DBT of South Jersey Group Curriculum

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Introduction

When?

This curriculum is a guide for group leaders.
It is not a requirement that you use all elements of this curriculum.
Rather, these are suggestions to use as group leaders.
Feel free to bring your own ideas!

Why?

This curriculum will help to minimize the amount of time that staff spend preparing for group. It will provide ideas on different mindfulness practices, teaching points for skills taught, and exercises to improve group engagement.

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Table of Contents

Mindfulness

- Mindfulness Introduction
- Wise Mind
- What and How Skills

Distress Tolerance

- Crisis Survival Introduction
- Pros and Cons
- Stop
- TIPP
- Distract with Accepts
- Self Soothe
- Improve the Moment
- Reality Acceptance Introduction
- Turning the Mind
- Willingness, Willing Hands, Half Smile
- Mindfulness of Current Thoughts

Emotion Regulation

- Emotion Regulation Introduction
- Model for Describing Emotions
- Check the Facts
- Opposite Action
- Problem Solving
- Accumulating Positives in the Short Term
- Accumulating Positives in the Long Term (Values and Priorities)
- Building Mastery
- Cope Ahead
- Please
- Mindfulness of Current Emotions

Interpersonal Effectiveness

- Dear Man
- Give
- Fast
- Options for Intensity, Troubleshooting

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Mindfulness

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Mindfulness

Mindfulness Introduction

- Goals of mindfulness:
  - Reduce suffering and increase happiness.
  - Increase control of your mind.
  - Experience reality as it is.
- Teaching points:
  - Core mindfulness skills are like core muscles. If they are strong, everything else gets easier to do. We want to keep them in shape because all of the other skills are built from them.
  - Trying to shut out thoughts and feelings is the best way to keep having them.
  - Mindfulness is simple, not easy.
  - Mindfulness is used to decrease cognitive dysregulation/distortions, which include: black and white thinking, mind reading, rumination, catastrophizing, fortune telling and dissociation.
  - Ask group members: what does mindfulness mean to you/what do you know about mindfulness? (As it is sort of a buzzword today).
- Mindfulness definitions: the practice of being present, in the moment, on purpose, without judgment, and not clinging to any moment.
- Video: Why Mindfulness is a Superpower

Wise Mind

- Ideas for mindfulness:
- Alternate nostril breathing. Find YouTube video on how to do it here.
- Definitions:
- Emotion mind: state of mind ruled by extreme emotion. Emotions control your thinking and behavior. Don't confuse being emotional with being in emotion mind. It is possible to have intense emotions without feeling out of control.

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- Rational mind: state of mind ruled by extreme reason and logical thinking.
- Teaching points:
  - We can't be in wise mind all the time.
  - When we are making big decisions, wise mind is where we aim to be.
  - Sometimes wise mind decisions are the harder decisions to make. Don't mistake the fact that it feels hard with the idea that it is not wise mind.
  - Other ways to describe wise mind: intuition, inner knowing, a still small voice inside of you, inner guidance system, sense of clarity, balanced state of mind, gut feeling, etc.
  - "I think this (reasonable mind), and I feel this (emotion mind), I know this (wise mind)."
- Group participation/skill practice:
  - Use this worksheet as an example in group and/or provide to group members for alternative homework/skill practice.
  - Do pros and cons of reasonable and emotion mind to show dialectics and importance of both.
  - Activity for explaining wise mind: shake glitter jars and waiting for them to settle. Here is a video highlighting the concept: Just Breathe
- Videos:
  - The Roommate Agreement- example of reasonable mind
  - Inside Out clip- example of emotion mind (first minute of video)
  - Brain Divided Animated Short- example of finding wise mind

What & How Skills

- Ideas for mindfulness:
  - Observe sounds in room
  - Mindful eating a piece of a candy (Hershey Kiss). First sit with it in mouth, let melt, then swallow. Example of using Observe.
  - Observe and describe mundane object as if seeing it for first time.
  - Observe and describe baby animals non judgmentally

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- Play “I spy” and have clients guess based on observe and describe.
- Observe the breath- notice the space between inhale and exhale; observe the expansion of the belly as you breathe in and the movement of it as you breathe out.
- Observe a mint or piece of candy in your mouth. Can you tolerate not biting into it. Freeze in a position-observe urges to move. Observe thoughts that come up when someone calls out random words-up, dark, fast, etc.
- Observe tension as you scan the body from head to toes. Practice labeling it as tension for the describe skill.
- Practice observing and describing thoughts by marking a tally each time a thought enters.
- One mindfully: eat, sip tea, listen to a song, look at art. Practice walking mindfully in the room, noticing what is needed in your actions in order to walk. Write out your day with your non dominant hand. Stretch, do a seated yoga practice. Observe the difference before and after.
- Non judgmentally: play songs that people often get the words wrong to. See if the group can get the lyrics that are "fact"
- Participate: sing a song together as a group.

- Teaching points:
  - Think of the mindfulness What skills as the verbs of mindfulness and the How skills as the adjectives of mindfulness.
  - Another way to think about mindfulness What skills is like parts of a baseball game. Observe is everyone in the stands- their job is to watch. Describe is the announcers- they describe the game factually. Participate is the players in the game- they have to participate fully in their specific roles.
  - Observe: noticing exactly what is. Without adding, subtracting or interpreting in any way. Babies and kids do this all the time. For some of them, they don’t even have language yet but they are engaged in taking information in through their senses. Consider providing an example.
  - We use mindfulness both internally and externally. Meaning that we use mindfulness to pay attention to what we feel, think, experience, etc. inside of ourselves. We also use mindfulness to pay attention to what we observe in the world around us. Is there one you tend to do more?

