



Skills Guide

Curriculum Overview

At Compass your child is taught various Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) skills.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT): CBT focuses on the connection between thoughts, feelings and behavior. CBT teaches children specific skills to challenge and reframe negative thoughts that contribute to unpleasant emotions and dysfunctional behaviors.

Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT): DBT focuses on the balance between what is “out of our control”/things we “can’t” change and “what is in our control”/things we “can” change. There are four parts of DBT: mindfulness, distress tolerance, interpersonal effectiveness, and emotion regulation. Mindfulness and distress tolerance skills help children get through difficult situations. Interpersonal effectiveness and emotion regulation skills teach children how to change their own behaviors in a helpful way. The goal of DBT is to help your children handle difficult situations and respond with helpful behaviors.

Mood Rating:

Each day your child is asked to check-in/check-out by identifying an emotion as well as a number on our mood rating scale to describe the intensity of their mood. The mood rating scale is 0-10 (0=calm, 10=out-of-control emotions).

Skill Overview

Anger Iceberg: Anger Iceberg helps teach children about primary and secondary emotions. Anger, referred to as a secondary emotion, is explained as an emotion that often arises from other difficult emotions, referred to as primary emotions, such as sadness, worry, guilt, embarrassment or loneliness. Like the bottom of the iceberg, primary emotions may not always be visible to other people and may be ‘under the surface.’ Children learn how to identify the underlying emotions experienced before anger and identify coping skills they can use to prevent an angry explosion from occurring.

Clue Snooping: Clue snooping is a form of challenging negative thoughts. Challenging thoughts involves identifying and then disputing irrational or maladaptive thoughts by looking at facts and evidence. After weighing all the evidence, we generate a thought that is accurate and balanced. This skill helps children have a more realistic and rational understanding of their thoughts.

Cognitive Distortions: Cognitive Distortions is a CBT skill that teaches that distorted thoughts, that may be extreme and untrue, make our mood rating go up. Cognitive Distortions are taught as very big Automatic Negative Thoughts (ANTs) that often make us feel stuck and try to convince us that they are true. Practicing this skill will help your child learn that challenging these thoughts involves identifying and then disrupting irrational or maladaptive thoughts by looking at facts and evidence. In this skill, we focus on three specific types of Automatic Negative Thoughts; a Worry ANT, a Negative ANT, and a Big Problem ANT.

Communication Styles: Communication styles is a modified DBT skill focusing on interpersonal effectiveness. Children are taught three different communication styles, which are represented by different animals: passive (turtle), assertive (owl) and aggressive (tiger). Children learn that using the assertive (owl) communication style is the most effective because it allows you to express your thoughts and feelings in a healthy and respectful manner.

DEAR: DEAR is a simplified DBT skill that teaches effective communication and problem solving. DEAR is an acronym that provides specific steps to interact with others to verbalize your wants/needs in an assertive and clear way. DEAR stands for **d**escribe the situation, **e**xpress feelings about the current situation, **a**sk for what you want or need and **r**eward the listener.

DISTRACT: DISTRACT is an acronym for a DBT skill which focuses on using distraction to help your child regulate when experiencing difficult feelings. It stands for **D**o something else, **i**magine feel good events, **s**top thinking about it, **t**hink about something funny, **r**emind yourself of positive experiences, **a**sk others for help, **c**ount things, and **t**ake a mental break. DISTRACT is an ideal skill for your child to use during a situation that they cannot change, when they are “stuck”, or when they need a short break before finishing a task or conversation.

Feeling Identification: This skill focuses on identifying physiological symptoms (face and body clues) at their earliest stages and using coping skills when we notice these bodily reactions. By using coping skills when we first notice these clues, we can prevent our mood rating from rising and we are often more successful in using coping skills. At Compass, children are taught how to use a Mood Rating Scale and the Zones of Regulation to identify and communicate their emotions.

Growth Mindset: Growth Mindset is a skill that is used when something is challenging, and we feel like giving up. We often experience Automatic Negative Thoughts (ANTs) in these situations. Growth Mindset teaches children the phrase, “My brain is like a muscle”, emphasizing the more we practice, the more we can learn, grow and strengthen our brain. This empowers us to keep trying even when we make mistakes or things are difficult.

