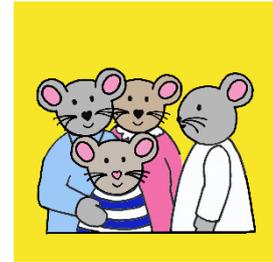


## Getting Acquainted - Depression

### Use This:

At the beginning of depression treatment to establish a relationship and plan.



### Goals

- The family will feel more comfortable through introductory get-acquainted activities
- The family will understand how the programme can meet their goals
- The family will learn about the importance of confidentiality, take-home assignments, and attendance
- The family will know how to use the *Feelings Thermometer*

### Materials

- *Feelings Thermometer* (p. 329)
- *Daily Feelings Record* (p. 330)
- Materials from recent assessment (if available)
- Pens, pencils, markers
- *Weekly questionnaires* and *Monitoring sheet* (see pages 268 – 285)
- *Therapist Note Taking Sheet* (p. 267)

**If time is tight:** Begin to build the therapy alliance and enthusiasm about the treatment programme. Learn about how the child shows depressive symptoms, and from the parent's perspective.

### Main Steps

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| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Set an Agenda</b>         | Remember to start by setting an agenda together.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Obtain Weekly Ratings</b> | Review the <i>Weekly questionnaires</i> and <i>Monitoring sheet</i> in detail. Discuss any difficulties with monitoring, usefulness of monitoring, what is being monitored etc.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Warm up</b>               | Try to get a conversation going at a pace that suits the child. It is often helpful to make sure formal treatment does not begin too quickly, since depressed children may be irritable, anxious, and not familiar with questions about their feelings. Try to refrain initially from asking a lot of personal questions of the child. |

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| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>ACTIVITY</b><br><i>Ice Breaker</i>         | <p>An ice breaker activity is a good idea to build therapeutic alliance. The appropriate activities will depend on the child's age and interests, so you should prepare beforehand, trying to obtain enough prior information about the child to plan a uniquely tailored ice breaker. The exercise may be as simple as engaging in a discussion with the child centred on three things about him or her that are unusual or interesting. Art materials may also be helpful if the child enjoys drawing or if you feel that the child might find a nonverbal means of connecting easier at first.</p>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>ACTIVITY</b><br><i>Personal Facts Game</i> | <p>To introduce your need to gather information, and the idea that this information is important to you, it might be helpful to play a "Personal Facts" game. In this game, both you and the child supply answers to the same questions, such as "What is your middle name?", "How old are you?", "How many brothers and sisters do you have?", or "What is your favourite activity?" Keep in mind that including questions about favourite TV shows, heroes, and superheroes can provide information that will be helpful later in treatment. After giving answers, you and the child might quiz each other. It is important that you recall the details accurately as this conversation is one of the child's first attempts to share personal information with you. It will also be helpful throughout the treatment if you are comfortable with the child asking personal information about you and with providing answers to appropriate questions.</p>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Provide Overview and Rationale</b>         | <p>Explain that this programme is a joint effort between the therapist and the child, focused on feelings – especially feelings we don't like that can keep us from doing the things we want to do and should be doing.</p> <p>Tell the child everyone has times when they feel bad, sad, gloomy, or grouchy, and that it's OK to feel bad sometimes. We know that children with epilepsy are particularly likely to have these times for a variety of reasons. However, not everyone knows what to do to stop feeling that way, and sometimes they get "stuck" feeling bad. Getting stuck in the bad feelings can stop us from enjoying friends, getting our schoolwork done, and doing other things that would be good for us. Note that by working with you in session, the child will be learning ways to get "unstuck" so that he or she can do the things he or she really values and wants to be doing.</p> <p>You might ask the child if he or she can remember times when he or she got stuck in bad feelings (bad, sad, gloomy, grouchy) and those bad feelings stopped him or her from doing something fun (like hanging out with a friend) or important (like schoolwork).</p> |

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|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Child's Perspective and Goals</b> | <p>Ask if this sounds like what the child thought you would be working on together. If not, find out what the child had expected and see if you can identify common ground between goals of treatment and the child's expectations.</p> <p>Ask if the child has specific goals that he or she wants to work on in therapy. Help the child to word the goals in a way that can relate to improving mood.</p>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Encourage Participation</b>       | <p>Invite the child to ask questions about treatment. Continue to re-open this invitation periodically until the child begins to share his or her questions and concerns. Stress to the child that information from his or her point of view is very important. Emphasise that you're interested in what the child sees and thinks about various situations. Value should be placed on the child's point of view.</p>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Describe Treatment Structure</b>  | <p>Lay out the structure and sequence of the treatment programme. Be sure to cover the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The activities that will happen in the various sessions (e.g., role-playing, practising new skills)</li> <li>• The importance of regular attendance (because each session builds on the contents of the previous ones, and the entire programme is needed to maximise the chances of success)</li> <li>• The worksheets, which contain practice assignments for him or her to do each week between sessions</li> <li>• The limits of confidentiality</li> </ul> |

**ACTIVITY**  
**Feelings  
Thermometer**

Have the child provide a rating for his or her current mood. You may need to practise once or twice with sample anchors to make sure the child is giving accurate ratings. Ask the child what the number he or she chose means, in order to be sure he or she understands the concept. Ask the child to indicate, using the **Feelings Thermometer** how his or her mood would be in several different situations (i.e., spending time with a favourite friend, after a disappointing mark, after a seizure) in order to make sure that the child feels comfortable using this scale. It is particularly important that the child be able to use the full range of the scale, not just the two endpoints.

For this session, the parent should also be introduced to the **Feelings Thermometer**. The parent should understand that the **Feelings Thermometer** is a tool that takes a global rating of the child's mood. Discuss that this tool will be used throughout the treatment to monitor the child's good and bad feelings. Explain to the parent how the **Feelings Thermometer** works. For practice in the session, ask the parent to use it to rate the child's mood under different circumstances (some good, some bad).

**Example script**

*If your child just did really well on an exam at school, what would his or her **Feelings Thermometer** rating be? What would the rating be if your child got into a disagreement with a best friend at school?*

Then have the parent rate the child's current mood. Ask the parent what that specific rating means, so you can be sure the concept is clear.

**PRACTICE  
ASSIGNMENT**  
**Daily Feelings  
Record**

The practice assignment for this week involves having the child practise making ratings of his or her mood each day during the coming week. Tell the family you will send them a **Daily Feelings Record** after the session. Ask the child to make one rating each day by circling a number on the thermometer and writing what happened that day to make him or her feel that way.

Remind the child that you will often take ratings with the **Feelings Thermometer** to gather clues and evidence about his or her feelings. Let the child know that at the next session, you will review his or her ratings together and talk about any changes that might have occurred in his or her mood over the week.

**Praise**

Praise the child for his or her good work during this first session.

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- Send the materials for the next session** Tell the parent/s you will send a written summary and the materials for the next session. Remind them that they do not need to be completed for next session as you will go through them together in the session. Tell the family you will also send the ***Weekly questionnaires, Monitoring sheet*** and ***Feelings Thermometer*** which need to be completed for the next session.

Confirm date and time of the next call.

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- Summarising** Ask if they would like you to summarise the session, if they want to summarise or if you should do it together.
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### **Leave ‘Em Laughing**

End the session on a positive note with the family by perhaps talking about things that are unrelated to treatment or a game or activity that will leave them feeling good about the work you’ve done today. The end of each session should be used to praise the family’s efforts and to convey support and encouragement.

### **Helpful Tips**

- Children often describe their depression as "tired," "bored," "cranky," "worried," or "mad," as well as "sad". Be sure to use the same language the child uses in describing his or her mood.
- Some children will have surprising insight, others relatively little, into what it is like to feel good and what it is like to feel bad. Use gentle encouragement, plus your own modelling, to draw out the child if he or she is reticent or reluctant to elaborate on ideas. It can also be helpful to refer to other people's experiences of feeling sad or down, just to get the child to talk about feelings.

### **How’s Your Style?**

- Did you praise often?
- Did you review often, by asking questions?
- Did you simplify the steps as needed?
- Did your pace match that of the child or family?
- Did you stay on track?