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- Describe: when you add a label to an observed experience. Describe what is actually available through your senses, not your guesswork. Example: if thoughts are racing, observe and describe "I notice that thoughts are coming really quickly right now".
- We can't describe what we have not observed. Observing is sort of a prerequisite to describing.
- Participate: fully engaging in your experience rather than standing on the outskirts. Jumping in with two feet to the experience. Participate is incongruent with self consciousness. It also requires letting go of rumination.
- Consider sharing different personal experiences of using participate. Examples: crying, deeply engaging in a conversation, belly laughing, movement, attending a concert, etc.
- Nonjudgmentally: to see reality as it is.
- A common misunderstanding is that you need to stamp out judgments altogether. It does not mean that you forbid judgments to enter your mind. Instead, the goal is to label and see them as judgments, which means they are not facts.
- Evaluating outcomes is different from judging.
- Negative judgements boost emotional pain. Being less judgemental doesn't eliminate pain but it does help us to reduce some unwanted emotions.
- One mindfulness: the opposite of multitasking. When things overwhelm us, the key is actually to take one step at a time, with total awareness.
- Thich Nhat Hanh quote: "peace is every step".
- Effectively: this is driven by what your goals are and the way the world works, whether we approve of it or not. If we are mindful of our goals then we know what will bring us closer or further away.
- Shifting focus of what is right/wrong, fair/unfair in order to do what works.

- Group participation/skill practice:
  - Show photos/videos of cute animals and count judgments
  - Show an item and observe and describe it with just the facts
  - Participate practice: do a dance as a group: the wobble, the electric slide, etc.
  - Participate practice: play "going on a picnic and I'm bringing…", use the alphabet to go through each thing that someone brings.
  - Participate practice: "Sound Ball". To play- toss a ball and make a sound. The person who catches has to repeat the sound and then add another sound, etc.

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- Videos:
  - Mindfulness What
  - Mindfulness How
  - Princess Diaries Scene: Lilly, SHUT UP! (fandub ready) Mia's part off- observe judgments, example of lack of mindfulness skills
  - The Time You Have in Jelly Beans- helpful for teaching non attachment to moments and one mindful in the moment.
  - Empathy- the Human Connection to Patient Care- a little sad but a video for non judgmental stance; more supporting an argument for it.
  - Making Mac and Cheese with Blue Gatorade- nonjudgmental video
  - Introduction to mindfulness from Marsha

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Distress Tolerance

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Distress Tolerance

Crisis Survival Introduction

- Ideas for mindfulness or group engagement: ask group members to either hold their arms straight out in front of them or do a wall sit for one minute (do activity alongside group members). Reflect on what everyone did to tolerate the distress of physical discomfort (you might find that these directly relate to DT skills- distracting, breathing, etc.)
- What is a crisis?
  - A highly stressful situation with potential for negative outcomes.
  - Desire to engage in destructive behavior.
  - Facing a major demand and feeling overwhelmed.
  - When problems can't be solved immediately.
- Goals of crisis survival:
  - Expand our window of tolerance.
  - Survive a crisis without making things worse.
  - Cope with emotions that are overwhelming.
- Teaching points:
  - Teach the window of tolerance and emphasize how trauma can narrow our window of tolerance, leading to states of either hypo or hyper arousal.
  - Draw a scale of emotions 0-10 and emphasize how from around 7-10 is where we use distress tolerance.
  - Crisis survival skills are short term solutions to painful/hard situations. These skills are not to be used all the time as the default skill (think: overusing distraction). It changes the intensity of the emotion, not the emotion itself.

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Pros & Cons

- Ideas for mindfulness: use crisis survival exercises since pros and cons is usually taught with intro to crisis survival
- Teaching points:
  - The idea is to examine the advantages and disadvantages of our crisis urges (as well as other, non crisis behaviors).
  - Pros and cons embraces a dialectical perspective of viewing behaviors by acknowledging that there are reasons (pros) why we engage in ineffective behaviors.
  - There is a big difference between thinking about pros and cons versus writing it all out in the format the DBT suggests. Being able to view it in this way helps us to get into wise mind.
  - Any decision you make will have pros and cons. It is deciding which cons you are willing to accept/tolerate.
  - The goal is to write out pros and cons prior to a crisis. It is generally more effective to have it completed ahead of time in order to review during a crisis rather than trying to think logically during a crisis when in emotion mind.
  - Next to each con it is helpful to add a skill or how how one would cope with it.
  - It is helpful to evaluate short and long term factors. “Do you want to have a good day or a good life?”
  - Examples: pros/cons of avoidance, pros/cons of trying skills, pros/cons of self harm behavior, etc.
- Group participation/skill practice:
  - Ask for an example or come prepared with example and write out pros and cons. Have group members participate by identifying specific pros and cons and writing them down.
  - Assign values to each pro and con(1-5) importance and then add up which costs more. You could have many pros, but they are not all that important.

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STOP

- Ideas for mindfulness:
  - Freeze dance.
  - Noticing the pause between the in breath and the out breath.
- Teaching points:
  - STOP: this skill helps us to refrain from acting impulsively and making difficult situations worse.
  - Use the imagery of a slamming door and the STOP is the is the door stop that prevents the loud bang.
  - When taking a step back it is encouraged to change locations. Changing your location can help change the thought patterns that you're observing.
  - Helpful tip: visualize a STOP sign or print out a STOP sign and put it somewhere that you tend to act impulsively so that it will help you to remember to use the skill.
  - During observe: when in crisis, it's easy to zoom in and only see a tiny bit of the big picture. When observing, we want to zoom out and see the full picture in order to identify the best course of action. The best course of action will depend on your goal.
  - Important to highlight that time can be spend in each letter. It may be some time before you get to the "P".
- Group participation/skill practice:
  - Have a group member identify a time STOP would be helpful and discuss how to implement the skill. Have group members "cope ahead" and identify ways they could remember to stop in a crisis moment.
- Videos:
  - Don't Yawn Video
  - DBT STOP Video

