

# #1: TAKING CHARGE OF YOUR NEGATIVE FEELINGS

Experiencing negative feelings like sadness, anxiety, or anger is a common part of everyday living. These feelings may be especially common in reaction to different experiences people have in their lives, such as a loss of something, concern over oneself or another person, or anger or resentment at being wronged. Sometimes negative emotions can get out of control and completely dominate the person's life. This is especially common when people have experienced a significant disruption in their life.

The topic of this handout addresses where negative feelings come from, and how thoughts can lead to feelings. Furthermore, thoughts that are related to feelings are not necessarily accurate. This leads to a discussion of common patterns or styles of inaccurate thinking that people often engage in that lead to negative feelings. By learning to recognize how thinking affects feelings, and challenging and changing the inaccurate thoughts underlying upsetting feelings, you can begin to take charge of your feelings.

## Questions:

*What are common types of negative feelings or distress that people in my situation may experience?*

- Depression
- Thoughts about suicide, hurting oneself, or life not being worth living
- Anxiety
- Hearing voices
- Having feelings or thoughts that others may mean me harm (paranoia)
- Post-traumatic feelings or symptoms related to upsetting experiences, including events related to having a psychotic episode

*Are there other negative feelings that you have recently been experiencing?*

## Where Do Negative Feelings Come From?

In any particular situation, the feelings that people have are influenced by the thoughts and beliefs they have in that situation.

### For example:

If Jeff got a poor grade on a test and thought, *"I'm a failure - I'll never pass this class and get my degree,"* how would he feel? On the other hand, if Jeff thought *"This is really no problem, I'll probably do better next time,"* how would he feel?

Not all thoughts or beliefs are completely accurate. In fact, sometimes they can be downright wrong.

### Questions:

Consider the following questions about Jeff's thought that *"I'm a failure—I'll never pass this class and get my degree"*:

- Why might his thought not be completely accurate?
- Just because Jeff got a poor grade on the test, does that mean he will fail his class?
- Just because Jeff got a poor grade on his test, does that mean that he is not going to get his degree? Why?
- What might be a more accurate statement that Jeff could say to himself in this situation? How would he feel if he thought this instead of his original thought?

## Changing Negative Feelings

As you can see from the example of Jeff above, changing upsetting and inaccurate thoughts can reduce negative feelings. You can also see that in some situations, negative feelings may be related to accurate, realistic concerns. In these situations, coming up with a plan for dealing with the concern can resolve the problem and reduce the negative feelings.

### Questions:

- If Jeff came up with a new and more accurate thought after doing poorly on the test, such as *"I am concerned about my performance on this test and how I can be better prepared for the next test,"* how would he feel?
- What are some strategies Jeff might try to address his concern?

For the rest of this topic area, we will focus on identifying and challenging inaccurate thoughts that lead to negative feelings. In the next topic area, we will continue work on this and also address how to resolve problem situations that lead to negative feelings.

## Common Styles of Thinking

(Adapted and modified from Burns, 1989)

As you now know, what people think in a situation can be inaccurate and unnecessarily lead to negative feelings. There are a number of patterns or "Common Styles of Thinking" in which people draw inaccurate conclusions that lead to negative feelings. Being able to recognize when your negative feeling is due to an inaccurate Common Style of Thinking can help you change your thought to a more accurate one, and reduce or eliminate your negative feelings. Below is a list of Common Styles of Thinking. For each Common Style:

- Consider why the thoughts listed under each style of thinking are examples of *inaccurate* thoughts.
- Think of a more accurate thought.
- Try to think of a personal example of when you engaged in that specific Common Style of Thinking.
- For your own examples, try to think of a more accurate thought for each situation.

### All or Nothing Thinking

The world is seen in extremes with nothing in between. For example:

- "Since I'm not perfect, I'm a failure."
- "The world is a totally dangerous place."

### Overgeneralization

A single distressing event is seen as a never-ending pattern. When something bad happens, it is assumed that it will happen again and again. For example:

- "Because I went through this psychosis, I will never have a decent life."
- "My first time with medications didn't go well, so I'm sure they will never work for me."

