have. (Show cartoons)

Exercise: "Example of positive and negative thoughts" worksheets.

Here is a list of negative thoughts that tend to occur a lot with kids. Have you had any of these? Check the ones that are familiar to you. Add any thoughts that you have had that are not on the list. Next look at the list of positive thoughts and check the thoughts that you have had during the past month.

*I am going to describe some situations. I want you to write down a negative and a positive thought you might have **about yourself** in each situation. Add these thoughts to the lists you have started.*

- a. It's Monday, and you find out that some friends of yours went to a movie on Saturday and didn't invite you.*
- b. You have just finished a very hard test, and your best friend tells you that they thought the test was pretty easy.*
- c. You see a group of friends having fun together, and you're not with them.*

4. "Thought-stopping"

Pass out elastic wrist bands or rubber bands.

One way to help help you slow down and catch a negative thought is to use this wrist band. Every time you catch a negative thought, you stop it by snapping the band.

The rule is to have at least 2 positive thoughts for every negative thought. These are called positive counterthoughts.

Group game: divide into teams. Present situations from spirals and give a negative thought. See how many positive thoughts each team can come up with in three minutes.

5. Homework

The homework gives the children practice recognizing negative thoughts, stopping them, and replacing them with two positive counter-thoughts. Pass out "Think Positive" worksheets and work through a few examples with the children.

6. Video-taping

Continue video-taping.

7. Review

What is FAT?

What is a positive thought? a negative thought?

What is "thought-stopping"?

Name: _____

Date: _____

THINK POSITIVE

DAY	ACTIVATING EVENT	NEGATIVE THOUGHT	POSITIVE THOUGHT
MONDAY			
TUESDAY			
WEDNESDAY			
THURSDAY			
FRIDAY			
SATURDAY			
SUNDAY			
MONDAY			

Changing Your Thinking



EXAMPLES OF COMMON NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

Check All that Apply

- ☐ I'm confused.
- ☐ There is no love in the world.
- ☐ I am wasting my life.
- ☐ I'm scared.
- ☐ Nobody loves me.
- ☐ I'll end up living all alone.
- ☐ People don't consider friendship important anymore.
- ☐ I don't have any patience.
- ☐ What's the use?
- ☐ That was a dumb thing for me to do (or say).
- ☐ I'll probably have to be placed in a mental institution some day.
- ☐ Anybody who thinks I'm nice doesn't know the real me.
- ☐ Life has no meaning.
- ☐ I'm ugly.
- ☐ I can't express my feelings.
- ☐ I'll never find what I really want.
- ☐ I'm not capable of loving anyone.
- ☐ I am worthless.
- ☐ It's all my fault.
- ☐ Why do so many bad things happen to me?
- ☐ I can't think of anything that would be fun.
- ☐ I don't have what it takes to be successful.
- ☐ I'll never get over this depression.
- ☐ Things are so messed up that doing anything about them is useless.
- ☐ I don't have enough willpower.
- ☐ Why should I even bother getting up in the morning?

EXAMPLES OF COMMON NEGATIVE THOUGHTS (continued)

Check All that Apply

- ☐ I wish I were dead.
- ☐ I wonder if they are talking about me.
- ☐ Things are just going to get worse and worse.
- ☐ I have a bad temper.
- ☐ No matter how hard I try, people aren't satisfied.
- ☐ Life is unfair.
- ☐ I'll never make *any* good friends.
- ☐ I'm afraid to imagine what my life will be like in ten years.
- ☐ There is something wrong with me.
- ☐ I am selfish.
- ☐ My memory is lousy.
- ☐ I am not as good as _____.
- ☐ I get my feelings hurt easily.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

EXAMPLES OF POSITIVE THOUGHTS

Check All that Apply

- ☐ Life is interesting.
- ☐ I really feel great.
- ☐ I'm having fun.
- ☐ I have great hopes for the future.
- ☐ I think I can do a good job at this.
- ☐ I have good self-control.
- ☐ I have enough time to accomplish the things I want to do in life.
- ☐ I like people.
- ☐ People like me.
- ☐ I have a good sense of humor.
- ☐ There are some things that I'm very good at.
- ☐ I'm pretty lucky.
- ☐ I deserve to have good things happen.
- ☐ I have some very good friends.
- ☐ I can learn new skills to gain control of my mood.
- ☐ I can find a solution to most of the problems that come up.
- ☐ Other people think that I'm fun to be with.
- ☐ I'm a good listener.
- ☐ I'm OK the way I am.
- ☐ Even if things don't always go my way, I'll live through it.
- ☐ I have some skills (sports, reading, art, etc.) that I'm good at.
- ☐ I'm doing all right.
- ☐ Even if it's a rainy day, I can keep myself busy.
- ☐ I often receive compliments for doing something well.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Session 8