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TIPP

- Ideas for mindfulness:
  - Progressive muscle relaxation.
  - Leading paced breathing exercise.
- Teaching points:
  - Rapid ways to reduce emotional arousal.
  - Changing your body chemistry to reduce high emotional arousal and feelings of being overwhelmed.
  - These skills are shown to work as well as impulsive crisis urges in regulating emotions, except they don't have the negative consequences.
  - Temperature: use a bowl of cold water (20-60 seconds). Remember to tip head forward and down. Mammalian dive response: humans and other mammals experience a reflex when face is cooled and breath is held. This is a physiological response to the body managing and tolerating less oxygen and regulating to temperature. Heart rate has been shown to decrease by 25% to this response.
  - Intense Exercise: upregulating nervous system in order to downregulate. Endorphins impact mood. It is hard to stay dangerously upset when you are exhausted by intense exercise. Examples: jumping jacks, short sprints, burpees, etc.)
  - Paced Breathing: generally the heart beats faster during in breaths and slows down during out breaths. When we extend the exhale, we activate the parasympathetic nervous system. This reduces the fight or flight response.
  - Progressive Muscle Relaxation: when we voluntarily tighten and relax muscles, the muscles will relax more than before intentionally tightening them. Relaxed muscles require less oxygen, so your breathing and heart rate slow down.
- Group participation/skill practice:
  - Lead the group through one part of TIP (that you did not already do for mindfulness).
- Videos:
  - Youtube videos on the mammalian dive reflex
  - Clip from The Office where Dwight does TIPP
  - 15 Minute Paired Muscle Relaxation Practice

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Distract with Accepts

- Ideas for mindfulness:
  - Have group members hold a squat position and/or arm up for a minute. Ask them what helped them to get through it despite having high distress/discomfort.
  - Have group members color or doodle for a few minutes as an example of distracting.
- Teaching points:
  - When you are in crisis, distraction can help to avoid destructive urges/behaviors. Distraction can be useful when emotional pain threatens to become overwhelming and when problems can't be solved right away. Example of situation that can't be solved right away: someone calls saying to call them back and it seems important but then they don't answer when you call back.
  - There are 7 sets of distraction skills.
  - Activities: the key is to choose activities that are neutral or opposite to what you are feelings. Choose activities that will hold your attention. For example, watching a show you've seen several times where your mind easily wanders is not effective.
  - Contributions: intense emotions often get us wrapped up in our own internal dramas to the point where we can forget there is a world outside of ourselves. Contributing takes us outsides of ourselves in a mutually beneficial way. This doesn't invalidate our pain, it just redirects self destructive energy in an healthy way.
  - Comparisons: another way of referring to gratitude or counting blessings. Take a moment to reflect on how your life is different from those less fortunate. During high distress it is hard to remember what is going right. Ways to do this: you can focus on past problems that are no longer occurring, compare to what would happen if you weren't being so skillful, etc. Compare by thinking of times you have felt differently so that you can remember it wont last forever. To do this effectively, look at just the facts; drop judgements.
  - Emotions: acting opposite to our current emotional state is a powerful tool. The key is to cultivate an emotion that is opposite to how you are feeling. Think: opposite action.

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    - Pushing away: blocking in a somewhat conscious effort to inhibit thoughts, images, and urges associated with painful emotions. Concept of containment: healthy avoidance. One form of blocking is repeatedly putting off destructive behavior (e.g. "I'm not going to act on this urge for 5 minutes" and then repeat once five minutes is over). Have to be cautious to not overuse pushing away.
    - Thoughts: using cognitive abilities to provide a temporary break from intense emotions. Example: count backwards from 100 by 3.
    - Sensations: physical sensation can provide a powerful temporary distraction. Example: hold ice in your hand.
- Group participation/skill practice:
    - Write out specific cope ahead for how one might use ACCEPTS
- Videos:
    - DBT Distract with ACCEPTS video

Self-Soothe

- Ideas for mindfulness:
    - Lead group members through a body scan.
    - Lead group members through giving themselves a hand massage for practice in self soothing.
    - Have group breathe in scented lotion or essential oils and notice impact.
    - Have group mindfully have a mint or piece of candy. Try to keep in mouth without biting/chewing through it.
- Teaching points:
    - Self soothing refers to being comforting, nurturing, gentle and mindfully kind to oneself. Self soothe activities reduce vulnerability to emotion mind and to acting impulsively and they reduce a sense of deprivation that is often a precursor to feelings of vulnerability. Consciously harnessing the power of our senses.
    - The idea of positive triggers that bring self soothe- things that bring comfort, calm emotions, and pleasant memories.

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- Ask group members which items they checked off on Handout 8? Which ones do they already use? Which ones would they be wiling to try?
- It is important to consider balancing self soothe with problem solving when needed. For example, if you're working to complete something by the deadline, you might work on completing the task while pairing that with a self soothe activity (e.g. working on an assignment while self soothing with a warm beverage or holding a worry stone).
- Ideas for the sense of hearing: make a self soothe playlist.

- Group participation/skill practice:
  - Have group members try different fidget/self soothe tools in group to see what works best for them.
  - Have group listen to ASMR clip.
- Videos:
  - Dr. Shireen Rizvi lecture on Self Soothe
  - Self Soothe

Improve the Moment

- Ideas for mindfulness:
  - Lead the group through a safe space imagery practice. Emphasize the use of imagery from IMPROVE.
  - Have the group watch a clip of snow fall, fire in fireplace, lit candle, etc. Snow Falling Loop
  - Have group listen to ASMR clip.
- Teaching points:
  - The idea with IMPROVE is to replace immediate painful/stressful/overwhelming events with more positive ones by making the moment more easy to tolerate.
  - Imagery: mental visualization works to relax your body and soothe your thoughts. By simply seeing yourself in a more calm setting, you actually allow your mind and body to feel as though you are. Imagine yourself coping well, tolerating distress, resisting destructive behaviors, how the situation will feel once it's over. If visualization doesn't come easy to you, it takes practice like anything else. Try to practice prior to a crisis event occurring.