### Must, "Should" or "Never" Statements

These are unwritten rules or expectations for how people think they should behave, that are not based on facts. These "rules" may have been learned when growing up and they may seem unchangeable. When they cannot be followed, they are distressing. For example:

- "I must take serious precautions on the train since people are likely out to get me."
- "I should be able to live on my own at this age."

### Catastrophizing

These thoughts occur when one focuses on the most extreme and distressing possible outcome. The thoughts often come out of the blue or following a minor problem when the person assumes the very worst will happen. For example:

- "I'm never going to get any better and my whole life will be a failure because I had this experience"
- "I didn't do well on this exam, so I know I'm going to flunk the class."

### Emotional Reasoning

This occurs when the person's feelings determine what he or she thinks or believes, even when there is no 'hard' evidence to support it. Just because a person feels something, it doesn't mean it's true. For example:

- "I feel anxious and afraid, so I must be in danger."
- "I feel ashamed, so I must be a bad person."
- "I feel sad, so my life must be hopeless."
- "I feel angry, so somebody must have wronged me."
- "I don't feel like this date is going well, therefore, it is not going well."

### Overestimation of Risk

The person thinks the risk of something is much greater than the evidence supports. For example:

- "I'm not going to take a walk because I might be attacked."
- "I'm not going to drive because I might get into a car accident."

### Inaccurate or Excessive Self-blame

The person blames himself or herself for something he or she had little or no control over or responsibility for. For example:

- "It's all my fault that I developed psychosis."

- "I'm responsible for my parents' divorce."

### Mental Filter

These thoughts occur when the person focuses only on negative aspects of something and ignores the positive aspects. By focusing on the negative, the person does not see the "whole picture" and feels worse than necessary.

- After fumbling for words in a conversation, you tell yourself, "I'm such a screw-up, I made a total fool of myself."
- Your boss gives you positive feedback about your work, but then recommends improving one area. You think, "My boss is unhappy with my performance."

### Check it out

Negative feelings can be the result of inaccurate thoughts, such as the Common Styles of Thinking described above. In order to know whether any negative feelings that you have are due to Common Styles of Thinking, and to correct those thoughts and improve your feelings, use the Common Styles of Thinking Worksheet (provided at the end of this handout) and follow these steps:

- Use the worksheet when you have a negative feeling, such as feeling anxious, depressed, annoyed, or guilty
- Describe the current situation in which you are having the negative feeling
- Identify the thought that is leading to your negative feeling
- Evaluate whether your thought is a Common Style of Thinking
- If it is, change your thought to a more accurate one

### Home Practice Options

1. Practice noticing and changing Common Styles of Thinking that lead to negative feelings using the Common Styles of Thinking Worksheet provided at the end of this handout. Try to practice this skill at least one day each week to examine any upsetting thoughts you have that lead to negative feelings.
2. Share this worksheet with a family member or friend and ask him or her to help you examine some of your upsetting feelings that may be due to Common Styles of Thinking.

## Summary Points for Taking Charge of Your Negative Feelings

- *Negative feelings are related to thoughts and beliefs that people have in different situations.*
- *Sometimes underlying thoughts are inaccurate and unnecessarily lead to negative feelings.*
- *Common Styles of Thinking are inaccurate patterns of thinking in certain situations that lead to negative feelings.*
- *Identifying an upsetting thought as a Common Style of Thinking, and changing it to a more accurate one, can reduce negative feelings or make them go away entirely.*

## Common Styles of Thinking Worksheet

**Directions:** When you begin to feel distressed or upset, first ask yourself, "What am I thinking right now that is causing this feeling?" Write down your thought on the worksheet. Next, identify whether the upsetting thought is a Common Style of Thinking (see #1 Taking Charge of Your Negative Feelings handout for description of Common Styles of Thinking). If it is, indicate which Common Style(s) on the worksheet. Then, come up with a more realistic or helpful thought and write that new thought down on the worksheet. You should notice a reduction in your negative feeling with your new thought compared to your old one.

SITUATION	<i>Upsetting Thought/feeling</i>	<i>Common Style of Thinking*</i>	<i>More helpful or realistic thought</i>
Example: On Friday at noon I was walking down the street when I saw a friend, but she did not say hello to me.	She must not like me anymore. / Sad	Catastrophizing	Maybe she did not really see me. Maybe she was distracted and was thinking about something else.

