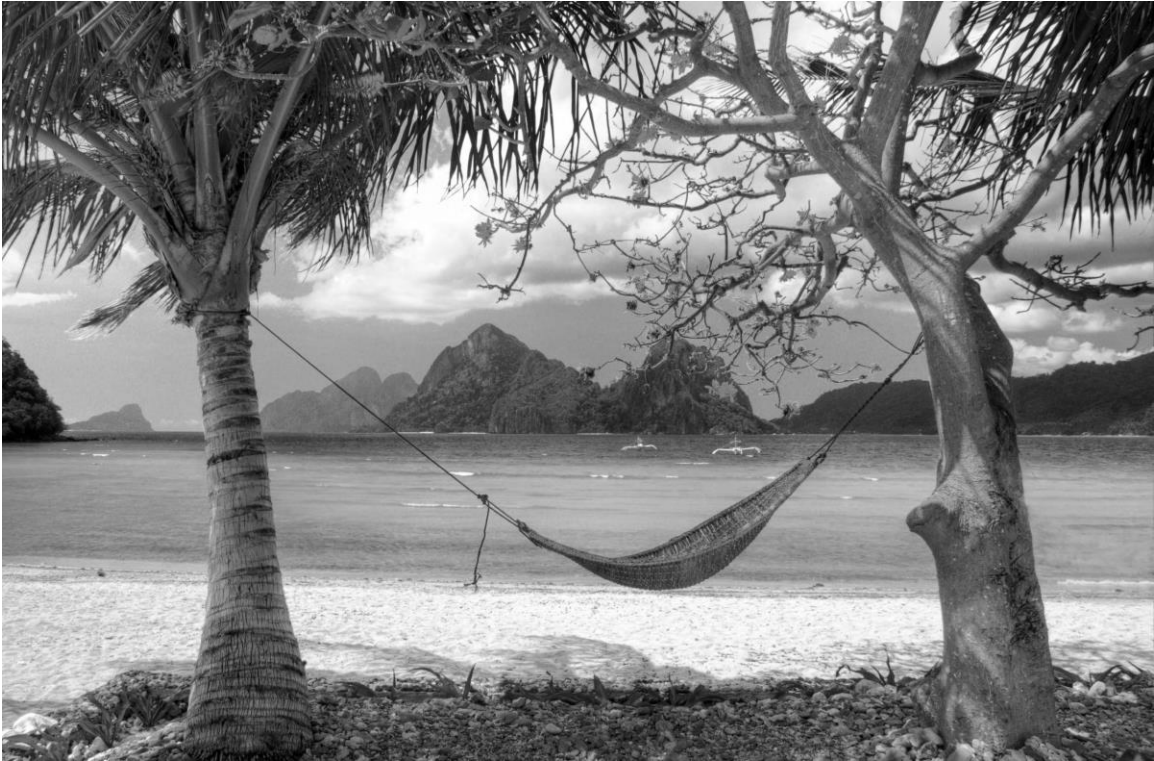


Getting Unstuck: Thoughts

Student Workbook



(434) 582-2651
Green Hall 1830
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Unhelpful Thinking Styles

All or nothing thinking



Sometimes called 'black and white thinking'

If I'm not perfect I have failed

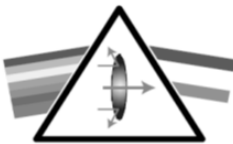
Either I do it right or not at all

Over-generalizing



Seeing a pattern based upon a single event, or being overly broad in the conclusions we draw

Mental filter



Only paying attention to certain types of evidence.

Noticing our failures but not seeing our successes

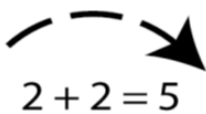
Disqualifying the positive



Discounting the good things that have happened or that you have done for some reason or another

That doesn't count

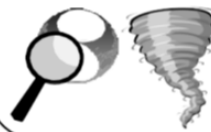
Jumping to conclusions



There are two key types of jumping to conclusions:

- **Mind reading** (imagining we know what others are thinking)
- **Fortune telling** (predicting the future)

Magnification (catastrophizing) & minimization



Blowing things out of proportion (catastrophizing), or inappropriately shrinking something to make it seem less important

Emotional reasoning



Assuming that because we feel a certain way what we think must be true.