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- Meaning: put simply, something good can come from something bad. Making meaning doesn't mean telling yourself that everything is great and denying the difficulty of what you're experiencing. It means finding meaning in something hard or finding a possible reason to reassign your present suffering.
- Prayer: this can come in any form that works for you. It can be religious or spiritual prayer, but it does not have to be. It could be to God, the universe, a higher power, mother nature, your own wise mind, a loved one, etc. Prayer helps to connect us to the world, which in turn enables us to stop trying to control things that are out of our control. When we feel a part of the greater whole, it is easier to cope.
- Relaxing actions: we often feel tension in our bodies when we feel overwhelmed. The key is to choose a relaxing activity that ordinarily has the effect of calming you down.
- One thing in the moment: the secret with this skill is to remember that the only pain we have to survive is "just this moment". We often suffer much more than what is necessary by calling to mind past suffering, wondering how long this suffering it going to last, or ruminating about future suffering we may need to endure. Think: the one mindfulness skill.
- Vacation: the idea here is similar to the notion of taking a time out to regroup on a real vacation. On an ideal vacation, you're able to take a break from life's stressors and return home ready to take on the challenges you left behind. The key here is to be in control of taking temporary vacations and make them as brief as possible so that we don't fall into long term avoidance.
- Encouragement: we often look for encouragement from outside forces. While there is nothing wrong with this, we can't always get that. The idea is to talk to yourself the way you would talk to someone you care about in distress. In relationships, couples who have a higher ratio of positive comments to negative comments predict partners staying in relationships. We are in relationships with ourselves and so saying more positive and encouraging things than put downs helps to tolerate distress and improve our relationship with ourselves.

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- Group participation/skill practice:
  - Problem solve with the group realistic ideas to practice taking a brief vacation. Make a plan for how/when they might do it.
  - Make a list of relaxing actions that work for them.
  - Give each other encouragement and write it down to reflect on later. OR Have group members write a list of encouraging statements for a friend/loved one, then pass that list to the person next to them to use when they need it.
  - Write future self a letter of encouragement.
  - Do an imagery practice as a group.
  - Have clients go through phone and save 5 different photos to an IMPROVE album. Ask members if anyone would be willing to describe the photos they selected.
- Videos:
  - Imagery- Visualization meditation

Reality Acceptance Introduction

- Teaching points:
  - Reality acceptance skills are the skills for accepting life as it is in this moment, even when we don't like it. They are particularly useful when we are living a life that is not exactly the life we want or when it feels like things in life are unacceptable.
  - The goals of reality acceptance are to reduce suffering and increase our sense of freedom.
  - When practicing these skills we must be willing to let go of how things "should" be.
  - Some people find that "reality acknowledgment" is easier to say than reality acceptance.
- Group participation/skill practice:
  - Write down this quote and ask for reflections: "The curious paradox is that when I accept myself exactly as I am, I can change" -Carl Rogers
- Videos:
  - DBT Reality Acceptance

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Reality Acceptance & Turning the Mind

- Ideas for mindfulness:
  - Write on the board this equation and instruct group members to reflect:
  - pain + acceptance = ordinary pain
  - pain + non acceptance = suffering
  - Reflect on your day today. What was something you accepted and what would have happened if you didn't.
- Teaching points:
  - Radical acceptance is about developing a new relationship with experience, where we allow experiences to be what they are without trying to control things that are out of our control nor fight reality.
  - When we are fighting reality we are increasing the cloud of pain/emotion mind presence and cannot see clearly to problem solve effectively, we solve from pain instead of wise mind.
  - Radical acceptance is not opposed to change. It is a dialectic where both can exist at the same time. In fact, we generally don't have one without the other. Changing reality requires accepting it first.
  - We only have to accept actual facts about the present moment, the past, and realistic limitations about the future. We have to be cautious not to accept distortions of reality, exaggerations, judgments or catastrophes.
  - Warning: sometimes accepting reality can cause emotions like sadness and grief to show up initially. This is a necessary part of processing and doesn't mean that you are doing it wrong. A sense of calm and peace eventually follows.
  - Emphasize why we teach crisis survival skills prior to acceptance skills. Crisis survival skills are the tools that help us tolerate these emotions during the process of accepting reality.
  - Turning the mind: acceptance seems to require some kind of choice. We have to turn our minds back (over and over again) to acceptance. Sometimes it helps to visualize two paths- one of acceptance and one of nonacceptance. Practicing this skill means turning the mind back to the path of acceptance when it strays (as it tends to do). You may have to do this several times.

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- Group participation/skill practice:
  - Have clients reflect on their journey getting into group. One must have accepted they needed more skills/support in order to make the change and commit to skills group. Discuss.
- Videos:
  - The Fly - YouTube
  - Radical Acceptance: How To Change Your Life By Accepting It First

Willingness, Willing Hands, Half Smile

- Ideas for mindfulness:
  - Willing hands posture while playing a song.

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- Teaching points:
  - In order to practice willingness, we have to know what willfulness is first and be able to observe when it is happening. Willfulness is: trying to frantically control something that is out of our control, denying reality, sitting on our hands when action is needed. A sign for willfulness might be saying "yeah, but" when suggestions are made about how to change the problem we are facing.
  - Willingness is:
    - Accepting what is and responding in an appropriate way.
    - Doing what is needed in the current situation or moment.
    - Saying yes to the mystery of being alive.
    - Responding from wise mind.
    - Active participation in reality (even when we don't approve of it).
    - Not always what we want but is always effective.
  - Half smile is not about changing your expression so that it is visible to others. Instead it is about communicating to yourself, to your brain and body. Emotions are partially controlled by facial expression. By adopting a more serene, accepting facial expression, we are able to control emotions and thoughts more easily. Be cautious of making a phony smile expression. This will actually create more tension. The key is to stay relaxed. Think: Mona Lisa smile.
  - Willing hands:
    - You can try doing one hand at a time if both feels too vulnerable at first.
    - Willing hands is opposite action all the way for anger.
- Group participation/skill practice:
  - Lead group members through the practice of half smiling and willing hands during group.
  - Show a photo of the Mona Lisa as an example of doing half smile.
  - Charades- give situations and show what is looks like to be willing (facing someone, open, listening) vs willful (arms crossed/closed off, eye rolling).
- Videos:
  - Marsha Teaches Willing Hands to Defuse Anger

