

WEEK 1

HANDOUTS

TAKE-HOME IMPRESSIONS

BRAIN INJURY SYMPTOMS

4 -7- 8 BREATH RELAXATION EXERCISE

DEALING WITH TRIGGERS

SYMPTOM RECOGNITION LOG

TAKE-HOME IMPRESSIONS

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I will share this with: _____
because: _____

3. I STILL HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT:

4. ONE STRATEGY I LEARNED TODAY THAT I BELIEVE WILL HELP ME IS:

5. THESE ARE THREE SITUATIONS WHERE I CAN SEE MYSELF USING THAT STRATEGY/SKILL:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

BRAIN INJURY SYMPTOMS

BRAIN INJURIES CAN RANGE IN SCOPE FROM MILD TO SEVERE. THE IMPACT OF BRAIN INJURY CAN INCLUDE:



PHYSICAL

- Headache
- Nausea
- Fatigue
- Numbness/Tingling
- Feeling dazed/stunned
- Balance Problems
- Dizziness
- Difficulties with interpretation of touch, temperature, movement, limb position and fine discrimination
- Trouble with integration or patterning of sensory impressions into psychologically meaningful data
- Partial or total loss of vision
- Diplopia: weakness of eye muscles and double vision
- Blurred vision
- Problems judging distance
- Nystagmus: involuntary eye movements
- Photophobia: intolerance of light
- Decrease or loss of hearing
- Tinnitus: ringing in the ears
- Increased sensitivity to sounds
- Anosmia: loss or diminished sense of smell
- Loss or diminished sense of taste
- Convulsions associated with epilepsy that can be several types and can involve disruption in consciousness, sensory perception, or motor movements
- Spasticity: physical paralysis
- Chronic pain
- Control of bowel and bladder
- Menstrual difficulties
- Regulation of body temperature
- Loss of stamina
- Appetite changes



COGNITIVE

- Feeling mentally “foggy”
- Feeling slowed down
- Difficulty with concentrating and/or memory
- Forgetting recent information and/or conversations
- Confusion
- Repeating questions
- Difficulty with attention, distractibility, speed of processing
- Difficulty with perseveration, impulsiveness, language processing
- Struggling with “executive functions”
- Receptive aphasia: not understanding the spoken word
- Expressive aphasia: difficulty speaking and being understood
- Slurred speech or speaking very fast/very slow
- Difficulty with reading and/or writing



EMOTIONAL

- Irritability
- Sadness/Depression
- Nervousness
- Aggression
- Disinhibition
- Dependent behaviors/lack of motivation
- Denial/lack of awareness
- Struggling with emotional ability or being more emotional



SLEEP

- Drowsiness
- Trouble falling asleep
- Sleeping less than usual or more than usual

4-7-8 BREATH RELAXATION EXERCISE

Place yourself into a comfortable but upright seated position, with your back straight. Exhale completely through your mouth, making a “whoosh” sound.

- 1 Close your mouth and inhale quietly through your nose to a mental count of four.
- 2 Hold your breath for a count of seven.
- 3 Exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound to a count of eight.
- 4 This is one breath. Now inhale again and repeat the cycle three more times for a total of four breaths.

FAQ:

Are the numbers important?

The absolute time you spend on each phase is not important; the ratio of 4:7:8 is important. If you have trouble holding your breath, speed the exercise up but keep to the ratio of 4:7:8 for the three phases. With practice you can slow it all down and get used to inhaling and exhaling more and more deeply.

Why should I do it?

This exercise is a natural tranquilizer for the nervous system. Unlike tranquilizing drugs, which are often effective when you first take them but then lose their power over time, this exercise is subtle when you first try it but gains in power with repetition and practice. Use this new skill whenever anything upsetting happens - before you react. Use it whenever you are aware of internal tension. Use it to help you fall asleep.

How often?

Do it at least twice a day. You cannot do it too frequently. Do not do more than four breaths at one time for the first month of practice. Later, if you wish, you can extend it to eight breaths. If you feel a little lightheaded when you first breathe this way, do not be concerned - it will pass.

DEALING WITH TRIGGERS

A **trigger** is something that sets off a reaction in you. Triggers can be internal (something that comes from a thought or emotion you create) and/or external (something in the outside world that causes you to react to it.)

INTERNAL TRIGGER REACTIONS INCLUDE:

- Feelings of anger, anxiety, or sadness
- Memories
- Loneliness
- Frustration
- Feeling out of control
- Feeling vulnerable
- Racing heartbeat
- Physical pain
- Negative self-talk

EXTERNAL TRIGGERS INCLUDE:

- Seeing something on the news or online that reminds you of your traumatic event
- Watching a movie or television show that reminds you of your traumatic event
- Certain smells
- The anniversary of a significant or traumatic event
- Holidays
- Visiting a specific place
- Seeing a person who reminds you of someone connected to your traumatic event

EVALUATE YOUR TRIGGERS

It is okay to sometimes avoid external triggers (as long as this avoidance doesn't negatively interfere with your day-to-day quality of life), but it is wise to continually evaluate your triggers and to practice good coping strategies. The physical and emotional symptoms of trauma can take some time to diminish in intensity. Continued coping strategy practice is essential. If you are struggling with symptoms of trauma, it is a wise idea to seek professional help from a counselor trained in helping clients process traumatic events. While it can be scary to ask for help, getting help in coping with your triggers will ultimately lead to a longer, healthier, happier life for you and yours.

When you find yourself faced with a trigger, do your best to ask yourself the following questions:

- What type of situation are you in? Are you safe?
- What is happening around you?
- What kind of emotions are you feeling?
- What thoughts are you having?
- What does your body feel like?

The following is a list of methods and practices for coping with the experience of triggers. More information on each of these methods can be found either within this curriculum or with a simple Internet search, and can be practiced on your own in privacy.