I feel embarrassed so I must be an idiot

should must

Using critical words like 'should', 'must', or 'ought' can make us feel guilty, or like we have already failed

If we apply 'shoulds' to other people the result is often frustration

Labeling



Assigning labels to ourselves or other people

*I'm a loser
I'm completely useless
They're such an idiot*

Personalization

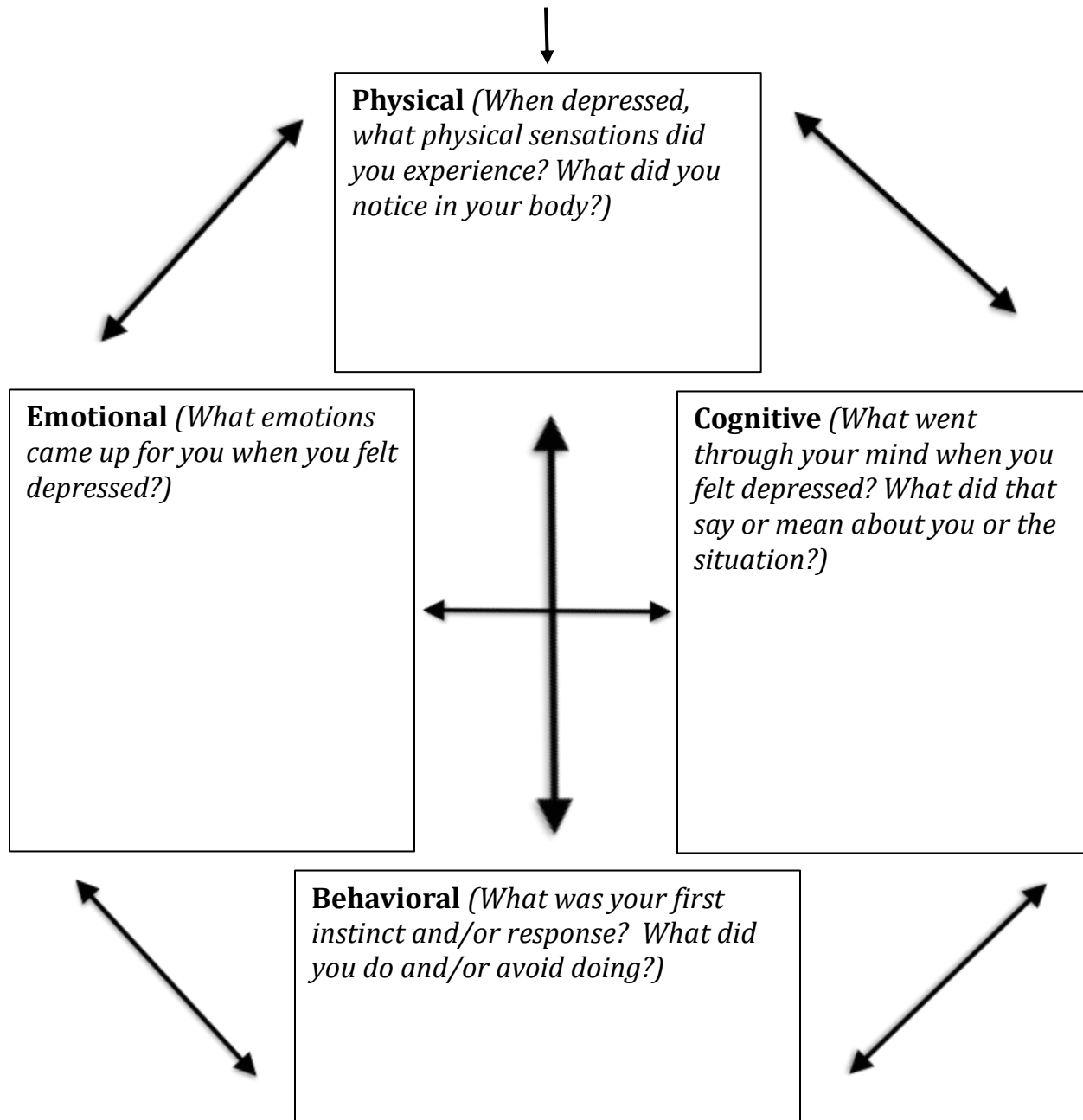
"this is my fault"

Blaming yourself or taking responsibility for something that wasn't completely your fault. Conversely, blaming other people for something that was your fault.

