Getting Unstuck

Presented by CSUEB Counseling Services
Week 3 - Depression Busting Behaviors
Let’s Stretch . . .
A Few Zoom Guidelines

- Please mute your audio while others are talking and type any questions into the chat box.
- Your video can be off or on, whatever makes you most comfortable.
- Confidentiality, and Zoom limitations.
Community Agreements

- Push yourself to participate
- Focus on your own experience
- Share headlines, not details
- Step forward, step back
- Ask others before giving them feedback
- Assume positive intent from others
- Take responsibility for your needs
Introductions:
Share your name, year @ CSUEB, major &
Agenda for today’s group

- Basic Self-Care
- Opposite Action to Emotion
- Depression Busting Behaviors
- Lovingkindness Meditation
Basic Self Care

One way we can make ourselves less vulnerable to extreme moods is by making sure we have solid routines of basic self-care.

While self-care can look different from person to person, there are some things that we recommend for everyone: attending to your own nutritional needs, good sleep, and physical activity. These are the foundation of basic physical and mental health.

When experiencing depression, many people notice changes to their appetites. Research shows that individuals experiencing depression often have deficiencies in vitamins and minerals that are linked to mood. We recommend that individuals experiencing depression focus on staying hydrated, eating meals regularly, and work towards a balanced diet. You can ask a medical doctor or work with a Registered Dietician for personal tips on managing your nutrition.
Sleep & Exercise

Research shows that you need 7-8 hours of sleep consistently in order to be well-rested and perform optimally. While we sleep, our brain is hard at work forming pathways for learning and consolidating information we’ve taken in that day. Sleep also helps regulate our mood and weight.

Although many college students may forgo sleep in order to finish a project or study for an exam, sleep deprivation will impact your mood, your energy, your grades, your ability to focus, and your ability to concentrate in class and on homework.

In addition to good sleep, research has shown that exercise is important to combating symptoms of depression. In the short term, exercise releases endorphins, which are powerful chemicals in your brain that can improve mood, energy levels, and concentration. Over time, consistent exercise promotes long-term changes in the brain, resulting in improved memory, coping, cognitive functioning, mood, and self-esteem.
Sleep & Exercise Tips

Sleep:
- Get regular.
- Get up and try again.
- Bed is for sleeping.
- Electronics curfew.
- No naps.
- Sleep rituals.
- No clock-watching.
- The right space.
- Keep daytime routine the same.
- Avoid caffeine, nicotine and alcohol.

Exercise:
- Find an enjoyable activity.
- Start small.
- Get outside.
- Schedule it in.
- Mix it up.
- Team up.
- Minimize equipment.
- Follow your energy.
- Set goals.

Which tip will you try this week?
Opposite Action to Emotion

Opposite to Emotion Action is a technique for changing painful emotions. Like all of the techniques we have been learning, it takes a lot of practice to be able to use it skillfully. The idea behind this technique is that it can help to deal with distressing emotions by setting into motion an action that is helpful, not harmful.

This skill is not about trying to suppress our emotions. We are using that the feeling to take a different action. The result of this will be a gradual change in our emotions.

This technique can be helpful when the emotions we feel might not be realistic to the situation we are in - they may be maybe out of proportion, or escalating, or be emotions that we want to challenge or change.
Unhelpful Behaviors for Depression

- Get up at different times every morning
- Go to bed at different times every night
- Miss class
- Don’t do a homework assignment
- Wait until the last minute to get something done
- Stop washing your hair
- Stop brushing your teeth
- Skip a test
- Stop going to team or club meeting
- Ignore or decline invites to hang out
- Skip a meal
- Overeat, or eat lots of junk food
- Binge drink
- Smoke cigarettes
- Stop talking to or avoid your friends
- Stop talking to or avoid your family
- Don’t seek help when you are struggling
- Stay inside all the time
- Play video games for hours
- Constantly monitor social media
- Stay in your bed
- Stay in your room
- Stop talking to your roommate
- Stop completing tasks
- Stop going to work
- Stop exercising
- Watch a lot of television shows and movies
- Only eat one meal a day
- Argue with other people
- Stop doing your hobbies
- Only focus on the negative
- Complain a lot
- Use recreational drugs or alcohol
- Sleep all day

*Which of these stand out to you? How have these impacted your own depression?*
An Example...

When we are depressed, we may feel like no one wants us around and we might as well just stay in bed.

A way to act opposite to the emotion of depression is to get ourselves up and do something (go for a walk, go to the grocery store, visit a friend, go to therapy, etc.). We are not denying our emotion, but we are challenging it with our actions. Instead of staying at home in bed, we are getting up and going out.

We may not see big changes, but little by little we will notice changes in the way we feel.
Opposite Actions to Consider

FEAR
- Approaching events, places, tasks, activities, people you are afraid of.
- When overwhelmed, make a list of small steps or tasks you can do.

GUILT or SHAME
- When guilt or shame is justified: Commit to avoiding that mistake in the future. Accept the consequences gracefully. Then let it go.
- When guilt or shame is unjustified: Do what makes you feel guilty or ashamed. Approach, don’t avoid.

SADNESS or DEPRESSION
- Get active.
- Do things that make you feel competent and self-confident.

ANGER
- Give the person you are angry with space, rather than attacking them. Avoid thinking about him or her, rather than ruminating on your anger.
- Do something nice, rather than mean or attacking.
- Imagine sympathy and empathy for other person, rather than blame.
Depression Busting Behaviors

Here are a few more ideas of activities that can start to break the cycle of depression. These do not have to be huge commitments; focus on small, baby steps. Choose activities that are doable for you when you are feeling down. The more success you have in doing the little things, the more likely you will be motivated to try more things.

**Socialize**
- Watch a movie with a friend
- Attend a sporting event
- Study in a public area, such as the library or a park
- Attend a Mindful Minutes session or counseling group
- Plan a socially distanced meal with friends or family
- Take an online fitness class

**Pleasant Activities**
- Take a walk outside
- Play with a pet
- Fix or tinker with something
- Do something creative - write a poem, play music, draw, paint . . .
- Read for fun
- Listen to music

**Mastery Activities**
- Do laundry
- Return a phone call
- Write that email to your professor
- Read a chapter or page of your assignment
- Take out the trash
• What are some times you have acted opposite to your current emotion? What was the result?

• When would it not be appropriate to act opposite to your present emotion?

• What opposite actions could you try the next time you feel depressed?
Lovingkindness Meditation
Additional Resources

- Counseling Groups throughout every week
- Virtual RAW events, especially Mindful Minutes
- Pioneers for HOPE - support with food and housing
- Follow us on Instagram - @eastbayshcs
Take care!

- Thank you for joining us!
- Think about what skills you might want to practice from home this week:
  - Practice your Sleep or Exercise Tip
  - Use your Opposite Action behavior the next time your depression tells you to do something unhelpful
  - Lovingkindness Meditation

We hope to see you again next week!
thank you