- ✓ **Mindfulness**
- ✓ **Safe place imagery/Guided visualization**
- ✓ **Grounding techniques**
- ✓ **Journaling**
- ✓ **Social Support**
- ✓ **Deep Breathing**
- ✓ **Coping Affirmations**
- ✓ **Relaxation/Self-soothing exercises**
- ✓ **Connect to your body**
- ✓ **Connect to others**
- ✓ **Regulate (exercise, focus on breathing, grounding)**

SYMPTOM RECOGNITION LOG

A helpful strategy is to create your own Daily Symptom Recognition Log. Each day, you should fill out the symptom log. Tracking the times and ways that you experience your symptoms will help you to better understand them, and that understanding can lead to better symptom management. Taking note of how you felt when you went through each symptom will help you to make a plan for how you are going to react next time you experience this.

Bring this log with you to the next meeting of our group!

Answer the following questions:

1. WHAT SYMPTOMS DID I EXPERIENCE TODAY?

(list the name of the symptom if you know what it is called, describe the symptom if you don't know what to call it)

2. I EXPERIENCED THESE SYMPTOMS WHEN I WAS

(list where you were/what you were doing)

3. I HAVE FELT THIS SYMPTOM BEFORE WHEN I WAS...

4. MY REACTION TO FEELING THIS SYMPTOM WAS...

5. THE WAY I REACTED MADE ME FEEL...

6. NEXT TIME WHEN I EXPERIENCE THIS SYMPTOM, I WANT TO...

WEEK 2

HANDOUTS

PRACTICAL MEMORY STRATEGIES

MUSCLE RELAXATION SCRIPT

MEMORY FLASH CARDS

S.M.A.R.T. GOALS DEFINED

TAKE-HOME IMPRESSIONS (OPTIONAL)

PRACTICAL MEMORY STRATEGIES

EXTERNAL MEMORY AIDS

Limits the work that the memory has to do and creates reminders.

- Diaries and datebooks
- Notebooks
- Lists
- Calendars
- Wall charts
- Post-it notes

ESTABLISHING A ROUTINE

Following a daily routine can help you get used to your responsibilities and expectations. This helps reduce the reliance on memory and increase your ability to remember tasks.

- Make a list of daily activities and keep it visible
- Use charts, pictures, and noticeboards for daily events
- Have your Behavioral Health Specialist (BHS) help you

ADAPT THE ENVIRONMENT

Changing your environment so as to rely less on your own memory.

- Keeping paper/notepad handy to write down important information and messages
- Picking a specific place to put important things such as glasses, notepads, lists. Always putting these back in that place.
- Keeping important things on you with a lanyard or pockets

COMBINING SEVERAL STRATEGIES

It is often helpful to utilize a combination of multiple aids and strategies. This can cover multiple problem areas and create a system which is specific and useful for you.

Can you think of some examples of doing this?

1. ONE STRATEGY I LEARNED TODAY IS:

2. THREE SITUATIONS WHERE I CAN SEE MYSELF USING THAT STRATEGY/SKILL:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

MUSCLE RELAXATION SCRIPT

This script is designed to be read out loud by the leader of this exercise. If you are planning to practice alone, read through the script ahead of time to become familiar with the content and process. The reading of the script will be difficult during the practice of Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR), but exact adherence to the script is not necessary. Once you are familiar with the exercise, feel free to modify it to fit your specific needs and comforts.

PREPARATION

Here is how to prepare:

- Find a quiet, comfortable spot to practice.
- Sit up or lie down while you practice.
- Have a blanket or sheet handy. Often when people are relaxed, they find they are cooler and need a light blanket.
- Take a few minutes to think about your breathing. (You can keep your eyes open or closed.) Try to do stomach breathing. Fill your stomach as you breathe in and then breathe out. Begin to slow your breathing down. Try to focus only on your breathing.

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

Steps to follow for progressive muscle relaxation:

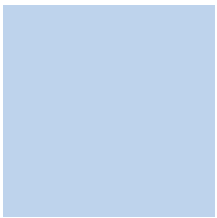
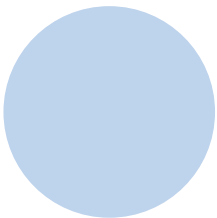
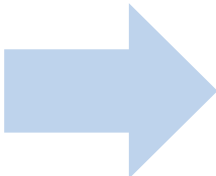

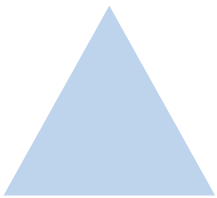




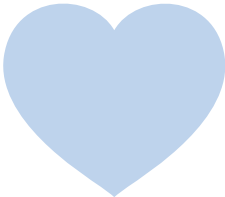

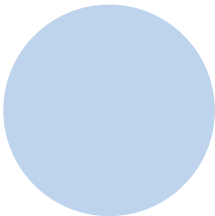
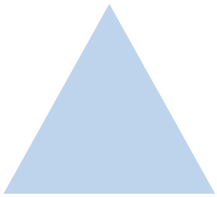
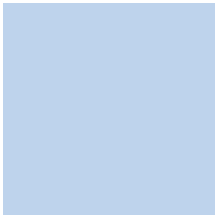


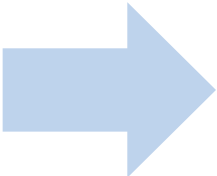

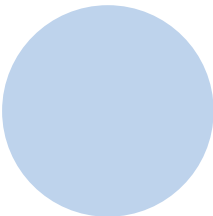





- Take in a deep breath. Hold that breath for a count of 4, let it out, and begin to relax. Do this about 4 times. As you breathe in, think about good, soothing energy flowing in. As you breathe out, breathe out your stress and bad thoughts.
- Allow your mind to focus on one body part at a time. Move from the top of your head all the way down to your toes.
- Relax your head and your scalp. Repeat this 2 or 3 times.
- Move down to your eyes. Relax your eyes and the muscles around your eyes. Squeeze your eyes tight for 4 counts, then relax. Notice the difference in your eyes and face when your eyes are squeezed and tense, and when they are relaxed.
- Focus on your mouth. Relax your mouth. Allow it to go limp.... Move down your neck, and relax your neck muscles.... Relax your shoulders....
- When you get to your arms, you may relax them one at a time or both at the same time. You may even choose to relax each finger, one at a time.
- Move all the way down to your toes using this skill.