Cross Sectional Formulation

Situation (*When? Where? What? With whom?*)

Schemas:

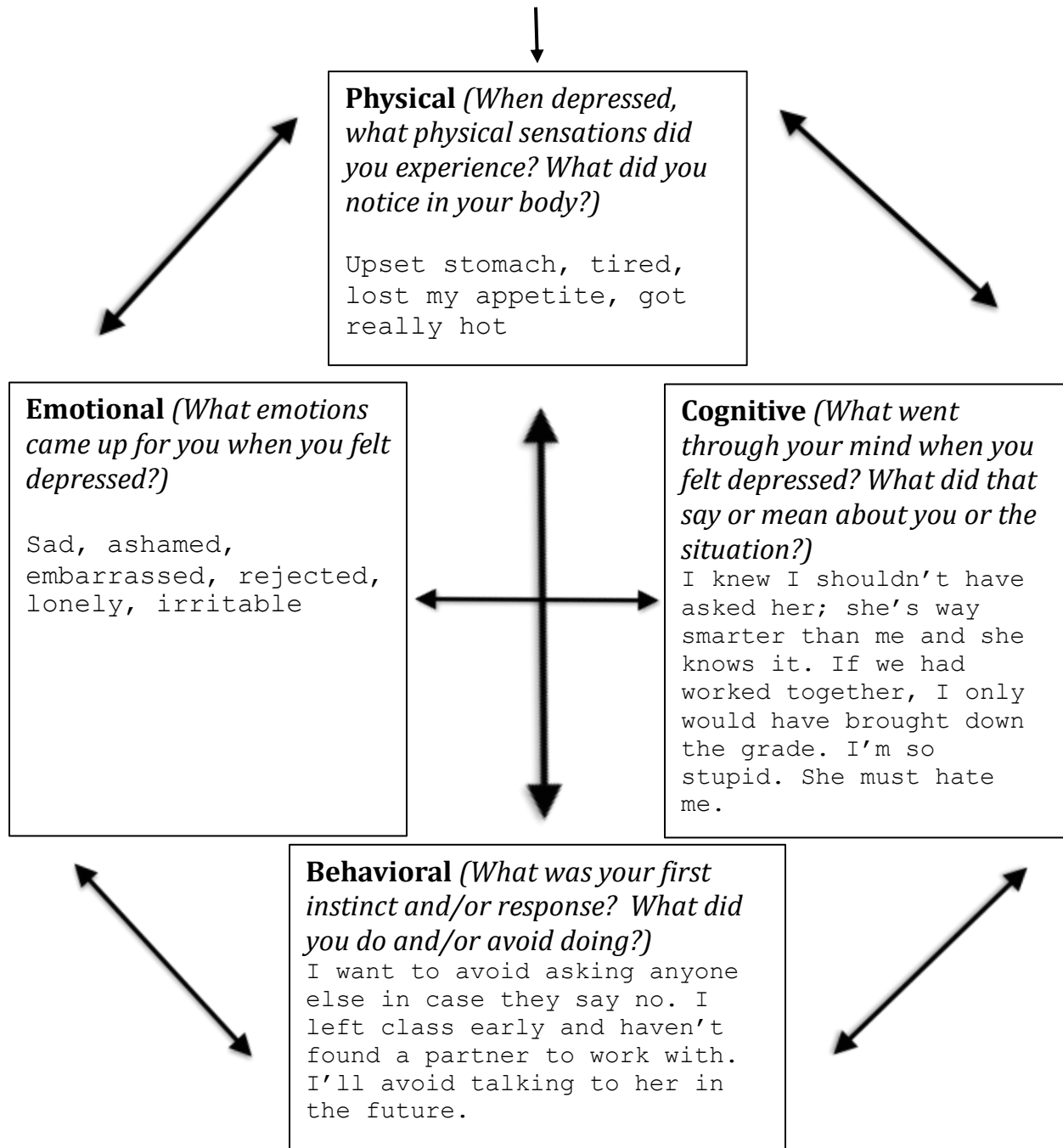


Cross Sectional Formulation

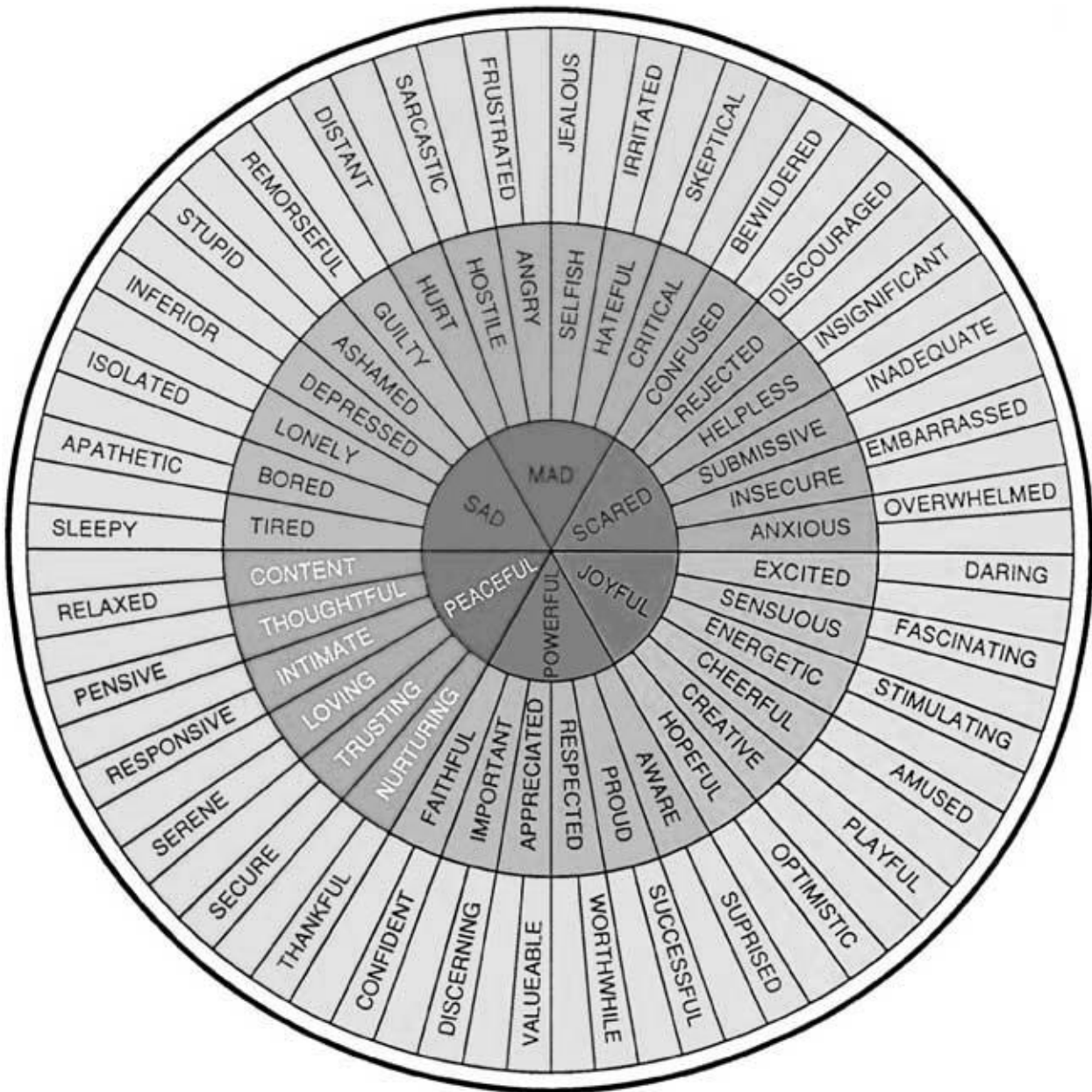
Situation (*When? Where? What? With whom?*)

I have a group assignment due for my class. I asked a fellow classmate to be my partner, but she declined.

Schemas: failure, abandonment, defectiveness, social isolation



Feelings Wheel



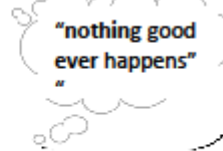
Challenging the Unhelpful Thinking Styles

All or nothing thinking



Things aren't either totally black or white, all or nothing. There are gray areas. Where is this on the spectrum?

Over-generalizing



Am I making global evaluations for a specific experience? Is it 100% true, 100% of the time? Am I describing what I actually see and have evidence for.

Mental filter



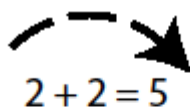
Am I using my negative schema as a filter? What if I approached the situation from a different perspective?

Disqualifying the positive



Am I only noticing the bad stuff? Am I filtering out the positive? Am I using my negative schema as a filter?

