

HANDOUT 6- Calm Thoughts

1. Cool Thoughts- include self-instructions to relax and calm down

- “Just stay cool, getting pissed off won’t help.”
- “It’s just not worth it. Take a few deep breaths and chill out.”
- “This, too, shall pass. Others have to deal with this kind of stuff without going crazy.”

2. Problem-Solving Thoughts- built around idea that anger is just a signal to look for alternative solutions

- “It’s not the end of the world, just a problem to be solved.”
- “It’s okay to feel annoyed, it’s just a hassle to be dealt with.”
- “Develop a plan. So, the first thing I want to do is...”
- “Break the frustration down. I can deal better with it that way.”

3. Escape Routes- self instructions to walk away from something upsetting

- “I can always walk away rather than lose it totally.”
- “It’s okay to take a time out. Move away, get your act together, then come back and deal with it.”
- “Better to walk away then to be a screaming idiot.”
- “Bottom line, I walk before I get too hot or do something dumb.”

4. Self-Efficacy Thoughts-Remind you that you have the ability to handle the situation, you have the skill to cope with the upsetting feelings

- “I can handle this; I’ve done it before.”
- “I’m hanging in and coping.”
- “I have what it takes to get through this hassle.”

5. Reattributions-another explanation for the other person’s behavior

- “He/she is probably just (scared, overwhelmed, not understanding, confused, out of the loop, hurting, etc)”
- “Cut him/her some slack. I’d hope they would do the same for me if I was having a bad time.”

6. See the Whole Picture- look for exceptions to overgeneralizations

- “Look at the other side.”
- “There are exceptions. For example...”
- “Time to look for some good for a change.”

HANDOUT 6- Calm Thoughts (Continued)

7. Getting Accurate-reminds you to stay with the facts, to avoid catastrophe type thinking and exaggeration

___ “Just the facts.”

___ “Tell it simple and straight.”

___ “I’m disappointed and frustrated. Stay there and I don’t need to lose control.”

Your Coping Thoughts:

8. Preferences, Not Shoulds-replaces absolute *should* statements with the language of desire and preference

___ “It doesn’t have to be my way-I just prefer it.”

___ “What I want and what has to be are two different things.”

___ “Nobody appointed me God. So give it up. Be human and focus on your wants.”

Your Coping Thoughts:

9. People Doing Their Best- acknowledges how others try to survive and cope with the circumstances of their lives as best they can

___ “He/she is doing what they know how to do.”

___ “I don’t like how she/he is doing it, but they’re trying to survive.”

Your Coping Thoughts:

(Adapted from material from Deffenbacher, J. and McKay, M. Overcoming Situational and General Anger)