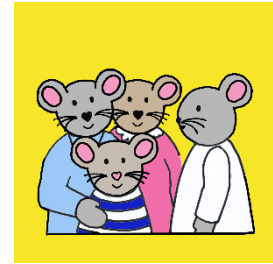


Learning about Depression - Family

Use This:

To introduce the family to the planned course of treatment for the child's depression.



Goals

- You will continue to establish rapport
- The family will understand the nature of depression and its expression in youth
- The family will learn that individuals can control their mood by changing **how they act** and **how they think**
- The family will understand the importance of regular attendance, worksheets and practice assignments
- The family will be optimistic about the child's situation and the likelihood of improving
- The family will be interested in participating in and learning more about treatment

Materials

- *Feelings Thermometer* (p. 329)
- *Thinking-Feeling-Doing* worksheet (p. 333)
- *How I Show My Feelings* worksheet (p. 332)
- *Understanding Depression* parent handout (p. 335)
- Materials from recent assessment (if available)
- *Weekly questionnaires* and *Monitoring sheet* (see pages 268 – 285)
- *Therapist Note Taking Sheet* (p. 267)

*⚡ If time is tight: Teach the family about the **Thinking-Feeling-Doing** model of depression and how gathering clues and practising skills can help reduce unpleasant moods.*

Main Steps

| | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Set an Agenda | Remember to start by setting an agenda together and by reviewing any practice assignments. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Obtain Weekly Ratings | Using the 0 to 10 scale of the <i>Feelings Thermometer</i> , obtain ratings from both the child and parent. Review the <i>Weekly questionnaires</i> and <i>Monitoring sheet</i> in detail. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Review Definitions and Vocabulary | Ask the child to describe how he or she knows when he or she is in a bad mood. What emotions are experienced during these times? Elicit other words (e.g., mad, grouchy) that might describe the symptoms of depression the child experiences. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | Praise the child's definitions and incorporate them into your own. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss the Nature of Childhood Depression | <p>Begin this discussion by asking for the parent's ideas of what depression is and how it is affecting his or her child.</p> <p>Example script</p> <p><i>Many people have different thoughts about what depression is and what depression looks like.</i></p> <p><i>How would you describe depression? How would you describe your child's depression?</i></p> <p>Frame the discussion around the depressive symptoms identified by the parent. Include the following points: (1) the difference between a transient sad mood and the more enduring nature of depression, (2) the fact that depression in children and teens may sometimes show up as irritability rather than the sadness seen in adults, and (3) the fact that different children may show depression in very different ways.</p> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Note Your Need for the Parent's Perspective | <p>Explain to the parent that in order for this programme to be most effective, you need to get his or her perspective on the child's depression and overall functioning.</p> <p>Example script</p> <p><i>As we were just discussing, depression can look very different in different children. What about your child? Because you are the true expert on your child, it would help me a lot to learn from you just what your child is like when he is feeling depressed.</i></p> <p>Remind the parent that his or her role in the child's treatment will be key to success. Build the parent's enthusiasm and work to increase his or her motivation to participate in the child's treatment.</p> |

- Provide Rationale for Treatment** Review with the parent/s and child the notion that our behaviours and our thoughts greatly influence the way we feel.

Example script

Our thoughts and our actions are very closely related. Was there ever a time when you had a job to do, and you felt pretty negative about it – like you wouldn't be able to do well at it? What did that do to your performance on that job? Exactly! Your negative thoughts about yourself and your future performance probably made it a lot harder to do well on the job. In much the same way, children who are depressed can feel down about themselves, and that can lead them to have problems developing close relationships and doing well in school or sports, which can lead to even more feelings of sadness. Part of changing this negative cycle for your child will be to work on his thoughts and his actions that are leading him to feel depressed.

Review with the parent/s and child the goals for treatment: to gradually change the child's negative thoughts and behaviours through special coping techniques and consistent practice, and to teach the child new ways to cope with sad or upset feelings, so that the child won't feel as depressed and will have the skills needed to feel better.

- Introduce the Feeling-Thinking-Doing Triangle** Explain to the child that depression has three parts to it: what we **feel** (using the child's language), what we **think**, and what we **do**.

- ACTIVITY**
The Feeling-Thinking-Doing Triangle
- Cover the first page of the **Thinking-Feeling-Doing** worksheet. Use questions to gather information from the child's own life to demonstrate how thoughts, feelings, and behaviours are often connected and can result in both pleasant and unpleasant emotions.
- Examples:
- *Is there a time recently when you felt (sad/mad/upset)?*
 - *What happened that started those feelings?*
 - *What did you think in your head?*
 - *How did you feel?*
 - *What did you do in response to those thoughts or feelings?*

- Normalise** Remind the child that everyone feels sad or bad sometimes; the important thing is knowing what to do in order to get "unstuck" from these feelings so we can get on with the things we need to be doing. If possible, use an example from this child's life (from the previous session) – some activity the child values that he or she doesn't do when "stuck" in bad feelings. As an alternative, or in addition, you may use an example from your own life, or that of "another kid I know."

| | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Introduce the Toolbox Concept | <p>Talk about the "toolbox" notion of treatment and ask the child if he or she knows what a toolbox is. The goal is to teach the child a number of specific coping skills. Ask the child to describe what sorts of things are in a toolbox (e.g., hammers, screwdrivers, wrenches). Point out that toolboxes have tools to solve all sorts of different problems, because not all tools work in every situation. Praise the child's efforts to come up with examples of tools and how they are used.</p> <p>Explain that people feel sad/down/upset for lots of different reasons, and show their feelings in lots of different ways. You have lots of tools that can be helpful to the child in improving his or her mood. Part of your work together will be trying out different tools in order to find out which ones work best.</p> |
| Example script | |
| <p><i>As we discussed earlier, depression is different for each individual. That also means that different children will need different things – different coping skills – to help them feel better. One of the main goals in treatment will be to give you a toolbox, or a set of coping strategies. We'll teach you several different strategies, find out which ones work best for you, and then have you practise those specific coping strategies until they are easy for you to use when you feel sad or down.</i></p> | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learn about the Child's Tools | <p>Ask the child what "tools" he or she use to improve a bad mood already. What are things he or she has tried in the past that have helped, even just a little bit?</p> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Explain the Importance of Practice | <p>Explain that trying out new tools that we are not used to can be strange at first, like learning how to use anything new. Ask the child to think of a time when they practised to become good at something that was difficult at first. Examples could include riding a bike, playing an instrument, learning to use an electronic tool, learning to use chopsticks, etc.</p> |

- Relate Practice to Mood**

Explain how the same principles that apply to learning how to do anything new also apply to changing mood. By practising using different tools, the child will get better at controlling his or her mood in order to have fewer unpleasant moods and less interference with things he or she wants to be doing. Use questioning to arrive at the idea that practice can be gradual, and that small steps will be required until bigger ones can be taken. It can help to reverse roles and ask the child how to help you learn to use something that they are very good at, such as an iPod or a video game.

Example script

***You:** How would you explain this game to me?*

***Child:** I would explain the rules and how to use each of the control buttons.*

***You:** But it seems really hard to me. I don't think it works for me. How can I get to be as good as you?*

***Child:** I'd tell you to learn one little step at a time. Also, if you practise it will get easier.*

***You:** Great! That's exactly the same as practising ways to change your feelings!*

- Explain about "How Feelings Look"**

Explain that since all people look, act, and feel differently when they are sad/mad/upset, you would like to get a better understanding of what the child "looks and feels like" when he or she is feeling this way.

- ACTIVITY**
How I Show My Feelings Worksheet

Complete the worksheet with the child, asking for more information to better understand the child's presentation of depression, including the triggers that provoke positive or sad feelings including seizures, medication, the bodily response to such feelings (e.g., increased or decreased energy, changes in appetite or sleep), the outward appearance that accompanies the feelings (e.g., downcast eyes, slumping body), the thoughts that go along with the feelings (e.g., "I'm no good" or "The world sucks"), and the behavioural display involved (e.g., talkative and seeking others out vs. quiet and withdrawn). You can also model disclosure by answering each question yourself.

| | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Explain the Importance of Monitoring | <p>Introduce the idea of monitoring, which is just like gathering clues or evidence.</p> <p>Example script</p> <p><i>Now, figuring out the kinds of things that lead us to have good or bad feelings can be like solving a mystery. What do detectives look for when solving a mystery? That's right – clues! Just like two detectives, we are going to gather important clues to help us learn more about the kinds of things that affect your feelings. Whenever you practise something here in session or at home for practice, I will ask you to fill in a Feelings Thermometer, like we did in session today. These ratings will tell us important things to help solve the mystery of what kinds of things make you have positive feelings, and what kinds of things make you have negative feelings.</i></p> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PRACTICE ASSIGNMENT <i>Thinking-Feeling-Doing</i> | <p>The child should complete page 2 of the Thinking-Feeling-Doing worksheet during the upcoming week. Ask the child to pick a time when he or she felt bad and to write on the sheet. The child should then write what he or she thought, felt, and did and come up with alternative thoughts, feelings, and behaviours relevant to that example.</p> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Review the Understanding Depression Handout | <p>Tell the parent to review the Understanding Depression handout after the session, and thank the parent enthusiastically for taking the time to talk with you.</p> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Answer any questions | <p>Leave time at the end for discussion of any questions or concerns the parent/s or child may have about treatment.</p> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Send the materials for the next session | <p>Tell the parent/s you will send a written summary and the materials for the next session. Remind them that they <u>do not</u> 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.</p> |
| <p>Confirm date and time of the next call.</p> | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Summarising | <p>Ask if they would like you to summarise the session, if they want to summarise or if you should do it together.</p> |

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

- For children who are high-energy, you can make the activities more engaging by using interactive games such as charades, or by drawing the "Thinking-Feeling-Doing" triangle on a large piece of paper and letting the child illustrate it.
- If the child enters the session in a bad mood, or seems tired, lethargic, or uninterested, this is an opportunity to introduce a "mood booster." Use the ***Feelings Thermometer*** to take a brief mood rating, spend a few minutes engaging in a pleasant activity, then re-rate the mood. Be sure to highlight for the child this important point: *what you do changes how you feel.*
- Check in on goals: Does the child feel that he or she is making progress? How does the material you covered today relate to the goals you set together?

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?