Jumping to conclusions



Am I assuming that I know the future? Am I assuming that I know what other people are thinking? Have I tested my assumptions?

Magnification (catastrophising) & minimization



Thinking of the worst possible things that could happen is not helpful right now. What's most likely to happen? What's the bigger picture?

Emotional reasoning



Just because it feels bad, doesn't necessarily mean it is bad. My feelings are a reaction to my thoughts and my thoughts aren't necessarily 100% true or accurate.

should must

Am I putting more pressure on myself? Are these unrealistic expectations? What would be more realistic?

Labelling



Would I say this to my best friend?

Personalization

"this is my fault"

Is this something that I am 100% responsible for?

Alternative Response Worksheet

Situation: *(When? Where? What? With whom? What did you feel depressed about?)*

I have a group assignment due for my class. I asked a fellow classmate to be my partner, but she declined.

Alternative Thoughts and Images: *(Are these thoughts helpful? Are the depressed thoughts 100% true/accurate, 100% of the time? What are other ways of looking at this? What is the bigger picture?)*

She might already have a partner.

I've done well in this class so far, so I might not be stupid.

Not everyone is going to like me and that is okay.

Alternative Behaviors: *(What could you do that would be more helpful for you, others, &/or the situation? What are coping strategies that might be helpful?)*

Coping Strategies I

Can Use:

☒ Deep breathing

☐ Distract myself

☐ Seek support from a friend/ family member

☒ Do a pleasurable activity

☐ Use alternative response worksheet

☐ Other _____

☐ Other _____

Alternative Feelings: *(What are feelings that are more helpful? What if you acted and thought differently about the situation? How might these changes help you feel differently?)*

Optimistic

Confident

Relaxed

Neutral

Outcome: *(What was the original outcome? Using these new alternatives, what would you like the outcome to be in the future?)*

Original outcome: I left class early and e-mailed my professor to assign me a partner. Next time: I would like to say, "thanks anyway" and will ask a person with whom I have worked well in the past.

Alternative Response Worksheet

Situation *(When? Where? What? With whom? What did you feel depressed about?)*

Alternative Thoughts and Images: *(Are these thoughts helpful? Are the depressed thoughts 100% true/accurate, 100% of the time? What are other ways of looking at this? What is the bigger picture?)*

Alternative Behaviors: *(What could you do that would be more helpful for you, others, &/or the situation? What are coping strategies that might be helpful?)*

Coping Strategies I Can Use:

- ☐ Deep breathing
- ☐ Distract myself
- ☐ Seek support from a friend/ family member
- ☐ Do a pleasurable activity
- ☐ Use alternative response worksheet
- ☐ Other_____
- ☐ Other_____

Alternative Feelings: *(What are feelings that are more helpful? What if you acted and thought differently about the situation? How might these changes help you feel differently?)*

Outcome: *(What was the original outcome? Using these new alternatives, what would you like the outcome to be in the future?)*

If you're having trouble, ask yourself these questions...

Alternative THOUGHTS:

1. What are other ways of looking at this situation?
2. Am I looking at the whole picture?
3. What might be a more helpful way of thinking about this situation?
4. What unhelpful thinking styles might I be using here?
5. What is the evidence that my thoughts are true? Is there an alternative way of thinking about this situation that is more accurate?
6. What is the probability that my thoughts will happen? What are some other things that could happen that are equally, if not more, probable?
7. Have I had any experiences in the past that suggests that this thought might not be COMPLETELY true ALL of the time?
8. Can I really predict the future? Is it helpful to try? What is more helpful?
9. Am I exaggerating how bad the result might be? What is more realistic?
10. Can I read people's minds? What else might they be thinking?
11. If a friend or loved one were in this situation and had this thought, what would I tell them?

Alternative BEHAVIORS:

1. What could I do in the moment that would be more helpful?
2. What's the best thing to do (for me, for others, or for the situation)?
3. If my feared situation happens, how will I cope? What coping skills can I use to handle my feared situation? What have I done in the past that was successful?
4. Do I need to work on acceptance, letting go of control, being okay with less than perfect, or having faith in the future and myself?
5. Breathe: Focus your attention on your breathing. Imagine you have a balloon in your belly, inflating on the in-breath, deflating on the out-breath.