Negative Thoughts and Beliefs

I. Goals

1. Review how negative thoughts are turned into positive thoughts
2. To teach more skills for identifying negative thoughts
3. To reinforce and consolidate skills

II. Tasks

1. Review homework
2. Negative thoughts and beliefs
3. Homework
4. Video-taping

III. Materials

1. Chalkboard/easel
2. video equipment

IV. Procedures

1. Review homework

Ask the group how successful they felt they were at using their thought-stopping wrist band and if it helped them to reduce their negative thoughts. Allow each child an opportunity to give examples from their homework of negative thoughts and positive counter-thoughts. Developing positive counter-thoughts is often difficult for children, so take the time necessary to make sure that they are understanding the concept.

2. Negative thoughts and beliefs

One way to battle negative thoughts is to look at the whole thought behind it or the belief. The trick is to learn how to argue with your negative thoughts and challenge them to see if they are true. When you have a negative thought ask yourself:

Am I overreacting, jumping to conclusions or blowing things out of proportion?

eg. Because my friend won't go to the mall with me today this must mean that she does not like me and will never go with me again.

Am I exaggerating?

eg. when one thing is wrong, everything is wrong: "This has been a terrible day. My whole life is a mess."

Is this an unreasonable expectation?

eg. "I have to be liked by everyone" or "Life is terrible because my parents don't drive a Lexus."

Lets look at some thoughts that kids might have and ask these questions, and argue with it.

Have the children read one at a time outloud and practice arguing with the thought or belief and coming up with a positive counter thought.

1. I have to be perfect.
2. I can never make a mistake.
3. Everyone has to like me.
4. I'm worthless if everyone doesn't like me.
5. If I do one thing wrong I should feel guilty and be punished forever.
6. I can't control how I feel.
7. It's terrible when things aren't the way I'd like them to be.
8. Either I'm a wonderful person that everyone likes, or everyone hates me.

3. Homework

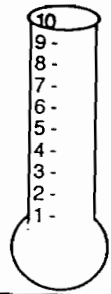
The homework is intended to help the child consolidate their problem solving skills and their positive thinking skills. Ask them to identify at least one problem during the next week that they would like to solve.

4. Video taping

I CAN SOLVE PROBLEMS ! ! !

Goal: _____

STEP 1: What is the problem?



STEP 2: What are my choices?
Actions

Negative:

Postive:

Thoughts

Negative:

Positive:

STEP 3: What might happen?

STEP 4: What is my choice?

STEP 5: How did it work?

Session 9

It Feels Good to Say Good Things to Others

I. Goals

1. Consolidate skills for coping with stress
2. To practice saying good things to others
3. Enhance self esteem by focusing on children's strengths, resources and accomplishments.
4. Promote smooth termination process.

II. Activities

1. Review homework
2. Discuss members feelings about the group ending
3. Complete "My Personal Stress Plan"
4. Play the "You're a Special Person Game"
5. Video Taping

III. Materials

1. "My Personal Stress Plan" sheets
2. Chalkboard/easel
3. Cards with each students name on them.
4. Video equipment

IV. Procedure

1. Review homework

Allow each child a chance to share how they used the steps for solving problems in the past week. Reinforce what the children have learned through praise and encouragement.

2. Discussion of Group Ending

Leaders should remind the children that there is only one more meeting with their parents and facilitate a discussion of their feelings and reactions. It is often helpful for the leaders to share their own feelings about the group ending and what the group has meant for them. If appropriate, reassure members that leaders will be available after the sessions end should a child wish to talk. Members sometimes want to continue their friendships beyond the group and may be encouraged to continue their supportive relationships with each other.

Give the children pre-printed invitations to invite their parents to the parent night or have them make their own.

3. "My Personal Stress Plan"

Have each child complete a personal stress plan in group. Emphasize that each person is different and may use different skills in coping with their own stress. The leaders should circulate around the room and help anyone who is stuck. The focus should be on reinforcing what they have already learned and praising them for their efforts.

4. "You're a Special Person Game"

This game is designed to enhance members' self esteem, to help them recognize their special strengths, and to experience how good it feels to say positive things to other people. The goal is to provide all the group members an opportunity to give and receive positive feedback from other members. The game is based on the assumption that all children have contributed significantly to the group by: being supportive, suggesting alternative solutions to problems, being a good listener, contributing to the video, and that it will enhance children's self-esteem to highlight those positive contributions.