\* More than one Common Style of Thinking may be related to the distressing feeling.





# #2: COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING FOR NEGATIVE FEELINGS

You have learned that what you think in different situations influences how you feel. You also know that not all thoughts or beliefs that lead to negative feelings are completely accurate—such as Common Styles of Thinking—and that correcting these thoughts can reduce or eliminate these feelings (as described in topic area #1 for this module, *Taking Charge of Your Negative Feelings*). However, you also know that some thoughts related to negative feelings are accurate, and you need to be able to address the problems in those situations in order to deal with those negative feelings.

This topic area will focus on teaching the skill of cognitive restructuring for dealing with negative feelings. You will learn a simple, 5-step method for using cognitive restructuring to examine the evidence supporting upsetting thoughts, and either changing your inaccurate thoughts to more accurate ones, or developing an action plan for dealing with realistic, accurate concerns. By learning and practicing cognitive restructuring, you'll have a valuable tool for dealing with any negative feelings you experience in your life.

## The 5-Steps of Cognitive Restructuring

The 5 Steps of Cognitive Restructuring (CR) is a step-by-step skill for dealing with negative feelings. When you experience a negative feeling, go through the 5 steps to deal with the feeling. A worksheet for recording each of the 5 steps, and an example of a completed worksheet, is provided at the end of this handout. A brief description of each of the steps is provided below.

1. *Describe the situation.* Describe what was happening to you or around you when you experienced your negative feeling.

2. Identify the upset feeling. Identify what feeling(s) you were experiencing in the situation. You may have experienced a variety of different feelings. Focus on the strongest, most upsetting feeling you were having.
3. Identify the thought underlying the feeling. A number of different thoughts might be related to the negative feeling. Write down any upsetting thoughts related to the feeling that you can think of. Then, identify which thought is the most upsetting one, and focus on that thought when you move on to Step #4. If you have trouble figuring out what your most upsetting thought is, use the Guide to Thoughts and Feelings provided at the end of this handout after the 5 Steps of Cognitive Restructuring Worksheet. After you have identified the most upsetting thought, consider whether that thought might be one of the Common Styles of Thinking, described in the previous topic area on Dealing with Your Negative Feelings.
4. Evaluate the evidence for and against the thought. Focus on evidence that is objective and factual, and not just based on feelings. Think of evidence that is the type someone could present in a court of law to convince a jury that something was true. If in the previous step you identified the thought as a possible "Common Style of Thinking", which means your thought is probably inaccurate, and you should carefully look for evidence that *does not* support your thought.
5. Take action. If your thought was not supported by the evidence, come up with a new, more accurate thought related to the situation. This new thought should be more believable than the old thought was. The new thought should also be associated with a reduction in your negative feeling. If your review of the evidence concludes that the thought *is accurate*, you need to develop an action plan to deal the situation. The steps of developing an action plan are described below.

The 5 Steps of CR is a skill for dealing with any negative feelings you may have.

1. Describe the situation.
2. Identify the upset feeling.
3. Identify the thought underlying the feeling.
4. Evaluate the evidence for and against the thought.
5. Take action by coming up with a new more accurate thought OR by developing an action plan to deal with the situation.

## Making Effective Action Plans

It is important to develop a specific plan for dealing with an upsetting situation in order to either resolve the situation or prevent it from happening again. An effective action plan can be developed by following the six steps described below. This process is also described in your Family Education Program and Supported Employment and Education sessions as problem solving using the same steps. An action plan worksheet is also included at the end of this handout.

1. Define the goal of the action plan. Be as specific as possible. Consider what you would like to see changed as a result of the action plan.
2. Brainstorm possible strategies. Think of different strategies for achieving the goal of your action plan. Don't evaluate your strategies yet—just focus on thinking of as many different strategies as possible.
3. Evaluate the different strategies. Weigh the advantages and disadvantages of each possible strategy for achieving your goal. Consider how hard it might be to implement each strategy, and what the chances are that the strategy will solve the problem.
4. Choose the best strategy or strategies. Pick one or two strategies that appear most likely to be effective in helping you achieve the goal of your action plan. Sometimes a combination of strategies is most effective.
5. Make a plan to implement the selected strategies. Make a specific plan to implement the strategy or strategies you selected. Consider what resources you may need to implement the plan, such as information, skills, money, or help from another person. Think of any possible obstacles to implementing your plan, and solutions to those obstacles.
6. Set a time and date to follow up on your plan and do additional work on it if the goal has not yet been achieved. Sometimes an action plan is effective the first time you try it, and other times you may need to do additional work on it, or try some of the other strategies you identified. Setting a date to follow up on your plan will ensure that you keep working on it until your goal has been achieved. Your planned date should not be more than a week away from when you developed your original plan.