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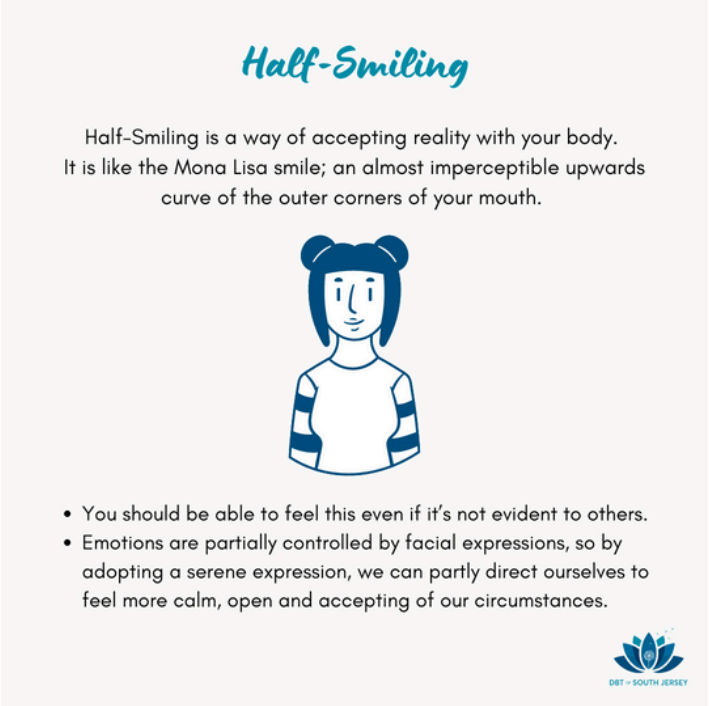

Mindfulness of Current Thoughts

- Ideas for mindfulness:
  - Instruct group members to not think about something for one minute (could be anything- e.g. "don't think of a pen"). Then instruct group members to think of a pen and set a timer for one minute. Group members might find that not thinking of ___ made it so that they still thought of the thing and that intentionally thinking of something eventually made it so that the thought drifted and they thought of something else. Reflect on observations and highlight how trying to keep out thoughts is one of the ways that ends up perpetuating the thoughts.
  - Set a timer for 1 minute and have clients say to themselves silently "thinking" every time they have a thought. Additionally you can have group members tally the amount of thoughts they have on a piece of paper.
- Teaching points:
  - The skill of knowing what is happening in your head at any given moment without getting carried away by it.
  - Why is it part of the acceptance based skills? Because it is about radically accepting (not necessarily approving of) thoughts.

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    - It is about changing your relationship with thoughts rather than changing the thoughts themselves. The task is to find new ways to relate to thoughts, particularly negative or painful thoughts so that they don't induce so much suffering.
    - Although events in life are catastrophic, thoughts about these events are not catastrophes.
    - This skill reminds us not to see thoughts as facts and to take them less seriously. Thoughts are really just neurons firing in our brains.
    - Try practicing with more neutral thoughts (see below exercise) and eventually it will get easier to do with more challenging thoughts.
- Group participation/skill practice:
    - After you have taught the skill, instruct group members to close their eyes/soften their gaze and use the mindfulness of current thoughts skill to observe thoughts as you slowly read a series of words (e.g. tree, salt, sky, dog, smile, blue, flower etc.)
- Videos:
    - Headspace | Meditation | Changing Perspective

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Emotion Regulation

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Emotion Regulation

Emotion Regulation Introduction

- Teaching points:
  - The same way we have an IQ, we have an E.Q. (emotional intelligence). Emotional intelligence is different from an IQ in that it is flexible and can change based on skills that we acquire. Emotion regulation skills help us to improve our E.Q.
  - What good are emotions handout:
    - Motivate to action: if there is a fire in the room, fear motivates me to run out and keep myself safe.
  - Communicate to others: people generally trust nonverbal over verbal communication, which is often shown through out emotional expression.
  - Communicate to ourselves: emotions send us really useful information.
- Group participation:
  - Have group members check off their top three goals in the book and discuss (page 205).

Model for Describing Emotions

- Ideas for mindfulness:
  - Play two different kinds of music and notice what emotion it brings up for each.
  - Have clients identify two emotions they felt today and inquire how did they know. Observe if responses fit into model for describing emotions i.e. prompting event/body changes / thoughts / action urge.
- Teaching points:
  - The model of emotions shows the components of an emotional response in the form of a flowchart.
  - Emotions are complex, full system responses. Changing any part of the system can change the entire response. In the emotion regulation skill module we will be focusing on different parts of the model to change in order to change how we feel.

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- Imagining taking a screen shot of one single moment, the model of emotions describes that one moment for that emotion rather than over a long period of time. The model of emotions is for 1 emotion at a time.
- Prompting event: the thing that happened right before the emotion starts. Can be internal or external.
- Vulnerabilities: lack of PLEASE skills (poor sleep, unbalanced eating, physical illness, etc.), or recent stressful event(s).
- Interpretations are when we fill in the blanks of a situation with our own interpretation or trying to connect the dots without having all of the facts.

- Group participation/skill practice:
  - Do an example with the group and write it down.
  - Have clients practice noticing body sensations that align with feeling sad vs. happy- sitting up tall for a minute vs. slouching down- notice any differences.
  - Pick an emotion and have everyone draw how they would represent it visually or pick songs that would represent it.

Check the Facts

- Ideas for mindfulness:
  - Two truths and a lie.
  - Whisper down the lane.
  - Look up song lyrics that are commonly misquotes/or wrong when people sing them. Have the group try to identify the correct lyric.
  - Play a clip from a movie or show and have everyone write a blow by blow account of what happened. See if anyone has different stories.
- Teaching points:
  - Checking the facts requires us to separate facts from assumptions and interpretations.
  - When trying to come up with other interpretations, think to yourself "what is the most generous interpretation I can give to the other person/situation?"
  - It is important to have a disclaimer about obsessing over what the facts are or could be. For someone with OCD, or someone who ruminates on facts, going down this route could be counterproductive.

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- Often it is not the actual situation that causes us pain but the story we tell about the situation. Checking the facts can help to see and label assumptions for what they are rather than seeing them as facts.
- Changing your emotional response means being willing to explore whether or not your emotional reactions fit the facts of the actual situation.
- Challenge yourself to come up with a few reasonable alternatives to the assumptions you are having.
- Fact checking does not equal fact finding. For example, if I assume that my friend isn't texting me back because she is mad at me and I go to check her location, instagram, etc. and find that she is active on social media- this is not fact checking! I am trying to prove my assumption right rather than taking an alternative perspective.
- When we are determining if an emotion is justified, remember- all emotions are valid and understandable for several reasons. The question here is: is it justified in this situation based on the facts? Also does the intensity and duration fit the facts of the situation?