Lemons to Lemonade (L2L): Lemons to Lemonade (L2L) is a CBT skill that teaches the concept of reframing negative thoughts. In this skill, the connection between thoughts, emotions, and behaviors is explored. Negative thoughts are defined as “lemons”. Turning lemons to lemonade is the act of finding a “glimmer” of positivity in difficult, negative and/or challenging situations. Looking for the positives in any situation can increase positive emotions and result in more helpful and healthy behaviors.

Mindfulness (4x4 Breathing, 5 Senses): This group of skills connects the basic practice of mindfulness to changes in physiological symptoms (face and body clues) as a helpful tool to calm the body and mind. Mindfulness is a part of DBT and is explained as “paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmental.” Mindfulness can help your child have more control over their mind and thoughts. Mindfulness can include 4x4 Breathing (deep breathing) and different activities that involve each of the five

Opposite Action: Opposite Action is a DBT skill key to emotional regulation and explores how emotions are connected to behaviors. Practicing this skill will help your child learn to change their emotions by altering behavior instead of engaging in unexpected behaviors related to that emotion that lead to distress and upsetting consequences. senses: smell, taste, touch, sight, and sound.

POPS: POPS is a CBT skill that represents a set of steps for solving problems and making helpful decisions. POPS can be a useful way to examine decisions that have led to negative consequences or have not been successful. POPS stands for **p**roblem, **o**ptions, **p**ick one and **s**ee if it works.

Positive Self-Talk: Positive Self-Talk is a CBT skill that teaches the importance of identifying and changing Automatic Negative Thoughts (ANTs). Stopping negative thoughts and replacing them with positive thoughts can help us to feel calmer, increase our self-esteem, and get through difficult situations. Since thoughts are connected to our emotions and behaviors, using positive self-talk is a skill that can lower your mood rating. A positive self-talk statement can be any positive statement you say to yourself, such as how you feel, what you are good at or what you like about yourself. At Compass, children are encouraged to think of having an “inner cheerleader” or “inner coach”.

Radical Acceptance/Size of the Problem: Radical Acceptance is a DBT skill that teaches the importance of accepting things that are out of our control in order to prevent our mood ratings from rising. This does not mean you like what has happened, instead you are going to stop trying to change it. Size of the problem is a skill which teaches one to identify if a problem is small, medium or big and the appropriate or expected reactions. Many times our reactions can be out of proportion to the size of the problem resulting in negative consequences.

Ride the Wave: Ride the Wave is a DBT skill that reinforces skill use for before, during, and after an intense emotion. Emotions are like waves in the ocean that rise and fall. No emotion lasts forever and using skills during an unpleasant emotion can help children cope with and get through a difficult situation. We may not be able to change what is causing the intense emotion, but we can choose to change how we react to it.

SEEDS: SEEDS is a proactive or preventative DBT skill that teaches the importance of taking care of your body's needs and health. This skill explores how proper sleep, eating, exercise, medication management, and self-care can help improve your mood.

STOP: STOP is a skill taught in both CBT and DBT that helps children manage impulsivity and increase problem solving. CBT focuses on stopping and changing racing or negative thoughts, while DBT focuses on behaviors. STOP can be used when your body or mind feel like they are out of control. STOP stands for **S**top and freeze your body, **T**ake a step back, **O**bserve/look around and **P**roceed/make a good choice. Children are also taught to "change the channel" which helps them stop and change their thoughts like you change the channel on a TV.

Thinking in Shades of Gray: Thinking in Shades of Gray is a CBT skill that highlights the cognitive distortion "black and white thinking." Cognitive distortions are our brain's way of tricking ourselves to believe our negative thoughts. Examples of black and white thinking words are: All, nothing, everyone, no one. When we use these extreme words, we get stuck. Nothing is 100% all the time. Your child will learn to challenge their all or nothing thoughts and find evidence against their negative thoughts to promote more balanced and flexible thinking.