When thoughts are related to negative feelings are accurate, you can address the problem situation by developing an effective action plan.

1. Define the goal of the action plan.
2. Brainstorm possible strategies.
3. Evaluate the strategies.
4. Choose the best strategy or strategies.
5. Make a plan to implement the selected strategies.
6. Set a time and date to follow up on your plan.

### Check it Out

The 5 Steps of Cognitive Restructuring (CR), including the steps for developing an action plan, can be used to help you deal with any negative feelings you experience. With the help of your clinician, try using the 5 Steps of CR in session to address some negative feelings you have recently experienced.

### Cognitive Restructuring and Symptoms

Learning how to use cognitive restructuring can be a helpful strategy for dealing with any negative feelings that you may have in your day-to-day life. Once you are familiar with the steps of cognitive restructuring, you can also use it to examine, challenge, and get relief from your distressing symptoms. Negative feelings related to symptoms such as depression, anxiety, traumatic experiences, hearing voices, and thoughts of hopelessness and hurting yourself can all be addressed and improved using the 5 Steps of CR.

### Questions:

Consider the following symptoms and distressing thoughts drawn from some of the standard questionnaires that you completed. Ask yourself "What might be the upsetting feeling? What might be the distressing thought?"

- "I will never get better or recover"
- Repeated disturbing, memories, thoughts, or images of a stressful experience
- "I felt I wasn't worth much as a person"
- "My voice is punishing me for something I have done"

- "I never get what I want so it's foolish to want anything"

### Check it out

With your clinician, review some of the answers you gave on the questionnaires that you recently completed about your distressing symptoms. Pick one or two items that you indicated that you had strong negative feelings about. For each item, try using the 5 Steps of CR in session to examine the thoughts related to the associated negative feeling. If the thought *is not accurate*, change it to one that is more accurate. If the thought is accurate, develop an action to deal with the situation. For each item that you carefully examine, see if your distress level goes down.

### Practice, Practice, Practice!

Cognitive restructuring is a skill for dealing with negative feelings that takes practice in order to get good at it. Like any other skill, such as bowling or playing a musical instrument, the more you practice, the better you will get at it. Over time, and with practice, cognitive restructuring can become a natural part of how you handle any negative emotions on a day-to-day basis. The more you practice, the greater mastery you'll have over your negative feelings and your ability to pursue and achieve your personal goals.

### Home Practice Options

1. Practice using the 5 Steps of CR Worksheet during the next week to carefully examine any thoughts you have related to negative feelings. If you conclude that there is strong evidence supporting a thought, use the Action Plan Worksheet to make a plan to address the situation. Try to practice this skill at least one day each week to address any negative feelings you may be having.
2. Share the 5 Steps of CR and Action Plan worksheets with a family member or friend and ask them to help you examine some of your negative feelings.
3. With your clinician, pick several distressing symptoms from the questionnaires to examine using the 5 Steps of CR over the next week—work on only one item at a time.
4. Share the 5 Steps of CR worksheet with a family member or friend and ask for their help in addressing one of your distressing symptoms from one of the questionnaires.

## Summary Points for Cognitive Restructuring for Negative Feelings

- *The 5 Steps of Cognitive Restructuring is a skill for dealing with negative feelings that helps you critically examine the thoughts underlying your feelings.*
- *Changing inaccurate thoughts related to negative feelings can reduce those feelings.*
- *Developing an effective action plan for dealing with realistic concerns about upsetting situations can resolve those problems, and reduce the negative feelings associated with them.*
- *The 5 Steps of Cognitive Restructuring is a useful tool for dealing with negative feelings and helping you move forward with you life.*
- *The 5 Steps of Cognitive Restructuring can help you deal with negative feelings resulting from symptoms and upsetting thoughts.*

## Sample Of The 5 Steps Of Cognitive Restructuring Worksheet

(Adapted and modified from Mueser, Rosenberg, and Rosenberg 2009)

**Directions:** Review this worksheet with your clinician and refer to this example to demonstrate how the steps of the skill work.