- Group participation/skill practice:
  - Have clients practice giving instructions to one another-for example, how to make a pbj sandwich. See if following the instructions gets them what they were hoping to achieve at the end if followed. Talk about times where you thought you were following instructions or treating a scenario as factual, but you were wrong.
  - Checking the facts can also be invalidating to hear when repeated over and over. Could be part of a group discussion.
- Videos:
  - Ellen's Audience Sings Only Girl In The World

Opposite Action

- Ideas for mindfulness:
  - Simon Says
  - Can have clients do yoga poses in their chair or standing and notice how they feel. Folded fold, vs. warrior two. When fully expanding into warrior two, how does it feel to stand with confidence. Same can be said for power posing.

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- Teaching points:
  - Emotions come with action urges. The question isn't whether or not the urge is right or wrong but rather whether or not it is effective to act on. For example, if I see a bear and my action urge for fear is to run, this is an effective action urge. If I see a bear and my action urge for curiosity is to move towards it, it is an ineffective action urge to act on and thus I would use opposite action.
  - When emotions are unpleasant, there is often a tendency to think and act in ways that keep us stuck or serve to intensify or prolong the unpleasant emotional experience. Ex: if someone feels stuck in a repetitive cycle of social anxiety, actions such as avoiding all social situations tend to support the social anxiety instead of change it.
  - For the action urges coinciding with specific emotions listed in the book- these action urges are not limited to what is listed here. Someone might have completely different action urges than what is written in the book.
  - We use opposite action all the time, even when we are not aware we are using it.
  - Emotions are information, not directives. Meaning, it isn't always effective to act in the ways emotions nudge us towards.
- Group participation/skill practice:
  - Make cope ahead plan for when opposite action is needed and is difficult to implement.
- Videos:
  - Scene from Seinfeld- silly way to demonstrate the skill in use
  - Amy Cuddy TED talk on power posing

Problem Solving

- Ideas for mindfulness:
  - Ask group members to line up in order of their birthday month without talking (in person only). Discuss what problem solving was used to make this happen once it is complete.

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- Teaching points:
  - The reality of life is that sometimes emotions do fit the facts of a situation. This is where problem solving comes in.
  - One of the first things we have to do is make sure we have the right problem. Particularly with more complex problems, sometimes we find ourselves solving the wrong problem which gets in the way of reaching desired results.
  - Often times we discount solutions prior to even considering them because we come up with reasons why they won't work. While this is understandable, it undermines our ability to try things out and put potential solutions into action. Example, if someone is giving us solutions and we are constantly saying "yeah, but…", we might be stuck in this cycle.
  - Don't assume there is one way to solve a problem.
  - The beauty of being on a team or problem solving in larger groups is that others often come up with solutions that we might not have thought of (see below group participation practice).
- Group participation/skill practice:
  - Bring in a problem or ask group members for an example of a problem and have everyone come up with solutions. Write the solutions down and don't discount any potential solution, no matter how unlikely they are to work.
  - Have the group work together to solve a riddle or puzzle.
  - Idea: problem solving student loans being too high. It can be fun to have group members generate solutions without evaluating them.

Accumulating Positives in the Short Term

- Ideas for mindfulness:
  - Write a gratitude list.
  - Identify and write down one thing that went well today or one thing you're looking forward to tomorrow.
  - Take 3-5 minutes writing down a recent pleasant memory (no matter how small).

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- Teaching points:
  - Bank account metaphor: when we engage in activities that result in pleasant emotions and experiences, it is like investing money in a bank account. Even if the event is something small, a penny saved is a penny earned. Over time, we have some savings to fall back on when life gets hard and we feel like we have nothing positive to pull from.
  - The absence of positive experience has an impact on us. It can cause a sense of deprivation, lack of connection, and overall dissatisfaction.
  - Often accumulating positive experiences is the last thing we think to do during hard moments but it is often what is needed the most.
  - Sometimes in our attempts to block out difficult emotions, we numb the positive ones too (unintentionally).
- Videos:
  - Accumulating Positives Now

Accumulating Positives in the Long Term
(Values & Priorities)

- Ideas for mindfulness:
  - Ask the group to imagine they can bring 5 objects (not for survival) on a deserted island. What would you bring? Discuss how this could be connected to values and priorities
- Teaching points:
  - Accumulating positives in the long term is about building a life worth living.
  - Life worth living goals are a fundamental tenant of DBT.
  - Short term pleasures can sometimes interfere with building a life worth living- of stable contentment. Always seeking things that make us feel better right this minute can (at times) get in the way of building permanent positive events.
  - A life worth living is a life that you value and find meaning in.
  - Metaphor- watching a plant grow. Creating a life worth living takes time and patience. We need to water the plant, fertilize it, be patient, etc. in order to see new growth.
  - Choose one value that you would like to work on first and start there.

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- Group participation/skill practice:
  - Give everyone a piece of paper with an image of a suitcase on it. Everyone is to imagine planning to leave for an unknown amount of time. Inside the suitcase they write what they would like to bring with them, and outside of the suitcase they write what they would leave behind. Ask everyone what they noticed and how this may connect to identifying what is important to them now in order to build a life worth living.
  - Write out or print out values on pieces of paper and lay them out for clients to pick which 3 are most relevant to them today. A values card sorting exercise.
  - Have everyone in the group select one value and write it at the top of a page. Everyone pass to their right, and the next person writes down one goal that can help the person with that value. Continue to pass until the sheet gets back to their owner, and they now have a list of ideas to support the work on their value.

