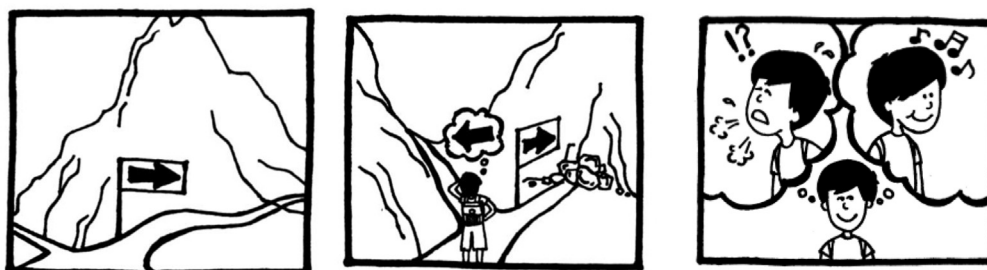


Client Manual

Improving Your Mood

A Culturally Responsive and Holistic Approach
to Treating Depression in Chinese Americans

Wei-Chin Hwang, Ph.D.
Claremont McKenna College



山不轉路轉；路不轉人轉；人不轉心轉。

*“If a mountain is blocking your path, find a road around it.
If the road doesn’t take you where you want to go,
make your own way.*

*If the approach you take doesn’t help you reach your goal,
then change your mindset and do something different.”*

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Layout and Art Design Team

Layout and Art Design Director: **Wei-Chin Hwang, Ph.D**
(黃威誠教授 / 心理學博士)
Artist: **Mayshen Chen, Ph.D.**
(陳玫勳 / 心理學博士)
Art Assistance: **Amanda Lam**
Layout and Design: **Maaret Sendrey, M.S.**

Translation Team

Translation Director: **Wei-Chin Hwang, Ph.D.**
(黃威誠教授 / 心理學博士)
Translators: **Nick Yeh, M.A.,**
(葉吉書 / 心理諮商碩士)
Joy Jia I Chung, M.S.,
(鍾佳怡 / 婚姻家族治療碩士)
Mayshen Chen, Ph.D.
(陳玫勳 / 心理學博士)
Translation Review: **James Zhu, B.A.,**
(朱恆劍 / 金融學士)
Sylvia Wu, B.E.
(吳思佳 / 教育心理與諮商學士)

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SESSION 1



Understanding how this program can help you take control of your emotions

Session Goals:

- Understand the purpose of this program why it was developed
- Understand confidentiality and privacy
- Understand the facts and fallacies about psychotherapy
- Understand the client and therapist roles and responsibilities
- Understand the course of psychotherapy
- Understand why dropping out of therapy is problematic
- Understand you and your problems
- Address emergency issues and understand depression and suicide
- Develop goals and identify signs of treatment progress

Purpose of this program

- Help clients improve their mood and decrease their feelings of depression
- Help clients develop insight into their problems
- Help clients live healthier and more fulfilling lives
- Help clients improve their family and social relations

How and why this course was developed

This program was designed for Chinese Americans by Dr. Wei-Chin Hwang, a licensed clinical psychologist and professor of psychology. It was funded by the U.S. National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) and is informed by empirically supported research and collaborations with Asian focused community clinics.

Course and structure of this program

This is a 12-week depression treatment program. Your therapist will meet with you once a week for 50 minutes (which is equal to one therapy hour) to help you improve your mood.

Confidentiality and privacy

Therapy offers a private and confidential way of addressing one's problems. The therapist and agency you are seeking treatment at will keep what you say confidential. Your therapist will discuss with you the legal limits of confidentiality. Please also discuss with your therapist the extent to which you want your family involved and what you would and wouldn't like the therapist to share with them.

Facts and fallacies about psychotherapy

Psychotherapy is like physical therapy. Physical therapy helps strengthen the body, while psychotherapy helps strengthen one's behaviors, mind, actions, and emotions. Both physical therapy and psychotherapy require hard work, insight, practice, and strengthening exercises. There is scientific and research evidence supporting the effectiveness of psychotherapy in helping people with their emotional difficulties.

Psychotherapy is not...

- A waste of time
- A miracle cure
- A quick fix for problems
- Time to complain
- Shameful
- For people who are "crazy" or "weak"

Psychotherapy can help people...

- Feel better emotionally
- Develop insight into their problems
- Become more effective communicators
- Improve social relations
- Engage in healthier behaviors
- Reach their goals and develop inner strength

Although therapy is not guaranteed to "fix" your problems, it is highly likely that it will help you feel better. It is important to note that if you do nothing to help resolve your problems, they may get worse and there may be negative personal, social, and familial consequences.

Therapy can help you improve your mood in **three** ways:

Change your life circumstances:

- Make changes in your life
- Take charge of problems
- Improve your social relations

Think in better ways:

- Increase positive, healthy, and effective thinking

Make internal changes:

- Feel more balanced
- Become more centered
- Increase feelings of inner peace

Roles and responsibilities of the client and therapist

Client:

- To come to therapy every week
- To be open and honest about your feelings and opinions
- To discuss your problems with your therapist
- To actively listen to what your therapist says
- To be open to making changes
- To practice and complete the exercises assigned each week



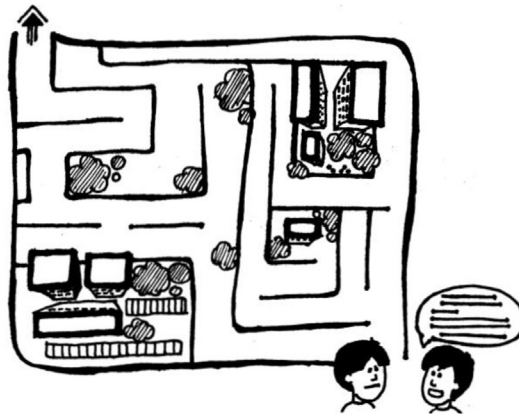
Therapist:

- To be emotionally supportive
- To provide you with psychoeducation
- To help you with your problems
- To provide feedback and suggestions
- To help you make decisions, but not to make decisions for you
- To refer you to a psychiatrist for medication evaluation

Course of therapy

Therapy takes time. Over the next several weeks, your therapist will be meeting with you to help you with your problems. You may feel like you are talking a lot during the first few weeks of therapy. This is normal. Your therapist needs to get to know you and your problems in order to help you. If your therapist does not get to know you well, it will be difficult for him/her to help you resolve your problems.

Map of the city metaphor: You and the therapist are in the middle of a large city without a map. You have been there before, but the therapist hasn't. The therapist can't help you find the way out of the city unless he/she gets to know the city better. Talking with your therapist about your problems can help improve his/her understanding so that the two of you can, metaphorically, find a better way out. When the therapist doesn't have an accurate understanding of what's going on, the two of you may end up wasting a lot of time driving around in circles, wasting gas, and becoming more frustrated. Spending some time up front to get to know you and your situation is a worthwhile investment. This will also help you make sound decisions and put you in a better position to address your problems.



Thinking more versus thinking less

Sometimes people come to therapy because they want to worry less about their problems and want to free their mind of negative thinking. In order to address your problems, you will need to talk about them with your therapist. This can lead to a temporary increase in feelings of discomfort, worry thoughts, and negative emotions. Working through this discomfort is important and is a normal part of the therapeutic process. Thinking about things in new ways can also help you better understand your problems and address them in new ways.

Why dropping out of therapy is problematic

There may be times when you feel like dropping out of therapy. This is normal and you should talk to your therapist about these feelings as they arise. One goal of therapy is to break negative and vicious cycles that have developed. Sometimes, clients may feel like dropping out of treatment at a very important or critical time. It is very important for you to stay in the program throughout the 12 weeks and work through your difficulties. People who drop out of the program prematurely do not get as much out of it.

We understand that sometimes people may feel uncomfortable with coming to therapy because of stigma towards mental health treatment (e.g., loss of face, feelings of embarrassment or weakness, feeling that one should be able to take care of problems by oneself, fear of other people finding out).



It takes a lot of strength and courage to face one's problems and take action to make things better. We believe that the biggest loss of face and the greatest showing of weakness is to do nothing while one's problems get worse. The therapist is here to help you feel better. Those who stay the entire 12 weeks are most likely to receive the greatest benefits from the program.



In-session discussion:

Getting to know you and your problems

Please tell your therapist more about yourself and the things that you are struggling with.

We understand that most people that come here have been struggling with their problems for some time. What has changed such that you decided to come seek help at this time?

In-session discussion:

Crises and clinical emergencies

Please let your therapist know if any crises or emergencies need to be immediately handled.

In-session discussion:**Understanding the relationship between depression and suicide**

It is common for people who feel depressed to have thoughts about death or suicide. Suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in the U.S. In addition, Asian American adults, especially Asian American women, have the highest rates of suicide in the U.S. Although it is common to have thoughts of hurting yourself when you feel depressed, we want to make every effort to ensure that you remain safe. It is normal for the therapist to periodically assess suicidal ideation. Have you been having thoughts of hurting yourself? Please check off the experiences that currently apply to you.

- You feel hopeless
- You feel that life is not worth living
- You have had thoughts of death or of hurting yourself
- You have thought of an idea, plan, or method of hurting yourself
- You have access to the means of hurting yourself?
- Have you previously attempted suicide? _____ If so, how many times? _____
- Have you ever been hospitalized for suicidal behaviors? _____
- How often do you think about hurting yourself? _____
- What triggers your suicidal ideation? _____
- You feel like you will hurt yourself

Please discuss the above with your therapist. What has kept you from hurting yourself? Suicide is a poor option for so many reasons. Remember, thinking about suicide is normal and not shameful. Talking about it with your therapist can help keep you safe. On the other hand, suicidal attempts can be damaging to families, unfair to others, and can set a bad example for people around you (e.g., if you hurt yourself, others you care about may also consider hurting themselves). Additionally, those who try hurting themselves often regret it and feel ashamed and embarrassed afterward.

There are some things you can do to help keep you safe when you are thinking of hurting yourself. Please check off the ones that might be effective for you. Come up with additional ideas with your therapist.

- Discussing it with your therapist and developing a suicide prevention plan
- Being around other people (not being alone)
- Calling a friend or family member
- Going to the gym or doing some other enjoyable activity
- Going to the emergency room
- Dialing 911
- Calling a suicide prevention hotline to talk with someone (Los Angeles Suicide Prevention hotline [Interpreter available]: 1-800-854-7771; San Francisco [Interpreter available]: 1-415-781-0500; California: 1-800-273-8255).
- Developing a suicide contract
- Other methods? _____

In-session discussion:

What are three goals that you have for therapy?

It is very important to develop goals for therapy. How will you know when you are getting closer to reaching your goals? How will you know when you begin to feel better?

Goals:

Signs of Improvement:

1. _____

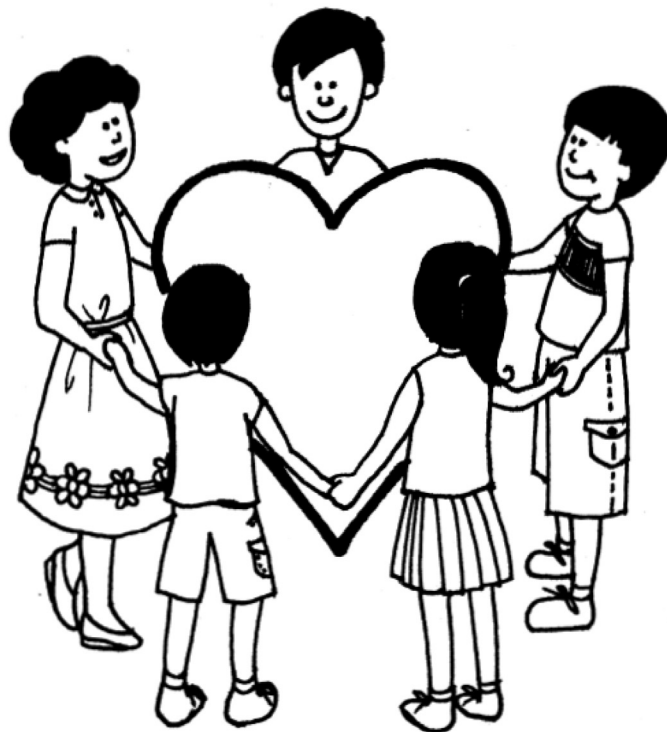
1. _____

2. _____

2. _____

3. _____

3. _____



SESSION 2



Understanding how depression can negatively influence your life

Session Goals:

- Understand what depression is like for you
- Understand the causes of depression and that it is treatable
- Understand the benefits of antidepressants & herbal medication
- Understand how psychotherapy treats depression
- Understand and break unhealthy cycles
- Understand “Qi” (Energy) and your mood

What is depression?

You are not alone. Feeling depressed sometime during one’s life is normal. In fact, most people will feel depressed at some time during their life. Research indicates that 10–25% of the population will experience more serious depression that will affect their functioning for extended periods of time. This is what is called clinical depression or a major depressive episode. Major depression is a mood disorder and is also a serious medical condition. It can be a persistent and recurrent problem if left untreated. Depression has both mental and physical symptoms.

Mental:

- Sadness or depressed mood
- Loss of interest or pleasure in things
- Trouble concentrating or making decisions
- Feeling guilty or worthless
- Having thoughts of death or suicide



Physical:

- Feeling tired or fatigued
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Changes in appetite or weight
- Feeling slowed down or restless



Sometimes people also express their depression through other physical symptoms, including:

- Headaches
- Stomach problems
- Physical aches and pains
- Inability to relax and irritability

Many people who are depressed experience social problems, including:

- Feeling lonely and isolated
- Difficulty getting things done
- Social and family conflict
- People worrying about you

In-session discussion:

What is depression like for you?

Please discuss what depression is like for you right now? In the boxes above, check off the symptoms you experience. It is important to remember that many people who are depressed do not necessarily feel sad. Instead, their depression consists more of a loss of interest or pleasure, and feelings of fatigue. Does this apply to you?

What causes depression?

- Difficult life circumstances
- Family or social conflict
- Financial problems
- Family history of depression
- Biological or chemical imbalances
- Physical health problems
- Job or academic stress
- Chronic or episodic stress

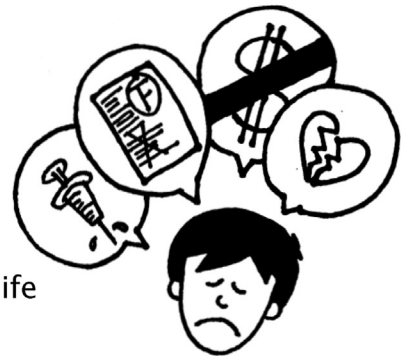
In-session discussion:

What caused you to be depressed?

Please discuss with your therapist the causes of your depression and how it has affected you.

Just like physical health problems, mental health problems can get worse if you don't seek help. In fact, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide and will soon rank 2nd only to heart disease for global burden of disease. Specifically, depression's impact on people across the world is higher than the impact of most physical health problems such as cancer, infectious diseases, as well as traffic accidents. Left unaddressed, depression can have severe consequences, including...

- Ruin relationships
- Lead to job loss
- Impact academic success
- Exacerbate physical health problems
- Create unhappiness and dissatisfaction with one's life
- Lead to death and disability



Depression is treatable

Although depression can negatively affect one's life, the good news is that depression is treatable. Research shows that psychotherapy by itself and/or in combination with antidepressant medication can help reduce depression.

In-session discussion:

The benefits of antidepressant and herbal medication

Antidepressants can be helpful for those who are feeling depressed. When one is too depressed, it is difficult to fully participate in this program and listen to the advice of other people. Medication can help people feel better and improve the chemical imbalances in your brain and body. It can also help balance and regulate your "Qi" or inner energy.

Are antidepressants right for you? Discuss the advantages and disadvantages. Have a discussion with your therapist about making an appointment with a psychiatrist.

Are you taking any herbal medication or Chinese medicine? Herbal medication can sometimes interact negatively with antidepressants. Be sure to discuss this with your psychiatrist.



How does psychotherapy treat depression?

Psychotherapy targets both the physical and mental symptoms of depression. It focuses on problem solving, helping you take control of your thoughts, and promotes engagement in healthy behaviors. As part of this program, you will practice different behavioral, cognitive, and internal strengthening exercises to help you manage your depression. Remember, our feelings are a natural reaction to life's stressors and how we cope with our problems. Because of this, the next several sessions will focus on strengthening three primary areas to help you feel better. Having balance in these areas is very important.



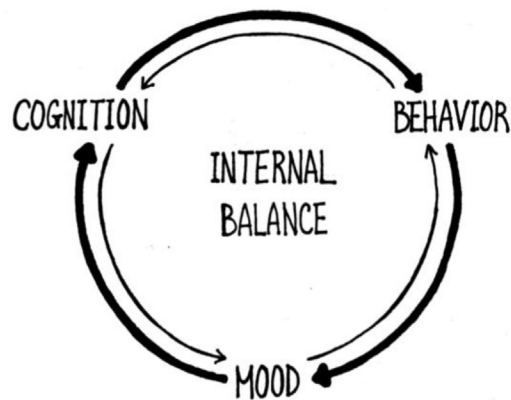
This program targets **three** primary areas to help you improve your mood:

1. **Behavioral strengthening:** Helping you problem-solve difficult life circumstances, manage social problems, and act in beneficial ways.
2. **Cognitive strengthening:** Helping you think in more effective and healthy ways.
3. **Internal strengthening:** Helping you feel more centered and balanced, strengthen your “Qi” or inner energy, and engage in healthier self-care activities.

In-session discussion:

Understanding and breaking unhealthy cycles

Many people who are depressed are trapped in unhealthy vicious cycles. The “Cognitions, Behaviors, and Mood Cycle” is a therapeutic tool that can help you understand these cycles. What cycles are you trying to break? How are your cognitions, behaviors, and mood interconnected? How does your overall internal balance and health affect this cycle?



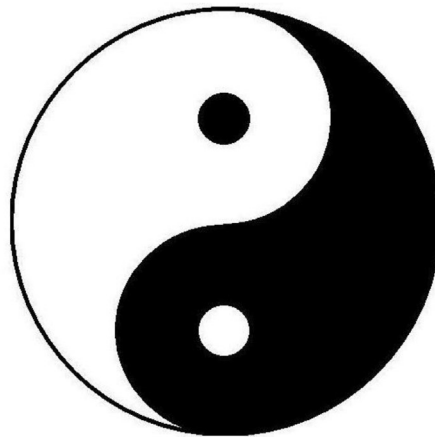
What kinds of cognitions and behaviors have made the cycle worse? When the cycle became worse, how did this affect the way you felt? When you felt emotionally worse, how did that affect your cognitions and behaviors?

How would your cognitions, behaviors, internal balance, and mood be if the vicious cycle were broken?

In-session discussion:

Understand “Qi” (Energy) and your mood

When people feel depressed, they often feel unhealthy and off-balance. Another way to improve your mood is to work on internal strengthening so that you feel more centered and healthy. The picture below is called the “Tai Qi Diagram.” Some people believe that depression is related to an imbalance in one’s Qi or inner energy. When one is depressed, one has too much “Yin Qi” (Dark Energy). When one is angry, one has too much “Yang Qi” (Light Energy). In order to improve your mood, you need to find more balance in your life. This can be achieved through more balanced thinking and behaviors.



Why is the line in the middle curvy rather than straight? This was purposefully done to represent life’s impermanence. The curvy line in the middle represents the ups and downs of life. Nothing in life is ever permanent or constant and one should understand and accept the fact that things in life are always changing. Sometimes life will be easy, other times it will be hard. Try not to be overly negative and lose hope.