### 1. SITUATION

Ask yourself, "What happened that made me upset?" Write down a brief description of the situation.

Situation:

I was invited to a family BBQ that will take place next week at the house of my cousin who is my age and just graduated from college.

### 2. FEELING

Circle your strongest feeling (if more than one, use a separate sheet for each feeling):

Fear/Anxiety

Sadness/Depression

Guilt/Shame

Anger

### 3. THOUGHT

Ask yourself, "What am I thinking that is leading me to feel this way?" Use your Guide to Thoughts and Feelings handout to identify thoughts related to the feeling circled above. You may identify more than one thought related to the feeling. Write down your thoughts below, and circle the thought most strongly related to the feeling.

Thoughts:

I won't have anything interesting to say at the party and I will feel uncomfortable.

Everyone will know that I have been in the hospital just by looking at me.

We're the same age and she's perfect at everything and I've done nothing worthwhile at all ever in life. \*\*\*

Is this thought a Common Style of Thinking? If yes, circle the one:

All-or-Nothing

Over-Generalizing

Must/Should/Never

Catastrophizing

Emotional Reasoning

Overestimation of Risk

Self-Blame

Mental Filter

#### 4. EVALUATE YOUR THOUGHT:

Now ask yourself, "What evidence do I have for this thought?" "Is there an alternative way to look at this situation?" "How would someone else think about the situation?" Write down the answers that do support your thought and the answers that do not support your thought.

Things that DO support my thought:

She's just graduated from college.

She rents her own apartment and has enough money to have a BBQ for everyone.

I had to drop out of school last year.

I'm bored most of the day and I don't have a job.

Things that DO NOT support my thoughts:

I know she has gone through a lot of troubles herself like having some health scares and recent break-up with her fiancé - her life probably doesn't feel perfect to her.

Just because someone has their own apartment and a BBQ and a college degree doesn't mean they are perfect or better than me.

I didn't have a choice about leaving school - it's not like I was lazy and didn't go to class. I got really stressed out and had too many problems to continue at that time.

My goal is to get my life back on track and I am working on it each week.

I want to go back to school and have my own apartment at some point and I am taking steps to make that happen in the future.



I have succeeded in other areas in my life prior to going to the hospital like in sports in high school and I also completed a challenging wilderness course a few years ago.

There are people in my life who I trust who have told me that I am a worthwhile person.

## 5. TAKE ACTION!

Next, ask yourself, "Do things mostly support my thought or do things mostly NOT support my thought?"

XX NO, the evidence does not support my thought.

If the evidence does NOT support your thought, come up with a new thought that is supported by the evidence. These thoughts are usually more balanced and helpful. Write your new, more helpful thought in the space below. And remember, when you think of this upsetting situation in the future; replace your unhelpful automatic thought with the new, more accurate thought.

New Thought:

Even though I have had some struggles lately I am working hard on moving forward and my family knows that. No one's life is perfect; we all have our problems but that doesn't mean I am worthless.

YES, the evidence does support my thought.

If the evidence DOES support your thought, decide what you need to do next in order to deal with the situation. Ask yourself, "Do I need to get more information about what to do?" "Do I need to get some help?" "Do I need to take steps to make sure I am safe?" Write down your action plan for dealing with the upsetting situation or complete the Action Plan Worksheet.

Action Plan:

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## The 5 Steps Of Cognitive Restructuring Worksheet

(Adapted and modified from Mueser, Rosenberg, and Rosenberg 2009)

**Directions:** Use this Worksheet whenever something happens that upsets you. It will help you sort out your thoughts and feelings and decide what to do next. The more often you use this worksheet, the easier it will be, and the more you will be able to reduce upsetting feelings.

### 1. SITUATION

Ask yourself, "What happened that made me upset?" Write down a brief description of the situation.