EXTRA TIPS

Tips that may help body areas that are tense or painful:

- As you move down your body, you may want to tighten and then relax certain body parts. This helps to show how different your body feels when it is tense and when it is relaxed. You can tense and then relax your eyes, hands, toes, mouth, and shoulders. You should get more relaxed as you move down your body. If you feel relaxed, you may not feel like doing this part past your mouth or shoulders.
- Warm often feels good. Think about any part of your body being warmed by the sun. For example, if your right arm has pain, you can focus on this arm. Think about warm rays of sun on your arm.

MEMORY FLASH CARDS

MEMORY FLASH CARDS

S.M.A.R.T. GOALS DEFINED



- **Specific** *(What, exactly, in detail, do you want to achieve?)*



- **Measurable** *(How will you know when you've reached your goal? Quantify it!)*



- **Actionable** *(What resources are needed - do you have them...including time?)*



- **Realistic** *(What's the outcome - the change - you're expecting?)*



- **Timed** *(Break it into steps. When will each step be completed?)*

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WEEK 3

HANDOUTS

FOUR-PART “I” STATEMENTS

HOW TO COMMUNICATE CLEARLY

TAKE-HOME IMPRESSIONS (OPTIONAL)

FOUR-PART "I" STATEMENTS

'I' statements allow you to clearly state how you, personally, perceive and respond to a situation. You tell the other person how you feel, but you do not blame them for your feeling that way. 'I' statements can be an effective way of getting your message across when you are angry, irritated, upset or just not getting what you want or need.

THE FOUR PARTS OF AN 'I' STATEMENT ARE:

The action:....."When..."

Your response:....."I feel..."

Preferred outcome:....."I would like..."

The benefit:....."That way..."

Saying to someone "I think", "I need", "I want" or "I would like" is more likely to result in a positive outcome than starting with something like "You should" or "You are".

This approach also encourages the other person to tell you how they feel and be clear and specific about their needs.



THE ACTION

You need to describe the action or situation causing the problem objectively. Give a true description of what happened.

Begin with something like: "When messages are not passed on . . ." "When I hear a raised voice . . ." "When I'm told we are going out . . ."

Rather than: "When you don't pass on a message . . ." "When you rant and rave at me . . ." "When you don't bother to tell me you've arranged to go out ..."

The last three ways are likely to cause the other person to be defensive. An objective description of the event can help the other person understand the effect their action has on you.



YOUR RESPONSE

People do not always know the effects of their actions. When you are talking about your response you are on safe ground. You are discussing the facts. People are less likely to argue the point if you say, "I get angry" or "I feel frustrated".

1. Your response might be *an emotion*. For example, you might explain that you feel hurt, angry or ignored.
2. Telling people *what you do* can sometimes be easier than saying how you feel. For example, "I withdraw"; "I shout at you"; "I do everything myself".

3. You might tell the other person *what you feel like doing*, even if you do not do it. For example, "I feel like ignoring you"; "I want to walk out".

Avoid blaming others for how you feel, or they may get defensive and reject the accusation with statements like: "If you get angry, that's your problem!"



YOUR PREFERRED OUTCOME

Discuss what you would like to be able to do or have: "I'd like to have messages left for me in" This focuses on what would improve the situation for you without blaming the other person.

1. When I am told we're going to a party at the last minute (*action*).
2. I feel angry (*response*).
3. I would like to have a day's notice, so that I can plan for the evening (*preferred outcome*).
4. That way I can arrange a babysitter and be ready on time (*the benefit*)

HOW TO COMMUNICATE CLEARLY

WHAT IS CLEAR COMMUNICATION?

- Influencing others
- Setting your boundaries
 - Respecting your own rights, while keeping a positive relationship with the other person.
- A form of persuasive communication

The difference between being aggressive and clear and how to avoid crossing the line:

SPEAKING UP FOR YOURSELF WITHOUT BEING AGGRESSIVE

Use the three C's

- 1. Clear:** When you want to be heard, make sure that your messages are straightforward and understandable. Use language that makes the listener clear on what you are saying. Avoid big or flashy words that can cause confusion.
- 2. Concise:** Do not beat around the bush or avoid the topic. By getting to the point quickly, you are able to limit the amount of confusion or misunderstanding distracting from your concern or issue at hand.
- 3. Conscientious:** This means giving respect to the others in a conversation. When people in a conversation feel respected, they are more willing to listen to what you have to say. Starting a conversation with a calm greeting or refraining from aggressive body language are two ways you can be conscientious in a conversation.

The goal of assertive communication is to get your point across in a way that the other person wants to hear. Speak to other the way you want to be spoken to.

HOW TO DEFEND YOURSELF WITHOUT LETTING YOUR EMOTIONS GET THE BETTER OF YOU

- 1. 🚗💥 The hit and run:** they dump on you then leave. Tell them you would like to revisit that issue after you have had time to consider what they need. Give yourself time to think first.
- 2. 😱🕒 The hallway ambush:** they corner you as you are on your way to do something else and want a response now. Tell them you will get back to them as soon as you have had time to think about it.
- 3. 😞😞 The misplaced blame:** not even your fault or responsibility. Say, "I can see that you're frustrated by that. Why do not you talk with "Joe" about why things were handled that way."
- 4. 😡😡 The appropriately placed (but over the top) blame:** Your slip. Do not over-apologize, just acknowledge your mistake and move on. Say, "I'm sorry that I did that. I will try to make it up to you."

*Adapted from: Assertiveness Skills: A Guide to Positively Successful Communication
Rockhurst University Continuing Education Center, Inc (2008).*

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WEEK 4

HANDOUTS

WHERE DO I FEEL?