Building Mastery

- Ideas for mindfulness:
  - How to Draw A Simple Plant- do a drawing exercise together
  - Practice writing a sentence over and over with your non dominant hand.
- Teaching points:
  - Building mastery refers to doing things that make you feel competent, empowered, self confident and autonomous.
  - Requires us to do something that is at least a little bit challenging. The idea is to generate a sense of accomplishment. Over time, a series of accomplishments leads to more positive self concept, higher self esteem, overall sense of joy and makes us more resistant to unpleasant emotions.
  - The idea is to do at least one thing per day to feel a sense of accomplishment and gradually increase difficulty over time. Building mastery does not equal perfection.
- Group participation/skill practice:
  - Consider reading and reflection on a quote from Atomic Habits by James Clear
  - Play Wordle online as a group to see if group members can figure out the word.
  - Share website tinyhabits.com for support in creating building mastery habits.
- Videos:
  - Kobe Shooting Alone After Loss- a clip of Kobe Bryant practicing shots after losing a game. He stays back by himself to practice and perfect his craft.

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Cope Ahead

- Teaching points:
  - Coping ahead challenges us to figure out which situations are likely to cause trouble and intentionally plan ahead for those situations.
  - Our instinct is usually just to ruminate and worry about future challenging situations. Cope ahead planning is taking that energy and harnessing it in a more effective way.
  - The parts of this skill that are often skipped but are crucial to the success of the skill are visualizing and rehearsing the situation.
  - Simply visualizing a situation can access the same parts of the brain as if we were actually in the situation. Training your brain to be there before you even get there is like creating a blueprint for how you want to behave in the situation.

PLEASE

- Ideas for mindfulness:
  - Give everyone a piece of paper with a thermometer on it. Assign values out of 100% for each of the please skills and have everyone color the thermometer for each box they can check off on please skills. For example-did you get a full nights sleep? If so, that gives you 10%. Did you take medicine, attend to illness, take vitamins-if so, color another 10% (If you use 10%, you would have 10 questions to ask that you have come up with based on the please skill). This gives everyone a visual representation of their emotional vulnerability/resiliency as they approach the day.
- Teaching points:
  - Please skills emphasize how it is hard to be mentally and emotionally well when we are not physically taking care of ourselves.
  - Lack of PLEASE skills significantly increase our vulnerabilities.
  - Treat physical illness: when we don't feel well, we're often in a state of misery and dread.
  - Balanced eating: work for balance. Not eating too much or too little. Be mindful of E.D. behaviors or mindsets. The gut is often referred to as the "second brain" since there is as much serotonin and dopamine made in the gut than in the brain.

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- Avoid mood altering substances: people often turn to substances to cope with feelings but in reality substance use dysregulates moods and causes emotion mind behaviors that would generally not occur if not under the influence. Substances are not just drugs and alcohol- consider things like caffeine as well.
- Balanced sleep: be in tune with how much sleep you need. Cope ahead for getting better sleep using the sleep hygiene protocol.
- Exercise: consider this any kind of movement. Finding a type of movement that feels good for you makes it more likely that you engage in the activity.

- Videos:
  - You're not you when you're hungry snickers commercial

Mindfulness of Current Emotions

- Ideas for mindfulness:
  - Draw a "mood ring" to describe how you're feeling in this moment. What color(s) would it include?
- Teaching points:
  - Metaphor: Emotions are like visitors. If you are a gracious host, you put out the welcome mat and let them in, AND you don't let them overstay their welcome.
  - Things that happen in life can be catastrophes but emotions themselves are not. We need to be willing to experience them.
- Group participation/skill practice:
  - Guide the group through a practice of mindfulness of emotions by having them identify an emotion that is present and lead them through a practice of having them notice where they feel the emotion in their body.

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Interpersonal Effectiveness

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Interpersonal Effectiveness

DEAR MAN

- Ideas for mindfulness:
  - List what tends to interfere with communication.
- Teaching points:
  - Objective effectiveness refers to reaching our objective or specific goal in a particular skill. Objective effectiveness is closely related to assertiveness skills.
  - DEAR MAN is like the ice cream and GIVE and FAST are different sprinkles. This imagery helps us understand the skills can be mixed together.
  - Assertiveness is confidence, where aggression is defensive. Assertiveness is a dialogue, where aggression is a debate. "I attack in order to protect myself" is not the same aw "I know what I want and I'm ready to hear what you have to say and we can negotiate from there".
  - Describe: when necessary, begin by briefly describing the situation. No judgmental statements or assumptions. Sticking to the facts helps the two parties get on the same page and begin in a pattern of agreement. Pro tip- look for the other persons head nod as you describe. When writing out the "describe", consider if the other person will nod along to that. Will they agree?
  - Express: Express clearly how you feel and what you believe about the situation. Use "I" statements. Prepare yourself that this part can feel vulnerable sometimes (especially when doing it effectively).
  - Assert: be clear and concise with what you are asking for. No "should" statements. Ask rather than demand. Not giving the other person a say in the matter tends to damage relationships. Don't assume the other person knows what you want.
  - Reinforce: identify something positive or rewarding that would happen for the other person if they give you what you're asking for. This involves taking the time to consider your audience. What is reinforcing to one person is not always reinforcing to another. At a minimum/when in doubt, show appreciation. Generally people like to feel appreciated and saying thank you is an easy way to reinforce the other person.

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- Mindful: stay mindful of your objective in the situation. Think: “eye on the prize”. Ignore attacks or diversions. Often when we go to make a request, an attack or diversion will throw us off and we end up on a topic or issue unrelated to the initial question (“well what about this thing that happened nine years ago!”). Keep the conversation on course by saying something like “that’s really important and I want to get to that. Can we stay with this for now and I promise we will come back to what you just said”.
- Appear confident: confident voice tone, physical stance, posture, eye contact, taking up space etc. This conveys to the other person and to yourself that you deserve whatever you’re asking for. Balancing not appearing arrogant while also not appearing apologetic.
- Negotiate: be willing to give in order to get. Offer and ask for alternative solutions to the problem. This is especially useful when you feel stuck. Consider turning over the problem to the other person (e.g. “it sounds like my solution doesn’t work for you but I need this to be solved in order to be satisfied in the relationship. I know you want that too. Do you have any ideas?”