Situation:

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### 2. FEELING

Circle your strongest feeling (if more than one, use a separate sheet for each feeling):

Fear/Anxiety

Sadness/Depression

Guilt/Shame

Anger

### 3. THOUGHT

Ask yourself, "What am I thinking that is leading me to feel this way?" Use your Guide to Thoughts and Feelings handout to identify thoughts related to the feeling circled above. You may identify more than one thought related to the feeling. Write down your thoughts below, and circle the thought most strongly related to the feeling.

Thoughts:

Is this thought a *Common Style of Thinking*? If yes, circle the one:

All-or-Nothing

Over-Generalizing

Must/Should/Never

Catastrophizing

Emotional Reasoning

Overestimation of Risk

Self-Blame

Mental Filter

#### 4. EVALUATE YOUR THOUGHT:

Now ask yourself, "What evidence do I have for this thought?" "Is there an alternative way to look at this situation?" "How would someone else think about the situation?" Write down the answers that do support your thought and the answers that do not support your thought.

Things that DO support my thought:

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Things that DO NOT support my thoughts:

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**5. TAKE ACTION!**

Next, ask yourself, "Do things mostly support my thought or do things mostly NOT support my thought?"

NO, the evidence does not support my thought.

If the evidence does NOT support your thought, come up with a new thought that is supported by the evidence. These thoughts are usually more balanced and helpful. Write your new, more helpful thought in the space below. And

remember, when you think of this upsetting situation in the future, replace your unhelpful ("automatic") thought with the new, more accurate thought.

New Thought:

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YES, the evidence does support my thought.

If the evidence DOES support your thought, decide what you need to do next in order to deal with the situation. Ask yourself, "Do I need to get more information about what to do?" "Do I need to get some help?" "Do I need to take steps to make sure I am safe?" Write down your action plan for dealing with the upsetting situation below or complete the Action Plan Worksheet.

Action Plan:

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## Sample of a Completed Action Plan Worksheet

*John was feeling down as he was sitting around his room on a Saturday afternoon with nothing to do. He decided to complete a 5 Steps of CR worksheet. On the worksheet he identified his feeling as depression, and the associated thought was "I don't have anything fun to do." When he evaluated the evidence, he identified quite a bit of evidence supporting his thought, including the fact that since his episode of psychosis he had not been engaging in many of the fun activities that he used to enjoy. He concluded that his thought was supported by the evidence. He then completed the following Action Plan Worksheet to address the situation.*

### **1. DEFINE THE GOAL**

**What situation requires action?** *I haven't been doing as many fun things as I used to.*

**Consider what change you would like to see in your situation. Be as specific as possible.**

*My goal is to start doing at least one of the activities that I used to enjoy.*

### **2. BRAINSTORM POSSIBLE STRATEGIES**

**What can you do to change the situation?**

Using your creative problem-solving skills, think of several possible ways of effectively achieving your goal and list them below.

- 1. Go biking*
- 2. Play video games with Justin*
- 3. Hang out at the mall*
- 4. Play guitar again*
- 5. Buy a lottery ticket and WIN*

**3. EVALUATE EACH SOLUTION:** After you have identified a list of different strategies in step 2, evaluate each one and place an asterisk (\*) next to the best ones on the list.

- 1. Pro: Biking is fun. Con: It's winter and my brakes are broken.*

- \*2. Pro: Justin and I have had a lot of good times playing video games in the past. Con: Justin might be busy.*
- 3. Pro: Hanging out at the mall gets me out of the house. Con: It's boring after a while.*
- \*4. Pro: I like playing the guitar and can do it by myself or with my brother. Con: I'm rusty at playing.*
- 5. Pro: Winning the lottery would be great. Con: Not much chance it will happen.*

#### **4. CHOOSE A SOLUTION**

*I want to try out two fun things this week: playing video games and playing the guitar.*

#### **5. PLAN HOW TO IMPLEMENT THE STRATEGIES YOU CHOSE**

**What steps can you take to make this happen?**

- 1. Try playing at least one song every day. It can be the same one.*
- 2. Look up guitar lessons on YouTube if I need a refresher.*
- 3. Call my brother to ask him to bring his guitar next Saturday so we can play something together.*
- 4. Start practicing the video game I got for Christmas.*
- 5. Call Justin on Monday and ask him to come over and play a video game after school sometime during the week.*