EMOTION LOG

ONE-MINUTE BREATHING SPACE

THE BODY SCAN MEDITATION

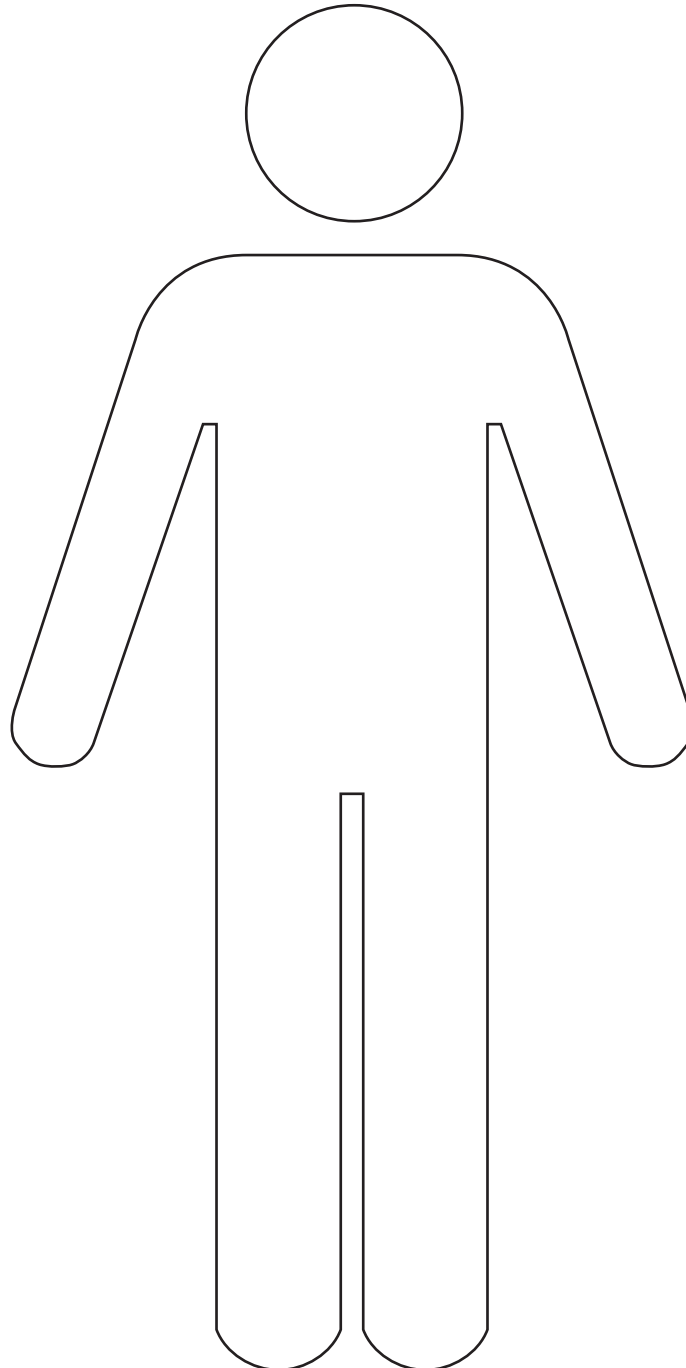
BEFRIENDING FEAR EXERCISE

EMOTIONAL RECOGNITION & REGULATION HANDOUT

TAKE-HOME IMPRESSIONS (OPTIONAL)

WHERE DO I FEEL?

We can recognize emotions by feeling them in our body. Label where you feel each emotion in your body and describe that feeling to the group. Feel free to draw on your body to help describe what happens.



EMOTION LOG

INSTRUCTIONS

Put a checkmark or color the box next to the emotions you feel daily (it can certainly be more than one!) and rank the emotion on a scale from 1 to 10 (1 = felt this emotion very little; 10 = felt this emotion an overwhelming amount). If you felt an emotion other than those listed, write the emotion in the "Other" section and rate it on a 1 to 10 scale.

	HAPPY	ANGRY	SAD	ANXIOUS	CALM	AFRAID	OTHER (SPECIFY)
Monday							
Tuesday							
Wednesday							
Thursday							
Friday							
Saturday							
Sunday							

At the end of the week, think back to any emotion regulation skills you used (e.g. listening to music, sharing your emotion with someone else, exercise, etc.). If you used any skills, write them below:

Did you find them helpful? Why or Why not?

ONE-MINUTE BREATHING SPACE

Haven't there been times when you just needed some "breathing space"? This practice provides a way to reconnect with the "here and now". You are just tuning in to what is happening right now, without expecting anything specific. If you remember nothing else, just remember the word "STOP".

S

STOP AND TAKE STOCK

Bring yourself into the present moment by deliberately asking:

What is my experience right now?

Head: Thoughts... *(What are you saying to yourself? What images are coming to mind?)*

Heart: Feelings... *(Enjoying, not enjoying, neutral, upset, excited, sad, mad, etc.)*

Body: Sensations... *(Actual present-moment sensations, tightness, holding, lightness)*

Acknowledge and register your experience, even if it is uncomfortable

T

TAKE A BREATH

Directing awareness to breathing. Gently direct full attention to breathing, to each in breath and each outbreath as they follow, one after the other.

Your breath can function as an anchor to bring you into the present and help you tune into a state of awareness and stillness.

O

OPEN AND OBSERVE

Expanding awareness outward. Expand the field of your awareness around and beyond your breathing, so that it includes a sense of the body as a whole, your posture, and facial expression, then further outward to what is happening around you: sights, sounds, smells, etc. As best you can, bring this expanded awareness to the next moments.

P

PROCEED/NEW POSSIBILITIES

Continuing without expectation. Let your attention now move into the world around you, sensing how things are right now. Rather than react habitually/mechanically, you can be curious/open, responding naturally. You may even be surprised by what happens next after having created this pause.

THE BODY SCAN MEDITATION

The body scan is not for everybody, and it is not always the meditation of choice even for those who love it. But it is extremely useful and good to know about and practice from time to time, whatever your circumstances or condition. If you think of your body as a musical instrument, the body scan is a way of tuning it.

SCRIPT:

When we practice the body scan, we are systematically and intentionally moving our attention through the body, attending to the various sensations in the different regions.

