Session 9 Agenda

Session Objectives

- Review exposure
- Learn how to get the most out of exposure practice
- Prepare to practice exposures for homework

Topics Covered

- Exposure practice

Manual Information

Grades 6-8

CBT and Mindfulness

Depression and Anxiety

10 Sessions

What You’ll Need

Access Session Agenda, accompanying Google Slide Deck and Resource PDFs under What You’ll Need on our website.

Review:

- Icebreaker: Look and Yell

Print:

- Check-In Sheet
- Helpful Hints for Facing Your Fears
- Facing My Fears

Preview and load:

- 5-Minute Self-Compassion Break

Prepare to bring:

- Group folders including My TRAILS Notes and Coping Skills Toolbox
- How to Create a Fear Ladder (to review)
- Fear Ladder Worksheet (to review)

Session Overview

1. Warm-Up
2. Homework Review and Agenda Preview
3. Exposure Review and Helpful Tips
4. My Exposure Plan (Fear Ladder)
5. Wrap-Up and Homework
6. Suggestions for Virtual Adaptation
Warm-Up

(5 minutes)

Say: “Welcome back! How are you feeling today? Why?”

Do: Use the Check-In Sheet.

Do: Play this fun group icebreaker activity: Look and Yell. This activity encourages the use of eye contact with one another, which is great exposure practice for those with social anxiety.

Do: Coping skill practice: 5-Minute Self-Compassion Break.

Do: Have group members identify and rerate their feelings. Ask them to write down the coping skill practiced on their Coping Skills Toolboxes.

Homework Review and Session Preview

(5 minutes)

Do: Encourage group members to share what they added to their fear ladders. Provide rewards as appropriate. Let them know we will talk more about these today.

Do: Highlight the importance of being very specific about the fear that makes a given situation difficult. Feel free to reference additional examples from the How to Create a Fear Ladder worksheet.

Do: Preview agenda for the day.

Say: “Last week we discussed how facing our fears one step at a time can help us approach things we need or want to do but avoid because of fear. This week we’re going to get a little more understanding about building fear ladders, and we’ll discuss guidelines and helpful tips for getting the most out of exposure.”

Exposure Review and Helpful Tips

(20 minutes)

Do: Hand out and discuss Helpful Hints for Facing Your Fears. At each hint, check in with group members about how this suggestion might fit in with their identified fear or fear hierarchy.

Leader tip: Try not to read this handout word for word. Instead, highlight key points and use it to guide the discussion.

Do: Choose one of the following videos on exposure to view as a group:

- How I Overcame Social Anxiety (6 min)
- How to Use Exposure Therapy to Overcome Phobias (6 min)
Say: “In this video, Dr. Mattu gradually works his way up to facing his fear by waiting until a task gets boring before moving on to something harder. Another way to do exposure is to jump in the deep end, or rip off the band aid, by doing something that’s really hard right away.”

Ask: What do you think might work better for you?

My Exposure Plan (Fear Ladder)

(10 minutes)

Do: Have group members use their Fear Ladder Worksheets from last week to complete the Facing My Fears worksheet. Have group members pick an exposure or two to try over the next week.

Explain:

• Students should pick something that causes a moderate level of anxiety — feeling anxious and choosing a new behavior is how we retrain our brains!
• Encourage students to think about barriers to completing their exposure, and to problem-solve solutions to these barriers ahead of time.
• Have students identify rewards for completing their assigned exposure and record their exposure practice for homework using Facing My Fears.

Leader tip: Validate that it can be really hard for students to face their fears. This is why it’s so important to use rewards as a motivator!

Wrap-Up and Homework

(2 minutes)

Say: “If we break the cycle of our avoidance now, we can move forward and accomplish our goals. We may not get completely over our fear and anxiety symptoms, but we will build confidence in ourselves by knowing we can do those things that we did not think we could do.....even if we do them while being afraid.”

Do: Encourage students to practice the exposure they filled out on their Facing My Fears Worksheet.
Suggestions for Virtual Adaptation

Use the suggestions below to modify this lesson for virtual formats.

- Consider using the accompanying TRAILS slide deck for this lesson.
- Use screen sharing to display the lesson’s videos, 5 Minute Self Compassion and How I Overcame Social Anxiety or How to Use Exposure Therapy to Overcome Phobias, as well as lesson worksheets: Helpful Hints for Facing Your Fears, Facing My Fears, Fear Ladder Worksheet
- Have students write down the coping skills they practice using their My TRAILS Notes.
- When discussing the Helpful Hints for Facing Your Fears handout, emphasize that facing fears can be very difficult, and that it is ok to try new challenges while feeling afraid. Read the questions on the Facing My Fears worksheet out loud and give examples of what common responses would be.
- Have students download Facing My Fears and work on an exposure over the next week.
Session 9:
Leader Reflection

Topics Covered
• Exposure practice

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Exposure Practice
☐ Reviewed the cycle of avoidance
☐ Reviewed the drawbacks of avoidance in daily life
☐ Introduced guidelines for good exposure practice, emphasizing that we have to feel anxious for the exposure to be effective
☐ Demonstrated effective exposure in group (through role play or video), during which I emphasized the importance of: eliciting anxiety, focusing on the anxiety (mindful), not distracting or using relaxation, repetitive and frequent practice, varying contexts
☐ Described how mindfulness can augment exposure
☐ Assigned out-of-session practice to encourage independent use of exposure

Group Skills
☐ Spent 20-30 minutes preparing for the group, reviewing activities, becoming familiar with content, resources to share, videos, activities, etc.
☐ Used materials from the TRAILS website
☐ Set an agenda at the beginning of the group
☐ Protected time for group and stayed focused throughout (did not multi-task)
☐ Created a warm, inviting, respectful space for the group
☐ Kept the group on task related to content and did not go into unrelated topics
☐ Encouraged group member participation, particularly among those who are generally quiet
☐ Actively participated in skill practice (e.g., coping skills, sharing of feelings, etc.)
☐ Provided examples that were relevant to the group