#### **6. SET A TIME TO FOLLOW UP YOUR PLAN**

*I will follow up next Sunday afternoon. I'll ask myself if I followed the steps of my plan and if I had at least a little more fun. I might have to work on this for a while so I can get back to having as much fun as before.*

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## Action Plan Worksheet

(Adapted and modified from Mueser and Glynn 1999)

**Directions:** Use this worksheet to help you develop a plan for addressing any upsetting situation that you want to resolve. This worksheet should be used after completing the 5 Steps of CR Worksheet. Make an action plan using this worksheet if you have determined either:

- 1) your initial upsetting thought is accurate
- OR
- 2) you have changed your initial upsetting thought to a more accurate one, but you still feel upset or believe that the situation requires some additional action.

### 1. DEFINE THE GOAL

**What situation requires action?**

Consider what change you would like to see in your situation. Be as specific as possible.

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### 2. BRAINSTORM POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

**What can you do to change the situation?**

Using your creative problem-solving skills, think of several possible ways of effectively achieving your goal and list them below.

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### 3. EVALUATE EACH SOLUTION

**Which strategies will work best?**

After you have identified a list of different strategies in step 2, evaluate each one and place an asterisk (\*) next to the best ones on the list.

### 4. CHOOSE A SOLUTION

**Which solution do you want to try?**

Select one of the strategies you placed an asterisk (\*) by from the above list to implement and write it below.

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### 5. PLAN HOW TO IMPLEMENT THE STRATEGIES YOU CHOSE

**What steps can you take to make this happen?**

Consider these questions:

*When will the plan be implemented?*  
*When is the problem or situation likely to come up again?*  
*What information do you need to have?*  
*Do you need to get some help?*  
*Who is going to support you in taking this action?*  
*What obstacles could interfere with the plan?*  
*How can you prevent or deal with these obstacles?*

Then, write down your plan below, listing the action steps you will take:

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## 6. SET A TIME TO FOLLOW UP YOUR PLAN

Ask yourself:

Did I follow the steps of my plan?  
How did it go? Is the problem solved or the situation improved?  
Do I need to modify the plan to make it more effective?  
When and where will I use the plan again?

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## Guide To Thoughts And Feelings

### Directions:

If you are having a negative or upsetting feeling, first find the feeling on the chart. Then ask yourself whether any of the questions in the second column apply to your thinking about the upsetting situation. If so, see the third column for some specific examples of thoughts that may apply to your upsetting situation. If the questions in the second column don't match up with your current thought process, then perhaps you may be experiencing a different emotion after all. This sheet can help you hone in on which feelings are most distressing to you and help you understand the thoughts that may be connected to those feelings.

Negative Feeling	Examples of questions you can ask yourself to identify your own underlying thoughts or beliefs	Examples of Thoughts or Beliefs Related to the Feeling
Fear or anxiety	<p>What bad things do I expect to happen?</p> <p>What am I scared is going to happen?</p> <p>Am I afraid I am going to lose control or go crazy?</p>	<p>Thoughts that something bad will happen, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some terrible thing is going to happen</li> <li>• I am going to be attacked or hurt</li> <li>• I am going to be rejected or abandoned</li> <li>• I am going to lose control or go crazy</li> </ul>
Sadness or depression	<p>What have I lost in my life?</p>	<p>Thoughts of loss, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am worthless</li> <li>• I don't have anyone I can depend on</li> <li>• Nothing will ever get better</li> </ul>

	What is missing in me or in my life?	
Guilt or shame	<p>What bad thing have I done?</p> <p>What is wrong with me?</p>	<p>Thoughts of having done something wrong or being lacking in some way, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am a failure</li> <li>• I am to blame for what happened to me</li> <li>• I am a bad person</li> </ul>
Anger	<p>What is unfair about this situation?</p> <p>Who has wronged me?</p>	<p>Thoughts of being treated unfairly or having been wronged, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am being treated unfairly</li> <li>• I am being taken advantage of</li> <li>• Someone has done something wrong to me</li> </ul>