*We have spent the last two weeks paying attention to our thoughts and practicing turning negative thoughts into positive thoughts. The next step is turning those positive thoughts into positive words about yourself and others. How do **you** feel when you say something positive to someone? That's right, everyone feels good when you say positive things about other people. It lets people know that you care enough to notice their strengths and effort. Can anyone give me an example of positive things you could say about members of this group?*

Have members first name as many positive qualities, preferably related to the group experience, as they can. List those characteristics on the board as they are suggested. Then, distribute writing paper (mounted on construction paper or tag board for long-term durability) with individual members' names on each. Ask children to write down whatever characteristics listed on the board (or relevant others they can think of) that describe a particular child. Rotate the papers around the group, so that each child can contribute written comments for all other group members. Then have each member read the comments for one other child while the leaders highlight the positive aspects of each person's unique contributions and strengths. (NOTE: Leaders may need to be actively involved in making sure that each child receives some positive feedback.) Although some children may be self-conscious and "giggly" during this exercise, those same children often keep their list well after the group ends!

5. Video-taping

This is the last opportunity to complete the video to be presented at the parent night. By now the children may be anxious about how the video is turning out and may want to spend most of the session video-taping, but the tape does not need to be long to effectively present the skills learned (5-10 minutes). The group may want to end the tape by introducing the group members and/or by giving a special message to their parents.



My Personal Stress Plan

Name:

Step One: What is the Problem?

Some problems that cause stress in my life are:

1. _____ ➔
2. _____ ➔
3. _____ ➔
4. _____ ➔
5. _____ ➔

Step Four: My Solution is:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Step Two: What are my Choices?

Some of my most upsetting negative thoughts are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Some positive counter thoughts are:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Some fun things I can do when I feel stressed are:

1. _____
3. _____

2. _____
4. _____

Some things I can do to relax and get control of my feelings are:

1. _____
3. _____

2. _____
4. _____

Some people I can talk to when I feel upset are: _____

Session 10

Family Night

I. Goals:

1. To promote generalization of the coping skills into their home
2. To reinforce the skills by allowing the children to be the experts
3. To promote self-esteem by allowing the children to feel good about what they have learned

II. Activities:

1. Introduction
2. Present Video
3. Game #1: Problem Solving
4. Game #2: Plan a Pleasant Activity
5. Game #3: Positive and Negative Thoughts
6. Game #4: Saying Positive Things
7. Closing

III. Materials:

1. Refreshments
2. Handouts for games, timer, pencils
3. Certificates of Completion
4. VCR
5. Posters: five steps for solving problems, FAT, spirals, tips for having fun
6. Student workbooks with completed assignments

IV. Procedure:

1. Introduction

Refreshments can be made available as people enter for the group. It is suggested that the chairs be arranged in a circle and that the children sit next to their parents. A general group welcome and introduction of leaders is made, and then the children are dismissed into another room for approximately 10 minutes with one of the leaders.

The children are asked to do two things:

- a. prepare certificates for their parents to give them after they teach them the skills
- b. write down three problems that parents could use to learn the steps for solving problems (one could be a feeling problem, a parent problem, a

family problem)

The leader will speak to the parents about the following:

- a. Allow the parents to introduce themselves to one another
- b. Present to the parents their role for the evening emphasizing the following points:
 - 1) *The goal of the group has been to teach the children a number of strategies for coping with stress and problems. We want to help your child to build their competence, sense that they can actively solve the problems in their lives, and promote positive and realistic attitudes.*
 - 2) *My goal tonight is to help you to help your children to use these skills in their real lives outside of the group. This is a critical step. Our hope is that by explaining what we have taught in the class to you, and giving you an opportunity to practice these skills with your child, you will be able to help your child to use these skills in his/her life.*
 - 3) *Because I want your child to feel good about their accomplishments, as this will increase the likelihood that they will use what we have taught them, we are going to let your children be the experts tonight and teach you what they have learned.*
 - 4) *We will demonstrate the major skills by a. showing you the video that the children made, and b. giving you an opportunity to play a series of games with your children that are designed to help your child to teach you the skills that he/she learned. **Your job this evening is to be an eager student and help your child to feel great about his/her accomplishments in the group.***

- c. Present a brief overview of the approach used with the children:

*We also want to provide for you a framework for the skills that we have taught the children. The approach that we have taken considers your personality as a three-part system that is made up of feelings, actions, and thoughts. (Refer to poster) With the kids we call this **FAT**. All three parts of your personality are interactive; that is, each part affects the others. Which part do you think is easiest to control or change? (Allow some time for the parents to respond)*

Most people try to change their emotions, since that is the area in which they are having problems. For example, they try to feel better first, but emotions or feelings are the hardest to change. It's much easier to change your thoughts and actions, and this, in turn, will change how you feel. This does not mean that we minimize the role of feelings. We

always ask the question, "How do I feel?" or "What is my emotional temperature?" because this may be the key to what we will do first.

When people are stressed-out, feeling down or sad, they also experience changes in their thoughts and actions. How do you think people's thoughts change when they are stressed or sad? (Allow time for the parents to respond).