Before we begin this activity, you can choose to stand or sit on the floor, whichever you'd like. Start by bringing your attention into your body.

You can close your eyes if that's comfortable for you.

Notice your body seated or standing. Feel the weight of your body in your seat, or your feet firmly grounded to the floor. Stack your ribs over your waist, and your head and shoulders over your ribs so that your body is aligned.

Take a few deep breaths. Bring your attention to your breath. Feel your lungs expand and lift your ribs on the inhale and feel them relax and drop down again as you exhale.

As you continue to take deep breaths, bring in more oxygen to enliven your body. Notice it filling you up and giving you energy while also relaxing you. And as you exhale, hold on to that sense of relaxation throughout your body.

There might be moments throughout this activity where your mind wanders or your attention leaves your body. That's okay. Remind your thoughts where you want them to be and gently bring them back without judgment.

Notice your feet on the floor, the sensations of your feet touching the floor. The weight and pressure, vibration, temperature. If you're seated, notice your legs and heels pressed into the floor. Maybe your hands are touching the floor too.

Bring your attention to your stomach area. Feel free to stretch your arms above your head. Expand your stomach and feel your muscles appreciate the stretch. Now relax your arms back down, notice any newfound softness around your stomach.

Notice your hands. Are they tense or tight? See if you can allow them to soften. Take a moment to massage your hands, feel them warm up and release any tension they might have.

Notice your neck and shoulders. Are they tense? Release that stress by taking a deep, mindful breath and allowing them to soften. Maybe roll your shoulders forward a few times, and then backward. Take a moment to stretch your neck to one side and feel your opposite shoulder drop a bit more. Switch sides. Drop your head down and feel the back of your neck appreciate that stretch.

Notice the muscles in your face now. Are your temples tight? Your jaw? Scrunch up your face, make the weirdest face you can, and then relax. Feel your jaw loosen, your mouth might even fall open a little bit. You can do this a couple more times if that's helpful. If there is still tension in any part of your face, take a moment to massage them with your fingertips. Appreciate the relaxation and warmth you feel.

Now, open your eyes and take in the space around you.

What do you hear? What do you see? What do you feel?

What feelings or emotions does this bring out in you? Allow yourself to experience any emotions or thoughts you are having. Let them come in, and then feel them go past you. You don't need to become attached to these emotions. Let them go. You experience emotions, but you are **not** your emotions.

Reconnect with your breath again.

Deep breaths in.... And out.

Be aware of your whole body as best you can. Take a moment to appreciate the relaxation your body has given you, and the new energy you have. Take one more deep, energizing breath. And then when you're ready, stretch out your body one last time and come back to the group.

BEFRIENDING FEAR EXERCISE

This next exercise uses the mindfulness of breathing exercise and incorporates promises on the in-breaths and out-breaths.

When we are aware that what we are feeling is fear, we say to our fear:

'Breathing in: **'I know you are there my fear.'**

'Breathing out: **'I will take care of you.'**

We simply practice this over and over. We may also practice with our anger, or loneliness.

EMOTIONAL RECOGNITION & REGULATION HANDOUT

EXERCISES FOR YOUNGER CLIENTS

THE FEELING EXERCISE

Collect a number of interesting objects such as feathers, putty, stones, or anything else that might be interesting to hold. Give each child an object and ask them to spend a minute just noticing what it feels like in their hand. They can feel the texture, if their object is hard or soft, and the shape. Afterwards, ask the children to describe what they felt. With bigger groups, pair children off to take turns completing the exercise together.

THE SEEING GAME

Ask the children to spend one minute silently looking around the room. Their goal is to find things in the room that they've never noticed. Maybe there are some big things like a poster or a picture, or just little details like cracks in the ceiling or an interesting pattern on the door. After the minute is up ask the kids to share the most interesting new things they noticed.

THE FIVE SENSES EXERCISE

Take the children outside if the weather is nice and have them lie silently in the grass. Begin to call out each of the five senses in turn (sight, smell, sound, taste, touch), and ask the children to notice everything they can with that particular sense, until you call out the next one. This exercise can also work well on walks, and in a number of other situations.