No matter how dark or depressing things get, there is always light in the darkness as represented by the small “Yang” dot in the dark part of the diagram. Even when things are great, it will never be perfect as represented by “Yin” dot in the light part of the diagram.

What has thrown your life off balance? Discuss the “Tai Qi Diagram” with your therapist and how you could find more balance in your life. Internal strengthening and health will help you reduce your depression.

Strengthening exercise: This week, spend 5-10 minutes sitting in the sunlight at least 3 times. Because depression is related to “Yin Qi” (Dark Energy), it is important to strengthen your “Yang Qi” (Light Energy). Sitting in the sun can help you feel more centered, relaxed, and rejuvenated. Focus on the positive energy of the sun warming up your body. Let your stresses and worries go. Use the sunlight to brighten up your life, relax your mind, and soothe your mood. Be prepared to talk about your experiences doing this “inner strengthening” exercise next time.

SESSION 3



Defining and visualizing your goals

Session Goals:

- Weekly check-in and review of take-home exercises
- Discuss initial reactions to therapy thus far
- Bamboo, flexibility, resilience, and personal strength
- Use visualization to reach your short-term and long-term goals
- Learn the “Climbing the Mountain” technique
- Complete behavioral (Action) strengthening exercises before next session

In-session discussion:

Weekly check-in and review of take-home exercises

Please discuss how your week went with your therapist.

Were you able to complete your take-home sitting in the sun “inner strengthening” exercises? What was helpful? What wasn’t so helpful? Please explain.

In-session discussion:

Initial reactions to therapy

Please discuss your initial reactions to this program with your therapist.

How have things been? Do you have any questions?

What will help you make the most out of this program? What would help you feel better?

Bamboo, flexibility, resilience, and personal strength

Bamboo is a strong, flexible, and adaptive plant. It can be used for many different things. For example, you can use bamboo to make chopsticks, cookware, furniture, and even houses. You can also eat bamboo and it's good for you! Bamboo can grow with very little care as long as it has water. Just like bamboo, we can be affected by the ups and downs, and the twists and turns of life. However, just like bamboo, we can also grow straight or in whatever direction we want with the right amount of nourishment and care.

Some life events can have a negative impact on our lives and our mood. Life events can also be positive and make us happy. Even though your life may not be heading in the direction that you would like, you have the power to make changes and move your life in the direction you want (e.g., growing straight again).

Do you agree or disagree? In order to heal and accomplish your goals, you need to be able to visualize how you would like your life to be. Would you like it to move in a positive or negative direction? How might moving your life in a more positive direction influence your mood?



In-session activity:
Using visualization to reach your goals

What are your goals and how you would like things to be? Are there differences between your short-term and long-term goals? Are your individual goals different from your family goals? Please write down your goals below.

Short-term Goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Long-term Goals:


1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

1. How would your life situation be different if you achieved your goals?
2. How would you be different (e.g., how would you act, think, feel, and speak differently)?
3. How would other people around you be different (e.g., how would they act, think, feel, and speak differently)?
4. Visualize what steps you would need to take in order to achieve your goals.
5. Visualize the consequences of doing nothing to address your problems.



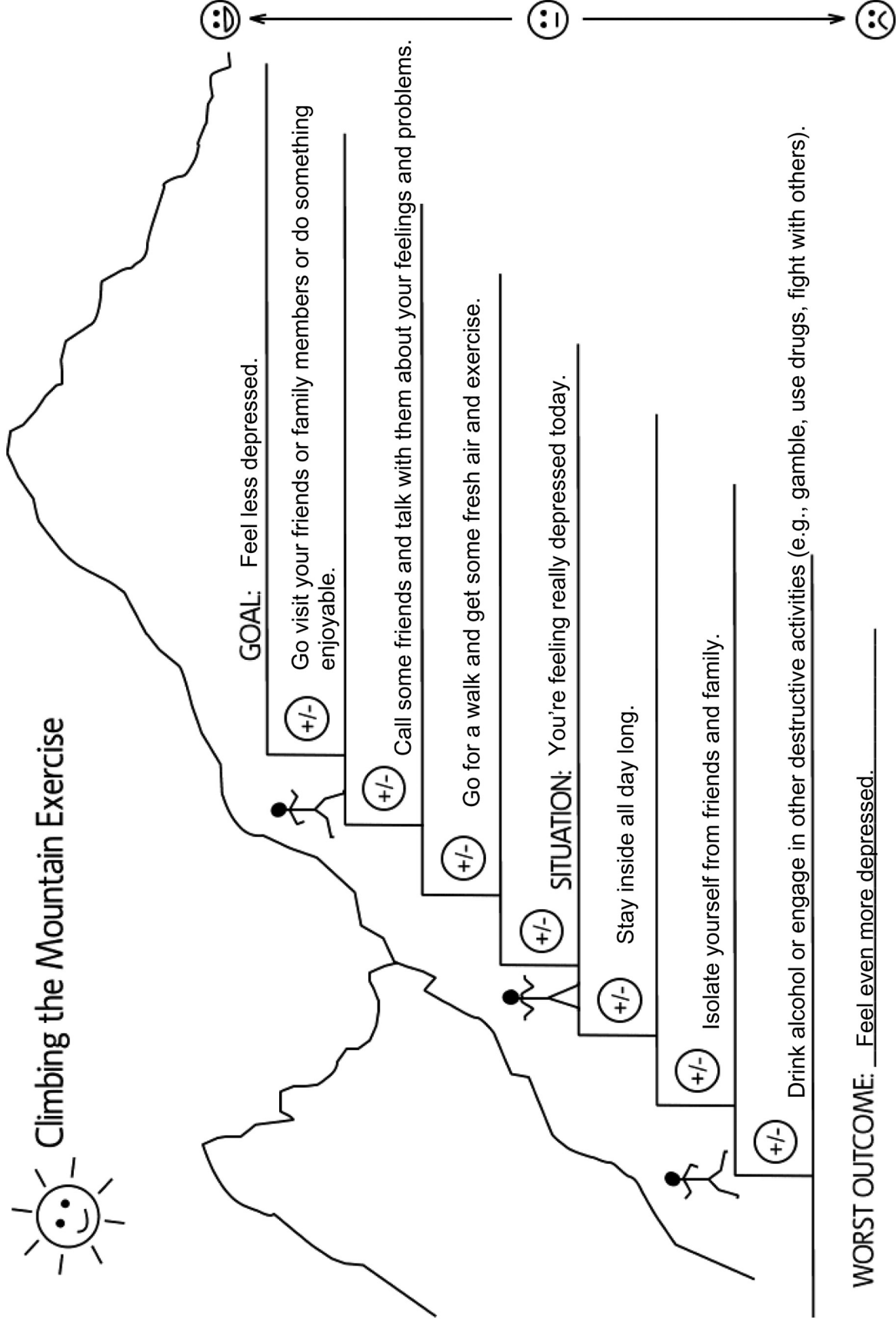
In-session Activity:
Learning the “Climbing the Mountain” technique

During the next several weeks, you will learn and apply the “Climbing the Mountain” technique to different aspects of your life. This technique will help you strengthen yourself behaviorally, mentally, and internally. Please fill out the worksheet on the next page.

1. Write down something problematic that happened in the space called **“SITUATION.”**
2. Visualize your **“GOAL”** and write it at the top of the mountain.
3. Write down the **“WORST OUTCOME”** that could happen at the bottom of the mountain.
4. What behaviors or actions might bring you closer to reaching your goals? Please write them along each step above the situation you listed.
5. What behaviors or actions might make the situation worse? Please write them on each step leading away from your goal.
6. How might each of the behaviors or actions that you listed affect your feelings and mood? (See mood bar on the right hand side of the worksheet).
7. Notice the  circle next to each behavioral response. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each action or behavior? There are different types of advantages and disadvantages, including personal, social, familial, emotional, time, money, health, and goal obtainment.



Climbing the Mountain Exercise



GOAL: Feel less depressed.

+/- Go visit your friends or family members or do something enjoyable.

+/- Call some friends and talk with them about your feelings and problems.

+/- Go for a walk and get some fresh air and exercise.

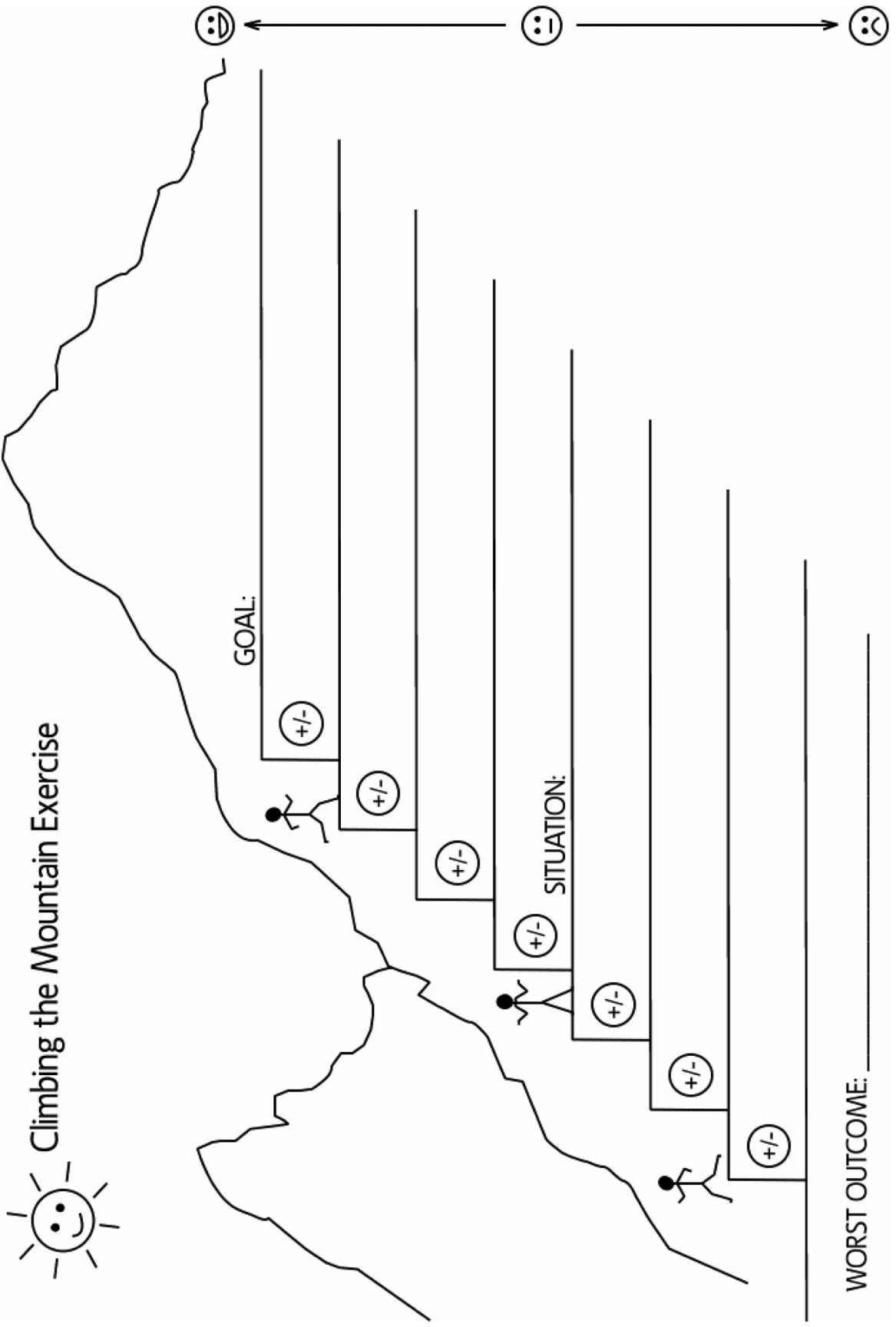
SITUATION: You're feeling really depressed today.

+/- Stay inside all day long.

+/- Isolate yourself from friends and family.

+/- Drink alcohol or engage in other destructive activities (e.g., gamble, use drugs, fight with others).

WORST OUTCOME: Feel even more depressed.



Take-home exercise:

Complete behavioral (action) strengthening technique

Attached, you will find 3 worksheets that you can use to practice the “Climbing the Mountain” technique. This exercise can help you improve your life situations and strengthen your behaviors so that you can better solve your problems.

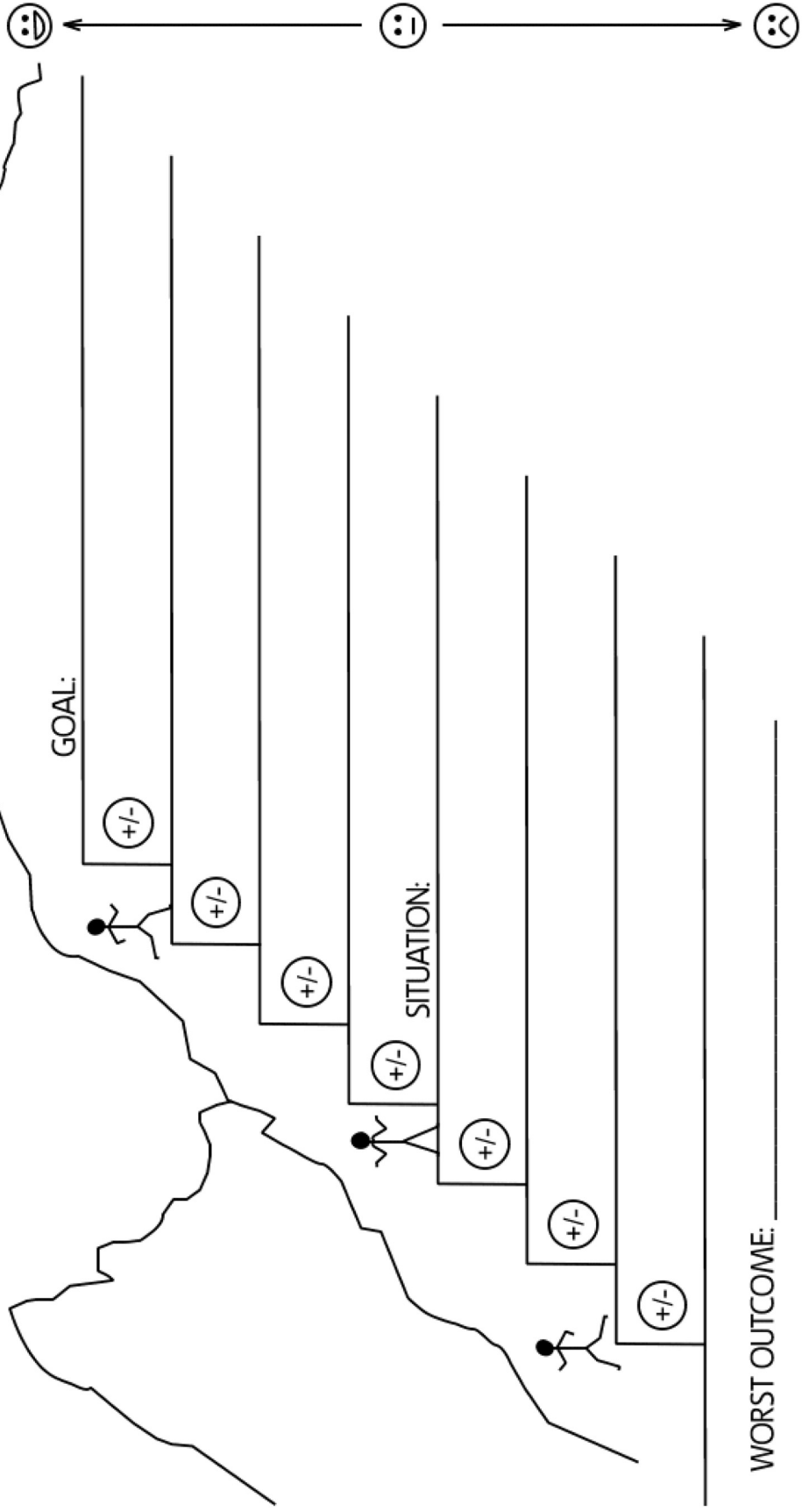
Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of acting in certain ways and discuss how your behaviors may or may not feed into the vicious cycle of your problems.

How are different types of behaviors or actions related to your mood?

Think about the range of behaviors and actions that can improve your situation and also ones that might make things worse. Please make sure to do this exercise more than 3 times when appropriate. Please complete the worksheets before the next session.



