

Overview of *Let's THINK About Feelings*

Part I:

Tools to help children differentiate emotions and identify stressors

1. Let's Talk About Feelings

This activity uses the *Feelings Word Finder* and the *Here's What Happened* cards to help children to accurately differentiate and name a wide range of emotions. The *Word Finder* has words to describe 60 emotions; the cards describe situations involving children, teens and adults.

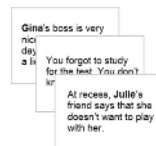
With this activity, the child imagines how these other people might feel.

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2. Feelings Check-Up

With these activities, the *Feelings Word Finder* is used (without the *Here's What Happened* cards) to help children and families identify and appropriately express their feelings about events that have occurred in their lives.

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3. Show Me How You Feel

The *Feeling Word Finder-Junior version* is a simplified and more visual version of the *Word Finder*, designed especially for younger children. It features a simplified list of words in the four categories (happy, sad, mad, worried/scared) and uses pictures of faces to help children to identify the intensity of those feelings.

It has its own set of *Here's What Happened* cards. As with the regular *Feelings Word Finder*, it can also be used to help young children identify and appropriately express their own emotions.

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4. Be a Feelings Detective

An important component of CBT is learning to challenge thoughts and beliefs that are inaccurate. This activity is a home assignment that begins the process of helping clients to distinguish between the "facts" of what happened and one's consequent thoughts or beliefs.

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5. The Stressometer

The *Stressometer* can be used to help the client think about the difference between healthy and unhealthy stress. First, the client identifies stressors (challenges, situations, circumstances, habits, relationships) in their lives. Using the stressometer as a visual guide, the client then assesses where each of the stressors fall on the healthy-unhealthy stress continuum.

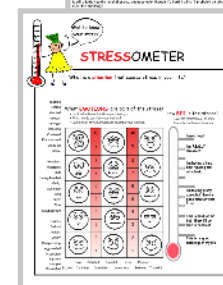
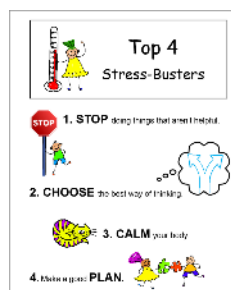
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6. TOP 4 Stress Busters

This handout is a follow-up to the Stressometer activity. It sets the stage for the therapeutic interventions in the next section of this manual: *Tools to help children understand and regulate emotions and behavior*

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Overview of *Let's THINK About Feelings*

Part II:

Tools to help children understand and regulate emotions and behavior

1. Don't Do It!

This activity focuses on **response inhibition**. It can be difficult to apply the principles of CBT in everyday life because we may habitually respond to a given situation with an ingrained, automatic response that is not helpful. In order to practice using new thoughts, we have to first be aware of, and then inhibit, this automatic response. **Don't Do It** includes games that introduce children to the concept of response inhibition and a home assignment to connect the concept to their everyday lives.



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2. Are You a Careful Thinker?

This group of activities focuses on **cognitive flexibility**.

The **I Can Choose** activity introduces the concept of cognitive flexibility, a basic principle of CBT. The goal is to help children understand that, by changing the way that they perceive or think about situations, they can transform their emotional reactions, which in turn helps them choose the most optimal behavior.

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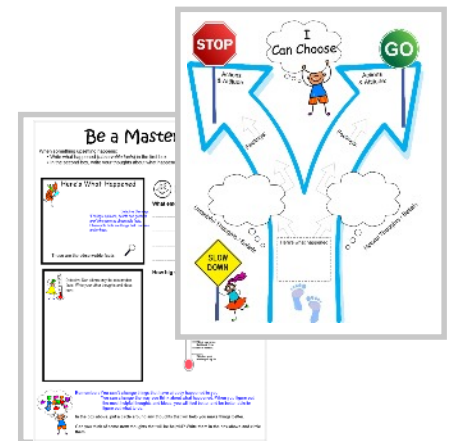
Be a Mastermind is a home assignment that helps children to stop and sort through their reactions when upsetting events occur.

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Are You a Careful Thinker? (Junior version)

This story explains the concept of cognitive flexibility in a way that is accessible for very young children.

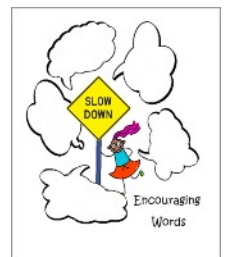
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Encouraging Words

These postcards are a "take-home" follow up to the **Are You a Careful Thinker?** activities. To help the child prepare for an upcoming stressful or challenging situation, the therapist helps the child formulate "encouraging words" - short, positive statements that they can use to replace automatic anxious, angry and/or upsetting thoughts.

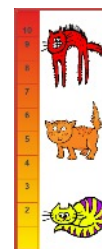
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3. Slow Down and Get Calm

This activity focuses on **self-calming and self-monitoring**. In addition to inhibiting one's automatic and unhelpful thoughts in a stressful situation, it is also important to be aware of one's physiological responses and to take action to "calm down" once automatic responses are triggered. This activity teaches child-friendly techniques for self-calming. The ability to **self-monitor** one's arousal is an important skill in CBT, so this activity also includes a rating scale that can be given to the child as an aid to self-monitoring in everyday life.

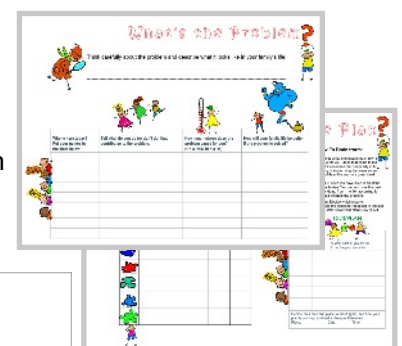
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4. What's The Problem, What's The Plan?

These activities focus on **cognitive flexibility and problem solving**. **What's The Problem, What's The Plan?** is designed for use with families. (There is also a version for use in individual therapy.) This activity structures the problem-solving process and also provides the child and family with a written summary of their decision-making to take home as a guide and reminder.

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Stay-on-Track Map

A follow up to **What's The Problem, What's The Plan?**, This home assignment provides external support to help children better regulate their emotions and behavior in order to do their part in carrying out a plan.

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Let's THINK about Feelings

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ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

Cognitive behavioral therapy “helps a person focus on his or her current problems and how to solve them. ... The therapist helps the patient learn how to identify distorted or unhelpful thinking patterns, recognize and change inaccurate beliefs, relate to others in more positive ways, and change behaviors accordingly.”

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/psychotherapies>

This resource provides child-friendly “tools” for therapists who have previous training and expertise in cognitive-behavioral therapy. This resource is not intended to provide background or training in CBT. It is expected that therapists using this resource already have a sound theoretical understanding of CBT and a repertoire of CBT interventions that they use with clients. This resource is intended to supplement those interventions, by providing activities and visual tools that make the principles of CBT more accessible for young people.

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