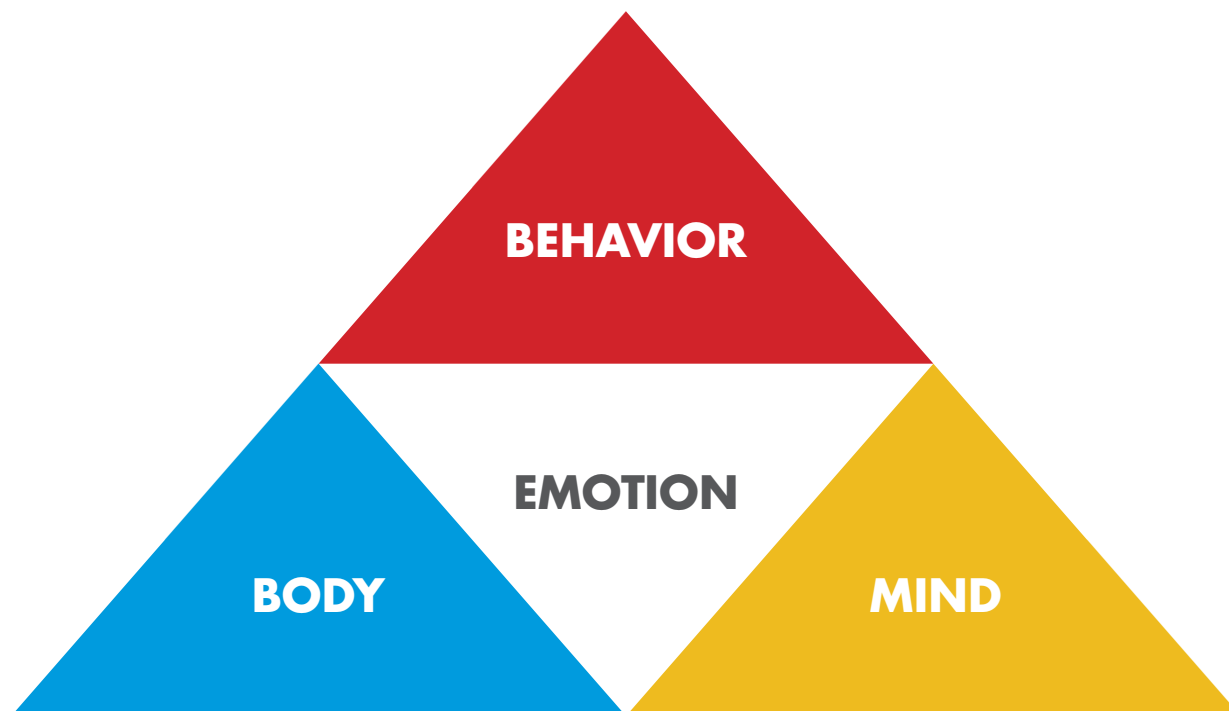
OCEAN BREATHING

Have the children sit or lie down in a comfortable position. Ask everyone to slowly breathe in through their nose, and then out through their pursed lips (as if they are blowing through a straw). Point out that the slow and steady breathing sounds like ocean waves, gently crashing on shore. Let the children continue breathing and making the ocean sound for one to two minutes.

THE POWER OF LISTENING

Ring a bell, a wind chime, or anything else that creates a long trailing sound. Ask each child to listen, and silently raise their hand when they can no longer hear the sound. After the ringing ends, ask the children to continue listening to any other sounds they can hear for the next minute. When the minute ends, go around the room asking everyone to tell you what sounds they heard.

Emotions are a big part of everyone's life. Some emotions are easy to deal with, while others are more intense and difficult to manage. To start successfully managing our emotions in healthy ways it is helpful to understand what emotions are. Emotions serve a purpose and are designed to give us information, called **emotional messages**. These messages usually get to us in three different ways: 1) our body (physical sensations), 2) our minds (thoughts, memories, imagination) and, 3) our behavior (urges and actions). This is called the **Emotional Triangle**.

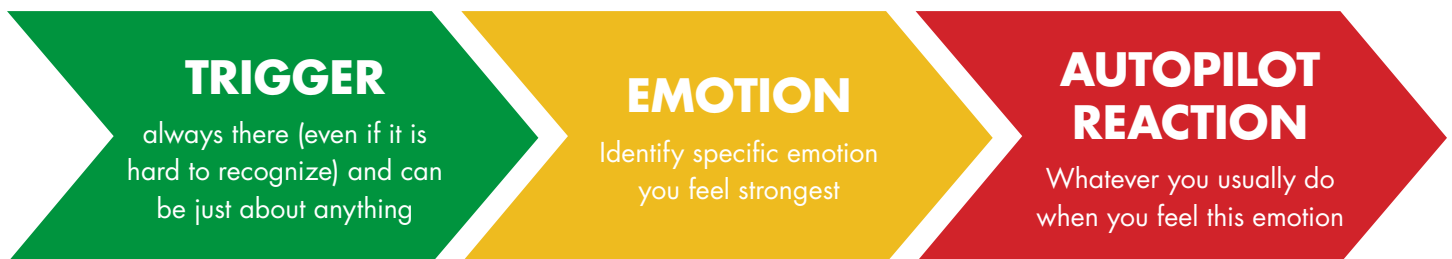


Look for clues in these three areas to identify the specific emotion you are feeling:

EMOTION	MIND	BODY	BEHAVIOR
FEAR	Thoughts race, imagine the worst, mind goes blank	Sweating, heart races, muscles tense, breathing heavy	Fight, flight or freeze
ANGER/ IRRITABILITY	Thoughts race, imagine the worst, mind goes blank	Sweating, heart races, muscles tense, breathing heavy, face gets hot	Confront, fight, yell
SADNESS	Thoughts slowed, think in circles, focused on the negative	Heavy, empty, numb, tired	Withdraw
GUILT	Critical focus on self and others' opinion of self	Sweating, heart races, muscles tense, sick to stomach, breathing heavy, empty, numb, tired	Hide
HAPPINESS/ JOY	Thinking fast, focused on the positive	Energized, bubbly	Approach
CONTENTMENT	Focused on the moment (Mindful)	Calm and relaxed	Stay