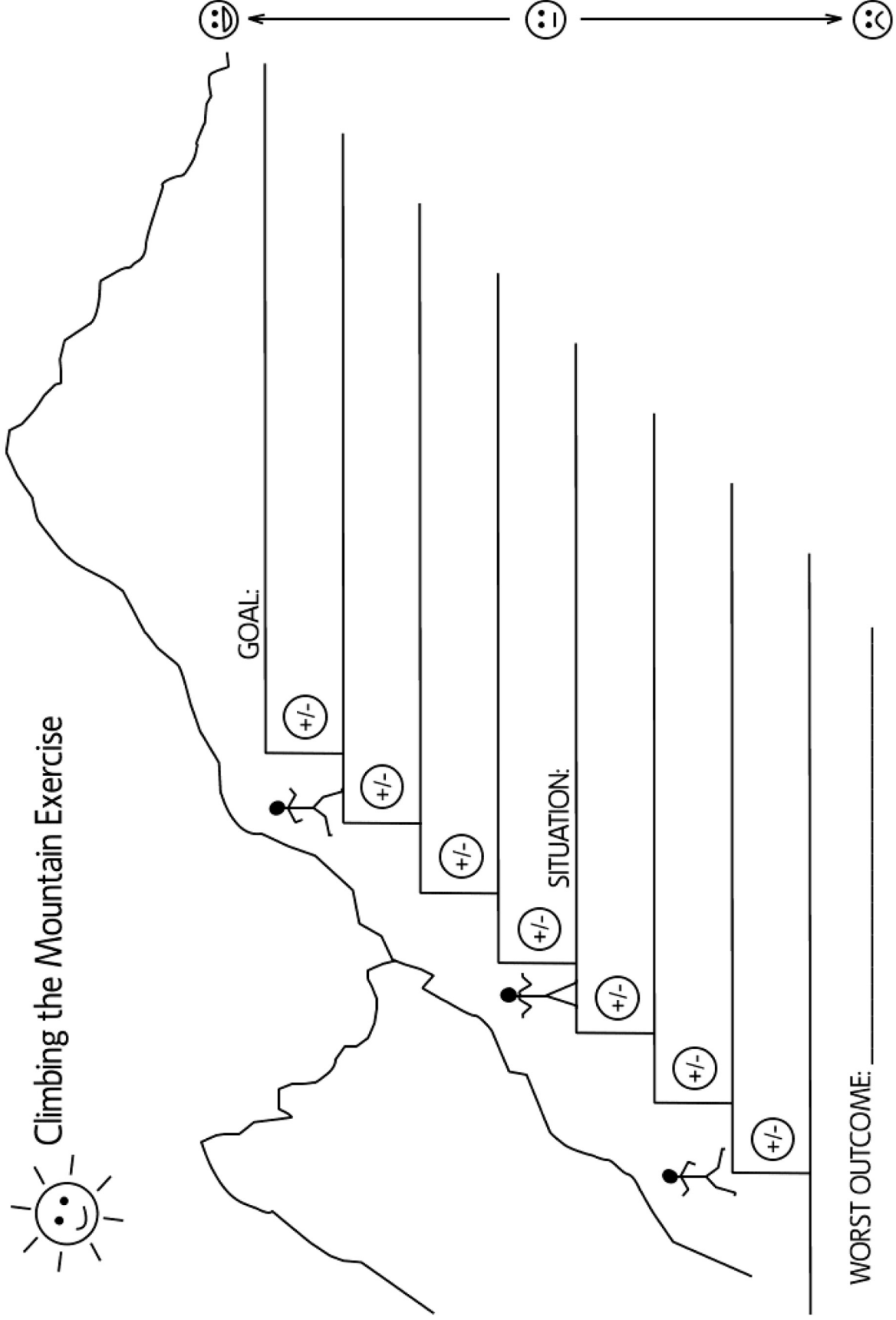
Climbing the Mountain Exercise



WORST OUTCOME: _____



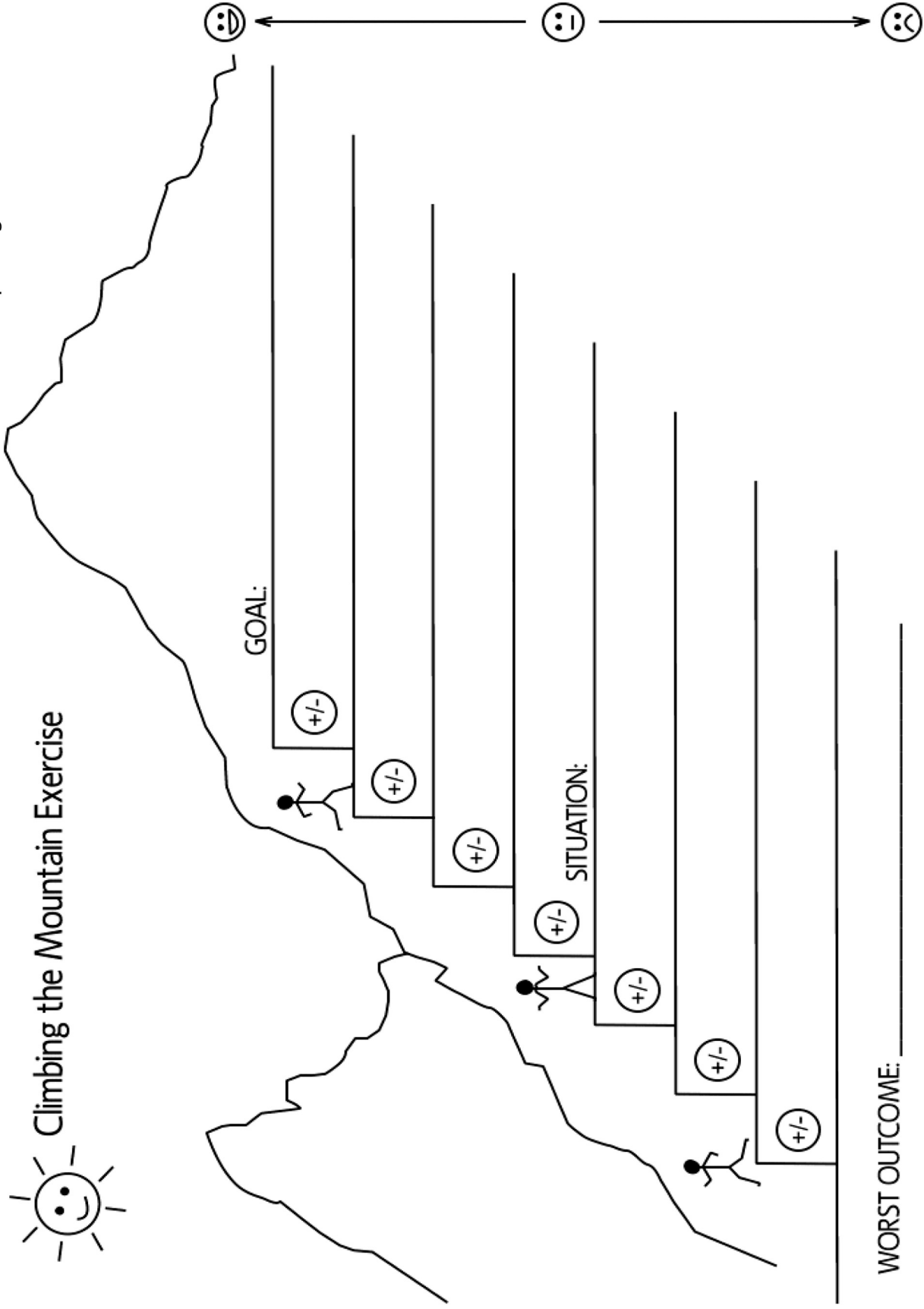
Climbing the Mountain Exercise



WORST OUTCOME: _____



Climbing the Mountain Exercise



WORST OUTCOME: _____

SESSION 4



Practicing behavioral strengthening: Effective problem-solving

Session Goals:

- Weekly check-in and review of take-home exercises
- Understand the “Principle of Wise Action”
- Advantages and disadvantages of “Wise Action”
- Understand how to balance your rights and responsibilities
- Practice “Climbing the Mountain” technique using “Wise Actions”
- Complete behavioral strengthening (“Wise Action”) exercises before next session

In-session discussion:

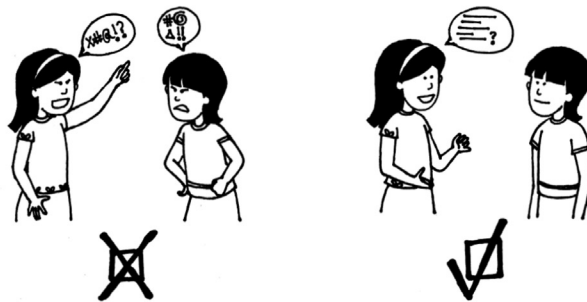
Weekly check-in and review of take-home exercises

Please discuss how your week went with your therapist.

Were you able to complete your take-home behavioral (action) strengthening exercises? What was helpful? What wasn't so helpful? Please explain. What would help you feel better?

Understanding the Principle of “Wise Action”

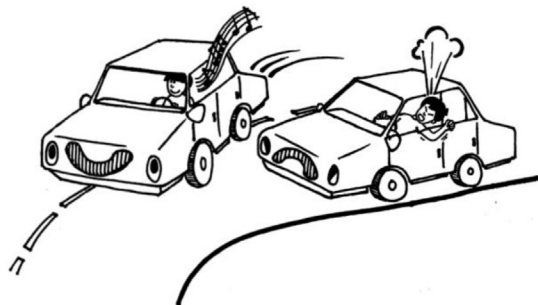
“Wise Action” or “Doing the right thing” is not always easy. Sometimes it can feel unfair that we have to act or behave in the best way possible. For example, when we get into a fight with someone in our family and they yell and criticize us, our natural tendency is to want to yell and criticize back. We may feel that it’s unfair that we have to hold in our emotions while they can act in whatever way they want. However, sometimes our natural reaction isn’t the wise or right reaction and it may make the situation and our life worse. Which of the pictures below represents “Wise Action?” Why?



The principle of “Wise Action” also applies to how you treat yourself. For example, when people feel depressed, they sometimes treat themselves badly by saying negative things to themselves, staying inside all day long, or drinking alcohol to cope with their problems [Note: Alcohol is a depressant. Do not drink alcohol when you are feeling depressed. It might make you feel better temporarily, but it may make you feel more depressed in the long term].

In order to improve your life circumstances, you should remind yourself of your goals and visualize how you should act and communicate. Dramatic expression of emotions can sometimes be unconstructive and make your problems worse. In addition, negative emotions like anger lead to a build up of “Huo Qi” or “Fire Energy,” which can damage your organs, and pollute your mind.

Example: If someone cuts you off on the freeway and you yell and scream at them, it only raises your blood pressure and ruins your day. It doesn’t affect them at all because they can’t hear you!



The principle of “Wise Action” has been an important part of Chinese culture for thousands of years. In order to help yourself act in the most constructive way possible, try to remind yourself of the following points when you get upset.

1. “Wise Actions” are effective actions.
2. “Wise Actions” are appropriate actions.
3. “Wise Actions” can help you reach your goals.
4. “Wise Actions” improve your karma.
5. “Unwise Actions” hurt others and also ultimately hurt you.
6. “Wise Actions” can help improve your mood. Letting go of overly negative emotions is better for you. Learn to let things go!



In-session discussion:

Advantages and disadvantages of “Wise Action”

Please discuss and think about the advantages and disadvantages of “Wise Action.”

What do “Wise Actions” look like? Those who practice wise action often do the following, which ultimately help improve their mood:

- 1) “Respond” rather than “react.”
- 2) Communicate in ways that acknowledge other people’s feelings as well as your own.
- 3) Think about how their actions affect themselves and the people around them.
- 4) Learn to let go of unhealthy feelings.

Can you think of a time when someone said something to you or did something that you didn’t like? How did you deal with it? What would be the “Wise Action?”

In-session discussion:

Balancing your rights and responsibilities

Taking care of others is very important to many people. However, we also need to make sure that we take care of ourselves. If we don't take care of ourselves, we won't be healthy enough to take care of others. Remember, everyone has personal rights (e.g., the right to have an opinion, to have feelings, to make choices, to request that others change their unhealthy behaviors). Everyone also has social responsibilities (e.g., the responsibility to be a good child, to be a good parent, to be a good spouse, to be a good employee, to be a contributing member to society). Have a discussion on how to find a good balance between one's own rights and needs and the rights and needs of others.

- What do you do if other people don't fulfill their obligations or responsibilities?
- Do you have to continue to sacrifice your own needs in the same way?
- How do you balance your rights with your responsibilities?
- What is the "Wise Action?"

In-session activity and take-home exercise:

Complete behavioral ("Wise Action") strengthening exercises

Below you will find an example of "Wise Action" that has been incorporated into the "Climbing the Mountain" exercise. Go over the example with your therapist and then apply this exercise to something that you are currently dealing with on the next empty worksheet.

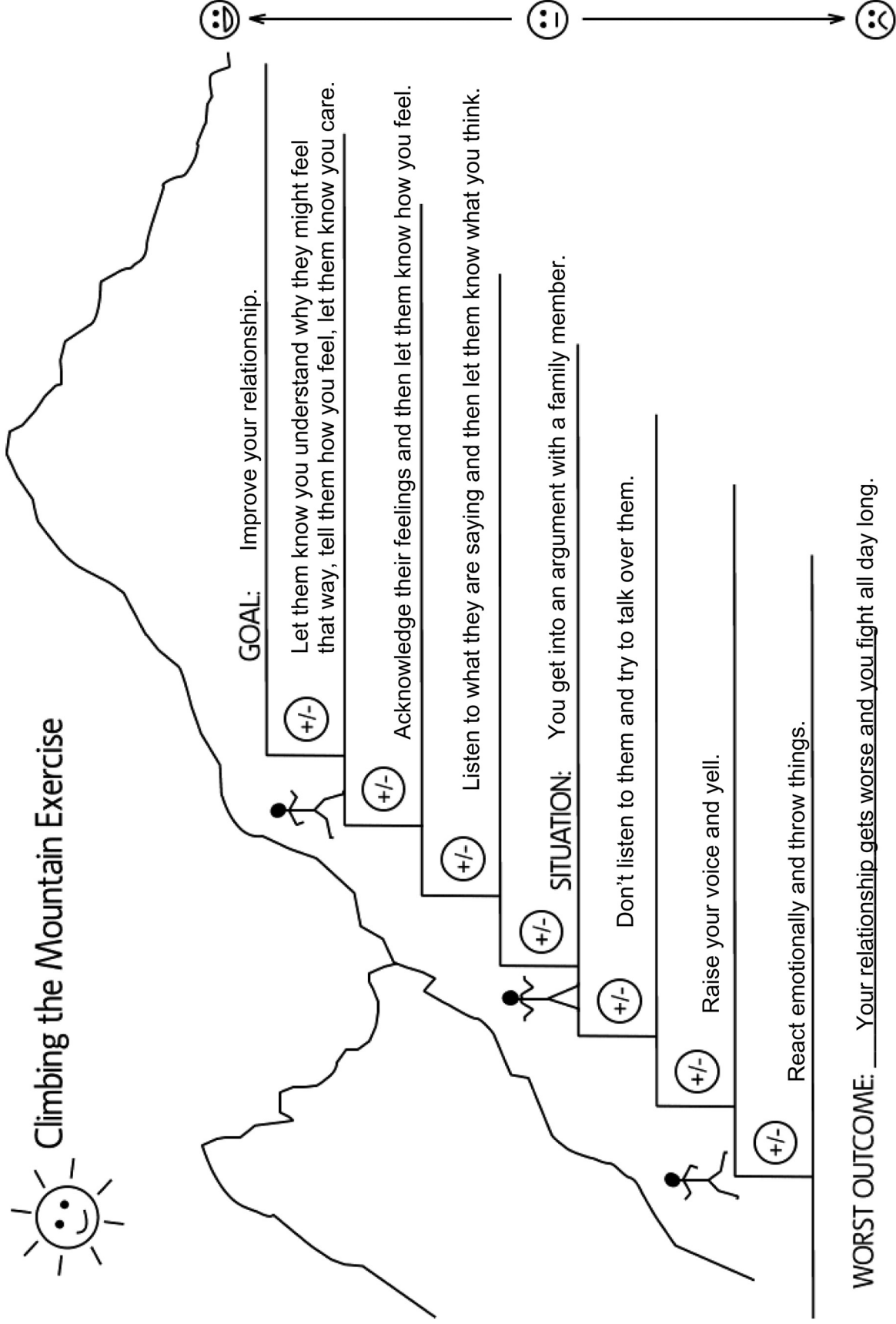
Afterward, you will find 3 worksheets that you can take home and use to practice the "Climbing the Mountain" technique. This exercise can help you improve your life situations and strengthen your actions so that you can better solve your problems. Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of your choices and acting in different ways.

How do your actions affect your mood?

Think about the range of behaviors and actions that can help improve your situation and also ones that might make things worse. Practice "Wise Action" this week. Please complete the worksheets before the next session.

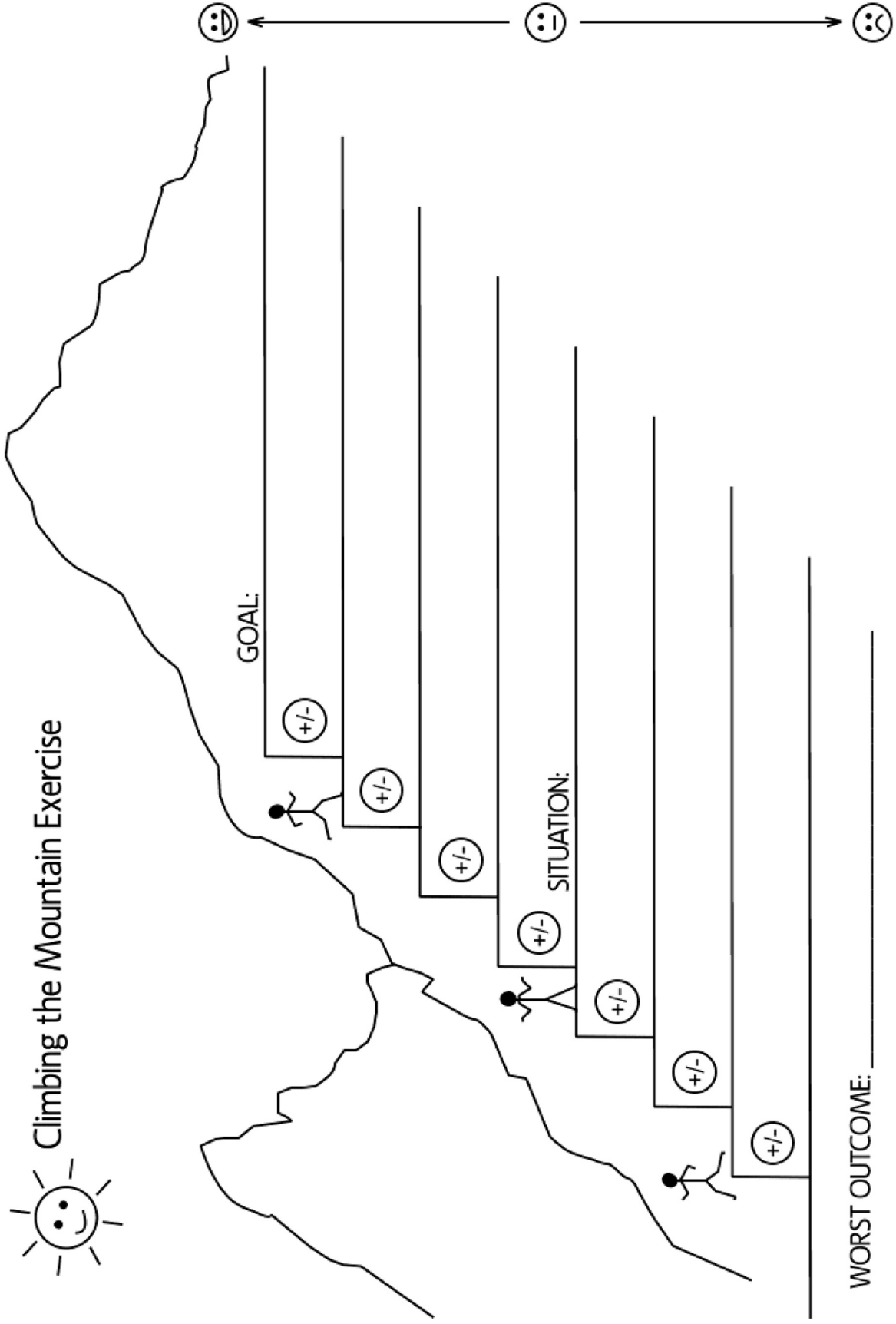


Climbing the Mountain Exercise

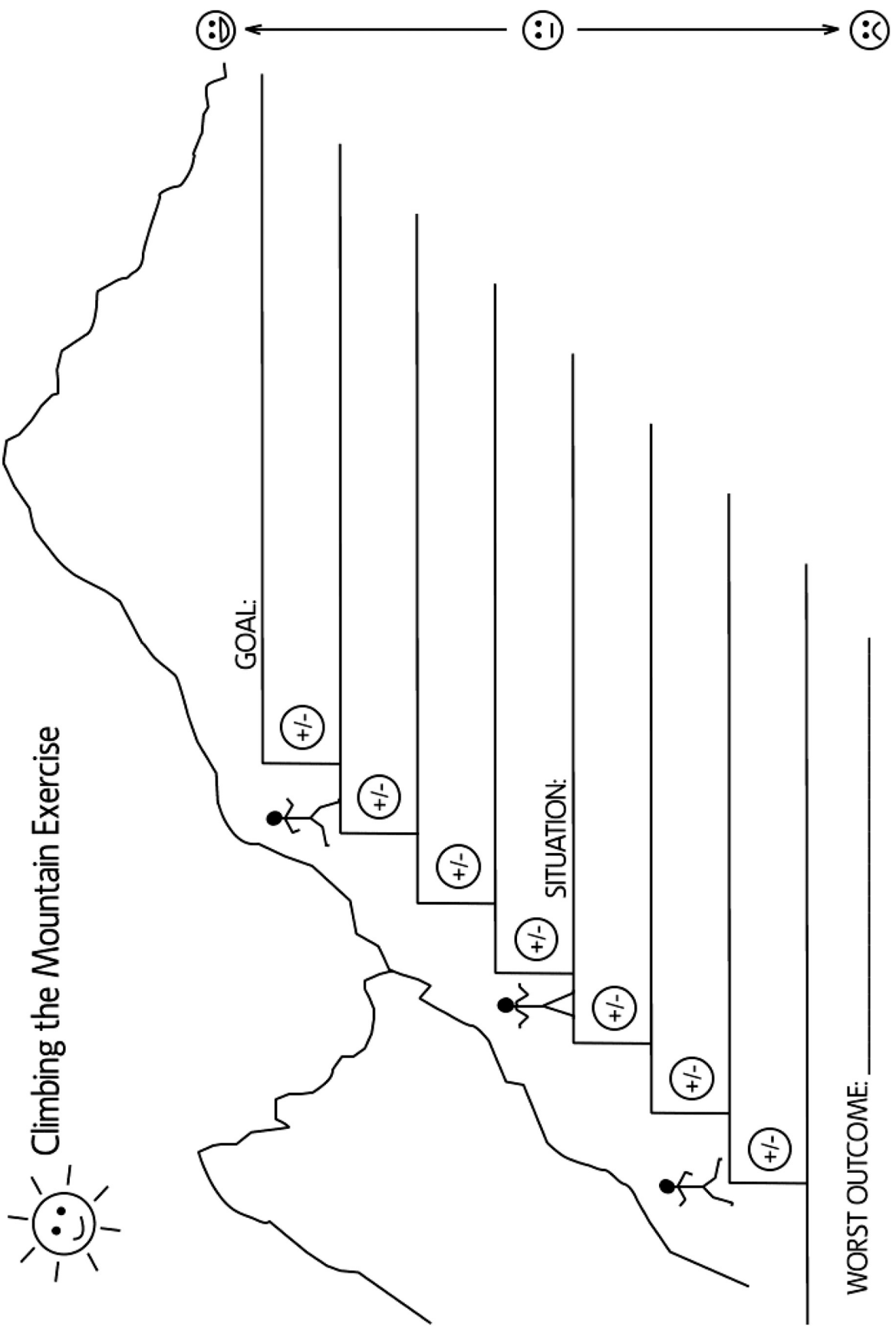


WORST OUTCOME: _____ Your relationship gets worse and you fight all day long.