Alternative FEELINGS:

1. What might it feel like if I acted/thought differently?
2. When I'm not feeling this way, do I think about this situation differently?
3. Are there any strengths or positives in me or the situation that I might be ignoring?
4. What else might this feeling be related to? Is it *really* about feeling ____?
5. Tell yourself: "This feeling will pass. It's a normal body reaction."

Maintaining Depressed Mood

Your task is to be a curious investigator or scientist in the study of you for at least two days this week. What are your thought and behavior patterns that perpetuate feeling depressed? What perpetuates feeling okay or good? What is not working and what is working?

Things I think and do that maintain my depressed mood:

Examples of thoughts: Magnification, disqualifying the positive, emotional reasoning

Examples of behaviors: Skip meals, stop exercising, stay up late, stop showering, miss class, avoid friends

Day	Thoughts	Behaviors
1		
2 (Sat or Sun)		

Things I think and do that help me feel okay, good, and/or accomplished:

Examples of thoughts: Compliment yourself, give yourself credit for doing something, talk back to your negative thoughts, remind yourself to be gentle to yourself, think about a good memory

Examples of behaviors: Read a book for fun, go to a club meeting, brush my teeth at night, go to the library to study, clean/organize my room, eat breakfast, take vitamins, call a friend, go to a coffee shop, do a chore

Day	Thoughts	Behaviors
1		
2 (Sat or Sun)		



Sleep Hygiene



1. **Get regular.** Go to bed and get up at more or less the same time every day, even on weekends and days off!
2. **Get up and try again.** Try to go to sleep only when tired. If you haven't been able to get to sleep after about 30 minutes, get up and do something calming (not stimulating) until you feel sleepy, then return to bed and try again.
3. **Avoid caffeine and nicotine.** Avoid consuming any caffeine (coffee, tea, soda, chocolate) or nicotine (cigarettes) for at least 4-6 hours before going to bed. These act as stimulants and interfere with falling asleep.
4. **Avoid alcohol.** Avoid alcohol for at least 4-6 hours before bed because it interrupts the quality of sleep.
5. **Bed is for sleeping.** Try not to use your bed for anything other than sleeping so that your body comes to associate bed with sleep.
6. **Electronics curfew.** Don't use back-lit electronics 60 minutes prior to bed, as the artificial light inhibits hormones and neurons that promote sleep.



7. **No naps.** Avoid taking naps during the day. If you can't make it through the day without a nap, make sure it is for less than an hour and before 3pm.
8. **Sleep rituals.** Develop rituals to remind your body that it is time to sleep, like relaxing stretches or breathing exercises for 15 minutes before bed.
9. **No clock-watching.** Checking the clock during the night can wake you up and reinforces negative thoughts such as, "Oh no, look how late it is, I'll never get to sleep."
10. **The right space.** Make your bed and bedroom quiet and comfortable for sleeping. An eye mask and earplugs may help block out light and noise.
11. **Keep daytime routine the same.** Even if you have a bad night's sleep, it is important that you try to keep your daytime activities the same as you had planned. That is, don't avoid activities because you feel tired. This can reinforce the insomnia.



Exercise Tips



1. **Find an enjoyable activity.** Exercise doesn't have to be boring. Choose a pleasurable activity, like playing volleyball or doing yoga. Aim for fun, not more work.
2. **Start small.** Commit to 10 minutes of exercise a day or add exercise to your daily routine (like walking to school or doing push-ups in your room).
3. **Get outside.** The sun provides a mood "pick me up" of its own, producing serotonin in the brain. Take a walk outside or go swimming.
4. **Schedule it in.** It's easy to skip exercise when we don't plan. Put it in your phone as part of your daily to-do's and celebrate when you check it off.
5. **Mix it up.** To avoid feeling bored with exercise, try a number of different activities.



6. **Team up.** Depression can be isolating. Ask others to do team activities or find an exercise buddy for accountability and to increase social interaction.
7. **Minimize equipment.** Equipment can be expensive. Identify activities that don't require you to have equipment or facilities, like walking, running, or dancing.
8. **Follow your energy.** If your energy fluctuates throughout the day, try to plan to exercise when your energy is at its peak. Alternatively, exercise when feeling sluggish for an energy boost.
9. **Set goals.** Achieving goals improves mood and self-esteem. Set specific achievable exercise goals and reward yourself when you accomplish them.



Cross Sectional Formulation

Situation (*When? Where? What? With whom?*)

Schemas:

