

**Religious Cognitive Behavioral Therapy  
for Depression In Clients with Chronic Physical Illness**

(Buddhist Version)

**Therapist Workbook**

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This workbook is a variant of the treatment protocol  
originally designed by A. T. Beck, M.D.

**Buddhism version developed by Jean Kristeller, Ph.D.**

\*Please cite appropriately\*

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## Session 1: Assessment and Introduction to RCBT

### Home Practice Activities

#### 1. Memory Verse

**"Light the lamp within; strive hard to attain wisdom. Become pure and innocent, and live in the world of light." (Dhammapada 236)**

Write the verse down and post it somewhere you will see it often, perhaps on a sticky note placed on your mirror or fridge. You may want to make several copies and post them in places you will see it throughout the day.

#### 2. Activity and Mood Monitor

The goal of the first session's homework assignment is begin developing skills in self-monitoring daily mood and daily activities. The goal at this stage is not to change any regular habits. The self-monitoring logs have a place for recording your activities and mood every two hours. Please complete this log daily. It may be easiest to fill out the activity log twice during the day. For example, you could record all of your morning activities when you eat lunch and all of your afternoon and evening activities just before you go to bed. This record will give us some information as to which activities may lead to better moods and which activities may lead to worsened moods.

Here are few guidelines about self-monitoring:

- a. Keep the self-monitoring log with you throughout the day and record your activities as close as possible to the end of the time periods.
  - b. Record the activity in a very few words. For example, you could record "went out to dinner" or "washed my clothes" or "read a book" or even "watched TV."
  - c. Immediately after recording your activities, record your mood.
  - d. Purchase a notebook to put the logs in, so that you will have a record of your activities. We will make use of them later.
  - e. Make sure you have your logs with you during each session. They are necessary for the rest of the program
  - f. Be sure and include even trivial events on your chart such as missed the bus or read the newspaper.
3. Be sure to have your completed homework sheets readily available to you during your next session so that you can review them with your therapist.

## Thinking and Depression

### Signs of Depression

"I don't have a purpose in life anymore now that my chronic pain makes it too difficult to work."

"I am a very poor Buddhist because I am depressed. A Buddhist should not be depressed."

"I just can't motivate myself to do any of the things which I need to do. I'm a lazy person."

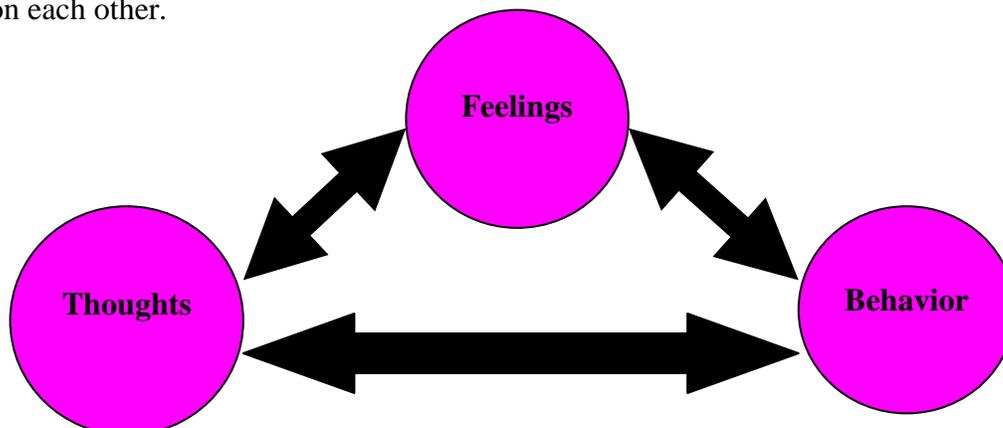
All of the above are statements that a depressed individual might make. While some of these statements and notions may seem to be correct on the surface they actually reflect a change in the way an individual thinks about him or herself. When people become depressed, they think about themselves and their environment in a different and more negative way.

Recent research has shown that depressed individuals are more likely to interpret an event more negatively than a non-depressed individual. Thus, depressive symptoms are related to the way in which individuals interpret and think about their situation in life. These thoughts and interpretations are also a reflection of one's past experiences. Not only are depressed individuals' interpretations more negative, but research also shows that their perceptions and interpretations are less accurate than those who are not depressed.

The interpretations that an individual makes of a situation influence his or her behavior, as illustrated in the following example. Imagine that you have a flat tire on a deserted highway and do not have anything to change the tire with, including a car jack. As you are standing there stranded, your next-door neighbor drives by and looks up briefly but keeps going. How would you feel about the fact that your neighbor kept driving? What would you most likely be telling yourself about the situation?

Now let's imagine, further, that you see your neighbor the next day and he comes over to you and apologizes for driving by you. "I'm so sorry I couldn't stop; my son fell and was bleeding from his head and I was rushing him to the emergency room." How might you be feeling now? What changed? What are you now telling yourself about the situation that is different from when you were standing on the road?

The following diagram represents the relative relationship that thoughts, feelings, and behavior have on each other.



The idea that our thoughts and assumptions play an important role in influencing not only our emotions but also our behaviors is actually a very common idea in Buddhism. Indeed, for Buddhists the cognitive behavior model is 2500 years old! Let me give you some examples from Buddhist texts:

- *The very first verses of the Dhammapada, one of the oldest collections of Buddha's teachings, state:*  
*"Our life is shaped by our mind; we become what we think. Suffering follows a corrupted thought as the wheels of a cart follow the oxen that draw it. Joy follows a pure thought like a shadow that never leaves."* The Buddha, Dhammapada, 1-2.
- *The Dhammapada on 'thought' (Ch. 3) also speaks to this basic principle. According to the Buddha, we don't need any heaven or afterlife to look for the devil. The mind itself – quick, fickle, and exceedingly difficult to focus – is the realm of Mara (the Buddhist image of the temptress/the devil). In its depths lie untapped sources of great power: desires and drives of such magnitude that the mind is rarely under any real control; it simply moves about as it likes. And the method for training the mind is meditation. One might consider the material of the unconscious as clay, and the shapes the clay has taken as strong desires, fears, attitudes, and aspirations that determine a person's behavior. Meditation allows access to that clay, softens it, and returns it to the potter's wheel.* (adapted from Easwaren, pp. 83-84)
- The Buddha taught:  
*"Hard it is to train the mind, which goes where it lies and does what it wants. But a trained mind brings health and happiness. The wise can direct their thoughts, subtle and elusive, wherever they choose. ... Those who can direct thoughts, which are unsubstantial and wander so aimlessly, are freed from the bonds of Mara."* (Dhammapada, 35-37).

**Activity and Mood Monitor**

<b>Day:</b>	<b>Activity Engaged In</b>	<b>Mood</b>
6-8 am		
8-10 am		
10 am-12 pm		
12 pm-2 pm		
2 pm-4 pm		
4 pm-6 pm		
6 pm-8 pm		
8 pm-10 pm		
10 pm-12 am		
<b>Day:</b>	<b>Activity Engaged In</b>	<b>Mood</b>
6-8 am		
8-10 am		
10 am-12 pm		
12 pm-2 pm		
2 pm-4 pm		
4 pm-6 pm		
6 pm-8 pm		
8 pm-10 pm		
10 pm-12 am		
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6-8 am		

8-10 am		
10 am-12 pm		
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2 pm-4 pm		
4 pm-6 pm		
6 pm-8 pm		
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10 pm-12 am		
<b>Day:</b>	<b>Activity Engaged In</b>	<b>Mood</b>
6-8 am		
8-10 am		
10 am-12 pm		
12 pm-2 pm		
2 pm-4 pm		
4 pm-6 pm		
6 pm-8 pm		
8 pm-10 pm		
10 pm-12 am		

## Session 2: Behavioral Activation and Walking in the Light of the Buddha

### Home Practice Activities

1. Memory Verse

**"If you do what is good, keep repeating it and take pleasure in making it a habit. A good habit will cause nothing but joy." (Dhammapada 118)**

As you did last week, write the verse down and put it in a place, or ideally more than one place, where you will see it many times a day. The more you meditate on these verses the more your mind is renewed and the greater improvement you will begin to see in your mood.

2. Plan and Complete Pleasant Events

Complete the two pleasant events you selected with your therapist between now and our next session. When you are finished the activity, complete the Planning Pleasant Activities Worksheet. Remember to complete the worksheets for both activities.

3. Identify and Contact a Member of your Sangha/Faith Community

Identify several possible faith companions and make contact with at least one of them. This is important over the long-term and relates directly to depression. Both the receiving and especially *the giving of support to others* (as will be addressed in the session on altruism) is key in this regard. Identifying people worse off than you are also helps to get your mind off your problems, helps you realize that things could be worse, helps you to feel grateful for what you do have, and gives a sense of purpose and meaning that will engage your own sense of compassion by caring for another. In approaching another person, you might say something like:

"I'm having a pretty difficult time now and I'm wondering if you would agree to pray for and with me during this period, and perhaps we could talk on the phone or go out for coffee once a week or every other week."

4. Reading

Please read the pages in your workbook titled, "The Categories of Unhelpful Thinking" to prepare for next week's session. This is somewhat lengthy and to make the most of the limited time in session it very important that you have already reviewed this material

5. Be sure to have your completed homework sheets readily available to you during your next session so that you can review them with your therapist.

*As Buddhists, we have the comfort of knowing that we have an enlightened leader – the Buddha—who understood the core meaning of all our pain, suffering, and trials. He understood how suffering can deepen until it becomes paralyzing as in depression; He knew how hard it can be to deal with physical illness. The teachings of the Buddha encompass both the causes of such suffering and the ways out of suffering. If you find yourself struggling to complete these activities, look to the inspiration of the Buddha for help in listening for and hearing your own inner wisdom through which he speaks. This will help give you the strength and encouragement you need.*

## Pleasant Activities List

Put a plus sign (+) next to any activity likely to generate some positive reaction in you.  
Put two (++) next to those that are positive and you are almost certain to do so.

1. Call a friend
2. Attend a movie
3. Clean the kitchen
4. Daydream
5. Rearrange furniture
6. Prepare a meal
7. Wash the car
8. Outdoor yard work or gardening
9. Buy a plant
10. Watch television
11. Take a mini-vacation
12. Go to an amusement park
13. Dinner with friends
14. Attend a play
15. Attend a concert
16. Visit a museum
17. Play a sport
18. Watch a sporting event in person
19. Watch sports with friends
20. Dance
21. Attend a meditation group or religious/spiritual service
22. Speak to a friend(s) on the Internet
23. Play video games
24. Text messaging
25. Twitter
26. Visit family members
27. Provide childcare for family or friends
28. Exercise alone
29. Exercise with others
30. Get a massage
31. Read a book or magazine
32. Write in a journal
33. Write a poem or short story
34. Play a musical instrument
35. Listen to music
36. Engage in a hobby, such as photography, scrapbooking, stamp/coin collecting, genealogy, knitting, crocheting, etc.
37. Take a bath or shower
38. Take a nap
39. Go shopping
40. Sailing, boating, fishing, or other water-related activity
41. Attend an educational class

## **Planning Pleasant Activities Instructions**

Implicit in the idea that mood is related to activity is the concept that mood can be improved by increasing specific activities. From the records you kept last week, you may be able to identify particular classes of activity that are associated with better mood. Even in the sutras we read of the Buddha spending time alone with his disciples away from demands. The purpose of this exercise is to schedule more of these activities in order to improve your mood.

You can look at your Self-Monitoring Logs and the Pleasant Activity List for ideas. Choose activities that you have some control over, that bring a sense of mastery or accomplishment, and that you enjoy. Choose activities that take more than 10 or 15 minutes to perform, yet which can be accomplished in one day. Schedule activities that are additions to what you would ordinarily do. Approach these as a way to bring joy into your life, fully savoring the experience and appreciating the skills of those involved in creating this experience for you – or your own abilities to use your mind and your body.

The following are some examples of pleasant activities:

- Have your hair done
- Browse in a bookstore
- Prepare a Chinese dinner
- Play tennis
- Visit an art museum
- Buy a new plant

Next, using the following worksheet, schedule and complete at least two activities between now and the next session. Be sure to complete the worksheet once you have engaged in the activity.

**Planning Pleasant Activity #1 Worksheet**

**1. Identify Activity #1 from the Pleasant Activity List or your imagination.**

Activity planned: \_\_\_\_\_

Who has to be contacted or notified? \_\_\_\_\_

**2. When** will each be accomplished?

Date of activity: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Prediction**

On scale of 0 – 10 how positive will the event be to you? \_\_\_\_\_  
(where 0 is not positive and 10 is very positive)

**4. Reflect**

Date activity was accomplished: \_\_\_\_\_

*Outcome:* On scale of 0 – 10 how positive was the event for you? \_\_\_\_\_

*Conclusion:* What seems to make events pleasant at this point? What did you learn?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Ideas for Future Activities:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Planning Pleasant Activity #2 Worksheet

### 1. Identify Activity #2 from the Pleasant Activity List or your imagination.

Activity planned: \_\_\_\_\_

Who has to be contacted or notified? \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. When will each be accomplished?

Date of activity: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Prediction

On scale of 0 – 10 how positive will the event be to you? \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. Reflect

Date activity was accomplished: \_\_\_\_\_

*Outcome:* On scale of 0 – 10 how positive was the event for you? \_\_\_\_\_

*Conclusion:* What seems to make events pleasant at this point? What did you learn?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Ideas for Future Activities:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **Unhelpful Thinking Styles and Reflections from Buddhism**

### **1. All-or-Nothing Thinking (AN):**

You see things in black-and-white categories. If your performance falls short of perfect, you see yourself as a total failure.

Example: An example would be a straight-A student who received a B on an exam and concluded, "Now I'm a total failure."

#### *A. Why is this thinking incorrect?*

This type of thinking causes one to fear any mistake or imperfection because that is taken as an indication of being worthless. This way of evaluating things is unrealistic because life is rarely completely either one way or the other. For example, no one is absolutely brilliant or totally stupid. Nothing on earth is totally one way or the other. Rarely, does everyone always like us, or rarely do we always find the perfect solution.

#### *B. Reflections from Buddhism*

The idea that nothing on earth will ever be perfect, including people and their activities is certainly a common theme in Buddhism. That is the reality of existence, and accepting such reality as consistent with the nature of life can be tremendously freeing. Holding oneself – or others up to such harsh judgment is part of dukkha. A way out of this is the Buddha's teachings on acceptance and loving kindness, both towards ourselves and others. As noted in the Dhammapada (#96), "Wisdom has stilled their minds, and their thoughts, words and deeds are filled with peace."

### **2. Overgeneralization (OG):**

You see a single negative event as a never-ending pattern of defeat.

Example: An example of this type of thinking would occur when a shy young man, who is self-conscious of his artificial leg, mustered up his courage to ask a woman for a date. When she politely declined because of a previous engagement, he said to himself, "I'm never going to get a date. No one wants to date a guy with only one leg." He believed that all women will turn him down just because one declined his offer. And, he erroneously assumed it was because of his artificial leg. The pain of rejection is generated almost entirely from overgeneralization.

#### *A. Why is this thinking incorrect?*

It is logically incorrect to conclude that one thing that happened to you once will occur over and over again. It is also incorrect to assume that all situations are similar; or that all individuals are similar.

## B. *Reflections from Buddhism*

Overgeneralization is similar to all-or-nothing thinking, but can be applied to any circumstances. Again, the path out is to recognize the tendency of the mind to oversimplify. Instead the wise mind opens up to the possibilities that may occur, letting go of the self-defeating attitudes with a sense of openness. The Buddha initially followed the path of the aesthetic, almost starving to death, before he realized that accepting food as nourishing and even enjoyable, did not mean that he was spiritually weak or at risk. This is one aspect of the middle way.

### **3. Mental Filter (MF):**

You pick out a single negative detail and dwell on it exclusively so that your vision of all reality becomes darkened, like a drop of ink that discolors an entire beaker of water.

Example: A woman with severe arthritis failed to complete one task that she had hoped to complete. She became more depressed and angry at herself for not completing that task. She overlooked the fact that there had been many tasks that she had, in fact, completed.

#### A. *Why is this thinking incorrect?*

It is more sensible to clearly view one's environment and be aware of the positive things one has done in addition to negative occurrences. It is not adaptive to filter out anything positive. It is irrational to say, "I should preoccupy myself with dangerous or negative ideas." Nothing is gained by dwelling on them.

## B. *Reflections from Buddhism*

The Buddhist scriptures usually emphasize that one should reflect on the positive rather than the negative. One should certainly reflect on what is true, and that includes seeing the positive things you have accomplished. The Dalai Lama is so admired these days partly because he maintains his ability to be positive and loving, despite the continued struggle of the Tibetan people. This happiness, emerging from within, is the focus of his book (with psychiatrist Howard Cutler), *The Art of Happiness*.

### **4. Disqualifying the Positive (DP):**

You disqualify positive experiences by insisting they "don't count" for some reason or other. In this way you can maintain a negative belief that is contradicted by your everyday experiences. You don't just ignore positive experiences as in the Mental Filter, but you clearly and swiftly turn them into their very opposite.

Example: An example would occur when someone praises your appearance or your work and you automatically tell yourself, "They're just being nice."

#### A. *Why is this thinking incorrect?*

Again, it is maladaptive not to pay attention to feedback you get from your environment.

We should take that feedback at face value and incorporate it into our understanding of ourselves. If we disbelieved everything everyone told us, we might still believe the world was flat. An adjusted person is one who pays attention to everything in their environment.

### *B. Reflections from Buddhism*

The critical mind can over focus on what is wrong in a situation, in ourselves, or in others. Acknowledging that part of something is negative does not mean that one cannot also acknowledge what is positive. Doing so does not mean that one has an inflated sense of self. More importantly, from a Buddhist perspective, dukkha (suffering) arises from becoming overly attached to any particular perspective, whether positive or negative. Acknowledging the positive, and experiencing pleasure from that, is not the same as being becoming attached or overly prideful to it. Joy may particularly come from appreciating the larger meaning of an experience, an appreciation which may be cut off if one immediately discounts it.

In the words of the Buddha: “Let us live most happily, possessing nothing; let us feed on joy, like the radiant gods.” Dhammapda 200.

### **5. Jumping to Conclusions (JC):**

You make a negative interpretation even though there are no definite facts that convincingly support your conclusions. There are two areas in which depressed individuals jump to conclusions.

#### Mind Reading (MR):

This is one area in which depressed individuals jump to conclusions. You arbitrarily conclude that someone is reacting negatively to you, and you do not bother to check this out.

Example: Suppose a friend says she does not have time to have a conversation with you on the telephone at a certain point. The depressed individual may conclude, "She is ignoring me and does not want to talk with me, because she does not like me anymore."

#### *A. Why is this thinking incorrect?*

One should never make an assumption about what someone is thinking without asking them because it is usually impossible to know what another person is thinking, no matter how sure we are we know. Jumping to conclusions about what the other is thinking is also maladaptive because our negative reactions to their imagined thoughts may set up a self-fulfilling prophecy. That is, we may react negatively to them when we suspect they do not like us, when in fact they do. However, our negative reactions will soon turn them off.

## *B. Reflections from Buddhism*

The nature of our minds is to impose interpretations on our observations of the world around us. Again, from the perspective of Buddhism, “thoughts are just thoughts”: our interpretations of situations may have powerful effects on our experience, and particularly on our emotions. But it is important to always be willing to question the reality behind our thoughts, and to tolerate ambiguity. Mindfulness meditation is particularly powerful in training us to take a moment to step back and observe that first interpretation of a situation as simply that – just the tendency of the mind to create meaning. And if we are dealing with depression, then the mind may be in the habit of creating a negative interpretation.

“We are what we think.  
All that we are arises with our own thoughts.  
With our thoughts we make the world.”  
--The Buddha.

### The Fortune Telling Error (FT):

The second way in which depressed individuals jump to conclusions is they anticipate that things will turn out badly. They feel convinced that their predictions are an already established fact.

Example: Depressed individuals will tell themselves that they are never going to recover,

"I will feel miserable forever."

### *A. Why is this thinking incorrect?*

No one has ever successfully predicted the future; there are so many factors that could have an impact upon the future. Furthermore, our predictions are likely to be even more off base if we predict only negative events because probability suggests that both positive and negative events will occur.

## *B. Reflections from Buddhism*

It is natural and normal to at times feel discouraged, but projecting that into the future is not the message of the Buddha. Instead, he encouraged us to always be flexible and not to become overly invested in one particular way of being or feeling. Living more in the present does not mean ignoring information or concerns that we have about something. However, considering what to do with such information can be done better if we are not projecting certain outcomes, and then feeling overwhelmed by a sense of dread. Such fear or anxiety will often get in the way of a higher sense of power and courage.

## **6. Magnification (Catastrophizing) or Minimization (MM):**

You exaggerate the importance of things (such as your goof-up or someone else's achievement), or you inappropriately shrink things until they appear tiny (your own desirable qualities or the other fellow's imperfections). This is also called the "binocular trick".

Example: A depressed individual accidentally misfiled some papers while working at his job. He concluded, "I made a mistake. How horrible! Everyone will think I am incompetent." An example of minimization would occur when the same employee was told by one of his or her colleagues that he had done a good job on a report. His reaction was to think, "Oh well, doing the report was very simple and anyone could do a good job on it."

### *A. Why is this thinking incorrect?*

It is important to have an accurate perception of ourselves and our performance. It is also important to realize that everyone makes mistakes and that they are to be expected. It is impossible for anyone to be perfect.

### *B. Reflections from Buddhism*

Every individual is unique and no one can possibly be perfect. So understanding and accepting one's own strengths and weaknesses is as important as understanding and accepting those of others. This is another opportunity to extend a spirit of loving kindness to yourself. Similarly, if someone truly disappoints you, it is natural to feel some amount of distress, without turning that into either overly harsh judgment of that person – or of yourself for having those feelings.

## **7. Emotional Reasoning (ER):**

You assume that your negative emotions necessarily reflect the way things really are: "I feel it, therefore, it must be true."

Example: A depressed individual may tell himself, "I feel overwhelmed and hopeless, therefore, my problems must be impossible to solve, or I'll feel inadequate, therefore, I must be a worthless person."

### *A. Why is this thinking incorrect?*

One cannot assume that one's emotions are a reflection of the true state of things. Our emotions are a reflection of our thoughts and beliefs, which as we have seen are a product of our past and may be distorted. Emotions may also be a reflection of our physiology and how tired we are, but they are not necessarily a reflection of the true state of affairs.

## *B. Reflections from Buddhism*

Emotions are often reflections of highly conditioned aversions or cravings, which may go back to childhood experiences of trauma, the real need to be loved, or other experiences. Very deep emotions, such as feeling overwhelmed or depressed, can feel all encompassing, as if they define who we are. But the Buddha strongly emphasized that such a narrow sense of self is always an illusion. There is no single 'self' in Buddhism to be found; identifying the real 'self' in a narrow way virtually always leads to a sense of *dukkha* or suffering. Expanding past these feelings by noticing them, acknowledging them, but not giving them the weight of reality, is the Buddhist path to a greater sense of equanimity. At the same time, struggling with the pain of emotions, and acknowledging them, may be a powerful door to greater awareness and appreciation for life. Feelings of longing or desolation may actually be positive in that they imply a growth process we are willing to go through.

### **8. Should Statements (SS):**

You try to motivate yourself with shoulds and shouldn'ts, as if you had to be whipped and punished before you could be expected to do anything. "Musts" and "oughts" are also offenders.. The emotional consequence is guilt. When you direct should statements towards others, you feel anger, frustration, and resentment.

Example: One example is the depressed housewife who says to herself, "I should keep my house cleaner, and I shouldn't complain," or, "I should be able to get my work done during the day."

#### *A. Why is this thinking incorrect?*

"Should" statements generate a lot of unnecessary emotional turmoil in your daily life, and, paradoxically, usually do not motivate you to change your behavior. Usually, you resent the source of the "shoulds." Saying, "I should do this", or "I must do this," usually causes one to feel pressured and resentful.

## *B. Reflections from Buddhism*

Often "shoulds" and "shouldn'ts" have at their core an attempt to "police" ourselves and meet what we perceive are others' expectations for our behavior. These "shoulds" or "shouldn'ts" may go back even to childhood, and to what we perceived were our parents expectations of ourselves. Or they may be of more recent origin. When we use the word 'should', there is generally little room for self-acceptance or flexibility. The Buddha taught that guidelines for our own behavior can be important, but that these need to come from a place of caring and love for others, and from a place of higher wisdom and caring for ourselves. Such wisdom may reflect the recognition that situations are often complex and that a single mode of action or behavior is not even desirable or useful.

## 9. Labeling and Mislabeled (L or ML):

This is an extreme form of overgeneralization. Instead of describing your error, you attach a negative label to yourself: "I'm a loser." When someone else's behavior rubs you the wrong way, you attach a negative label to him or her: "You are an idiot." Mislabeled involves describing an event with language that is highly colored and emotionally loaded. Example: An individual fails to get a job which they applied for and they call themselves a "failure."

### A. *Why is this thinking incorrect?*

We are not our behavior. Labeling yourself is not only self-defeating, it is irrational. You cannot be equated with any one thing you do. Your life is made up of many events, thoughts, actions, and emotions. For example, you do not call yourself a "Breather" just because you breathe. Likewise, you do not call yourself a "failure" because you made a mistake.

### B. *Reflections from Buddhism*

We are so much more than a single action, thought or feeling. Attachment to any single aspect of who we are or what we experience is one of the surest paths to *dukkha*. Furthermore, it represents a spiritually limited perspective in that it immediately discounts all other ways of being or experiencing the wonders of life.

## 10. Personalization (P):

You see yourself as the cause of some negative external event for which you were not primarily responsible.

Example: One example is the child who misbehaves or is rude. The depressed mother says, "I am a failure or a bad mother," (as if she could control everything her child did).

### A. *Why is this thinking incorrect?*

Essentially, the person with this problem has confused influence with control. While we obviously have some influence over people, especially our children, we cannot control everything they do. What another individual does is ultimately their responsibility and decision, not yours. We are not omnipotent. Furthermore, they have identified a single event or experience as defining who they are.

### B. *Reflections from Buddhism*

When negative events happen that reflect on us, we may feel guilty or blamed, and helpless in the face of these experiences, as if we were ourselves their cause. Again, cultivating a sense of empathic understanding, both for ourselves and for others creates a sense of caring and compassion, without the burden of guilt, self-blame, or anger that may otherwise occur. Another aspect of Buddhism that is pertinent here is our tendency to identify who we are with only one aspect of our self. That which we call the 'self' actually has many, many facets, all of which are constantly changing. In Buddhist terms, there is no single 'self'; realizing this can be tremendously freeing. Attaching 'ego' to one aspect of this complex person is an invitation to suffering.

## Session 3: Identifying Unhelpful Thoughts: The Battlefield of the Mind

### Home Practice Activities

#### 1. Memory Verse

**Meditation brings wisdom; lack of meditation leaves ignorance. Know well what leads you forward and what holds you back, and choose the path that leads to wisdom** (*Dhammapada* 282)

#### 2. Contemplative Meditation Practice

Spend 20 minutes a day in contemplative practice or meditation.

Begin by using the memory verse for this week, and continue practicing in whatever way you find most satisfying. If you already have a silent meditation practice using breath awareness, or open mindfulness, try to do this in addition to your usual practice, and perhaps use a focus on the verse for at least part of each practice. If you are using open or breath awareness practice, then also follow the instructions in the Thought Log to become more aware of the types of unhelpful thoughts that might arise during this practice.

#### 3. Thought Log

Please write down your thoughts once a day using the ABC method. Be sure to fill out all of the sections and categorize each thought into one of the unhelpful thought categories. If you have more than one stream of ideas in one time period, you can indicate several categories. There are seven thought logs included in the manual this week so that you can fill one out each day.

Remember that this is a learning experience; you should not worry about completing the logs perfectly.

#### 4. Positive Activity

Add another positive activity to your week. Follow the same procedure for scheduling this activity as we used in Session 2.

#### 5. Contact Member of your Sangha/Faith Community

Be sure to contact someone from your faith community or sangha and ask them to partner with you during this period or agree to partner with them in their difficult situation. If you are having trouble doing this, be sure you bring it up when the therapist asks about this.

#### 6. Be sure to have your completed homework sheets readily available to you during your next session so that you can review them with your therapist.

## **Contemplative/Meditative Practice: Engaging Words of Wisdom**

*Contemplative practice is a way to meditate on the words of the Buddha and his disciples and leads to a more profound experience of the sacred. In meditation or contemplation, we experience the higher wisdom within and throughout the universe. Meditation or contemplation is a gift to ourselves and to those we love. Meditation is also a discipline, undertaken as one would undertake to learn to play the piano. Practice is the key.*

*There are many forms of Buddhist meditation and contemplative practice. One way to engage in contemplative practice is to take a verse from the Buddhist scriptures and meditate on it. In other words, you spend some quiet time reflecting on the verse, repeating it to yourself, and saying it as a prayer to Buddha or as a way to more deeply take in his wisdom. It's like letting yourself be saturated in his wise words. Some forms of meditation have you focus your attention on your breath. When you notice yourself thinking about something else, you are to bring your attention back to your breath. Contemplative/meditative practice is different in that instead of focusing on your breath you focus on these wise words. This also leads to a contemplative state.*

*It's normal to find that your mind has wandered to thinking about something else. When you notice that this has happened, don't get upset with yourself. When you become quiet in prayer the first thing you are likely to notice is the how busy the mind remains. This is normal, though unnoticed in everyday life. Some find the interior noise overwhelming at first. Don't panic. Think of your thoughts as boats sailing along a deep river. Boats will sail into view, and they will sail past. Let them sail on; you do not need to be concerned with them. The quality of your meditation time is not measured by the quality or intensity of your thoughts or by how often your attention is captured by them. Simply bring your attention back to the verse.*

### **The Method**

1. Choose a verse. Begin with your memory verse for the week.
2. Sit comfortably, but not too comfortably, back straight, chest open so the breath is free and open.
3. Read the passage slowly. Savor each phrase. What word phrase or idea speaks to you?
4. Read the passage again. Where does this passage touch your life? What do you see, hear, touch, or remember?
5. Read the passage a third time. Listen quietly.
6. Note insights, reflections, and personal response to the reading in your journal, or leave this for the end of the practice session.
7. Follow the steps in order or go back and forth between them as you feel moved.
8. Finish by waiting for a few moments in silence.

### **Instructions**

Practice this for 20 minutes once or twice daily, and then discuss with your therapist any problems you encountered in doing this, or share how praying in this way made you feel.

## ABC Method for Challenging Beliefs Leading to Negative Emotions

### Session 3: *Worksheet 1*

(\*To be Completed During Session 3\*)

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative beliefs or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these beliefs or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Unhelpful Thought Category:** Specify the unhelpful thought category(s). (See Unhelpful Thinking Styles Worksheet) that best describes the error(s) in the belief.

## ABC Method for Challenging Beliefs Leading to Negative Emotions

### Session 3: Worksheet 2

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative beliefs or expectations automatically went through you mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these beliefs or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Unhelpful Thought Category:** Specify the unhelpful thought category(s). (See Unhelpful Thinking Styles Worksheet) that best describes the error(s) in the belief.

## ABC Method for Challenging Beliefs Leading to Negative Emotions

### Session 3: Worksheet 3

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative beliefs or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these beliefs or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Unhelpful Thought Category:** Specify the unhelpful thought category(s). (See Unhelpful Thinking Styles Worksheet) that best describes the error(s) in the belief.

## ABC Method for Challenging Beliefs Leading to Negative Emotions

### Session 3: Worksheet 4

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative beliefs or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these beliefs or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Unhelpful Thought Category:** Specify the unhelpful thought category(s). (See Unhelpful Thinking Styles Worksheet) that best describes the error(s) in the belief.

## ABC Method for Challenging Beliefs Leading to Negative Emotions

### Session 3: Worksheet 5

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative beliefs or expectations automatically went through you mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these beliefs or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Unhelpful Thought Category:** Specify the unhelpful thought category(s). (See Unhelpful Thinking Styles Worksheet) that best describes the error(s) in the belief.

## ABC Method for Challenging Beliefs Leading to Negative Emotions

### Session 3: Worksheet 6

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative beliefs or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these beliefs or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Unhelpful Thought Category:** Specify the unhelpful thought category(s). (See Unhelpful Thinking Styles Worksheet) that best describes the error(s) in the belief.

## ABC Method for Challenging Beliefs Leading to Negative Emotions

### Session 3: Worksheet 7

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative beliefs or expectations automatically went through you mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these beliefs or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Unhelpful Thought Category:** Specify the unhelpful thought category(s). (See Unhelpful Thinking Styles Worksheet) that best describes the error(s) in the belief.

**Planning Pleasant Activity #3 Worksheet**

**1. Identify Activity #3 from the Pleasant Activity List or your imagination.**

Activity planned: \_\_\_\_\_

Who has to be contacted or notified? \_\_\_\_\_

**2. When** will each be accomplished?

Date of activity: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Prediction**

On scale of 0 – 100 how positive will the event be to you? \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Reflect**

Date activity was accomplished: \_\_\_\_\_

*Outcome:* On scale of 0 – 100 how positive was the event for you? \_\_\_\_\_

*Conclusion:* What seems to make events pleasant at this point? What did you learn?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Ideas for Future Activities:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Session 4: Exploring Unhelpful Thoughts: Bringing All Thoughts into Awareness

### Home Practice Activities

1. Memory Verse

**"As an irrigator guides water to his fields, as an archer aims an arrow, as a carpenter carves wood, the wise shape their lives." (Dhammapada 145)**

2. Contemplative/Meditative Practice

Spend 20 minutes a day in contemplative/meditative practice. Begin by using the memory verse for this week, and then try with previous weeks' memory verses if you wish, or other favorite verses you may have. If you already have a meditation practice, try linking this into it, or doing it in addition to your usual practice. Also, at least three times during the week, use the Loving Kindness meditation, as outlined below (or if you regularly use this, continue with it as you usually do, reflecting it onto the materials from this week). If you are not familiar with using this type of meditation, it is often useful to engage it near the end of the practice.

3. Thought Log Monitor

Complete the ABCDE thought monitor at least once a day.

Be on the lookout for automatic negative thoughts that trigger emotional upset and negative behaviors such as avoidance. The goal is to improve on the ability to spot these negative patterns at the time they occur, and to attempt to develop alternative ways of responding through the use of more effective beliefs and expectations.

Remember to use your religious/spiritual beliefs and practices, as well as scriptures, to help challenge your unhelpful and negative beliefs.

4. Contact Member of Faith Community

If you have not already done so, please make contact with a person(s) in your faith community and plan a time to get together with them, ideally sometime this week.

5. Be sure to have your completed homework sheets readily available to you during your next session so that you can review them with your therapist.

### **Loving Kindness Meditation**

- 1) During the course of your usual practice, perhaps near the end, silently speak to yourself (or softly out loud if you wish) the following.
- 2) “May I be happy. May I be peaceful. May I be free from suffering.” Say these words silently but slowly to yourself, allowing a few moments to yourself to engage and experience these feelings.
- 3) Bring to mind someone you know and have warm feelings toward. Picture them as clearly as possible. Again, to repeat to yourself, directed toward this person: “May you be happy. May you be peaceful. May you be free from suffering.”
- 4) Then bring to mind a person with whom they may have some difficult feelings. Again, repeat to yourself: “May you be happy. May you be peaceful. May you be free from suffering.”
- 5) Then gently return to your breath, and continue for at least a few minutes with your usual practice, perhaps repeating your memory verse again several times. This practice may also be done during the course of the day for a few moments, as desired.

## Disengaging Questions

Use these questions to explore and challenge your automatic thoughts. Be sure to answer each question you pose to yourself. You will find each question helpful for many different thoughts. Several examples are also presented to help you get started.

1. Do I know for certain that \_\_\_\_\_?  
**Example:** *Do I know for certain that I won't have anything to say?*
2. Am I 100% sure that \_\_\_\_\_?  
**Example:** *Am I 100% sure that my anxiety will show?*
3. What evidence do I have that \_\_\_\_\_?  
What evidence do I have that the opposite is true?  
**Example:** *What evidence do I have that they did not understand my speech?*  
*What evidence do I have that they did understand my speech?*
4. What is this worst that could happen? How bad is that? How can I cope with that?
5. Do I have a crystal ball?
6. Is there another explanation for \_\_\_\_\_?  
**Example:** *Is there another explanation for his refusal to have coffee with me?*
7. Does \_\_\_\_\_ have to lead to or equal \_\_\_\_\_?  
**Example:** *Does "being nervous" have to lead to or equal "looking stupid"?*
8. Is there another point of view?
9. What does \_\_\_\_\_ mean? Does \_\_\_\_\_ really mean that I am a(n) \_\_\_\_\_?  
**Example:** *What does "looking like an idiot" mean? Does the fact that I stumbled over my words really mean that I look like an idiot?*

**ABCDE Method for Exploring and Challenging Beliefs (Session 4, Worksheet 1)**  
**(\*To Complete During Session 4\*)**

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative beliefs or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these beliefs or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**D**ispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation: Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**R**eligious/Spiritual Beliefs and Resources: How can your Buddhist worldview, the teachings of the Buddha, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that help you explore and challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**E**ffective New Belief and Consequence: What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 4, Worksheet 2)

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative beliefs or expectations automatically went through you mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these beliefs or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**D**ispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation: Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**R**eligious/Spiritual Beliefs and Resources: How can your Buddhist worldview, the teachings of the Buddha, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that help you explore and challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**E**ffective New Belief and Consequence: What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 4, Worksheet 3)

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative beliefs or expectations automatically went through you mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these beliefs or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**D**ispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation: Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**R**eligious/Spiritual Beliefs and Resources: How can your Buddhist worldview, the teachings of the Buddha, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that help you explore and challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**E**ffective New Belief and Consequence: What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 4, Worksheet 4)

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative beliefs or expectations automatically went through you mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these beliefs or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**D**ispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation: Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**R**eligious/Spiritual Beliefs and Resources: How can your Buddhist worldview, the teachings of the Buddha, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that help you explore and challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**E**ffective New Belief and Consequence: What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 4, Worksheet 5)

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative beliefs or expectations automatically went through you mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these beliefs or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**D**ispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation: Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**R**eligious/Spiritual Beliefs and Resources: How can your Buddhist worldview, the teachings of the Buddha, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that help you explore and challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**E**ffective New Belief and Consequence: What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 4, Worksheet 6)

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative beliefs or expectations automatically went through you mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these beliefs or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**D**ispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation: Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**R**eligious/Spiritual Beliefs and Resources: How can your Buddhist worldview, the teachings of the Buddha, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that help you explore and challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**E**ffective New Belief and Consequence: What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 4, Worksheet 7)

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative beliefs or expectations automatically went through you mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these beliefs or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**D**ispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation: Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**R**eligious/Spiritual Beliefs and Resources: How can your Buddhist worldview, the teachings of the Buddha, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that help you explore and challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**E**ffective New Belief and Consequence: What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## Session 5: Dealing with Loss Home Practice Activities

### 1. Memory Verse

**“Take refuge in the Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha, and you will grasp the Four Noble Truths: suffering, the cause of suffering, the end of suffering, and the Noble Eightfold Path that takes you beyond suffering.”** (*Dhammapada 190-191*).

### 2. Contemplative/Meditative Practice

Spend 20 minutes a day in contemplative/meditative practice. Begin by using the memory verse for this week, and then try with previous weeks’ memory verses or other favorite verses you may have. If you already have a meditation practice, trying linking this into it, or doing it in addition to your usual practice. Again, add the loving kindness meditation toward the end of your practice several times during the week, if you wish.

### 3. Thought Log

Use the ABCDE thought log and/or behavioral experiment to actively address one or two losses you have experienced as a result of your illness. You and your therapist should have come up with a concrete plan to do so in session. Two ABCDE thought log worksheets have been included in this section of the workbook for this exercise. Remember that integrating your religious beliefs and practices into the use of each of these tools makes them even more effective.

### 4. Active Surrender

Reflect on the things in your life that you want to surrender or let go of. Use the worksheet provided to make a list. Then, as part of your meditation practice this week, notice any related thoughts or feelings that arise, and practice being aware of them, and then letting them go. This is another effective tool to address the losses you have experienced as a result of your illness.

### 5. Contact Member of Faith Community

If you have not already done so, please make contact with a person(s) in your faith community and plan a time to get together with them, ideally sometime this week.

6. Be sure to have your completed homework sheets readily available to you during your next session so that you can review them with your therapist.

## Words of Encouragement

*The core teachings of Buddhism are contained in the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path. The Four Noble Truths are: 1) that all of us will suffer at times, sometimes in small ways, and sometimes in extremely painful or profound ways; 2) that our automatic response to such suffering is to try to avoid it, feel angry, overwhelmed, or wish that it would cease; 3) that the way to the end of suffering is engaging our own wisdom to let go of unrealistic expectations; 4) that experiencing and working with such suffering, by following the Noble Eightfold Path, is the true door into fundamental freedom and inner peace.*

*Therefore, suffering can actually help open the door to a path to a higher level of being, even if the path may be difficult and challenging. This path is smoothed out by understanding the compassion with which the Buddha taught these lessons, and then by engaging a sense of compassion for yourself and for others.*

**ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 5, Worksheet 1)**

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative beliefs or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these beliefs or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**D**ispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation: Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**R**eligious/Spiritual Beliefs and Resources: How can your Buddhist worldview, the teachings of the Buddha, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that help you explore and challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**E**ffective New Belief and Consequence: What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 5, Worksheet 2)

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative beliefs or expectations automatically went through you mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these beliefs or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**D**ispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation: Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**R**eligious/Spiritual Beliefs and Resources: How can your Buddhist worldview, the teachings of the Buddha, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that help you explore and challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**E**ffective New Belief and Consequence: What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.



## Session 6: Coping with Negative Emotions and Spiritual Distress

### Home Practice Activities

#### 1. Memory Verse

**"Be vigilant; guard your mind against negative thoughts. Pull yourself out of bad ways as an elephant raises itself out of the mud."** (*Dhammapada* 327).

#### 2. Contemplative Meditation Practice

Spend 20 minutes a day in contemplative meditation practice, using the memory verse as part of the practice and including loving kindness, using the expanded version below as desired.

#### 3. Spiritual Struggles and Spiritual Resources

It is important to remember the following points:

- It is normal to question yourself in the face of illness.
- It is normal to feel negative emotions, anger and resentment.
- It is natural for us to experience a range of emotions and all of them can be accepted. Having such feelings does not mean you are a 'bad Buddhist'.
- Freedom from *dukkha* comes from opening our awareness and higher wisdom to what is really true and honest.

If you and your therapist identified spiritual resources that would be helpful in addressing any spiritual struggles you have, make a plan to use these resources this week to address that issue. Spiritual resources include, but are not limited to, contemplation/meditation, journaling, social support from friends, conversations/counseling with spiritual leaders, Buddhist studies, extending loving kindness to yourself and others, existential psychotherapy, attending retreats/spiritual services, finding and attending support groups, and attending activities sponsored by these groups.

#### 4. Repentance and Forgiveness

Forgiveness can be a powerful antidote for some spiritual struggles (e.g., resentment, anger, bitterness) and an integral part of the process of healing. Indeed, research has shown strong relationships between emotions such as anger and resentment and physical health problems and compromised immune functioning.

*There are many aspects of Buddhist wisdom that point to a mind-body relationship.*

*The Noble Four Fold path lays out a way to be well, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. One overwhelming source of dukkha can be anger related to feelings of hurt and suffering received from others. . Forgiveness is one of the most powerful means by which this can be released, so that a sense of inner peace and spiritual well*

*being is able to flow more freely. This may be forgiveness toward others or toward ourselves. The Buddha teaches that we can first acknowledge these feelings – of hurt, anger or guilt – and then work to let them go. That doesn't mean that what happened to you was right or justified. What forgiving someone does mean is that we let go of holding this action against the person. We let go of feeling resentful, bitter, and angry. When we make a decision with our will to forgive someone, even when we don't feel like it, we may experience our feelings begin to change – but indeed, our feelings may be the last part to change. That doesn't mean you haven't forgiven, it just means your feelings having yet come into alignment with the decision you made with your will to forgive.*

*Is there anyone you would like to forgive? That could include others, yourself, and even a higher spirit, if that is meaningful to you. If yes, and if you did not address these in session, make a list of the people you want to forgive or the things for which you need forgiveness.*

Take some time to reflect mindfully about each item on your list. It is important that your focus and awareness be specific and that you do not just offer one blanket prayer for all the items listed. You can use a prayer such as the following:

*“I choose to forgive \_\_\_\_ (the person) for \_\_\_\_ (the action). I release him/her and cancel their debt to me completely. I will no longer hold any accusation against them. Even now I release them from this sin. I also need to forgive myself for the bitterness (or other feelings against this person) that I have stored in my heart. I give up holding all my feelings of \_\_\_\_ and as they arise again, will simply observe and let go of them again.”*

After you have finished, you might try closing your eyes and imagining yourself coming into the presence of the Buddha. See yourself giving the list of wrongs that others have done to you, and that you have just forgiven, to him. Also, if you wish, share your own actions for which you would wish forgiveness from others. Reflect on how the Buddha might encourage you to return the gift of loving kindness and forgiveness both to yourself and to others; also reflect on how your own inner wisdom, informed by the teachings of the Buddha, might release you from these burdens.

5. Contact Member of Faith Community

If you have not already done so, please make contact with a person(s) in your faith community and plan a time to get together with them, ideally some time this week.

6. Be sure to have your completed homework sheets readily available to you during your next session so that you can review them with your therapist.

### Expanded Loving Kindness Meditation

- 1) During the course of your usual practice, perhaps near the end, silently speak to yourself (or softly out loud if you wish) the following.
- 2) “May I be happy. May I be peaceful. May I be free from suffering.” Say these words silently but slowly to yourself, allowing a few moments to yourself to engage and experience these feelings.
- 3) Bring to mind someone you know and have warm feelings toward. Picture them as clearly as possible. Again, to repeat to yourself, directed toward this person: “May you be happy. May you be peaceful. May you be free from suffering.”
- 4) Then bring to mind a person with whom they may have some difficult feelings. Again, repeat to yourself: “May you be happy. May you be peaceful. May you be free from suffering.”
- 5) Then bring to mind a person whom you feel you need to forgive. Again, repeat to yourself: “May you be happy. May you be peaceful. May you be free from suffering.”
- 6) Then end with: “May I be happy. May I be peaceful. May I be free from anger. May I forgive.”

Then gently return to your breath, and continue for at least a few minutes with your usual practice, perhaps repeating your memory verse again several times. This practice may also be done during the course of the day for a few moments, as desired.

## Forgiveness Exercise

Is there anyone you would like to forgive? *That could include others, yourself, and even a higher spirit if this feels meaningful to you.* If yes, make a list of those you want to forgive or the things for which you need forgiveness.

Take some time to reflect mindfully about each item on your list. It is important that you focus your thoughts and awareness in regard to the thoughts and feelings that arise for each person, rather than engaging only a general wish to all. You might also offer the following:

*“I choose to forgive \_\_\_ (the person) for \_\_\_ (the action). I release him/her and cancel their debt to me completely. I will no longer hold any accusation against them. Even now I release them from this sin. I also need to forgive myself for the bitterness (or other feelings against this person) that I have stored in my heart. I give upholding all my feelings of \_\_\_ and as they arise again, will simply observe and let go of them again.”*

**I need forgiveness for....** \_\_\_\_\_  
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**I need to forgive.....** \_\_\_\_\_  
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## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 6, Worksheet 1)

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative beliefs or expectations automatically went through you mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these beliefs or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**D**ispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation: Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**R**eligious/Spiritual Beliefs and Resources: How can your Buddhist worldview, the teachings of the Buddha, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that help you explore and challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**E**ffective New Belief and Consequence: What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 6, Worksheet 2)

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative beliefs or expectations automatically went through you mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these beliefs or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**D**ispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation: Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**R**eligious/Spiritual Beliefs and Resources: How can your Buddhist worldview, the teachings of the Buddha, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that help you explore and challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**E**ffective New Belief and Consequence: What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 6, Worksheet 3)

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative beliefs or expectations automatically went through you mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these beliefs or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**D**ispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation: Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**R**eligious/Spiritual Beliefs and Resources: How can your Buddhist worldview, the teachings of the Buddha, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that help you explore and challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**E**ffective New Belief and Consequence: What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## Session 7: Gratitude Home Practice Activities

### 1. Memory Verse

**"Just as a mother would protect her only child at the risk of her own life, even so, cultivate a boundless heart towards all beings. Let your thoughts of boundless love pervade the whole world." (Sutta Nipata 1490150)**

### 2. Contemplative/ Meditative Practice

Spend 20 minutes a day in contemplative meditation practice. Begin by using the memory verse for this week, and then try with previous weeks' memory verses or other favorite verses you may have.

### 3. Grateful Exercise I: Identifying the Positives

Use your gratitude list, particularly your gratitude toward the Buddha for all that he taught and all that he has done, as well as gratitude for those in your faith community, to help challenge negative thoughts and to replace negative emotions. Continue to add to your gratitude list this week as you think of more things for which you are grateful.

### 4. Gratitude Exercise II: Celebrating the Positives

Express your feelings of gratitude toward the individual you identified in session. This ordinarily takes place in person, by phone, or letter. Complete at the specific time and place you chose in session. Remember to include the following:

- Precisely and specifically what it was that the other person did for you. Thus, "you were a nice person to me", is not as suitable as, "when I was in the hospital you came to visit me and you prayed for me every day."
- Include as many of these concrete activities for which you feel grateful as possible.
- Be sure to note what the meaning of the person's activities was for you. That is, how the activity or way of being made you feel, influenced your life, caused you to grow, taught you things you needed to know, etc.

### 5. Contact Member of Faith Community

If you have not already done so, please make contact with a person(s) in your faith community and plan a time to get together with them, ideally sometime this week.

### 6. Be sure to have your completed homework sheets readily available to you during your next session so that you can review them with your therapist.





## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 7, Worksheet 1)

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative beliefs or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these beliefs or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**D**ispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation: Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**R**eligious/Spiritual Beliefs and Resources: How can your Buddhist worldview, the teachings of the Buddha, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that help you explore and challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**E**ffective New Belief and Consequence: What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 7, Worksheet 2)

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative beliefs or expectations automatically went through you mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these beliefs or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**D**ispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation: Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**R**eligious/Spiritual Beliefs and Resources: How can your Buddhist worldview, the teachings of the Buddha, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that help you explore and challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**E**ffective New Belief and Consequence: What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## Session 8: Altruism and Generosity Home Practice Activities

1. Memory Verse

**“Selfish desires give rise to anxiety; selfish desires give rise to fear. Be unselfish, and you will be free from anxiety and fear”** (Dhammapada 215)

2. Contemplative Meditation Practice

Spend 20 minutes a day in contemplative meditation practice. Begin by using the memory verse for this week, and then try with previous weeks' memory verses or other favorite verses you may have.

3. Altruistic Acts

Carry out the specific altruistic acts to be done for the particular persons at a particular time you and your therapist chose in session. Be sure to have more than one option in case other people are unavailable.

4. Extend a Loving Kindness Meditation toward Someone Daily

If you have not been doing so already, begin to daily extend a loving kindness meditation toward the person in your faith community with whom you have begun to have contact. Doing so for someone other than ourselves helps to get our minds off of our own problems and is a great way to be generous with our time and energy. It also helps to put our own problems in perspective.

5. Contact Member of Faith Community

If you have not already done so, please make contact with a person(s) in your faith community and plan a time to get together with them, ideally sometime this week.

6. Be sure to have your completed homework sheets readily available to you during your next session so that you can review them with your therapist.

## Altruistic Acts

Make a list of the ways you have been helpful in the past and ways that you could be helpful now. Then rank each item on your list from easiest to most difficult (0-100 with 100 being the most difficult of all).

Helpful/Generous Act	Degree of Difficulty (0-100)	Activity Chosen

Next, select several of the easier acts you would like to initiate. Answer the following questions for each act you choose:

*Helpful/Generous Act #1:* \_\_\_\_\_

- 1. For Whom?**
  
- 2. When will you do it?**
  
- 3. Why will you do it?**
  
- 4. How will you do it?**
  
- 5. How frequently will you do it?**

*Helpful/Generous Act #2:* \_\_\_\_\_

- 1. For Whom?**
- 2. When will you do it?**
- 3. Why will you do it?**
- 4. How will you do it?**
- 5. How frequently will you do it?**

*Helpful/Generous Act #3:* \_\_\_\_\_

- 1. For Whom?**
- 2. When will you do it?**
- 3. Why will you do it?**
- 4. How will you do it?**
- 5. How frequently will you do it?**

Remember to connect your goal of helping others with the teachings of the Buddha to seek out ways to extend care and compassion to others. Keep in mind the image that extending such gifts to others is honoring the spirit of the Buddha, as if you were extending such intentions for well-being to the Buddha himself.

## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 8: Optional)

**Activating Event:** Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**Beliefs:** What negative beliefs or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**Consequent Feelings and Behavior:** What painful feelings did these beliefs or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Dispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation:** Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**Religious/Spiritual Beliefs and Resources:** How can your Buddhist worldview, the teachings of the Buddha, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that help you explore and challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**Effective New Belief and Consequence:** What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## Session 9: Stress-Related and Spiritual Growth Home Practice Activities

### 1. Memory Verse

**“May I know how to nourish the seeds of joy in myself every day.”**  
(Visuddhimagga [from Thich Nhat Hanh, *Teachings on Love*])

### 2. Contemplative Meditation Practice

Spend 20 minutes a day in contemplative meditation practice.  
Begin by using the memory verse for this week, and then try with previous weeks’  
memory verses or other favorite verses you may have.

### 3. Complete the Spiritual Reflections Worksheet

### 4. Positive Changes

Add to your list of the changes in your life that you could view as positive or that have caused growth, including spiritual growth. It will be helpful to look to your spiritual faith and the words of the Buddha and other teachers, past and present, to help you view some of the changes that have occurred as positive. Also think about the paradoxes in Buddhism and how these might help you reframe your situation.

Reflect on the meaning of these changes in terms of your character and the predictions you make regarding negative beliefs. In particular, what power do these changes give you to stop avoiding unpleasant experiences and to face them courageously?

### 5. Read Paradoxes in Buddhism worksheet

If you can think of other paradoxes in Buddhism, add them to the worksheet.

### 6. Extending Loving Kindness to Someone

Continue to extend loving kindness to someone other than yourself this week. It could be the same person as last week or someone different.

### 7. Be sure to have your completed homework sheets readily available to you during your next session so that you can review them with your therapist.





## Paradoxes in Buddhism

There are many paradoxes in Buddhism. Buddhism indeed embraces the power of paradox, not to confuse, but to help release us from seeing the world in terms of absolutes, particularly in regard to our own mental construction of the world. These paradoxes are designed to help us see situations in our lives from another perspective.

Some of these paradoxes include the following:

1. “Form is no other than emptiness, emptiness no other than form. Form is exactly emptiness; emptiness exactly form. Sensation, conception, discrimination, and consciousness are also like this.” (Heart Sutra).

Emptiness (*shunyata*) does not mean that nothing exists, but that all substance is dependent on our perception and on our thoughts. This also points to the interrelationship of all forms that do exist (dependent origination).

These statements are sometimes interpreted as fatalistic or nihilistic, but the intent is just the opposite. The intent is to help us understand that we can shift our experience of virtually everything by shifting our conceptions or awareness.

2. “Things are not what they appear to be, nor are they otherwise.” (Lankavatara Sutra.)

Understanding comes from simply observing – neither projecting a certain meaning nor avoiding doing so. Can you hear a bird song, without thinking the word ‘bird’ or wondering what type of bird it is, or wishing the sound was clearer or nearer? Just listen. Can you observe an emotion, without judging it or expanding on it or suppressing it? Can you observe physical pain in this way?

3. “All states are without self; those who realize this are freed from suffering. This is the path that leads to pure wisdom.” (Dhammapada 279).

What is meant within Buddhism as the distinction between ‘self/no-self’? This is the ultimate paradox, and what Buddha meant continues to be a question of great debate. Does this mean that there is no validity to having a sense of ‘self’? Perhaps not, as we know that losing a sense of self, under trauma or in certain drug states, can be terrifying and is not normal. However, there are two very positive ways in which the concept of ‘no-self’ can apply.

One way is core to the Buddhist sense of enlightenment, which may emerge from deep meditative practice, in which a profound experience of release from a sense of ‘self’ opens the door not to terror but to an all-encompassing sense of wisdom and compassion for others. But if this was all that was intended by identifying the reality of ‘no-self’, then it would be limited to the relatively few who experience such profound states.

Rather, the Buddha meant this concept of ‘no-self’ to have much broader meaning by noting that “ALL states are without self...”.

Therefore, the other meaning is in relation to how we identify self in the moment. This applies to our tendency to identify our ‘true self’ with only one aspect of who we are: ‘I am a mother; I am a musician; I am a teacher.’ The problem is that when this changes or ceases, whether in the moment, or more permanently perhaps due to illness or disability, we experience our being as fundamentally changed or incomplete. Or with illness, we might begin to identify ‘self’ with the disability or with the illness, ‘I am a cancer patient; I can’t walk; I am blind’. And then we may feel – and believe -- that this negates every other aspect of who we are. In truth, who we are is incredibly multi-faceted, and each part is in constant flux, yet deserves acknowledgment and appreciation. Realizing that this is true, we can then experience all those other aspects of our being in a way that will help free us from suffering in the moment. Doing so also awakens us to the possibility of experiencing deeper understanding and wisdom. Wisdom is not about learning more information, but is about opening ourselves to the complexity of understanding that can occur in the moment: “If I am not my illness, then how can those other aspects of my experiences, past and present, help me be as much of a person as is possible?”

## Session 10: Hope and Relapse Prevention Home Practice Activities

### 1. Memory Verse

**"If you want to reach the other shore, don't let doubts, passions, and cravings strengthen your fetters. Meditate deeply, discriminate between the pleasant and the permanent, and break the fetters of Mara (troubles and temptation)"**  
(Dhammapada 349-350)

### 2. Contemplative Meditation Practice

Spend 20 minutes a day in contemplative meditation practice.  
Begin by using the memory verse for this week, and then try with previous weeks' memory verses or other favorite verses you may have.

### 3. Continue to Use the Tools Daily

In order to maintain the gains you have achieved in treatment you need to keep using the tools you have learned. These tools include the following:

- Exploring and changing your negative interpretations (Additional ABCDE sheets are included at the end of this workbook. Feel free to make extra copies for yourself)
- Gratitude
- Altruism (choose a specific activity for a specific person)
- Finding the positives in your life
- Extending loving kindness to yourself and to someone else
- Cultivating access to your own inner wisdom
- Look for examples in Buddhist texts for encouragement
- Spending time with others
- Connecting with your sangha/faith community, specifically the person(s) identified earlier in treatment
- Filling your mind and heart with the words of the Buddha

One way to remind yourself to continue to put into practice the things you have learned is to incorporate them into a daily devotional period. Each day during this time you can review your thoughts and behavior to make sure they line up with the teachings of the Buddha, as they help you connect with your own inner wisdom. You might find it helpful to use a journal during this time.

### 4. Make Use of Your Spiritual Resources

Spiritual resources include, but are not limited to, contemplation/meditation, journaling, social support from friends, conversations/counseling with spiritual leaders, Buddhist

studies, extending loving kindness to yourself and others, existential psychotherapy, attending retreats/spiritual services, finding and attending support groups, and attending activities sponsored by these groups.

5. Anticipate Set Backs

Remember that there will be set backs and times that are more challenging and difficult than others. It is at these times that it is even more important to engage in the activities and resources you learned, especially if you don't feel like it.

6. Continue Contact Member of Faith Community

Continue to be in regular contact with the member of your faith community. Remember to extend loving kindness to him or her daily, too.

**Congratulations on a job well done!**

Liberating Prayer

Praise to the Shakyamuni Buddha

O Blessed One, Shakyamuni Buddha  
Precious treasury of compassion,  
Bestower of supreme inner peace,

You who love all beings without exception,  
Are the source of happiness and goodness;  
And you guide us to the liberating path,

Your body is a wishful filling jewel,  
Your speech is supreme, purifying nectar,  
And your mind is refuge for all living being,

With folded hands I turn to you,  
Supreme unchanging friend,  
I request from the depths of my heart:

Please give me the light of your wisdom,  
To dispel the darkness of my mind  
And to heal my mental continuum.

Please nourish me with your goodness,  
That I in turn may nourish all beings  
With an unceasing banquet of delight.

Through your compassionate intention,

Your blessings and virtuous deeds,  
And my strong wish to rely upon you,

May all suffering quickly cease  
And all happiness and joy be fulfilled  
And may holy Dharma flourish for everyone.

Tibetan Buddhist prayer of the New Kadampa Tradition.  
Cited in Deegale, M. Buddhist Prayer: A Reflection.  
In Gross, R. M., & Muck, T.C. (2003). (Eds.)

## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs

**Activating Event:** Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**Beliefs:** What negative beliefs or expectations automatically went through you mind when you were in that situation?

**Consequent Feelings and Behavior:** What painful feelings did these beliefs or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Dispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation:** Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**Religious/Spiritual Beliefs and Resources:** How can your Buddhist worldview, the teachings of the Buddha, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that help you explore and challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**Effective New Belief and Consequence:** What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.