Climbing the Mountain Exercise

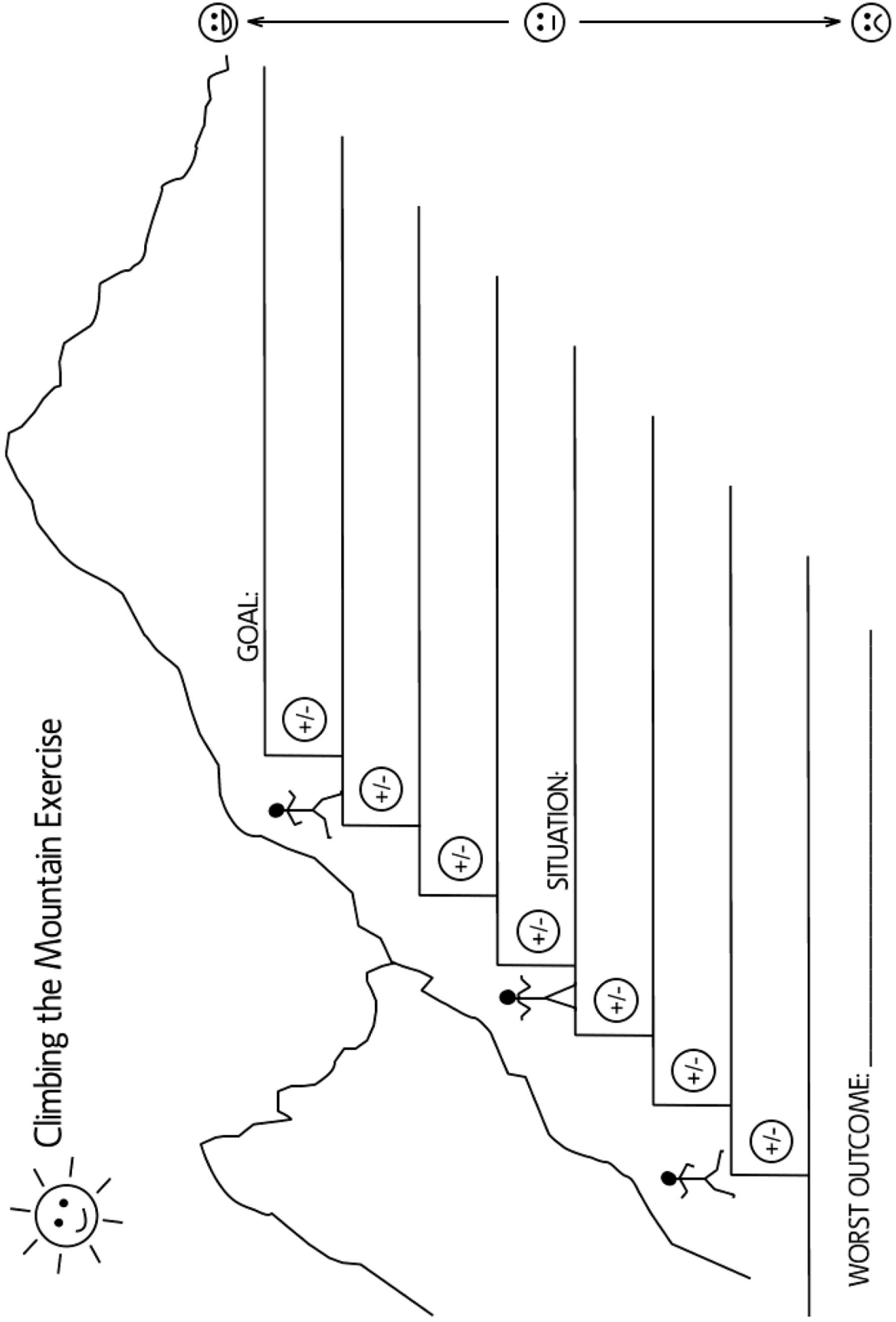


WORST OUTCOME: _____





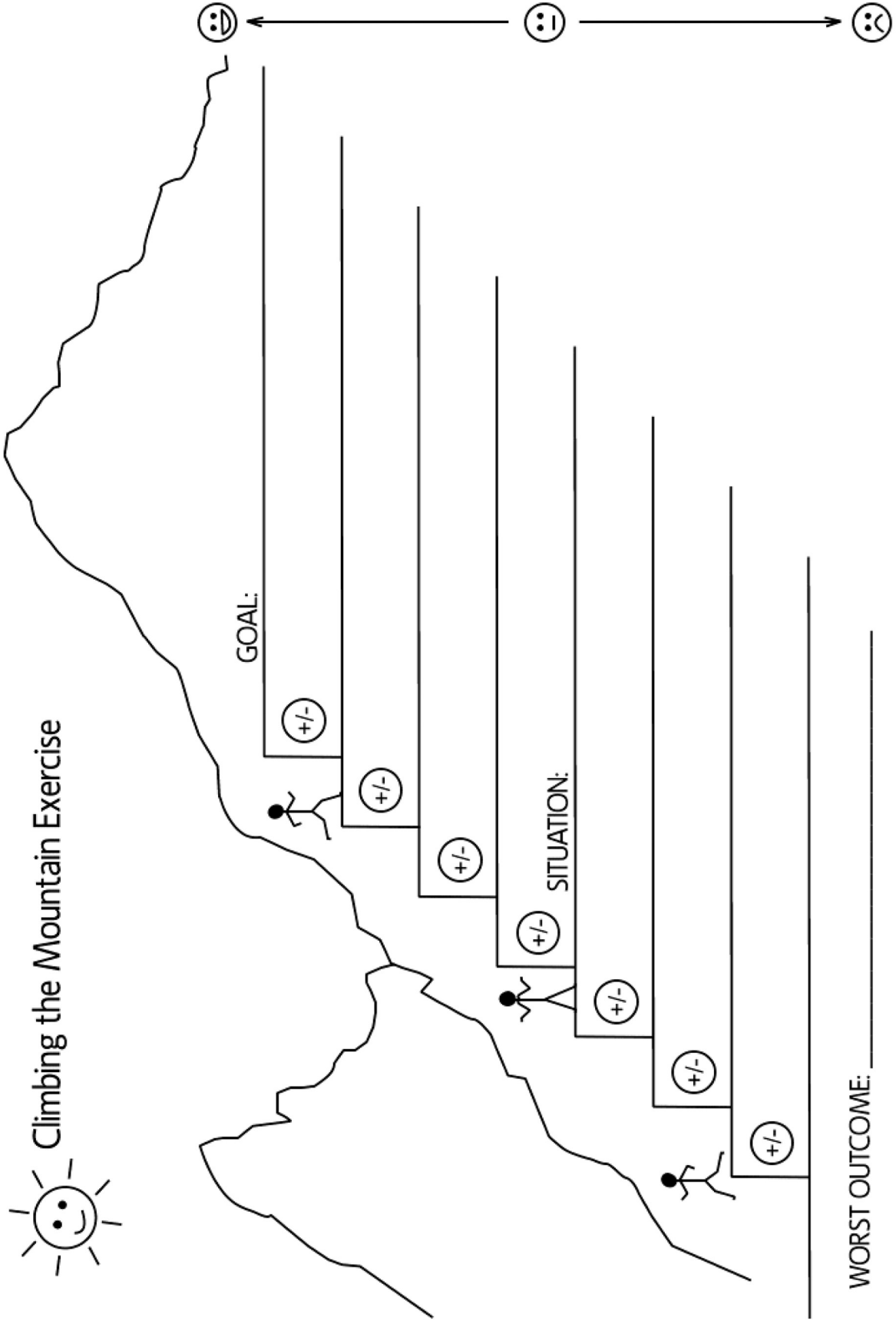
Climbing the Mountain Exercise



WORST OUTCOME: _____



Climbing the Mountain Exercise



SESSION 5



Practicing behavioral strengthening: Improving your communication skills

Session Goals:

- Weekly check-in and review of take-home exercises
- Understand different types of communication
- Understand different styles of communication
- Understand that healthy communication is effective communication
- Understand your communication style
- Practice nonverbal communication with supportive actions
- Practice active listening and reflective empathy
- Use the “Climbing the Mountain” technique to strengthen your communication
- Complete behavioral strengthening (Communication) exercises before next session

In-session discussion:

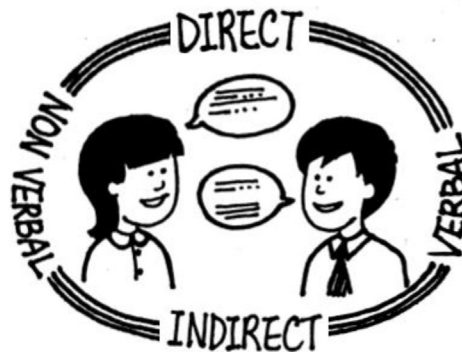
Weekly check-in and review of take-home exercises

Please discuss how your week went with your therapist.

Were you able to complete your take-home behavioral (Right Action) strengthening exercises? What was helpful? What wasn't so helpful? Please explain. What would help you feel better?

Understanding different types of communication

Everyone can improve the way they communicate. There are two main types of communication, direct and indirect. Direct communication is more straightforward and verbal; whereas, indirect communication is more implied and more nonverbal. Nonverbal communication uses body language and facial expressions to convey what one thinks and feels. You can be direct and indirect in both verbal and nonverbal ways. In addition, the volume and tone that we use while speaking also affects how people respond to us. It is also important to understand that people from different cultural backgrounds communicate differently. Learning to communicate effectively can help improve our relationships and mood.



	Verbal:	Nonverbal:
Direct	Asking someone if they can help you with the dishes.	Looking at the dishes with disgust, sighing, or looking at the person with disapproval.
Indirect	Not doing the dishes and saying that you are really tired.	Not saying anything and going to your room to lie down.

Understanding different styles of communication

There are also **four** main styles of communication: (1) passive-aggressive, (2) passive, (3) aggressive, and (4) healthy. Each of these styles has verbal and nonverbal components and also has different degrees of directness and effectiveness. Tone of voice and volume also differ with each style.

Passive-aggressive style: Holding things that bother you in until you can't hold them in anymore, and then having an emotional or angry outburst.

Verbal:

Not directly saying what one wants, and then being too direct, emotional, or critical later on.

Example:

Not saying anything about the dishes until you get fed up and then yelling at and criticizing the other person.

Nonverbal:

Facial and bodily expressions that are inconsistent with the way you feel, that rapidly change to extremes, or that are confusing to others.

Effectiveness:

Poor

Volume and Tone:

Fluctuates between high and low volume, and passive and aggressive tone.

People's reactions:

People won't understand your needs and will be confused when you become upset. This style leads to a lot of drama, fighting, and hurt feelings in relationships.

Passive-aggressive communication style checklist:

- Do you have difficulties expressing your emotions and needs?
- Do you bottle in your feelings until you can't take it anymore and then explode?
- When you explode, do things get very dramatic or get physically or verbally aggressive?



Passive Style: Holding things in and not expressing your feelings or needs when you are unhappy or dissatisfied.

Verbal:

Not directly saying what one wants or needs.

Example:

Saying...“I don’t feel well today,” but never directly communicating what one wants from the other person (e.g., being upset that the other person doesn’t help with the dishes, but not directly asking them to help).

Nonverbal:

Frowning, feeling tired, or smiling all the time and pretending there is nothing wrong.

Effectiveness:

Poor

Volume and Tone:

Low volume and passive tone

People’s reactions:

People won’t understand your needs or what you want from them. If you don’t communicate more effectively, they may learn to treat you badly, ignore you, and a vicious cycle of unmet needs may develop.

Passive communication style diagnostic checklist:

- Do you hold your feelings in when you are upset?
- Do you have difficulties expressing your emotions and needs?
- Do your facial and physical expressions effectively communicate how you feel?



Aggressive Style: Strongly expressing yourself and your feelings as they occur.

Verbal:

Shouting, yelling, demanding, commanding, blaming, being critical, or being verbally abusive.

Nonverbal:

Pushing, hitting, slapping, throwing things, or being physically abusive.

Example:

Yelling... “Why don’t you ever do the dishes?”

Effectiveness:

Poor

Volume and Tone:

High volume and aggressive tone

People’s reactions:

People may act defensively. Even if they initially listen or do what you want them to do, they eventually feel resentful. Some people may be afraid to be honest with you about how they feel. They might hold things in or they might hold things in until they explode.

Aggressive communication style diagnostic checklist:

- Do you raise your voice when you are upset?
- Do you criticize other people when you are upset?
- Do you get physical when you are upset?



Healthy Style: Being tactful about how you communicate and expressing yourself and what you need in a calm, honest, and respectful manner. Not holding in your emotions, not attacking or criticizing others, and not acting out your feelings. Understanding how others feel and letting them know that you are aware of their feelings. “Responding” rather than “reacting.”

Verbal:

Speaking in a calm, rational, and respectful manner.

Example:

Saying... “I’m really tired today. Can you help wash the dishes? Thank you.”

Nonverbal:

Having facial and bodily expressions that are consistent with the way you are feeling.

Effectiveness:

High

Volume and Tone:

Normal volume and calm tone

People’s reactions:

People are more willing to listen to what you say when you don’t criticize or attack them. It is important to let people know that you understand how they feel and also to respectfully let them know how you feel. They will be better able to empathize with you and be more willing to help.

Healthy communication style diagnostic checklist:

- Are you able to understand and reflect upon the situation before responding?
- Are you able to empathize with others and understand how they feel?
- Are you able to respectfully communicate your emotions and needs to others?
- Are your physical and facial expressions consistent with what you say or don’t say?



Healthy communication is effective communication

Although there is no one formula for determining which communication types or styles are better, research and clinical experience tells us that when communication problems develop, being more direct and using a more straightforward communication style (both verbal and nonverbal) leads to fewer misunderstandings and is more effective. Passive-aggressive, passive, and aggressive communication styles may lead to social conflict, anger, depression, and may also increase physical health problems. Remember, just as unhealthy communication styles are learned, they can also be unlearned by being mindful and practicing.

In-session discussion:

Understanding your communication styles

Discuss the different communication types and styles.

- Which type do you use in your life?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?
- What kind of communication type and style would better help you reach your goals and achieve better outcomes?
- Which one of them leads to better outcomes?
- How does your facial and body expression change with different styles and how might others interpret your physical reactions?
- How do you feel emotionally and physically when using each one of the communication styles?
- Has your communication style been helpful in resolving your problems or has it been making things worse? What changes might you need to make to your communication style?

Healthy and effective communication can take on different forms. Below are two examples to help improve your communication. One is more nonverbal and focuses on being supportive by the things that you do. This is called **nonverbal communication with supportive actions**. The other is more verbal and helps you speak in ways that are more understanding and supportive. This is called **active listening and reflective empathy**. Communication is a two-way street. Even if others are communicating in an unhealthy way, we should always try our best not to get caught up into the vicious cycle and focus on communicating in effective ways. We should also try to be consistent in what we say and do.

In-session practice:

Practicing nonverbal communication with supportive actions

A person can be supportive and communicate effectively both verbally and nonverbally. When others feel like they are supported, they are also more likely to be attuned to your needs, and are also more likely to be supportive to you.

Example: Not listening and not acting empathically

Wife: Can you help wash the dishes?

Husband: I'm really exhausted today.

Wife: How come you never help wash the dishes? [This may be ineffective because the wife didn't acknowledge that the husband was tired]

Husband: Didn't you hear me? Didn't I just say that I was tired?

[Husband ignores wife and watches TV.]

[Fighting begins...]

Example: Supportive nonverbal communication

Wife: Can you help wash the dishes?

Husband: I'm really exhausted today.

Wife: [notices tired look on husband's face] Did you eat yet? Let me get you some tea. Dinner will be ready in a minute.

Wife: [While eating dinner she acknowledges his feelings] You look tired today. What happened?

Husband: My boss was getting on my nerves and dumped all this work on me (wife nods and let's husband know she is listening).

[Wife gives husband some time to relax and unwind]

[Later on she massages husband's shoulders to help him relax.]

Husband: Thanks. That felt really good. How was your day?

Wife: It was okay, just a bit tiring. I had to run errands, pick up the kids, and work all day long. That's why the dishes aren't done yet.

[Husband gives wife a shoulder massage]

Wife: Could you help me clean up the kitchen?

Husband: Sure. [Husband gets up and washes the dishes]

In-session practice:
Practicing active listening and reflective empathy

Active listening and reflecting empathy can also help strengthen your relationships. In order to improve your communication and de-escalate conflictual situations, it's really important to actively listen and use reflective empathy to let others know that you understand how they feel. You can do this by listening to them and repeating back what they said in your own words. When people feel heard and understood, they are less likely to criticize and attack. You need to be able to put yourself in their shoes in order to truly understand their feelings. This is called frame-switching or perspective switching. People are more responsive to you when you understand them.

Same Example As Before: Not listening and not acting empathically

Wife: Can you help wash the dishes?

Husband: I'm really exhausted today.

Wife: How come you never help wash the dishes? [This may be ineffective because the wife didn't acknowledge that the husband was tired]

Husband: Didn't you hear me? Didn't I just say that I was tired?

[Husband ignores wife and watches TV.]

[Fighting begins...]

Example: Active listening and reflective empathy

Wife: Can you help wash the dishes?

Husband: I'm really exhausted today.

Wife: [She nods and acknowledges husband's feelings] Yeah, I can tell. What happened?

Husband: My boss was getting on my nerves and dumped all this work on me.