TIP: TIP is a DBT skill that can help your child regulate their mood. The acronym stands for temperature change, intense exercise/flavor, and progressive muscle relaxation. TIP is a skill that is helpful to use when your mood rating is high. Practicing this skill can help your child cope with situations that we are unable, unwilling, or would be inappropriate to change.

Willingness vs. Willfulness: Willful vs Willingness is a DBT skill that encourages skill use when there is a desire to be willful. Being willful means that you are choosing to stay stuck at a high mood rating and not use skills. Practicing this skill helps your child understand the negative consequences of being willful and staying stuck. Your child will be given examples of how being flexible is in their control and leads to positive outcomes. Willingness empowers your child to use skills to lower their mood rating and help them focus on what is in their control.

Wise Mind: Wise mind is a DBT skill that teaches three different states of mind. "Feeling mind" includes our emotions and motivation while "fact mind" includes the facts/evidence, coping skills, rules and expectations. "Wise mind" combines both "feeling mind" and "fact mind" to help us to think more clearly and make better decisions.

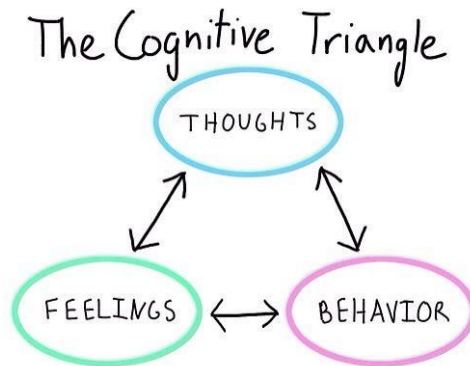
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

Overview:

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) focuses on the connection between thoughts, feelings and behavior. CBT teaches children specific skills to challenge and reframe negative thoughts that contribute to unpleasant emotions and dysfunctional behaviors.



At Compass negative thoughts are referred to as **Automatic Negative Thoughts (ANTs)**. Your child also learns to identify an emotion as well as a number on our mood rating scale to describe the intensity of their mood. The mood rating scale is 0-10 (0=calm, 10=out-of-control emotions). Children are taught that when we have ANTs, our mood rating rises and we may engage in “unhelpful” or “unexpected” behaviors.



Tips for Home:

- After your child experiences a negative emotion and dysfunctional behavior, discuss with your child (when they are calm) how their thoughts, feelings and behavior were connected. Discuss what skills could be used during a similar situation in the future.
- Encourage your child to teach other family members about CBT.
- Praise your child when they can identify and communicate a mood rating, zone or feeling word.
- Assist your child in reframing ANTs to be more positive or helpful thoughts.
- Consider adding a CBT related goal to your child's chart at home (be sure you are using a positive opposite!). Example: Name a feeling word/zone to describe current mood.

Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)

Overview:

Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) focuses on the balance between what is “out of our control”/things we “can’t” change and “what is in our control”/things we “can” change. There are four parts of DBT: mindfulness, distress tolerance, interpersonal effectiveness, and emotion regulation. Mindfulness and distress tolerance skills help children get through difficult situations. Interpersonal effectiveness and emotion regulation skills teach children how to change their own behaviors in a helpful way. The goal of DBT is to help your children handle difficult situations and respond with helpful behaviors. At Compass we discuss how thinking about what we can’t change increases our Mood Rating and how focusing on what we can change helps us lower our Mood Rating.



Mood Rating

At Compass we ask your child to rate the intensity of their mood on a scale of 0-10 (0=low, 10=high). This is to assist them in learning that emotions happen in varying amounts and may require a different level of intervention based on the mood rating.

Tips for Home:

- Assist your child in determining if they “can” or “can’t” control a situation. Be sure to praise your child when they can identify the situation correctly!
- Encourage your child to use coping skills when they “can’t” control a situation.
- Consider adding a DBT related goal to your child’s chart at home (be sure you are using a positive opposite!). Example: Use a skill during a difficult situation to get back to the Green Zone.
- Encourage your child to teach other family members about DBT.