When people are down, their thoughts become more pessimistic, they have doubts about their ability to do the things they enjoy, and they tend to view others and the world in general more negatively.

How do you think people's actions change when they are stressed or down? (Allow some time for parents to respond)

They stop doing the things they once enjoyed, they become quiet and withdrawn, they avoid social situations, and they tend to be passive and easily irritated.

When we feel down, we're less likely to do the things we enjoy and we begin to have doubts about our ability to be successful doing those things and this leads to a negative downward spiral (refer to poster).

On the other hand, when we are successful at something we feel good and we gain self-confidence. When we think that we can do something well, we feel good and we are more likely to do more things in the future. This is called a positive upward spiral. (refer to poster)

The best approach is to try to prevent or interrupt negative spirals before they become serious. The purpose of this group has been to teach some simple skills that will help them change the downward spiral to an upward one. The skills include: a. problem solving/goal setting, b. awareness of one's stress level through taking their emotional temperature and catching downward spirals, c. controlling feelings through relaxation, d. increasing positive interactions with good social skills, e. doing more fun activities, and f. changing negative thoughts into positive thoughts.

This may be a good time to see if the parents have any questions before the children are invited back in.

2. Video Presentation

The children are then welcomed back and the video tape is presented. After the video, the children are given their Certificates of Completion of the I.C.O.P.E. program and then presented with the task of continuing to teach their parents the skills.

3. Game #1: Problem Solving

Divide the group into two teams. The leader will read one of the problems written by the children and each team will fill out a problem-solving sheet. They will have three minutes to write down how they feel and come up with as many solutions as they can. Then they will be given one more minute to decide on which alternative they will select to solve their problem.

Points will be kept by the leader on the board as to how many possible solutions each team can come up with. Each team will read their solutions and tell which one they selected. Approximately three to four problems will be presented.

4. Game #2: Scheduling Fun Activities

During the group the children ran an experiment and found that they felt best on days that they did more fun or pleasant activities. So we talked about things that they could do each day to make their life more fun. In this next activity I would like each family to come up with a list of things that they like to do together and then select one of these and make a plan for doing it. (Refer to poster: Tips for planning fun activities)

Allow 5 to 10 minutes for each family to make a plan. Leaders should circulate around to each family and see if they are stuck or if they need some assistance with the task.

5. Game #3: Identifying positive and negative thoughts

This all has to do with FAT. Would one of the children please explain what FAT is. (Allow a child to explain). What kind of thoughts do we have when we are feeling down or stressed out? Everyone has negative thoughts sometimes, and there are legitimate reasons to have them every now and then. But negative thoughts can become a problem if they occur too often because they make us feel sad or down. What was our plan for negative thoughts? That's right, the rule is: replace every negative thought with at least two positive counter thoughts. This next game will give us a chance to practice this.

Divide the group back into their two teams. The leader will present a negative thought (eg. "Why should I even bother getting up in the morning?" or "Why do so many bad things happen to me?" or "I can't think of anything that would be fun" or "I am so dumb") and each team will have three minutes to come up with as many positive counter thoughts as they can. Each team will read their thoughts outloud and get a point for each plausible response.

6. Game #4: Saying Positive Things

*We found that it not only helps to **have** positive thoughts, but **sharing***

*positive thoughts with others helps **us** to feel better and helps other people to think positive. We thought of all the good things we could say about each child in the group and wrote them on a card. (Leader can read from the cards that the children made in the last group and present them to each child) The group thought that _____(name of child) is . . .*

Have each family sit together and practice saying positive statements and giving compliments to one another. Pass out sheets of possible positive statements to assist them if needed. The leaders need to circulate and assist families who are having difficulty with the assignment.

7. Conclusion

At the end of the evening allow an opportunity for each child to present their parents with a certificate for learning the skills.

Invite any concluding questions or comments.

Pass out student workbooks.

Make concluding remarks and close session.

POSITIVE STATEMENT

1. I'm really glad you are my Mom.
2. You look nice today.
3. I'm really happy that you came with me to the group.
4. You are fun to be with.
5. Thanks for helping me with my schoolwork.
6. Thanks for taking good care of me.
7. You are a terrific mother.
8. I love your cooking.
9. We have so much fun together.
10. I love your smile.

POSITIVE STATEMENT

1. You are a great kid.
2. You are really cute.
3. You are a loving kid.
4. You have a great sense of humor.
5. I love your smile.
6. I like spending time with you.
7. You are fun to be with.
8. You have a kind heart.
9. I'm happy that you came to the group with me today.
10. You are a good person.

Certificate of Achievement

This award of distinction is presented

*To _____
For Superior Achievement & Excellence of
Performance in _____*

This _____ day of _____, 19____

Signed _____