Wife: [Wife continues to empathize with his experience] That's horrible. Is there anything I can do?

[Husband continues to talk about his day and vent]

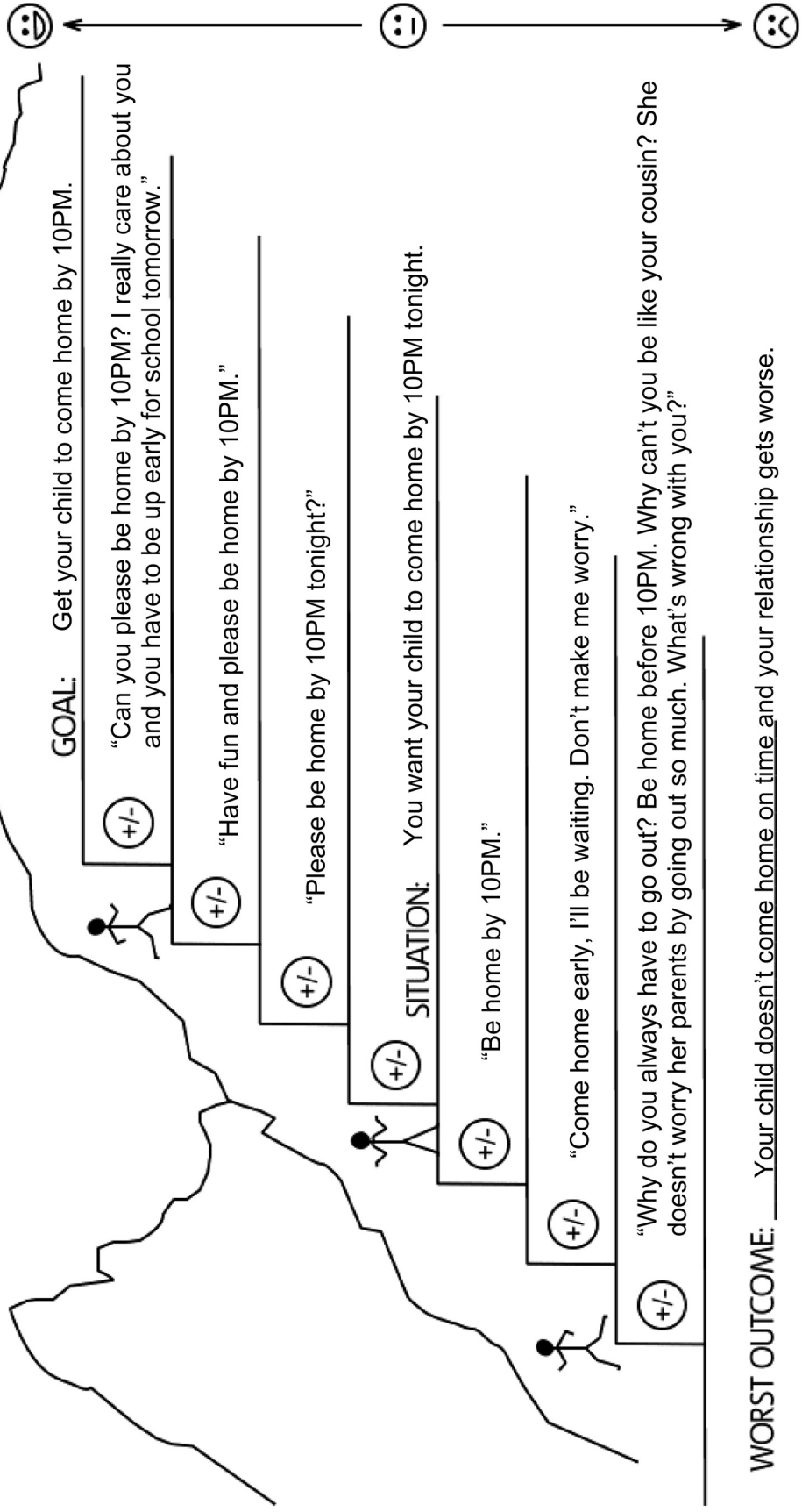
Wife: [Wife continues to acknowledge his feelings and also lets him know that she knows how he feels] I can understand why you feel tired because I also got handed 3 new projects today. I also had to pick up the kids and run the errands. That's why the dishes aren't done yet. Would you mind helping?

Husband: You must be really tired too. Let me do them then.

Take a moment and practice role-playing communication skills with your therapist.

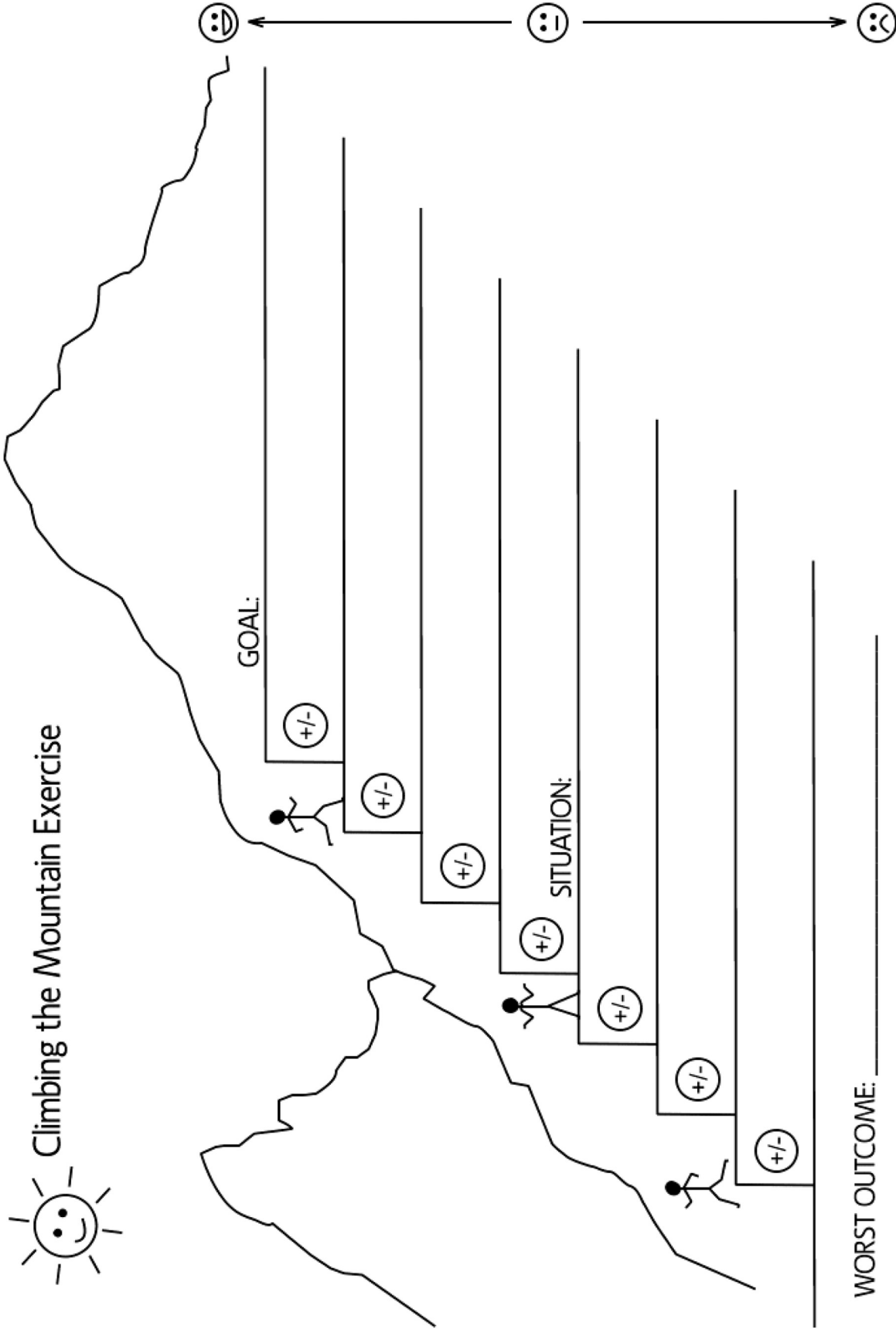


Climbing the Mountain Exercise





Climbing the Mountain Exercise



WORST OUTCOME: _____

Take-home exercise:

Complete behavioral (Communication) strengthening exercises

Attached, you will find 3 worksheets that you can use to practice the “Climbing the Mountain” technique. This exercise can help you improve your communication skills so that you can better reach your goals.

Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of how you communicate in response to different situations.

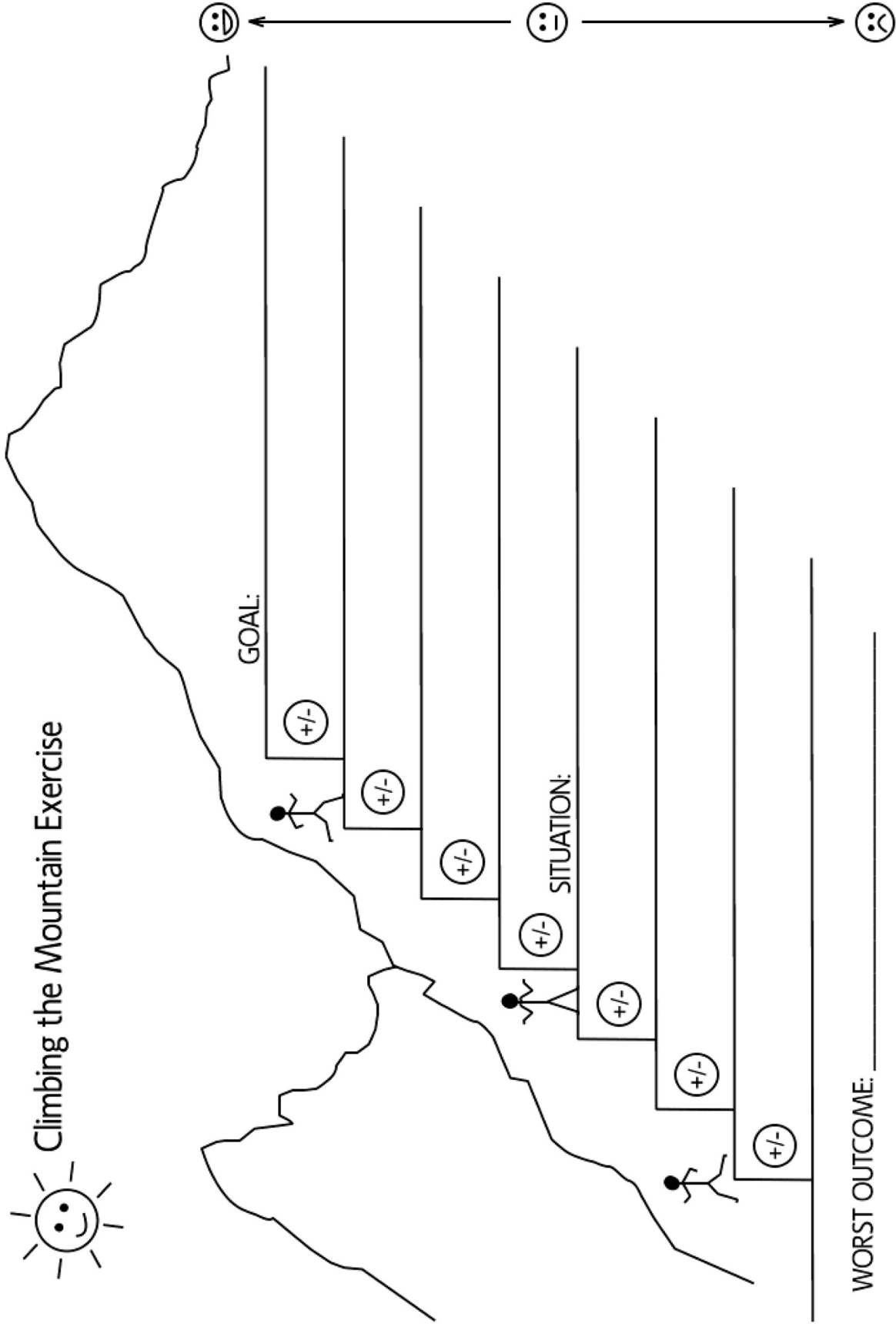
How are different types of communication related to your mood?

Practice active listening and reflective empathy and nonverbal supportive actions when you communicate with people this week.

Please complete the worksheets before next session.



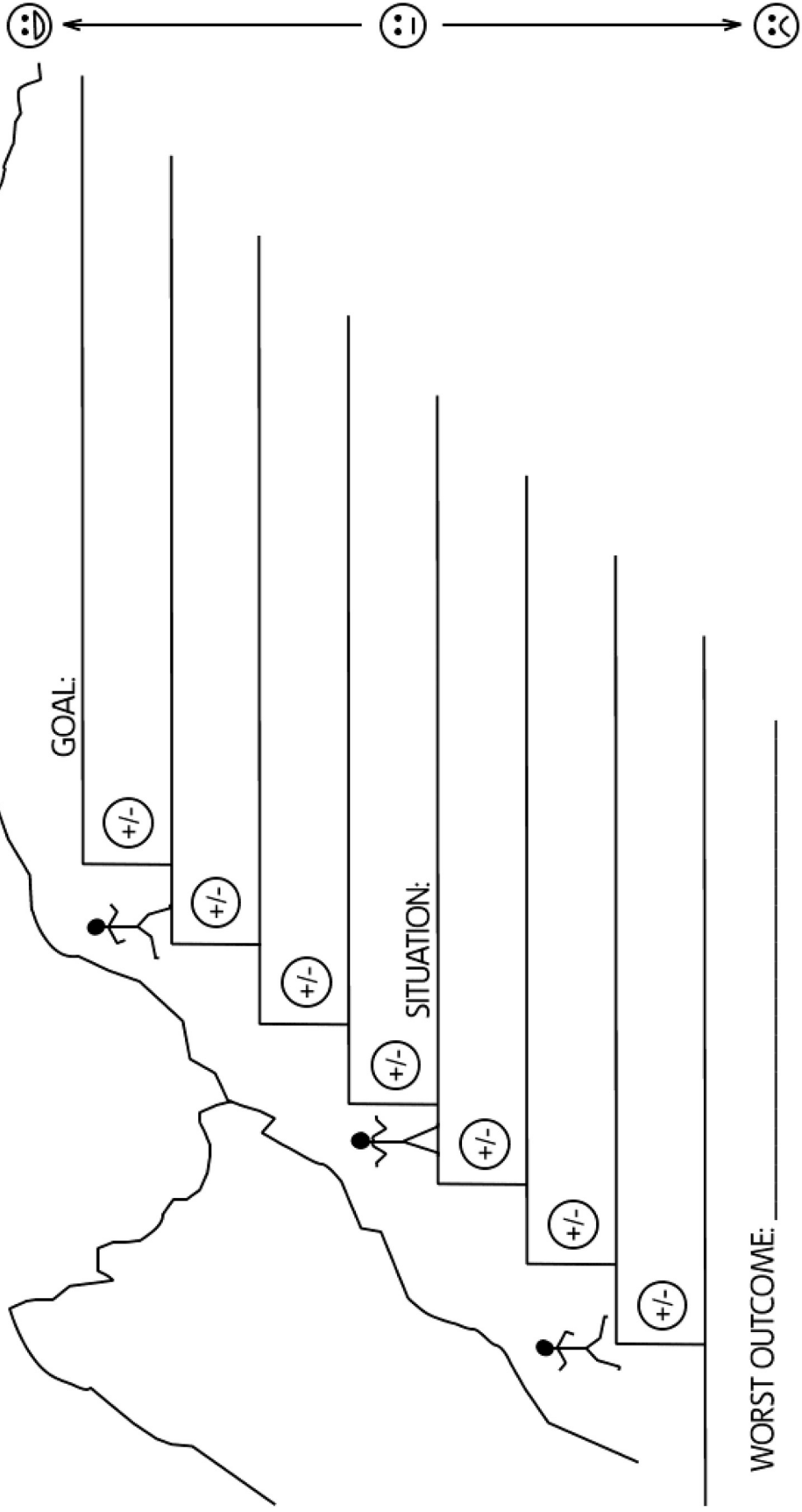
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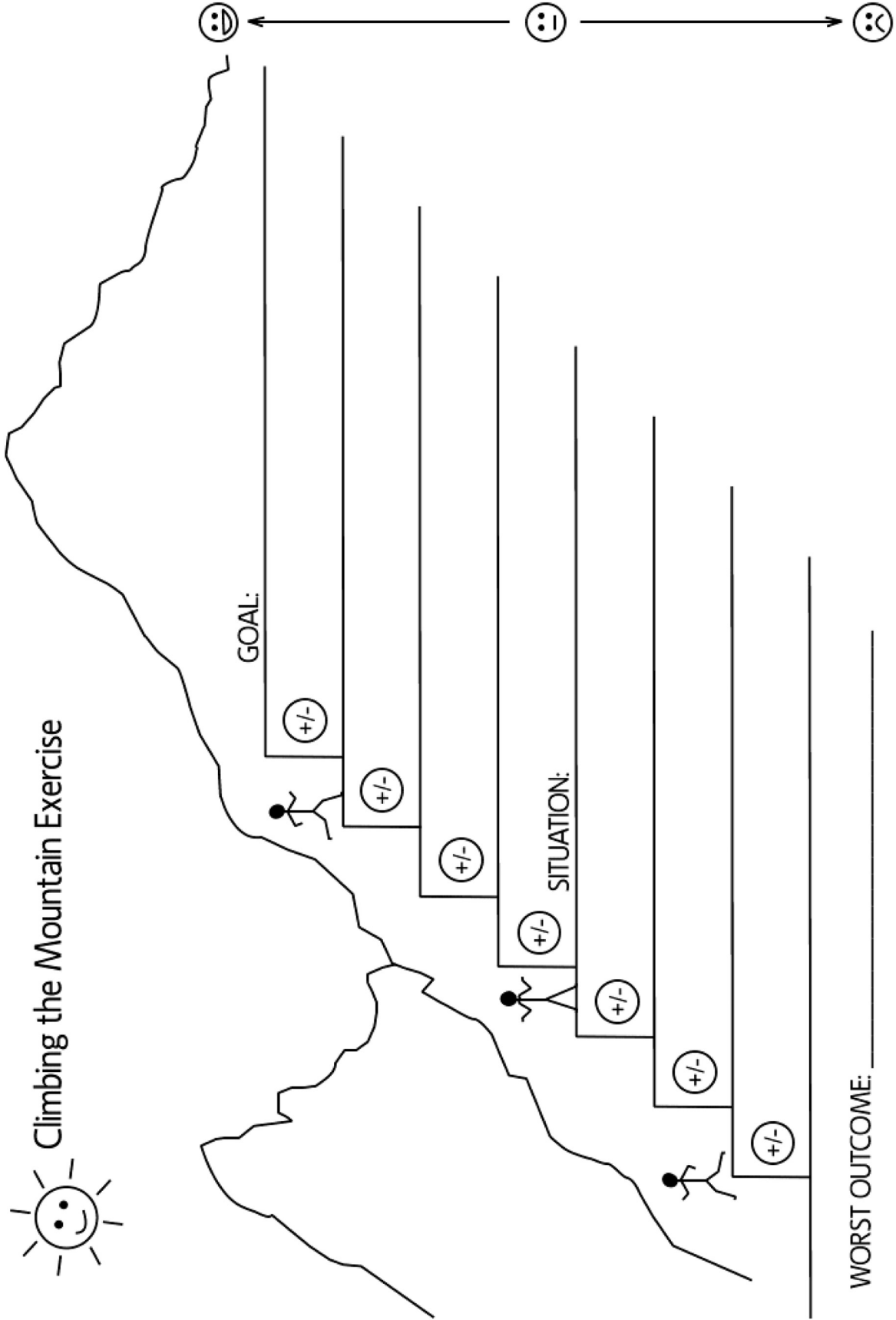
Climbing the Mountain Exercise



WORST OUTCOME: _____



Climbing the Mountain Exercise



WORST OUTCOME: _____

SESSION 6



Practicing cognitive strengthening: Understanding unhealthy thinking patterns

Session Goals:

- Weekly check-in and review of take-home exercises
- Responding to life stresses through cognitive strengthening
- Changing our response when we can't change what happened
- Understand that negative thinking is natural, but too much negative thinking is unhealthy, ineffective, and unproductive
- Identify common unhealthy thinking patterns
- Understand your thinking patterns
- Use the "Climbing the Mountain" technique to strengthen your thinking

In-session discussion:

Weekly check-in and review of take-home exercises

Please discuss how your week went with your therapist.

Were you able to complete your take-home behavioral (Communication) strengthening exercises? What was helpful? What wasn't so helpful? Please explain. What would help you feel better?

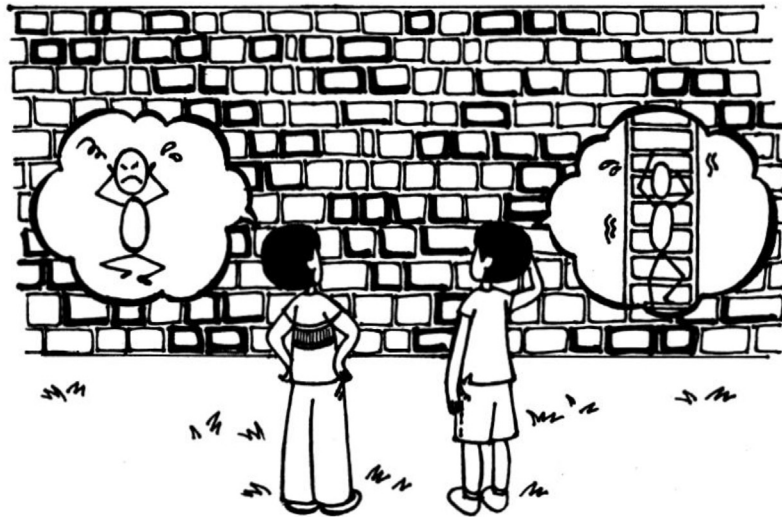
Responding to life stresses through cognitive strengthening

As we mentioned before, this program focuses on three ways to address problems: **behavioral**, **cognitive**, and **internal strengthening**.

Learning how to strengthen the way we think, or cognitive strengthening, is important because we sometimes can't change other people or our life situation. Just as we have a choice in how we act behaviorally and respond to things, we also have a choice on how we mentally act or respond. Our choices influence our ability to better reach our goals.

We always have a choice on how we respond to things. For example, two people faced with the exact same situation may have very different reactions.

You can either have a positive, healthy, or productive way of coping with life's stresses or have a negative, unhealthy, or unproductive way of reacting to stress. The former is more effective, while the latter is less effective.



Example 1: Two people get laid off from work. Both naturally get initially upset, but cope differently in the long run.

Healthy reaction:

Does best to find another job, reminds self of skills and abilities that employers want, doesn't lose hope and has faith in finding a new job.

Unhealthy reaction:

Remains emotionally upset, thinks negatively about oneself and one's abilities, feels sorry for oneself, doesn't look for another job, and becomes depressed.



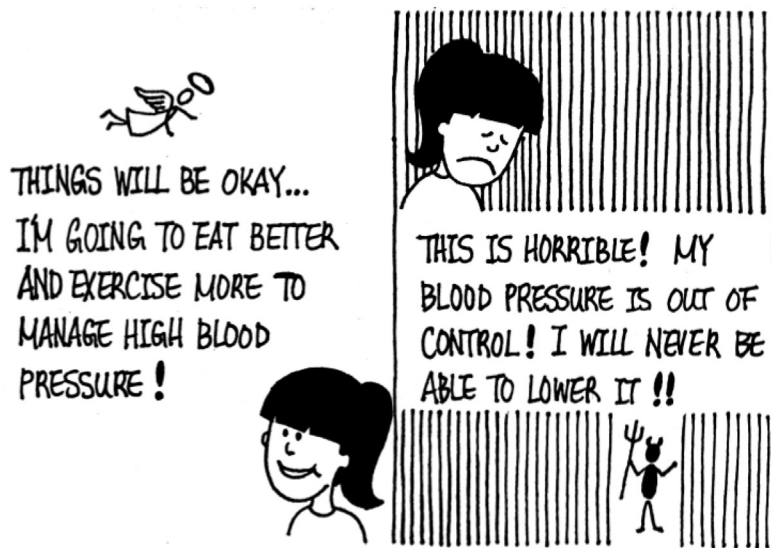
Example 2: Two people find out that they have high blood pressure. Both naturally get initially upset, but cope differently in the long run.

Healthy reaction:

Begins to eat healthier, exercises regularly, and approaches life with a positive mindset by increasing positive self-talk.

Unhealthy reaction:

Continues to be upset, feels hopeless, continues to eat unhealthy foods, doesn't exercise, and eventually becomes depressed.



In-session discussion:

Changing our response when we can't change what happened

Sometimes, we can't change the situation. However, we can change how we adjust and deal with our circumstances. Discuss the healthy and unhealthy reactions to examples 1 and 2 above.

What has been bothering you lately? Is there anything you can do to change the situation? Is there anything you can do to cope with the problem in a more healthy way? What kind of mindset would help you feel better and get you closer to your goals?

Negative thinking is natural, but too much negative thinking is unhealthy, ineffective, and unproductive

When bad things happen, it is natural to think in negative ways. The goal is not to get rid of unpleasant thoughts because they sometimes help encourage us to work harder. Nevertheless, too much negative thinking has both emotional and physical consequences that can take us further away from our goals. Negative thinking can also hurt the people around us and prevent us from fulfilling our roles and responsibilities. We need to have a balance of positive and negative thoughts in order to remain healthy and effective.



Identifying common unhealthy thinking patterns

When our thinking patterns become unhealthy, our minds become polluted with negative thoughts and cognitive biases. This cognitive pollution hurts our mental health just like different chemicals pollute our bodies. Just as our heart, kidneys, liver, and other organs help keep our bodies clean, we need to use a mental filter to help keep our minds healthy and effective.

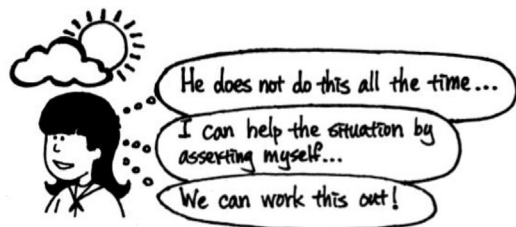
Characteristics of unhealthy and ineffective thinking

1. All or none thinking
2. Pessimistic, hopeless, overly negative
3. Critical towards self or others



Characteristics of healthy and effective thinking

1. Flexible, non-rigid
2. Optimistic, hopeful
3. Supportive and encouraging towards self and others



In-session discussion:
Understanding your thinking patterns

Discuss the unhealthy and healthy thinking patterns listed above.

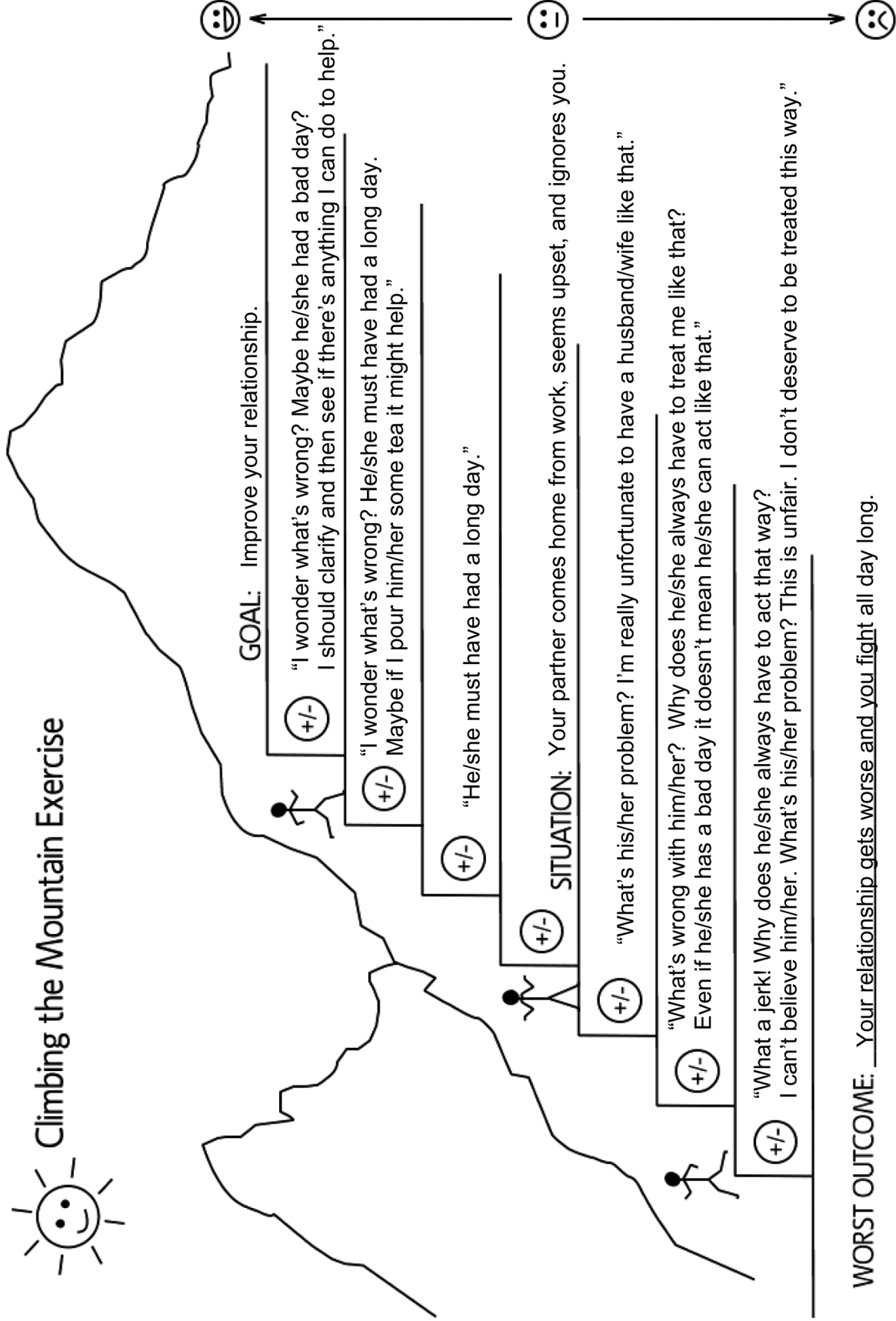
- Which patterns do you tend to use?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of thinking the way you do?
- Are there ways to strengthen your thinking and make it more effective?

Practice using the “Climbing the Mountain” technique to develop more effective, healthy, and productive thinking. See if you can identify unhealthy thinking in the example provided and in your own life situations.



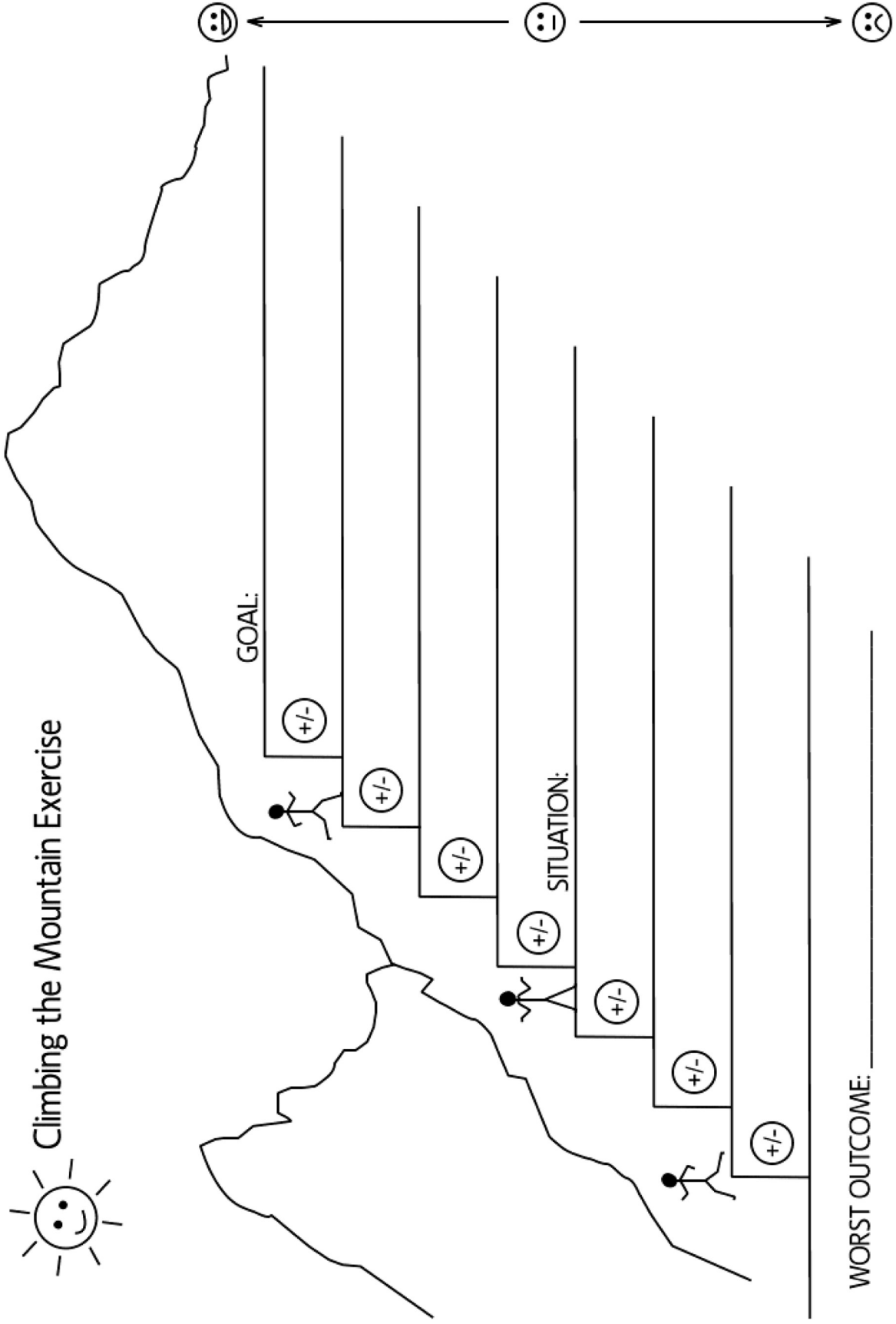


Climbing the Mountain Exercise





Climbing the Mountain Exercise



WORST OUTCOME: _____

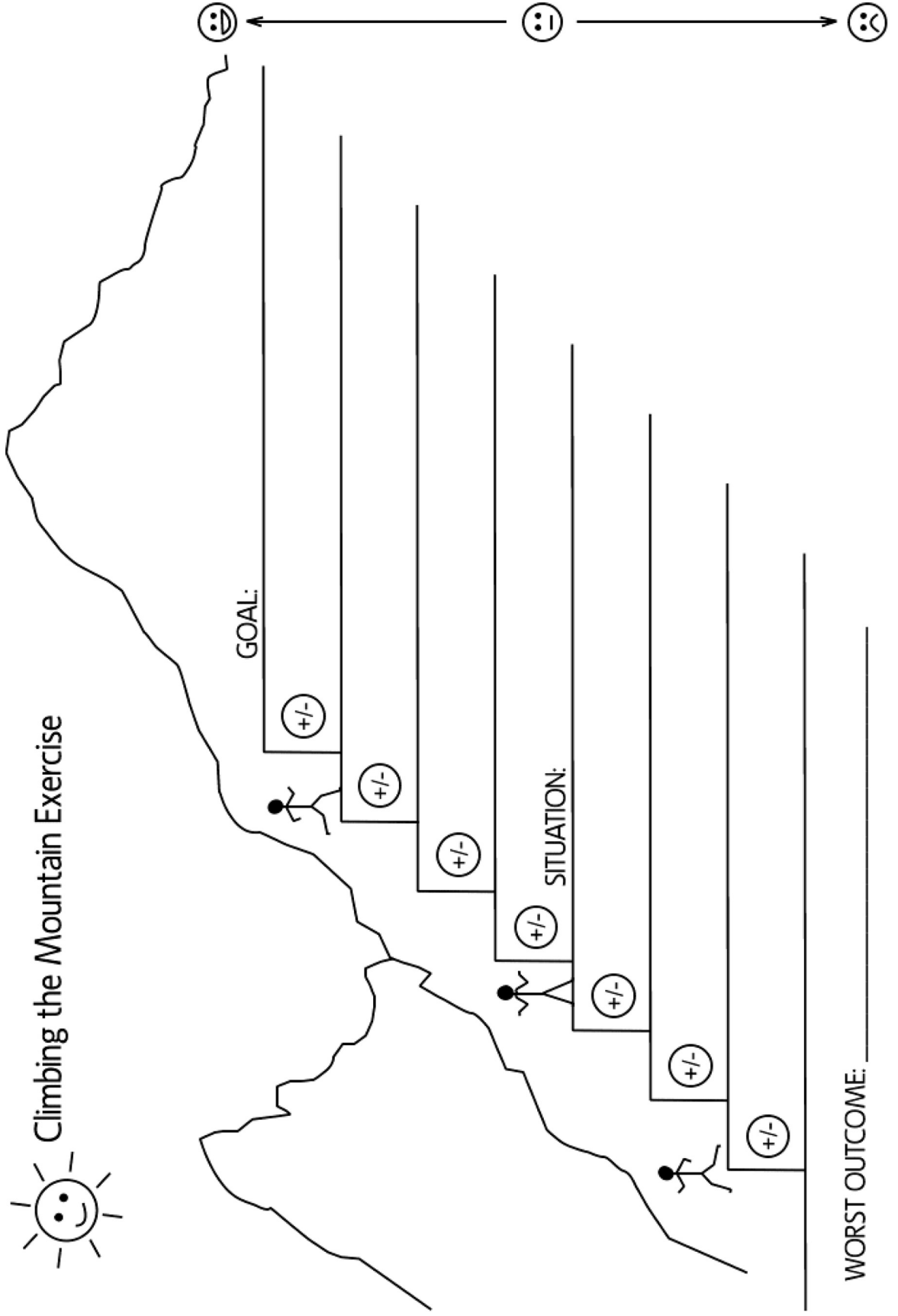
Take-home exercise:
Complete mental strengthening exercises

Attached, you will find 3 worksheets that you can use to practice the “Climbing the Mountain” technique. This exercise can help you think in more healthy ways so that you can better reach your goals.

- Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of thinking in different ways in response to different situations.
- How are different types of thoughts related to your mood?
- Practice thinking in more effective ways this week.
- Please complete the worksheets before next session.



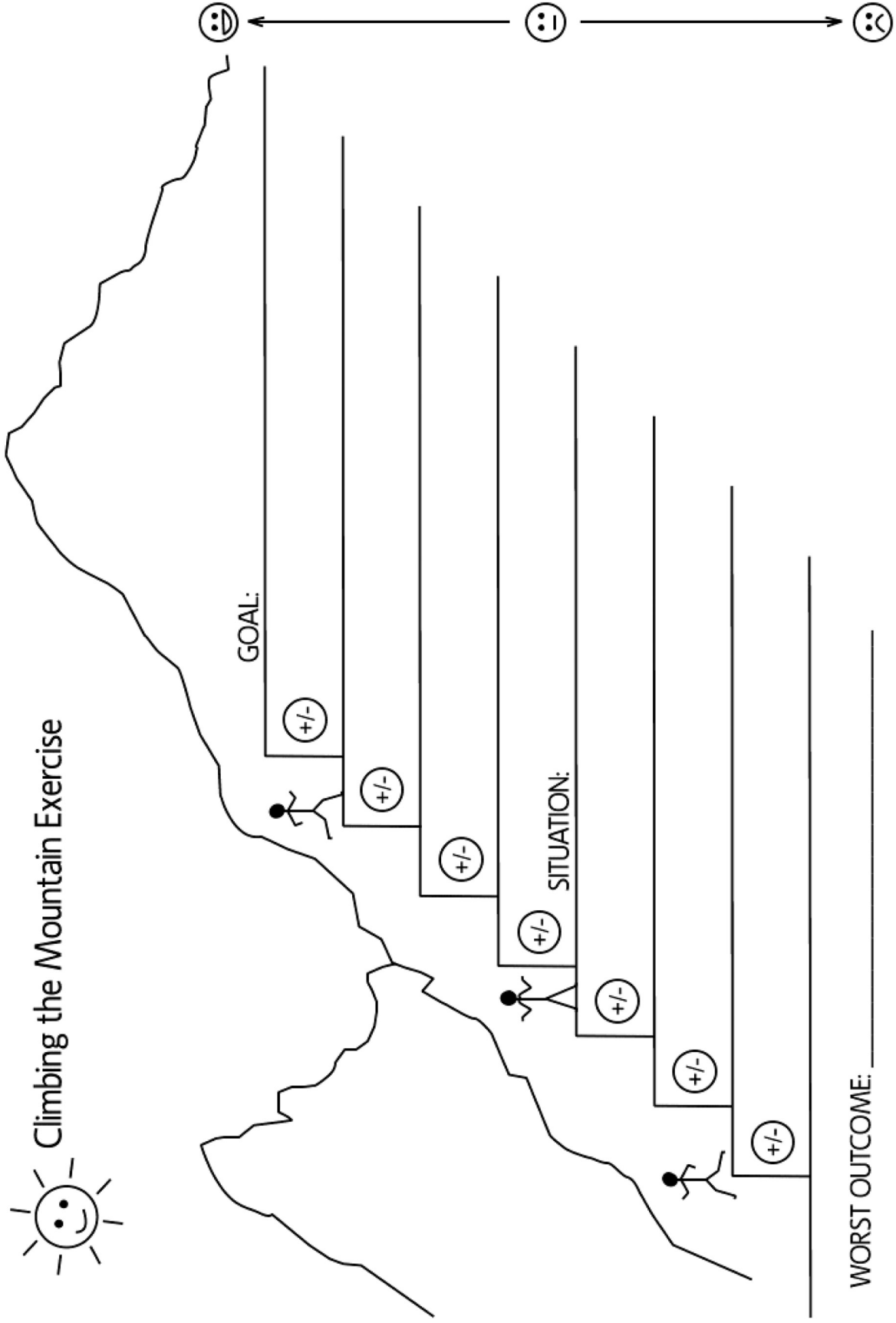
Climbing the Mountain Exercise



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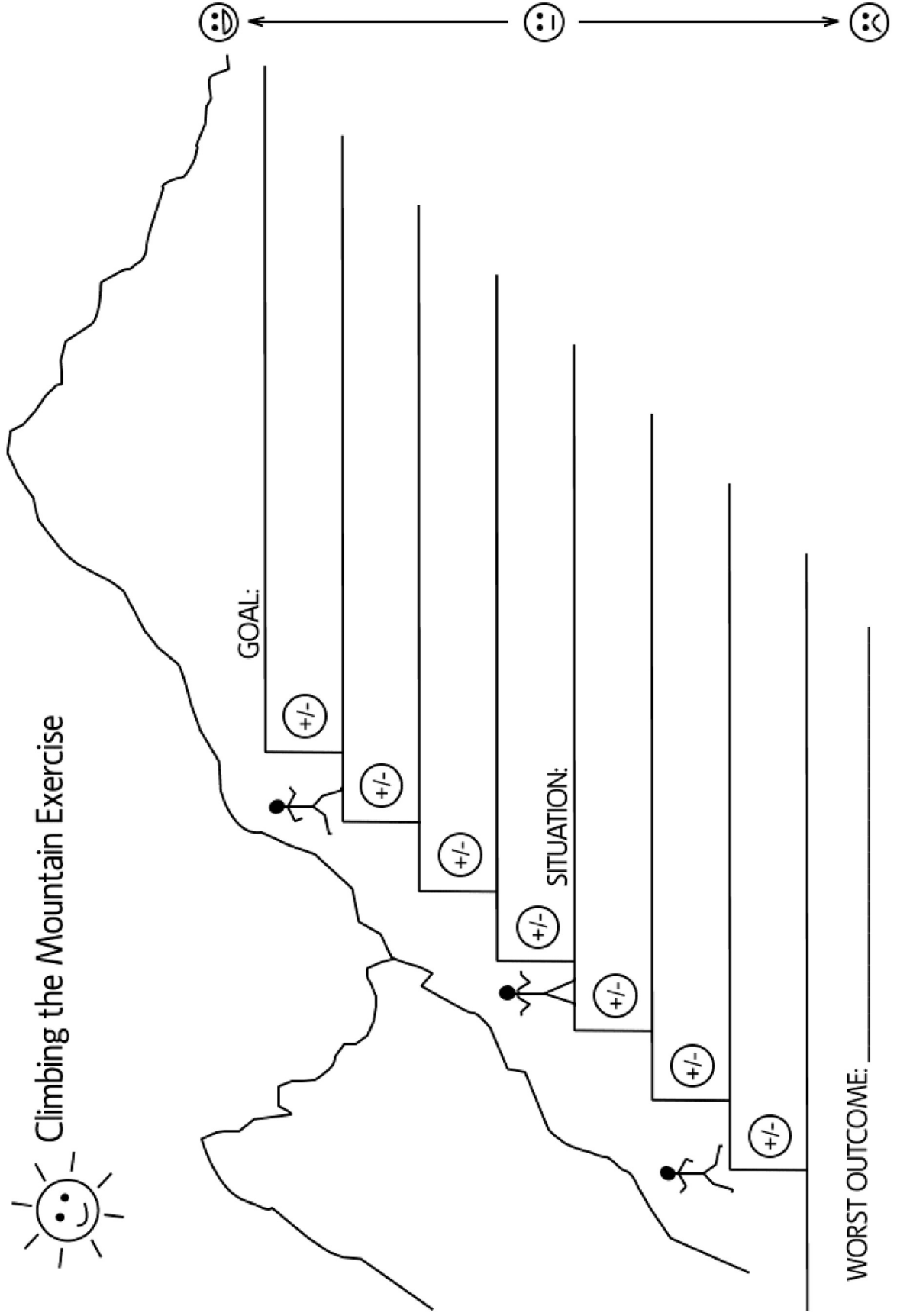


Climbing the Mountain Exercise





Climbing the Mountain Exercise



WORST OUTCOME: _____

SESSION 7



Practicing mental strengthening: Learning effective thinking strategies

Session Goals:

- Weekly check-in and review of take-home exercises
- Review your goals and signs of improvement
- Understand that negative thinking is biased and ineffective
- Learn strategies for developing more balanced and healthy thinking
- Complete mental strengthening exercises before next session

In-session discussion:

Weekly check-in and review of take-home exercises

Please discuss how your week went with your therapist.

Were you able to complete your take-home mental strengthening exercises? What was helpful? What wasn't so helpful? Please explain. What would help you feel better?

In-session discussion:

Review your goals and signs of improvement

You are now halfway through the program! Please take a moment to discuss your experiences with your therapist. How have things been going?

What were your goals when you first came in? How will you know when you are getting closer to accomplishing your goals? Discuss whether you feel like you have been making progress. What might help you feel better?

Negative thinking is biased and ineffective



Sometimes our minds become polluted with negative thoughts and worry. This type of thinking is ineffective and moves us away from our goals. Negative thinking can be separated into thoughts regarding...

- Yourself
"I am useless!"
- Your life circumstances
"I hate my job!"
- Other people
"That person is such a jerk!"
- The future
"Things will never get better."

Too much negative thinking is unproductive and a waste of emotional strength and energy. In addition, it can also be a waste of time. For example, sometimes we spend more time worrying about something than actually doing something about it.

Remember, the goal is not to stop thinking negatively, but to spend more time thinking in healthy, productive, and effective ways. It is very difficult to get rid of negative thoughts. A more effective approach is to think more about pleasant things, have more balanced thinking, and to increase the amount of positive thoughts you have. Consequently, your negative thinking will decrease.

Strategies for developing more balanced and healthy thinking

In order to better achieve your goals, there are other strategies in addition to the climbing the mountain technique that can help you reach your goals and improve your mood. Discuss each of the strategies below with your therapist. Identify which ones might work best for you.

Yes, but: Say “Yes, but” after every negative thought and replace with a positive thought.

Focusing on something else: Find something else to think about or do (e.g., listen to music, go to the gym, meet up with friends). Try not to ruminate on negative thoughts which can be unhealthy.



Worry time: Set aside some time during the day to worry. Don't worry at other times.



Visual Cue: Think of a visual cue such as a stop sign every time you find yourself thinking too much and too negatively.



My role model's reaction: What would your role model do? How would they react? How would they think about the problem?

Is it worth it?: Weigh the advantages and disadvantages of continuing to think in this way.



Other techniques?...

Take-home exercise:

Complete mental strengthening exercises before next session

Apply the skills you learned today to your life situations.

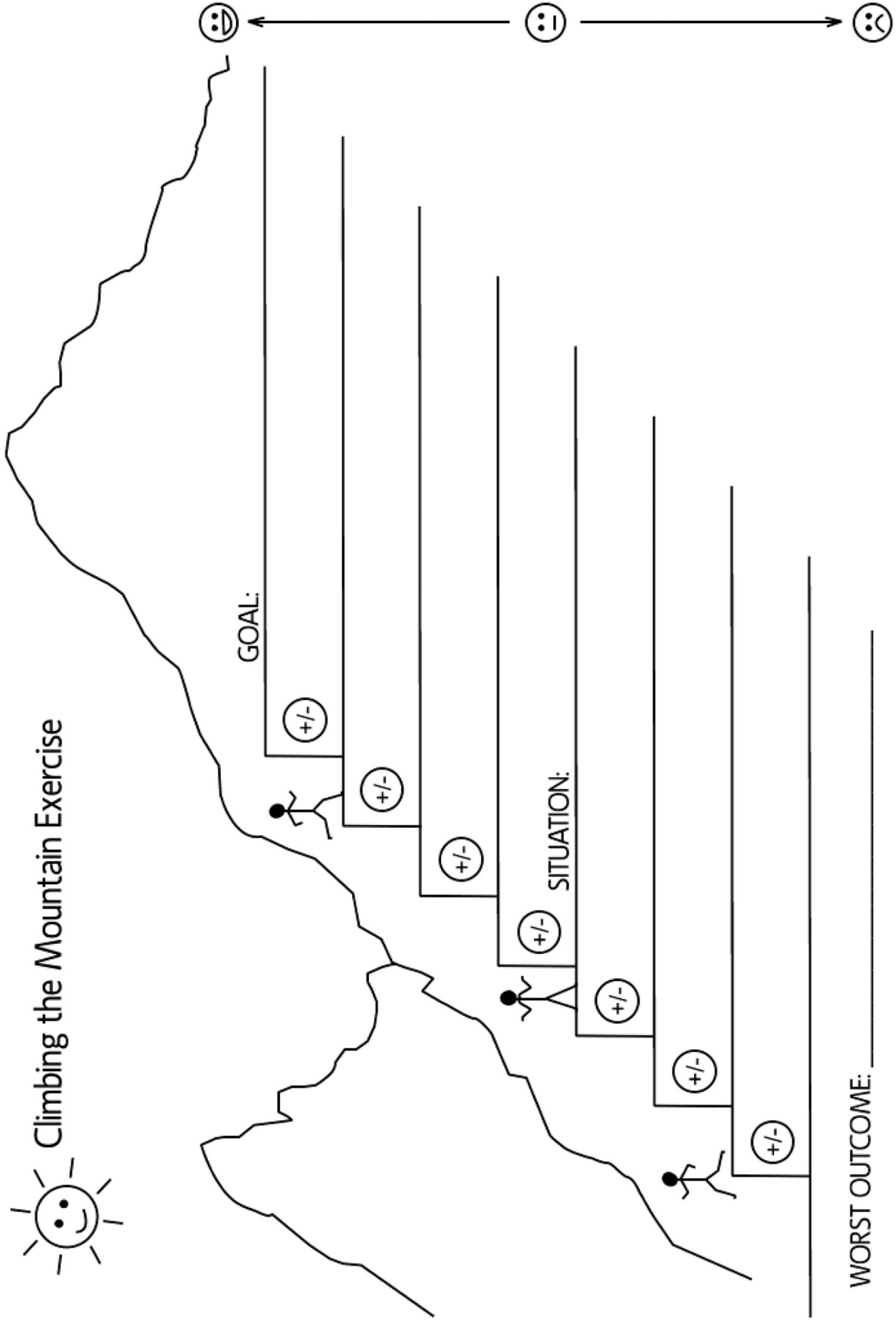
Be prepared to discuss which ones were useful and which ones didn't work so well and why next week.

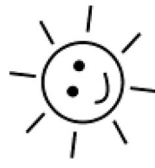
How do your thinking patterns influence your mood?

Continue practicing the "Climbing the Mountain" (Thinking) technique. This can help you improve the way you think so that you can better reach your goals.

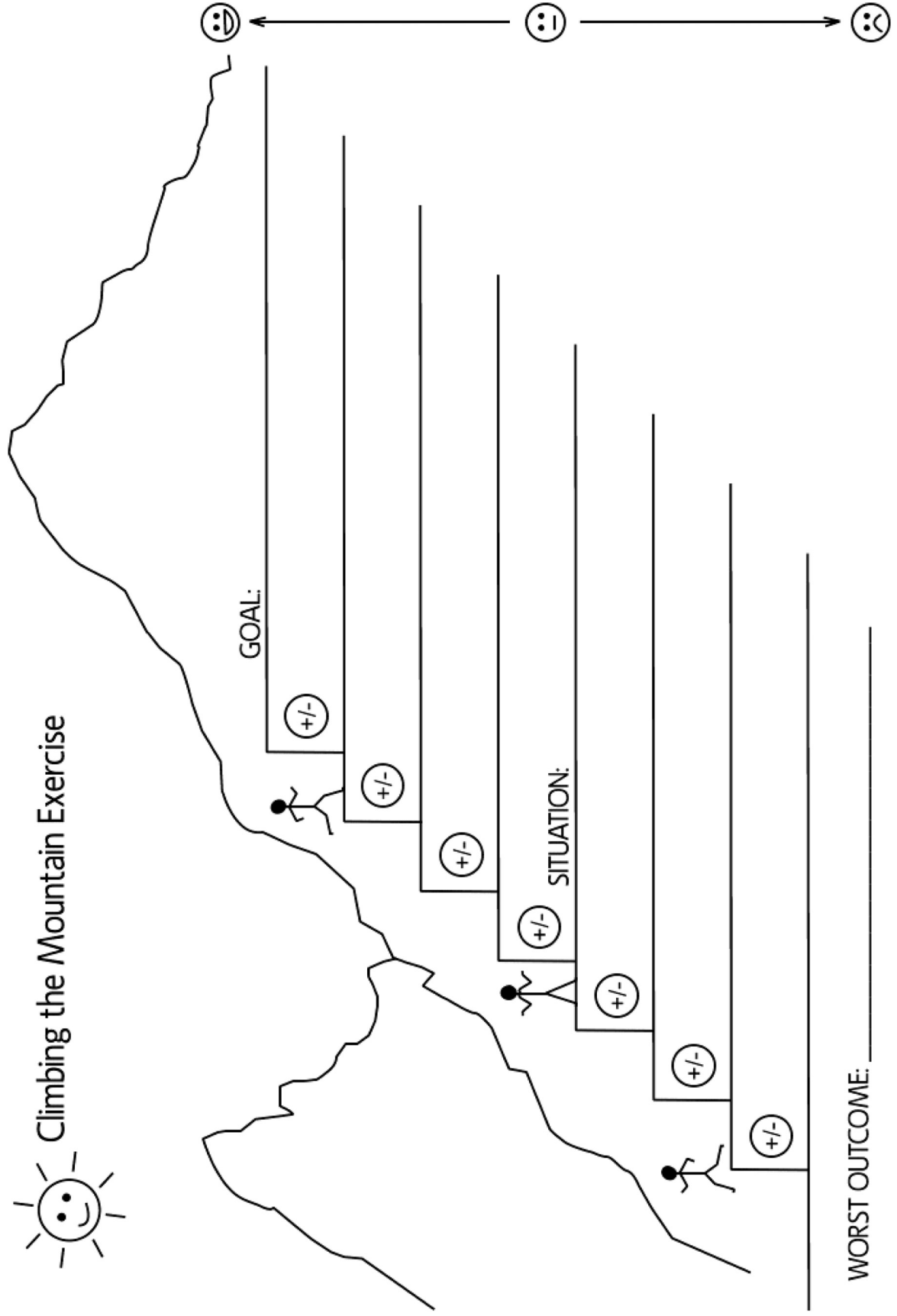


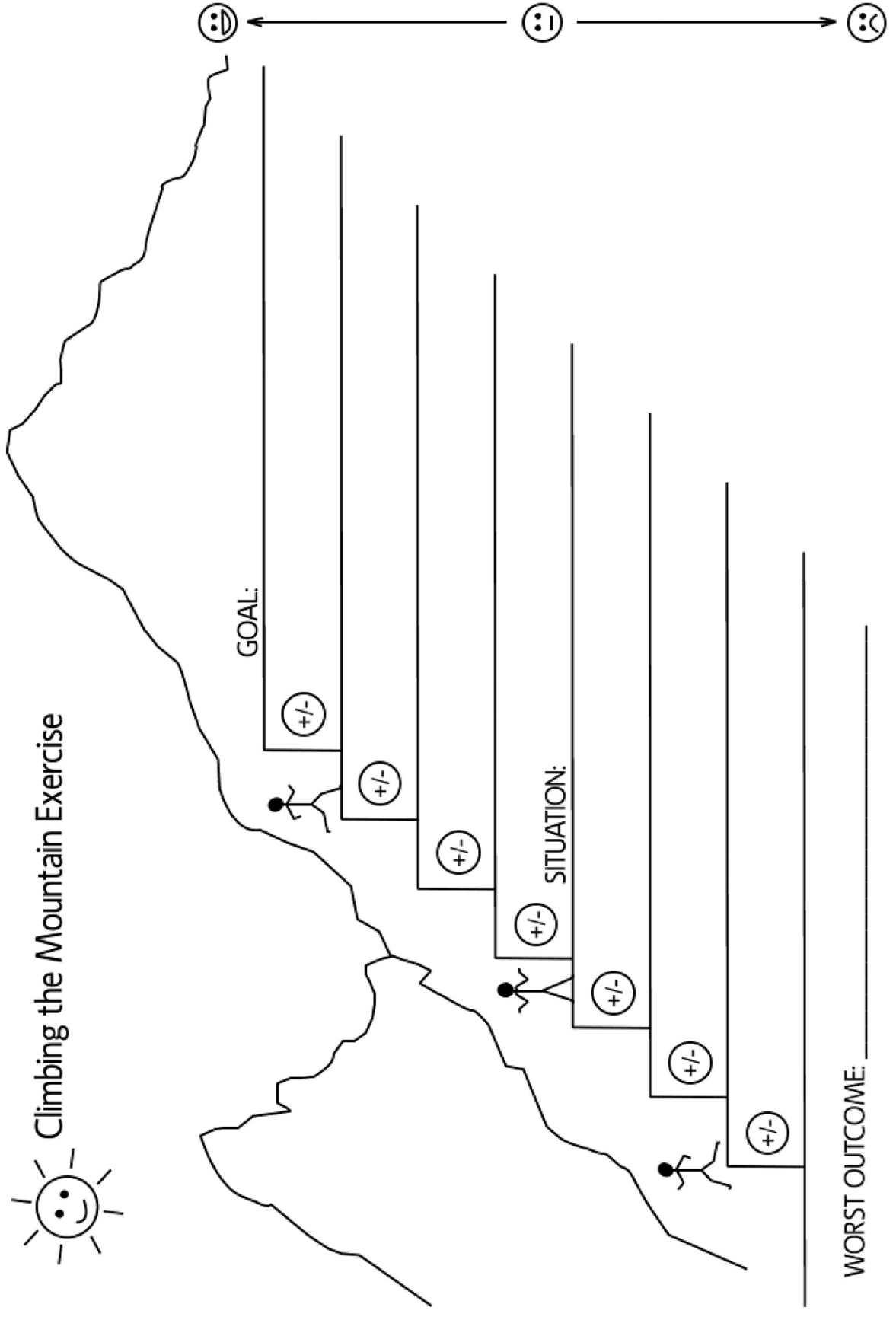
Climbing the Mountain Exercise





Climbing the Mountain Exercise





SESSION 8



Practicing internal strengthening: Engaging in healthy activities

Session Goals:

- Weekly check-in and review of take-home exercises
- Understand that engaging in healthy activities can improve your mood
- Understand different types of healthy activities
- Understand what healthy activities you enjoy
- Understand barriers to engaging in healthy activities
- Address the barriers that might affect you
- Plan the daily healthy activities you will engage in this week

In-session discussion:

Weekly check-in and review of take-home exercises

Please discuss how your week went with your therapist.