- Group participation/skill practice:
  - Have someone volunteer something they want to make a request and have the whole group collaborate in writing out DEAR MAN on the (in person or digital) whiteboard.
- Videos:
  - Amy Cuddy Ted Talk on Power Posing- show clip (consider around minute 2- minute 8) of TED talk and emphasize how this connects to “appear confident”.
  - Sell it Like Serhant-On Appearing Confident

GIVE

- Ideas for mindfulness:
  - Split the group in two have have members argue a topic (like adopt don’t shop for dogs or plastic straws). Instruct group members to go back and forth and validate the other side before making their argument.

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- Teaching points:
  - Relationship effectiveness refers to improving or maintaining a relationship, while at the same time obtaining an objective. When improving relationships is the main goal, the focus is on how to go about trying to improve the relationship.
  - (Be) Gentle: people tend to respond to gentleness more than they do to harshness. This means no (hidden) threats, attacks, judging, name calling, put downs, guilt trips, sarcasm, snark, etc. When we use punishing language and behavior to get what we want, people are less likely to want to give us what we want in the future.
  - (Act) Interested: listen to the person's point of view, opinion or perspective without simultaneously thinking of a rebuttal. Listen for the sake of listening. Don't seem distracted (e.g. looking down at your phone). Remember, we don't necessarily have be interested to do this part of the skill.
  - Validate: review the levels of validation handout. This means communicating that the other persons feelings, thoughts or actions are understandable to you, given their past or current experiences. We can validate the why without agreeing with the what. Validation is one of the main ingredients for a loving relationship, not just to be used during conflict.
  - Easy Manner: using an easy manner helps to create a comfortable atmosphere and conveys the message that this conversation is safe and the other person can be relaxed and open as well.
- Group participation/skill practice:
  - Write out DEAR GIVE script.
- Videos:
  - It's Not about the Nail
  - Inside Out clip
  - Brene Brown on Empathy
  - Michael Dumps Jan Via Voicemail -How does this damage the relationship or impact the objective of breaking up being met?
  - Positive Reinforcement Big Bang Theory -This clip shows using positive reinforcement to increase chances of getting your objective met.

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FAST

- Ideas for mindfulness:
  - Have group members and write a letter to their self respect. Prompt: "Dear self respect..."
- Teaching points:
  - Self respect effectiveness refers to acting in a manner that maintains or increases a sense of self respect. The key here is to ask for what you want/say no in such a way that you will still respect yourself after.
  - Ask group members: what are ways you feel like you lose self respect? Examples could be: becoming extremely emotional with someone who isn't safe to express emotions with, asking passively or giving in, getting extremely angry or threatening.
  - (Be) Fair: it is hard to like yourself over time if you are consistently taking advantage or people. It is also hard to like yourself over time if you always give in to other people's wishes and don't stick up for your own beliefs. Being fair means balancing our own wishes with others.
  - (No) Apologies: when apologies are warranted, apologize. Don't apologize for being alive, for taking up space, for making a request, for disagreeing or having an opinion. Apologies imply that you are wrong or have made a mistake. Excessive apologies often get on the other persons nerves or simply dilute real apologies. Think: appear confident.
  - Stick to values: consider reviewing your values from emotion regulation handout 18-Values and Priorities. Avoid selling out your own values or integrity to get your objective met or to be liked.
  - (Be) Truthful: a pattern of dishonesty erodes self respect. If dishonesty is your usual mode of getting your objective met, it will likely be harmful in the long term.
- Group participation/skill practice:
  - Write out DEAR FAST script.
- Videos:
  - Hitch-Will Smith Meets Eva Mendez What skills do you see being used? What could be improved?

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Options for Intensity (Dime Game), Troubleshooting

- Teaching points:
  - It is important to consider whether or not to ask for something or say no to something and how strongly to do so.
  - Have you ever questioned whether or not it is wise mind to say no or even ask for something you want? The dime game helps to provide an objective answer based on a series of questions.
  - Capability: be a critical thinker with this one. It is not always straightforward. For example, when asking myself is this person able to give me what I want when I am asking for simple validation, it is tempting to say yes. However, depending on who it is, they actually might not know how to validate. Maybe it was never modeled to them, maybe they don't have the skills, etc.
  - Long term vs. short term: sometimes being passive results in peace now but creates problems in the long run. If you know this might be true, then increase your intensity.
  - Give and take: if you think of relationships as providing deposit and withdrawals, are there more deposits than withdrawals in the relationship or vice versa. Do you feel like you give as much as you get with this person?
  - Timing: imagine being a younger kid waiting to ask your parents for something at the right time. We intuitively know to do this but sometimes forget when there is a sense of urgency. Stay mindful about when you are asking/saying no.
  - Wise mind is an additional factor to consider when deciding how strongly to ask for something/say no to something and how intensely to push for what you want. Use wise mind to calibrate the other factors considered. If you think it is wise mind, consider adding 5-10 cents. If you feel it is not wise mind, consider taking away 5-10 cents.
  - Examples of low intensity behaviors when asking/saying no: asking indirectly, looking down, using a lot of filler words, saying "it's okay if not" before the person has even answered, giving into the other persons request, etc.
  - Examples of high intensity behaviors when asking/saying no: speaking firmly, insisting, appearing confident, making eye contact, waiting for a response before filling silence, etc.

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- Group participation/skill practice:
  - Look at Handout 8 and review the levels of intensity. Put checkmarks where you tend to ask for things/say no to things. What are the pros and cons to this approach? Does your approach tend to be different with different people or contexts? What changes do you think need to be made? Discuss with group members
  - Come up with an example for asking for something/saying no to something and have group members practice creating a statement for asking/saying no using the different levels of intensity. Example: asking for the air conditioning to be turned down. Go through all the levels of intensity- some examples would include:
  - Hint directly, take no: "it's so cold in here".
  - Ask firmly, negotiate, resist no: "can you turn down the air conditioning please? If you're not able to now can you in a little bit? What can I do to make this happen?" etc.
  - Interpersonal Effectiveness Bingo Card (bingobaker.com)
- Videos/additional resources:
  - There is a free app called The Dime Game (graphic looks like a blue bar graph). Is asks the questions from the dime game and then generates the answer for intensity based on answers to the questions.

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