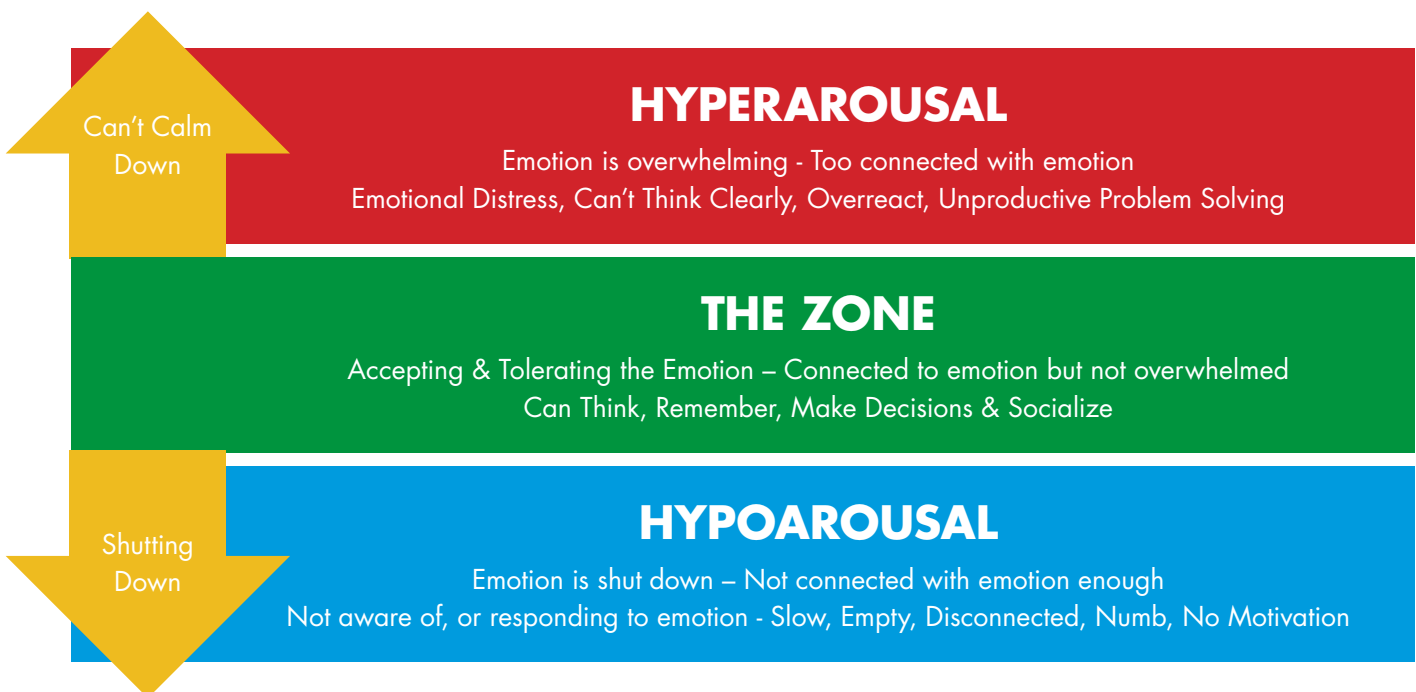
BRAIN INJURY & EMOTIONS

People with a brain injury can be left with changes in emotional reaction and behavior that they did not experience before. A brain injury can change the way people feel and express emotions, as well as increase and intensify emotional triggers. Some people may experience emotions very quickly and intensely but with very little lasting effect. For example, they may get angry easily but get over it quickly. Or they may seem to be “on an emotional roller coaster” in which they are happy one moment, sad the next and then angry. This is called **emotional lability**. Mood swings and emotional lability are often caused by damage to the part of the brain that controls emotions and behavior. In some cases, the brain injury can cause emotional reactions or outbursts that may not have any relationship to the way the person feels.



RECOGNIZING & MANAGING EMOTIONS

Learning to recognize and label triggers and emotions will help reduce unwanted emotional reactions. A Useful way to think about how we experience and manage emotions is through the **Zone of Tolerance**, which represents the comfort levels at which we can manage our emotions. When we are on the edge of our “zone” we are **emotionally vulnerable**. When we struggle to stay in our zone, managing simple things in life can also become a struggle, mainly because we get stuck in emotional reactions that have worked for us in the past.



MY EMOTIONAL REGULATION PLAN

NAME: _____ **DATE:** _____

SITUATIONS/TRIGGERS: When these things happen, I am more likely to feel unsafe and upset (circle all that apply)			
Not being listened to	Feeling pressured	Being touched	People yelling
Feeling lonely	Feeling left out	Being stared at	Teasing
Not having a say	Particular class/subject	Not understanding work	Argument
Particular time of day	Contact with:	Other:	Other:

WARNING SIGNS: These are things I notice when I am put in that situation (circle all that apply)			
Sweating	Red and/or hot face	Acting & feeling hyper	Being rude
Sing/hum	Breathing heavy	Wringing hands	Swearing
Pacing	Becoming very quiet	Loud voice	Bouncing legs
Squatting	Damage things	Hurt	Isolating/avoiding others
Crying	Hygiene issues	Clenching teeth	Rocking
Hit someone	Leave the room	Throw things	Hurt others

**Plan derived from Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.*

MY ACTION PLAN

POSSIBLE WAYS TO RESPOND TO THE SITUATION AND MY FEELINGS: These are things that might help me calm down and keep myself safe when I m feeling upset (circle all that apply)			
Being around other people	Listening to/writing music	Hugging person/pillow	Sitting/talking with support person
Pacing in private	Coloring/drawing	Reading a book	Singing softly
Exercise/using the gym	A cold splash of water	Writing in a journal	Punching a pillow
Humor	Bouncing a ball	lying down	Singing softly
Time to myself	Fidgeting	Deep breathing	Telling myself to relax

When _____ happens,

I feel _____ and that's ok!

When I feel _____

I will use my strategies of _____

Other ideas about what to do when feeling emotional outburst or mood swings:

**Plan derived from Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.*

TAKE-HOME IMPRESSIONS

You are encouraged to fill out this handout after attending each meeting of this group. Doing this is optional, but it is designed to help you retain as much of what you learned in today's session as possible. In your own words, please answer the following prompts:

1. SOMETHING I LEARNED ABOUT BRAIN INJURY TODAY THAT I DID NOT KNOW BEFORE IS:

2. SOMETHING I LEARNED TODAY THAT I WANT TO SHARE WITH SOMEONE IN MY LIFE IS:

I will share this with: _____
because: _____

3. I STILL HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT:

4. ONE STRATEGY I LEARNED TODAY THAT I BELIEVE WILL HELP ME IS:

5. THESE ARE THREE SITUATIONS WHERE I CAN SEE MYSELF USING THAT STRATEGY/SKILL:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

WEEK 5

HANDOUTS

THREE CORNERS GAME SIGNS

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

ANGER MANAGEMENT & DE-ESCALATION

MY ANGER MANAGEMENT PLAN

TAKE-HOME IMPRESSIONS (OPTIONAL)

**NO
CONTROL
OVER
MY ANGER**

**SOME
CONTROL
OVER
MY ANGER**

**COMPLETE
CONTROL
OVER
MY ANGER**

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

Directions: Close your eyes or find something in the room to focus your gaze on. Relax your whole body, allowing it to feel heavy. Take a deep breath in. Hold it for one second. Let it out slowly. Continue taking deep breaths in and out. Imagine the tension leaving your body each time you breathe out. You may pick any of the following muscles to use during your progressive muscle relaxation. Begin when you are ready:

- 1. Clench your right fist tightly.** Clench for 5 seconds. Notice the tightness. Now slowly let go and relax your fist. Feel the difference as your hand becomes loose. Now, clench your left fist tightly. Clench for 5 seconds. Notice the tightness. Slowly let go and relax your fist. Feel the difference as your hand becomes loose.
- 2. Press your right arm in towards your ribs.** Hold for 5 seconds. Notice the tightness. Now slowly let go and relax your arm. Feel the difference as your arm becomes loose. Now, press your left arm in towards your ribs. Hold for 5 seconds. Notice the tightness. Slowly let go and relax your arm. Feel the difference as your arm becomes loose.
- 3. Bring both shoulders towards your ears.** Hold for 5 seconds. Notice the tightness. Slowly relax your shoulders. Feel the difference as your shoulders become loose.
- 4. Clench your teeth together and press your tongue to the roof of your mouth.** Hold for 5 seconds. Notice the tension. Now slowly relax your jaw and tongue. Feel the difference as your mouth begins to loosen.
- 5. Lower your eyebrows and wrinkle your forehead as much as you can.** Hold for 5 seconds. Notice the tension in your forehead. Now slowly relax the muscles. Feel the difference as your eyebrows and forehead loosen.
- 6. Pull your stomach inward.** Hold for 5 seconds. Notice the tightness in your stomach. Now slowly relax the muscle. Feel the difference as your stomach.
- 7. Press your right leg downwards.** Hold for 5 seconds. Notice the tightness. Now slowly let go and relax your leg. Feel the difference as your leg becomes loose. Now, press your left leg downwards. Hold for 5 seconds. Notice the tightness. Slowly let go and relax your leg. Feel the difference as your leg becomes loose.
- 8. Point your right toes and stretch your foot.** Hold for 5 seconds. Notice the tension. Slowly relax your foot. Notice the difference in looseness. Now, point your left toes and stretch your foot. Hold for 5 seconds. Notice the tension. Slowly relax your foot. Notice the difference in looseness.

As you finish, take a few deep breaths in and let them out slowly. Open your eyes when you are ready. Get up, walk around, and/or stretch to release any remaining feelings of tension.

Adapted from: http://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/En/Documents/Progressive_Muscle_Relaxation_Script_EN.pdf

ANGER MANAGEMENT & DE-ESCALATION

THINK

Slow things down. Take three deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth. Take this time to collect your thoughts before responding so that you do so with intent.

CALM DOWN AND EXPRESS

Once you've gotten some clarity of thought, express what you're frustrated with assertively but not aggressively. Say what you are concerned about and what your needs are.

TIMEOUT

Remove yourself from the stressful situation. Take a few moments to be alone so that you feel better prepared to manage frustrating incidents without reacting aggressively.

HUMOR

Laughter is another great way to de-escalate anger. After taking a timeout, take the initiative to lighten things up. Laughter diffuses tension brought on by anger so implementing humor is effective, however avoid sarcasm.

'I' STATEMENTS

When voicing how you feel to another person, use "I Statements" from the "Communications Skills" week. This is a great tool for expressing yourself. Remember that "I Statements" begin with phrases like "I am" or "I feel."

PROBLEM SOLVING

After vocalizing your concerns and needs, focus on how you can resolve the issue (although not all situations will have a solution). Remind yourself that getting angry won't change the situation but finding a solution to the angering problem might.

MY ANGER MANAGEMENT PLAN

Here is a situation where I might get angry:

If I begin to get angry during this situation, **I will do** the following:

Make this list of options excessive. Have as many options as possible, and work with your individual counselor, other staff members, unit supervisor, or peers, to provide multiple alternatives. Alternatives will allow you to have options that work if something isn't available (e.g. talking to a positive peer if school is in session).

I SHOULDN'T do the following:

After I have calmed myself, I can speak to the following people about my anger:

WHO	WHY

TAKE-HOME IMPRESSIONS

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I will share this with: _____
because: _____

3. I STILL HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT:

4. ONE STRATEGY I LEARNED TODAY THAT I BELIEVE WILL HELP ME IS:

5. THESE ARE THREE SITUATIONS WHERE I CAN SEE MYSELF USING THAT STRATEGY/SKILL:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

WEEK 6

HANDOUTS

STOP-THINK-PLAN-DO MODEL

IMPULSIVE BEHAVIOR WORKSHEET

TAKE-HOME IMPRESSIONS FORM

STOP-THINK-PLAN-DO MODEL



STOP:

Before doing/saying something.



THINK:

About impact of behavior and of another strategy.



PLAN:

Steps needed to engage in strategy/behavior



DO:

The action/behavior

IMPULSIVE BEHAVIOR WORKSHEET

To begin, choose a specific and recent example of impulsive behavior. On a piece of paper, write the specific event at the top of the page and then draw a line vertically down the middle of the page.

On the left side of the page you will write down every *(T)hought, (F)eeling, (E)vent, (BS) Body Sensations* and *(B)ehaviors* leading up to and during the problem. You want this to be as detailed as possible.

After you have completed this, you will then write on the right-hand side alternative thoughts, skills, or tools you could use next time.

For example, if you tend to have problems with anger and you punched someone it might look like this:

I got angry, irritable, mad <i>(F)</i>	Imagine my happy place
I had not had breakfast that day <i>(E)</i>	Take time to eat something
Tense shoulders <i>(BS)</i>	Breathing exercise
Punched another person <i>(E)</i>	Walk away

TAKE-HOME IMPRESSIONS FORM

You are encouraged to fill out this handout after attending each meeting. It is designed to help you retain as much of what you learned in today's session as possible. In your own words, please answer the following:

Today I learned:

I will share this with: _____, because:

I still have questions about:

This strategy will help me:

I will use this strategy when:

OPTIONAL MODULE **HANDOUTS**

TAKE-HOME IMPRESSIONS

TAKE-HOME IMPRESSIONS FORM

You are encouraged to fill out this handout after attending each meeting. It is designed to help you retain as much of what you learned in today's session as possible. In your own words, please answer the following:

Today I learned:

I will share this with: _____, because:

I still have questions about:

This strategy will help me:

I will use this strategy when:
