

Ilsia: (Group Facilitator) Provides a safe environment for the group members and keeps them focused on the purpose of the session.

Mattie:

Bill: 27 years old, has been struggling with living on his own since he moved to North Carolina due to a new job. He had many friends and was surrounded by family back in Oregon. Work is very demanding and it is hard for him to practice self-care or enjoy his time alone. Bill tends to try coping by using drugs and alcohol. He has been arrested on several occasions and is currently on probation. Bill has sought help before from group intervention but it never works

Lauretta: 32 years old, single mother of a 6 year old, no family/social support, just graduated with a masters degree in early childhood education. She is struggling with finding a job and feels like she should be ahead in life. Lauretta wants to learn how to be her own person and cope with her anxiety/depression.

Minda:

Sample Script: 7th Session

Introduction: Getting started/Setting Positive Tone

Ilsia- Good morning everyone! I am glad everyone was able to log onto Zoom today. I know last week we had some connectivity issues.

Mattie: Yes! I now have a strong internet connection, so I don't think we will have a problem now.

Ilsia- Great! So, like always I want to briefly cover confidentiality. Anything that is said in this group will stay between us. If someone mentions any intent to harm themselves or others, as a

mandated reporter, I will have to disclose those statements. Can I get a verbal yes if you acknowledge this confidentiality policy?

Mattie: Yes.

Bill: Yes.

Lauretta: Yes.

Minda: Yes.

Clarifying Purpose/Rules Reminder

Ilsia: Great! Before we get started, I want to remind you all of the group rules we came up with in our first session. Please be respectful to one another. That includes letting others freely express themselves without judgment and not talking over each other. Group members will actively participate in group discussions and other activities. Phones will be turned off or set on silent for the duration of the group meeting. Are we still okay with these group rules?

Bill: Sure.

Lauretta: Yes.

Minda: Yes.

Mattie: Yeah.

Ilsia: As you may know, the purpose of these group meetings is to work through our depression and anxiety by using CBT. We have talked about your individual goals in the previous sessions so, the group rules allow us to stay on track towards those goals. You guys are on the 7th session now, we are pretty much halfway through our entire set. How are we feeling with how things are going? I know there was some hesitancy in the beginning.

Universality

Bill: I can only speak from my perspective, but I like how things are going. It took me a while to adjust to being in a group setting especially since I am the only guy here but you guys get me.

Lauretta: I think I was hesitant in the beginning because Bill was the only guy. I would say it was a little odd because some of my main issues are surrounded by the fact that I don't have my kids' father in my life. I was also hesitant because I do not have knowledge or experience with substance abuse. I kind of felt like a third wheel because Bill and Mattie had that connection. I also had some judgment about that but I don't now. I have learned a lot from them and I am grateful to have that understanding about substance abuse.

Minda: I can always relate to her because she's a mom too but I have also found myself relating to Bill with being lonely so I didn't expect that connection to happen.

Bill: Thanks Lauretta.

Ilisia: I am glad you are seeing that connection Lauretta. Minda, how about you? How are things going?

Minda: Some days I am pretty down and don't feel like coming to group but I always feel a little bit better afterwards.

Ilisia: Thanks for sharing that Minda. Does anyone else also feel that way?

Bill: I sure do. Some days I am just in my head about how things are going for me and I don't feel like coming. Yet, I have come to every meeting.

Lauretta: I have missed a session for just that reason and I found out that I ended up feeling worse by not coming. When I have forced myself to come, I have learned that I end up feeling better.

Ilsia: It's normal to have days that are more difficult than others. Despite not desiring to come to the group, I appreciate the transparency. Mattie, what are your thoughts?

Mattie: I'm fine coming to group meetings because I know I need the help and I want to change. You guys know what I have been dealing with and I need to do better for myself and my future.

Agenda/Icebreaker

Ilsia: I'm glad to hear that Mattie. We are here for each other and I am glad that we can help you reach those goals. On today's agenda we will be starting with an icebreaker. Then we will transition into some discussion followed by a mindfulness activity. Lastly, we will conclude by summarizing what we talked about today and possibly talk about some home activities.

So, if there aren't any questions, we will start with an icebreaker. We are going to do a little show and tell. I am going to give everyone about a minute to find something in your home that is important to you. We will then take turns on sharing our item and why it is important to us.

Any questions before I start the timer?

Lauretta: I don't have any.

Minda: No.

Mattie: *shakes head no*

Bill: Nope!

Ilsia: Okay, timer starts now.

1 minute has passed

Ilsia: Okay! Time is up and I am already seeing some interesting items. Let's start with Bill and then he can choose who can go next.

Minda: Okay, so this is one of my favorite pajama shirts. I know it's odd but I always feel cozy and relaxed when I wear it.

Bill: Wow, I need one of those then.

Minda: Haha yes it's great. You can go next Bill.

Bill: For my item, I chose to share this picture of me and my family. We were celebrating my niece's 5th birthday. Things were going great for me during this time. I like to look back at it sometimes and see who I was before all of these changes.

Ilsia: Thank you Bill for sharing that. You seem happy in that photo.

Bill: Yes, I was. I miss my family and everything back home.

Ilsia: I can only imagine what that might feel like.

Bill: Well, it doesn't feel that good but I'm here.

Ilsia: Yes, you are. Thank you for sharing that picture with us. We have Mattie and Laretta left to share. Who do you pick?

Bill: I'll have Laretta go next.

Laretta: Okay thanks Bill. Here I have my masters degree. This is important to me because I worked very hard to get this. This was a great accomplishment of mine that I always wanted to do since I was a teen.

Mattie: Wow, although you are not where you want to be, that is still something to be proud of. I wish I had something like that to look back on.

Laretta: Thanks Mattie, I know I just hate that I haven't been about to use it and find a job. But I'm sure we can talk more about that later. What do you have?

Mattie: I know we said no phones in the meeting, but my phone is important to me. Sometimes I watch videos to distract myself from things or scroll through social media. I look through my camera roll at times and see all of the pictures I have with my friend that passed.

Bill: That's kind've like me with my picture. I miss my family and I'm sure you miss your friend.

Mattie: Yeah, it's helpful sometimes but it still hurts a little.

Lauretta: I get that. TikTok is a coping aid for me. It distracts me and calms me down, especially the funny ones. Laughter is the best medicine.

Ilsia: So it seems like we all shared things that either bring us comfort or back to a memory of happiness and success. I want to thank you guys for sharing your items and being vulnerable with the message behind those things. We are now going to dive into our session.

Mattie Steele

Mindfulness Activity

Ilsia: Now that we have moved on with a productive ice breaker, I would like for us to move onto our mindfulness activity before we start the session. Today's activity will be mindfully listening. In order to do this, I need each of you to think about one thing that is causing you stress lately, and one thing you are looking forward to! I will give you guys five minutes in order to get your thoughts processed, and we will come back to this.

5 min. Passes

Ilsia: Ok who would like to go first?

The group is silent for a moment.

Lauretta: I think I can go first. Recently, as you all know, I have achieved my long goal of getting my masters. As I talk about a lot though, I do not have a job to use this yet. This has been an issue of stress. I really feel as though I am doing nothing with my degree and have no emotional support and feel as though I am doing this all on my own. This issue has caused me a lot of stress. I am currently unemployed and facing a lot of debt due to school loans. I, at this point do not feel like I have anything to look forward to due to all the stress, and sadness this has caused me.

Bill: Lauretta, I think you are doing wonderful. Your masters degree is something to be very proud of. I think one thing you can look forward to is being able to one day work within your field. I know it seems hard right now, but I know you will accomplish your goals!

Ilsia: Thank you for being so supportive Bill! Lauretta after hearing this how did that make you feel?

Lauretta: Well it honestly made me feel supported. Not a lot of people have reached out and told me they were proud of me for this. Honestly, since being

divorced and becoming a single mother I feel as though all the burden of being a parent has been put on me, so it was refreshing to hear that there is hope, and maybe something for me to look forward to.

Mattie: Laretta I cannot relate to you with being a single mother, but I can relate to not having any hope or something to look forward to. When I first started using drugs I felt as though I was worthless and had no sense of being. When I first got clean it felt even more so like this. Drugs were my purpose, and after quitting drugs came the anxiety. I feel as though I cannot win. This is the first group I have actually stayed with, and I just honestly want to thank you guys for it.

Bill: I can also relate to what you are saying Mattie. When I quit drinking and using, I also felt as though I had no meaning because for so long my purpose was using drugs and alcohol. I know you stated in the last session that it was hard for you to stop using due to your friend's death, but just remember how strong you are, and me and you both are getting through this one day at a time.

Ilsia: I am loving hearing your feedback from you guys and the support that is being stated!

Mattie: I guess I would like to continue and finish my mindfulness activity.

One thing that stressed me out is my sobriety, I am fighting this every moment it feels like. There is nothing more I would like to do than use, but I know now that my anxiety and depression will worsen if this continues. One thing I look forward to is maintaining one year sober. This is something I cling to and hold on to. I would like to make Cory (friend who passed away) proud.

Lauretta: I think you will make your friend proud Mattie. You should be proud of yourself now though, just by continuing to come to the meetings!

Ilsia: Ok so far, Lauretta and Mattie have completed the mindfulness activity.

Minda, you have been a little quiet, how do you feel about this activity?

Minda: Well, to be honest I am feeling a little angry.

Ilsia: Can you tell us more about this emotion you are feeling?

Minda: Well, my husband is in jail, and I am left to take care of three kids by myself, what am I supposed to look forward to each day? It's always stressful, there is nothing to look forward to. I just feel angry, and then my anger makes me depressed, because all I feel is angry all the time.

Lauretta: I can relate to that Minda. When I first had my divorce, I felt angry. It made me feel bad that it made me angry that I had to take care of my child

alone. I felt like a bad mother, and still feel guilt from this to this day. One thing that really helped me though was feeling needed by my child. Knowing that they loved me and would remind me every day that I was a good mom, really kept me going through this.

Minda: Don't get me wrong I love my children, I just get angry about what my husband did, and the fact he left me alone to do this.

Ilsia: Minda, do you feel as though at this moment you feel as though you are grieving your husband being away, or the fact that you are doing this alone?

Minda: Well, I feel both. I miss him. I know what he did was really bad, but I hate being alone. Even if the kids are in the house, I still feel lonely and become anxious, because what if something were to happen? What if someone tries to break into our house? What if one of my kids gets sick? I don't know how I'll handle that alone. My husband and I were married for 13 years and now he is gone, and I don't know how to do this on my own.

Ilsia: I liked the way you worded this, Minda. The way you stated why you were anxious, and being able to identify your stressors was something you should be proud of.

Minda: It felt good to vocalize how I have been feeling. Honestly, I think something I do look forward to is my husband getting out of jail. I know it may sound odd, but I miss him, and I am just ready for my family to be whole again.

Ilsia: I can understand your want for your husband to come home. That is normal, especially after a thirteen-year-long marriage. I know that you miss him.

Bill: Minda, I think you are very brave to admit what has been making you anxious. I know I cannot relate to your circumstance, but I know my wife would be able to relate to you. I have been in jail multiple times, and each time it happens I know my wife becomes very upset. This is one reason why I am trying to get sober and stay sober. I can say now that I can also relate to Mattie and state that my sobriety is something that stresses me out, but also my job. But one thing I look forward to is making my wife proud, and being able to be the man she needs me to be.

Focus of the session (Bill) (ex. Making connections with members, talking more about their goals, .)

Ilisia: In today's session I wanted to work on some emotional strategies that can also help us in those moments when mindfulness may not be an option we can always try to do something else to actually be a little bit more constructive. Changing the way that our behavior comes across. One way to do that is called opposite action. To change our emotions. Emotions come with specific action urges that push us to act in certain ways. So to escape the pain of an emotion we may do that in harmful ways because sometimes we just developed these negative coping skills and that feels good to us because that's what we know and learn how to do. But we can rewire and change the way that we go about responding to our negative emotions. So there are common urges associated with simple emotions. I'm just going to name some emotions we might experience and what the common urges might be. So for fear, we might think of escape or avoiding. With anger, we might think of an attack. With sadness, we might withdraw or become passive or isolated. With shame, we might avoid or save face by attacking others. With guilt, we might promise that you won't commit the offense again and you bow your head begging for forgiveness. With jealousy, we have verbal accusations. We attempt to control and we act suspicious and then with love we want to say I love you and make an effort to spend time with the person doing what the other person wants and needs giving affection so it looks different to everybody. So those are some of the urges that you can associate with these specific emotions. If we want to work to act opposite to the action when the emotion is doing more harm than good. So when we have fear or anxiety maybe we want to approach it as opposed to attacking it and we can do this in an assertive way. So you can approach events, places, tasks, activities, and people you're afraid of and we can confront them in a positive way. There are ways to get our points

across without screaming or yelling or having some type of negative reaction to it and we want to do things to increase a sense of control and mastery of this. Avoid the person you're angry with rather than attacking them. Take a time-out. Breathe in and breathe out deeply and slowly. With sadness, we might want to get active and want to approach it instead of avoiding it to increase our pleasant activities. Shame we want to face the music so that when our behavior violates our moral values or something shameful has been revealed we can either apologize and repair the harm and try to avoid making the same mistakes in the future and accept our consequences. We can forgive ourselves and let it go which is really hard to do but it's important that we try to do it. Do you guys have any questions about those opposite actions or urges? I know it's a lot of information.

Lauretta: So it's kind of like if we wanna react to a certain emotion but maybe it's not going to be a good outcome that we should try and do the opposite?

Ilsia: Yes, exactly. You got it. So I want you guys to think a little bit about an emotion for yourself and then I'm gonna go through this with each of you. I want you to observe and describe a certain emotion and what your typical urge would be and then I'll walk you through what I want you guys to think about doing the opposite of that action entirely.

Mattie: I can go first. So observe and describe an emotion. So I guess right now I'm feeling overwhelmed which I guess can be like fear in a way. I just have a lot of things to do at home and at work, things like that. I found myself feeling overwhelmed. I think my initial response is to avoid it because it's easier. That provides temporary relief. In the long term, it doesn't. So I guess the opposite action would be to fully engage or you know sort of set measurable goals and start a little bit at a time instead of completely avoiding the situation.

Ilsia: I always like to use the analogy if I was to put a full plate of food in front of you and ask you to eat everything in one bite, how does that feel? But if we can break it down and you say, OK I can eat it all but I'm gonna do it in 20 bites to get this done and then keep moving on to the next thing. It feels more manageable when we break things down to give ourselves an end goal. It doesn't feel as overwhelming, so never bite off more than you can chew essentially.

Mattie: Yeah it definitely makes sense.

Lauretta: I guess I could go next. I mean I am not feeling this way right now but I'm thinking of anger. There have been times when I'm feeling angry because someone did something or someone said something that was hurtful and I have the urge to be mean or attack them like you said. Maybe say something just like you know, not nice. And I'm thinking the opposite action could be able to pause and not respond right away. Maybe calm down and then like you said maybe respond. Try and respond more kindly and try to talk about it in a calm way. I would be doing maybe more harm by attacking. So that's kind of what comes to mind when I think about this.

Ilsia: Yeah absolutely and usually when we take that step back we can do a mindfulness exercise sometimes. I like to suggest maybe we go and take a walk. You can go to the kitchen and fill a cup or glass with water and see how you feel afterward before you respond. Give yourself that break like you were saying to be able to refocus a little bit before you respond.

Lauretta: Yeah I think that would make me feel better about myself.

Bill: I guess I could go. I guess the one thing that I'm thinking about that happened yesterday, it feels like there are two emotions at the same time. I said something about a friend to a different

friend, which now looking back wasn't very nice. And then the friend that I was talking about started texting me. So I was feeling, I guess, guilty and shameful about what I had said. But then like I didn't respond to the text message I just went on YouTube. And then when I did respond I was really more defensive and actually angry telling him certain things. So it's kind of what I did. Not really sure what I could do differently. Maybe you know, say something head on like apologize before I shouldn't have said something. But I didn't do that this time.

Ilsia: So looking back on it now you know next time maybe confront it in a more beneficial way so that you're not walking away and feeling that guilt or that shame and a lot of times in those situations if we do speak negatively about somebody behind their back we tend to overcompensate so we might overcompensate on being like extra nice. Or we go on the defensive too because that guilt is kind of creeping in so much that we go on the defense. Just being able to kind of find that middle ground.

Minda: Something that I had been feeling is jealousy. I've noticed a lot of things going on between people at work and what they've been able to achieve and where they're able to go and my gut reaction is that it's just like to bad mouth them or put down what they've done and their accomplishments. I'll try to find ways to sort of like poke holes and that doesn't make me feel very good. I suppose the opposite reaction could be kind of like maybe not overcompensating like try and I guess find the reasons why that's impressive try and like maybe speak it into existence in some way. Look at it like how wonderful that is for them and give them the acknowledgment.

Ilsia: So a lot of times when we feel jealous we try to put other people down because that makes us feel better. But if you're actually just being happy for your friends and people that you know

because of their accomplishments you will ultimately end up feeling better about yourself because you're not hanging on to that jealous feeling and at the same time the possible guilt and all the other motions that might come up and then you're genuinely happy for your friends as well as usually for yourself.

Minda: Yeah that makes sense.

Ilsia: Thanks for sharing guys. I know that this can be really difficult and all of you were very vulnerable like I asked so thank you. You know the beautiful thing about group therapy is that we're able to give feedback to other members of the group. It's not just about me facilitating and giving feedback. So over the next eight weeks, I hope you guys can continue to feel more comfortable and kind of jump in and lead a little bit. Be comfortable giving that feedback to each other and rely on each other to kind of work through and problem solve a little bit as we continue to meet.

Lauretta: Debrief, mood check, homework, last thoughts

Debrief:

Ilsia: Let's think back on what we have learned throughout our time together. So to summarize, today we did an icebreaker where we shared an item that was special to us. Then we did a mindfulness activity where we shared something that has been a stressor this week. You all were very supportive to each other! Next we discussed opposite action where we look at changing negative coping behaviors. You all gave some great examples of that. Now let's do a mood check and reflect on how far we have come.

Mood check:

Hey everyone, before we go I would like to check in and see how everyone is feeling right now. Let's reflect and compare how we feel now versus how we felt on our first session. Who would like to share first?

Bill: I'll go. I'm feeling way more relaxed than I did when I started. We know each other now. I feel sure that I am not being judged by you guys.

Ilsia: Thanks Bill, I am glad to hear that. Who would like to go next?

Lauretta: I will. I feel what Bill is saying but I also feel more hopeful about the future than I did when I started. I guess just meeting you all and getting to know you all while being a positive experience has made the future look better.

Mattie: I feel that. I'm relaxed today too. I feel more positive towards people in a way because I have learned here that helping people learn awareness about addiction can help them be less judgemental. I have seen Lauretta grow in that regard and it has helped me have faith that others can be reached. I have less bitterness towards people who judge because I now see the other side of it.

Minda: I feel content today. In comparison to day 1, I see that I was not very content. I realize that I have learned many useful things here that will help me throughout life.

Ilsia: I would like to add that I observe that you all seem to feel more supported than you did when we started, thoughts?

Bill: For sure

Lauretta: yes, absolutely

Mattie: nods yes

Minda: yes

Ilsia: Great! During the mindfulness activity, it was very heartwarming to see how supportive you all have become of each other. Laretta was able to tell us how much that has helped her by just having the support. I also saw how supportive Mattie and Bill were to each other regarding their past substance abuse. We also saw how Laretta was able to support Minda through her hardship of undergoing this major life change. As you all can see, support goes a long way.

I think it is safe to say that the support you have found here has contributed to the improvement in your mood. Before we go, I would like to give you guys a little homework.

Earlier we discussed changing emotions with opposite action. I have a little worksheet for you to use when the situation arises. Here are some examples of opportunities for opposite action:

Lethargy- lethargy is often a result of depression which effects your motivation. While your urge is to avoid, your opposite action would be to engage. In this instance, you could try making a list of things that you would like to do if you had the motivation and pick one to throw yourself into despite the fact that you may not feel like it.

Social withdrawal-like lethargy, isolation is avoiding so the opposite action would be to engage in a social activity even if it is just starting off small like making a phone call to a friend.

Fear of failure or rejection are also avoidant emotions. We may avoid tasks or challenges due to these fears. The opposite action would be to engage in said task.

Guilt- with guilt the urge is to negative self-talk so the opposite action would be to give yourself affirmations.

So for this assignment, when you find yourself having a negative emotion, write it down in the first box. In the second box, you will write down what you feel urged to do, like what action you feel you want to do. Then you will do the opposite action and document what that action was. In the last box, record how you felt after doing that opposite action. Does anyone have any questions?

Group: shakes head no

Alright then, We will share our answers with each other next session. I think you will find this exercise to be useful in identifying opportunities to change your knee jerk reactions to negative emotions. It is always good to practice and this could be a great opportunity to learn from each others' experience.

Before we go, does anyone have any last thoughts or feelings they would like to share?

Bill: no

Mattie: no

Lauretta: no

Minda: no

Illsia: Alright then, until next time! Yall have a great week!

EMOTION REGULATION

Practice Exercise 5: Due Date _____

Changing Emotions by OPPOSITE ACTION to the Current Emotion

Ask yourself the following questions as a guide to OPPOSITE ACTION:

Observe and Describe the emotion:

What is the current emotion you are having?

What is your Action Urge?

Do Opposite Action ALL THE WAY.

How did you feel after acting opposite to your emotion?

Mindfulness Activity Explanation/debrief (Mattie)

Closing (Laretta) (debrief, mood check, “homework”, any last thought/feelings)

Rogg, M., Braakmann, D., Schaich, A., Ambrosch, J., Meine, C., Assmann, N., Schweiger, U., & Fassbinder, E. (2021). How patients with borderline personality disorder experience the skill opposite action in the context of dialectical behavior therapy-A qualitative study. *Psychotherapy (Chicago, Ill.)*, 58(4), 544–556.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/pst0000392>

SUMMARY OF ABOVE ARTICLE

“Dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) is currently the most researched therapy method to treat borderline personality disorder (BPD). A major component of DBT is learning and practicing specific skills to regulate emotions. Qualitative studies found that patients perceived DBT skills as helpful in dealing with emotions. However, DBT consists of more than 60 different skills, and earlier qualitative studies had a broad focus. The present study explores patients’ experience with a specific skill, opposite action (OA). The skill is one of the major DBT skills assumed to play an important role in symptom improvement. OA means deliberately performing a behavior that is opposite to the emotional urge to act and is intended to weaken the original emotion. Qualitative data from semistructured interviews with 23 patients diagnosed with BPD receiving DBT were analyzed following qualitative content analysis procedures. The

participants generally had a good understanding of the skill, although it was often mixed with other skills of DBT. Performing OA was perceived as exhausting. Adverse effects of OA, intense emotions and high distress were reported as barriers to OA use. However, participants named several factors that helped them overcome these barriers, including their thoughts and actions, support from others, and treatment elements. Participants described positive effects of OA such as positive emotional changes and a decrease in problem behavior and more freedom in everyday life. The findings of the study provide valuable information to optimize the delivery of OA and DBT and can help to improve treatment outcome for patients with BPD.”

Hildebrandt, L. K., McCall, C., & Singer, T. (2019). Socioaffective versus sociocognitive mental trainings differentially affect emotion regulation strategies. *Emotion (Washington, D.C.)*, 19(8), 1329–1342. <https://doi.org/10.1037/emo0000518>

SUMMARY OF ABOVE ARTICLE:

“Tania Singer

Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences, Leipzig, Germany

A variety of contemplative practices putatively improves the ability to deal with difficult emotions. However, it is unclear how these different types of mental training differentially affect the use of different emotion regulation strategies. We addressed this question in a 9-month longitudinal study in which participants ($N = 332$) took part in three distinct 3-month mental training modules cultivating attentional (the Presence module), sociocognitive (the Perspective module), and socioaffective, compassion-based skills (the Affect module). In addition, the participants completed the Cognitive Emotion Regulation

Questionnaire and the Brief COPE Inventory at baseline and after every module. The Presence module did not notably change the use of any emotion regulation strategies, whereas the Perspective and the Affect modules both increased the use of acceptance. Moreover, the Perspective module was especially effective in increasing the use of adaptive, cognitive transformations such as reappraisal, perspective taking, and planning, whereas the Affect module uniquely led to decreases in maladaptive avoidant strategies such as distraction and refocusing. These findings imply that (a) cultivating present-moment focused attention might not be sufficient to change emotion regulation strategies, (b) different types of mental practices focusing on either cognitive perspective taking or sociomotivational capacities lead to adaptive emotion regulation via different strategies, and (c) specifically cultivating positive affect and compassion can decrease avoidance of difficult emotions. This research suggests that different mental training exercises affect the use of specific emotion regulation strategies and that clinical interventions should be designed accordingly.”

Wei, M., Wang, L.-F., & Kivlighan, D. M. (2021). Group counseling change process: An adaptive spiral among positive emotions, positive relations, and emotional cultivation/regulation. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 68*(6), 730–745.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/cou0000550>

SUMMARY OF ABOVE ARTICLE:

Research has provided empirical support for the effectiveness of group psychotherapy. However, we have little understanding of mechanisms that account for the effectiveness. Thus, there is a need for complex theory-driven hypotheses and analytical models to understand the complexities of change in group counseling. We used Fredrickson’s broaden-and-build theory as well as Yalom and Leszcz’s proposition

about adaptive spirals as guiding frameworks. We then examined the process of how positive emotions or positive relations and emotional cultivation (regulation) reciprocally influence one another to create an upward or adaptive spiral toward greater well-being over the course of group interventions. A total of 196 Taiwanese children and adolescent clients across 33 groups participated in an 8-session emotional cultivation/regulation group intervention. The random intercepts cross-lagged panel model (RI-CLPM) was used for the data analyses in Mplus. Overall, our results supported the broaden-and-build theory and its broaden-, build-, and upward-spiral effects, with the exception of positive affect. Specifically, positive emotions (i.e., gratitude and psychological need satisfaction) and positive relations (i.e., teacher–student relationship and perceived social support) predicted future improvements on emotional cultivation (i.e., the broaden effects). Additionally, improved emotional cultivation was a long-lasting characteristic that could be drawn upon at later moments to drive greater positive emotions and relations (i.e., the build effects). Together, the results supported a reciprocal model with positive emotions and relationships being associated with greater future emotional cultivation and subsequently emotional cultivation being associated with greater future positive emotions and relationships (i.e., the upward spiral or adaptive spiral effects).

Daros, A. R., Williams, G. E., Jung, S., Turabi, M., Uliaszek, A. A., & Ruocco, A. C. (2018). More is not always better: Strategies to regulate negative mood induction in women with borderline personality disorder and depressive and anxiety disorders. *Personality Disorders, 9*(6), 530–542.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/per0000296>

ARTICLE SUMMARY:

"Individuals with borderline personality disorder (BPD) have difficulties regulating emotions, which may be a consequence of using less effective emotion regulation (ER) strategies to lessen the intensity of their negative emotions. It is not yet known whether people with BPD utilize particular ER strategies to modulate specific mood states and if these strategies are different from those used by individuals with depressive and anxiety disorders. In the present study, 90 participants (30 BPD, 30 anxiety and/or depressive disorders, and 30 healthy controls) underwent a mood induction procedure and specified which ER strategies they used and their perceived difficulty regulating mood following induction. Compared with healthy controls, BPD endorsed higher negative mood prior to, immediately following, and 4 min after neutral and negative mood inductions; more maladaptive ER strategies (e.g., rumination); and more perceived difficulty regulating negative mood. Compared with anxiety and/or depressive disorders, BPD endorsed similar ER strategies and subjective difficulty during mood inductions, endorsed higher negative mood following a neutral video and 1 negative video, and recorded higher RSA reactivity during and following 2 negative videos. Results suggest that individuals with BPD use a higher number of maladaptive ER strategies compared with healthy controls, which may lead to less effective modulation of negative mood and higher reports of difficulty regulating emotions. In addition, physiological measurements indicated that individuals with BPD may have higher RSA reactivity in response to negative mood induction compared with other mental disorders, which may reflect inefficient or disorganized attempts to regulate emotional arousal."

Shu, J., Bolger, N., & Ochsner, K. N. (2021). Social emotion regulation strategies are differentially helpful for anxiety and sadness. *Emotion (Washington, D.C.)*, 21(6), 1144–1159. <https://doi.org/10.1037/emo0000921>

ARTICLE SUMMARY:

"Little is understood about how emotion regulation strategies typically used to regulate one's own emotions can be used to help others in distress, a process we refer to as social emotion regulation. We integrated research on social support, the self-regulation of emotion, and appraisal theories to hypothesize that different kinds of support and emotion regulation strategies should be differentially helpful for others, depending on the kind of emotion they are experiencing. Specifically, we predicted that helping others to actively modify their situation, as opposed to their appraisals and emotional responses, will be more effective for those experiencing anxiety as anxiety is a response to appraising threat in one's environment. However, helping others to modify

their appraisals and emotions should be more effective for those experiencing sadness as sadness is a response to an irrevocable loss. To test this, we created a novel paradigm in which regulation targets were recruited online to write about personal events causing anxiety or sadness and regulation providers were recruited to provide written help to the targets. Study 1 supported the hypothesis using strategies drawn from the social support literature (advice vs. emotional support). Study 2 used strategies drawn from the literature on the self-regulation of emotion (situation modification vs. reappraisal) to demonstrate that as predicted, different strategies are believed to be differentially helpful depending on the target's emotion and when adjusting for individual differences in social and affective functioning, targets judge social emotion regulation strategies to be differentially helpful when implemented by providers.”

Avoidance in the Clinic: Strategies to Conceptualize and Reduce Avoidant Thoughts, Emotions, and Behaviors With Cognitive- Behavioral Therapy. (n.d.).

ARTICLE SUMMARY:

Avoidance is a common problem with clients seen in outpatient mental health clinics. Although this problem is typically viewed as a feature of anxiety disorders, it is also commonly seen in depressive disorders and in most other mental disorders, as well as in many people presenting for help with situational distress. Although avoidance is commonly considered to be a behavioral reaction to a feared or unwanted trigger, other types of avoidance such as cognitive, experiential, or emotional are also common and may coexist with behavioral avoidance. Any type of avoidance undermines positive outcomes with clients and several cognitive– behavioral therapies have been developed to target it, notably behavioral activation and exposure therapy. This article examines the problem of avoidance and discusses ways in which to assess and include it in the clinical case formulation and

then to follow-up with treatment. Two client scenarios are described throughout the article to help clarify the strategies to conceptualize and treat avoidance in the clinic.”