Were you able to complete your take-home mental strengthening exercises?

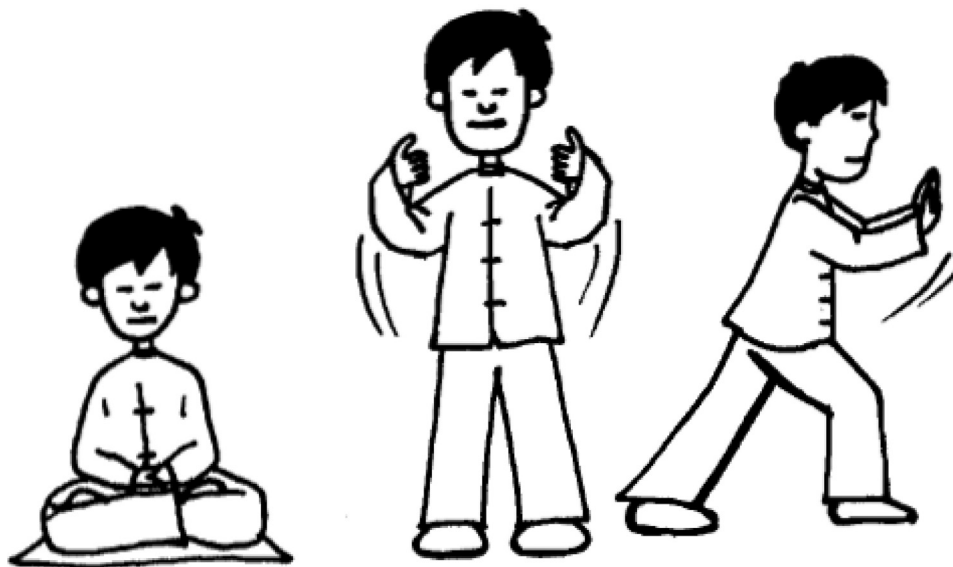
What was helpful? What wasn't so helpful? Please explain. What would help you feel better?

Engaging in healthy activities can improve your mood

Participating in healthy activities is a necessity, not a luxury or a waste of time. People who are depressed engage in fewer healthy activities. In order to combat your depression and feel better, you need to make sure you continue to engage in healthy activities. As a result, you may have to increase your current healthy activities or learn new ones.

Engaging in healthy activities can help you...

- Feel more relaxed
- Reduce the effects of stress on your mind and body
- Help you feel more centered
- Give you more energy
- Help you focus
- Help you sleep better
- Increase your patience
- Help you better manage your emotions
- Decrease physical aches and pains
- Help increase the flow of healthy “Qi” or energy
- Reduce the stagnation of Qi or energy in your mind and body



Understanding different types of healthy activities

There are 4 main types of healthy activities. They include physical, social, task oriented, and relaxing. Some of these categories overlap, and there will be activities that belong to multiple categories. Please circle the ones that would be most enjoyable for you. Are there activities that you enjoy that are not included in this list?

Physical	Social	Task oriented	Relaxing
Going to the gym	Spending time with friends and family	Cooking	Reading
Jogging	Playing mahjong	Cleaning	Taking a hot shower or bath
Lifting weights	Playing cards		Getting a massage
Walking	Playing board games		Listening to music
Yoga	Eating	Gardening	Meditating
Martial arts	Drinking tea or coffee	Washing dishes	Fishing
Tai Chi	Walking with friends	Doing laundry	Bird watching
Dancing	Karaoke	Shopping for groceries	Cloud watching
Hiking	Talking on the phone	Decorating	Sitting in the sun
Cycling	Going to the beach	Running errands	
Playing a sport	Watching a movie with friends	Home improvement	
Swimming	Going to church	Reading	Listening to running water (rivers, ocean, waterfalls, or fountains)
Walking the dog	Going to a community event	Going to the library	Mindfulness
Ping pong	Joining a club	Taking a class	Deep breathing
Badminton	Volunteering	Paying the bills	Progressive muscle relaxation
Golf	Visiting your relatives	Shopping smart and finding bargains	Playing a musical instrument
	Watching soap operas	Knitting	Breathing fresh air
	Raising a pet		Going to the beach
	Babysitting		Taking care of others
			Reflecting on good memories

In-session discussion:			
What activities do you enjoy?			
<p>What kinds of activities do you like? Are these activities that you currently do, used to do, or need to learn? Please list at least 4 activities for each category listed below.</p>			
Physical exercise	1. _____	3. _____	
	2. _____	4. _____	
Social	1. _____	3. _____	
	2. _____	4. _____	
Task oriented	1. _____	3. _____	
	2. _____	4. _____	
Relaxing	1. _____	3. _____	
	2. _____	4. _____	

Barriers to engaging in healthy activities

Sometimes, it is difficult to follow-through with the healthy activities we plan. Barriers include...

Poor excuses: Thinking that it takes too much time, that you won't enjoy yourself, or using not having enough money as an excuse.

Unhealthy activities: Drinking alcohol, smoking, using drugs, gambling, and staying in bed all day long.

Setting unrealistic goals: Leading to failure, disappointment, reinforcing of negative thinking, and engaging in unhealthy activities.

In-session discussion:
Addressing the barriers that might affect you

Sometimes, we have difficulty staying on a healthy schedule and following through with our plans. What are the barriers that keep you from engaging in healthy activities? How can you overcome these obstacles? Why are the reasons listed above poor excuses or fallacies?

Develop an effective plan to overcome barriers to healthy activities by:

1. Problem-solving the barriers.
2. Developing realistic goals and expectations.
3. Practicing and taking things one step at a time (e.g. instead of running 10 miles, make progress by setting incremental goals and making small steps, such as getting out of bed, walking around the block, walking around the park, jogging 1 mile, jogging 2 miles, etc.).
4. Evaluating and re-evaluating your goals and strategies.
5. Try, try again!



In-session discussion:

Plan the daily healthy activities you will engage in this week?

Just like everything in life, we need to practice and develop our skills in order to reach our goals. With your therapist, develop an effective plan to complete at least 1 healthy activity per day. Make sure you identify a wide range of activities that take different amounts of time and that come from different categories. Realistically evaluate whether you can complete the activity on the days listed below and write down what time you will do them. What kinds of barriers might prevent you from achieving your goals? What kinds of strategies might help you overcome those barriers? On a scale of 1-9 with 9 being the most enjoyable, how enjoyable do you think the activity will be? On a scale of 1-9, how enjoyable was it in the end? Incorporate healthy activities into your life over the next several weeks.

Day	Time	Healthy Activity	Barriers	Overcoming Barrier	Anticipated Enjoyment (1-9)	Actual Enjoyment (1-9)
Day 1						
Day 2						
Day 3						
Day 4						
Day 5						
Day 6						
Day 7						

SESSION 9



Practicing internal strengthening: Managing your stress through relaxation training

Session Goals:

- Weekly check-in and review of take-home exercises
- Understand the impact of stress on your health and mood
- Learn relaxation techniques
- Practice relaxation training
- Complete internal strengthening (Relaxation) exercises before next session

In-session discussion:

Weekly check-in and review of take-home exercises

Please discuss how your week went with your therapist.

Were you able to complete your take-home internal strengthening (healthy activity) exercises? What was helpful? What wasn't so helpful? Please explain. What would help you feel better?

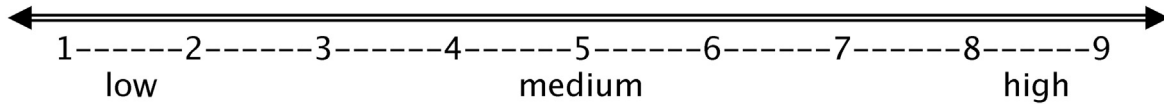
Understand the impact of stress on your health and mood

Everyone experiences stress in their lives. Facing stress is natural. However, too much stress in a person’s life can be damaging and draining. There are generally three different kinds of stress that people face. They include episodic stress, chronic stress, and daily hassles. These different types of stresses are interrelated and episodic stresses can also turn into chronic stresses. For example, an episodic stress such as losing your job can become a chronic problem if you are unable to find another job quickly. The cumulative stress you experience is called your total stress burden. What stresses are you currently facing? Below, please circle the ones that apply to you. Are there stressors that you face that are not included in the list below? Please write them down in the spaces provided.

Total Stress Burden		
Episodic Stress	Chronic Stress	Daily Hassles
Losing a job	Being unemployed	Cleaning the house
Getting robbed	Family problems	Paying the bills
Death of a loved one	Stressful work environment	Finding childcare
Being sued	Language problems	Running errands
Moving to a new place	Immigration stress	Time management
Divorce	Transportation problems	Taking care of others
War	Difficulties finding a friends/partner	Cooking dinner
Natural disaster	Caring too much about what others think	Picking up the kids
Being physically abused	Being taken advantage of	1.-----
Being sexually assaulted	Academic pressures	2.-----
1.-----	Being separated from family	3.-----
2.-----	Problems with visa/residency	
3.-----	1.-----	
	2.-----	
	3.-----	

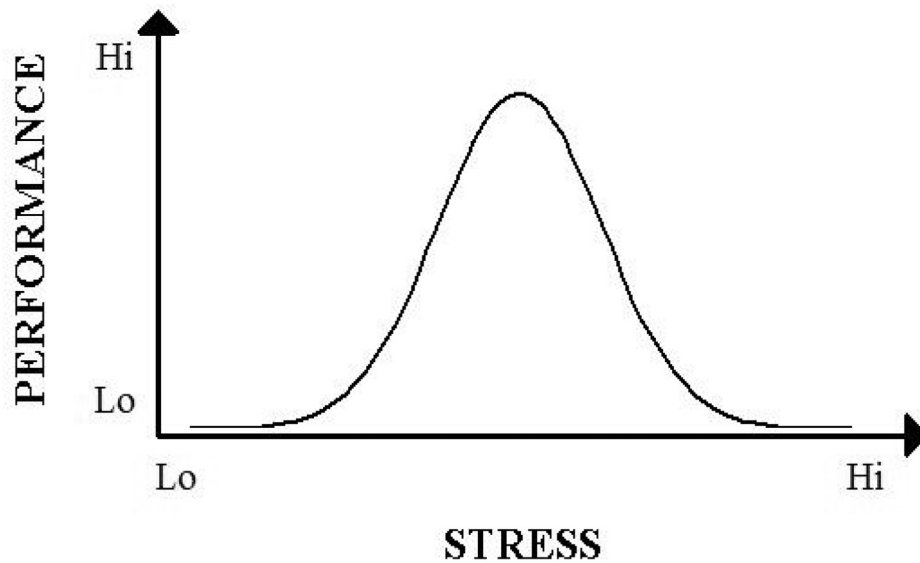


On a scale between 1 through 9, how stressed are you?



Although a little bit of stress in life can help people work harder and perform better, too much stress can take its toll on our physical and mental health. In addition, too much stress can negatively influence your performance. How does stress influence your health? How has your stress influenced your relationships? How has stress influenced your performance? Your therapist will explain the Stress-Performance Curve depicted in the figure below.

Stress-Performance Curve



Learning relaxation techniques

In addition to exercise and healthy activities, we can also use different relaxation techniques to help us become centered and balanced. Relaxation is very important for our physical and mental health. In addition to resolving our life stresses directly, it is important for us to learn how to relax and cope with our stress in a healthy way. With your therapist, practice some of the relaxation techniques that are described below.



Centering: *Meditation techniques*

Deep breathing and meditation helps people feel more relaxed and centered. There are many different types. Some focus on the inhaling and exhaling of your breath. Others use the assistance of music, chants, body/hand poses, sound, or visualization to help one feel more relaxed and centered. It is important for you to find the type that works best for you.



Relaxation: *Progressive Muscle Relaxation*

This consists of a series of tensing and relaxing different parts of your face and body. Start from the top of your body and work your way down. Tense each part of your body for 10–15 seconds, then release. Move on to the next part of your body. This strategy is especially effective for those who have a lot of tension, worry, and frustration in your life.



Energy: *Closeness with Nature*

There are many types of energy building techniques. For example, the solar technique involves sitting in the sun for several minutes and letting the sunlight energize and rejuvenate you. Since depression is related to “Yin Qi” or “Dark Energy,” sitting in the sun will rebalance your energy by generating “Yang Qi” or “Light Energy.” It is important to visualize the energy of the sun warming your mind, body, and spirit, and lighting up the darkness of your depression. You can also use a water technique by sitting next to running water (e.g., a fountain, river, waterfall, or ocean), and letting the sound of water cleanse your mind, body, and spirit. Notice your thoughts and worries as they enter you mind. Learn to let them go and watch the unhealthy thoughts and feelings flow way naturally with the water.

Mindfulness: *Massaging one's mind*



Developing mindfulness is important. It can help people manage their emotions and gain perspective in life. The massaging one's mind technique involves massaging one's eyebrows and in between one's eyes to open up what's called one's third eye or mind's eye. Focus on seeing the world in a positive way and visualize what you need to do to reach your goals. Let go of your stresses and see the world in a new light.

Reflecting on positive moments



Thinking about the positive things that have happened to us or reflecting on the good things that are happening right now in our life can help us reduce our stress levels, feel more centered, and improve our mood. Spend some time thinking about pleasant events, looking at pictures associated with good times, and appreciating what you do have rather than what you don't have. Remember, the glass can be either half empty or half full, depending on which way we look at it. This is up to you. Try to use a positive mental filter and have a positive outlook on life.

Cleansing or soothing activities



Engaging in relaxing activities such as taking a bath, a hot shower, using a jacuzzi, sitting in the sauna, or taking a nap in a relaxing place can help reduce stress and improve your mood. These activities not only help you feel more relaxed, but they also help you feel cleaner and more rejuvenated.

Other techniques



Are there other things that you can do to help you feel more relaxed? Talk about them with your therapist or ask your therapist if there are other techniques that they would recommend.

In-session activity:
Practicing relaxation techniques

Which one of the above relaxation techniques is most appealing to you?

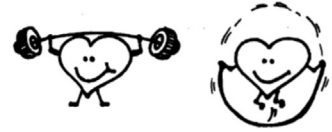
Just like everything else in life, you need to practice and develop your relaxation skills in order to feel more centered and healthy. Go ahead and practice some of these techniques with your therapist.

Take-home exercise:
Complete internal strengthening (Relaxation) exercises before next session

Apply the skills you learned today to your everyday life. Be prepared to discuss which ones were useful, which ones didn't work so well, and the reasons why next week. What kinds of barriers might prevent you from achieving your goals? What kinds of strategies might help you overcome those barriers? On a scale of 1-9 with 9 being the most enjoyable, how enjoyable do you think the relaxation activity will be? On a scale of 1-9, how enjoyable was it in the end? In addition to practicing relaxation techniques this week, also remember to continue engaging in healthy activities this week.

Day	Time	Relaxation Technique	Barriers	Overcoming Barrier	Anticipated Enjoyment (1-9)	Actual Enjoyment (1-9)
Day 1						
Day 2						
Day 3						
Day 4						
Day 5						
Day 6						
Day 7						

SESSION 10



Practicing emotional strengthening: Principles of everyday healthy living

Session Goals:

- Weekly check-in and review of take-home exercises
- Understand emotional strengthening
- Understand principles of everyday healthy living
- Practice the principle of everyday healthy living
- Use the climbing the mountain technique for internal strengthening
- Review your goals and markers of improvement
- Complete internal strengthening exercises before next session

In-session discussion:

Weekly check-in and review of take-home exercises

Please discuss how your week went with your therapist.

Were you able to complete your take-home internal strengthening (Relaxation) exercises? What was helpful? What wasn't so helpful? Please explain. What would help you feel better?

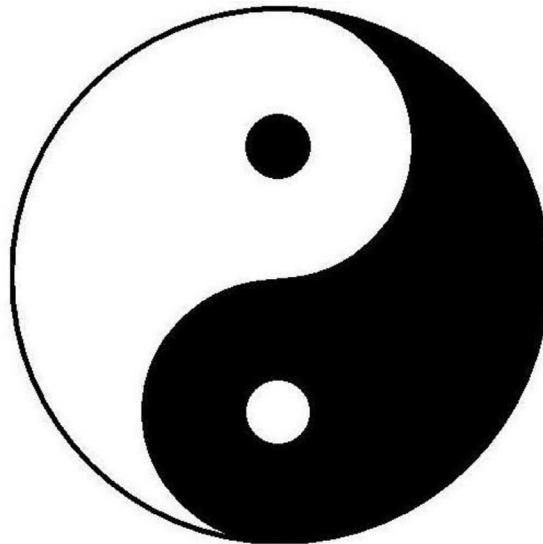
Understanding emotional strengthening

Negative emotions and self-defeating thoughts can be natural. However, life can be unsatisfying when one gets trapped in negativity and unhealthy cycles. In order to make the most out of life, we need to learn how to let go of negativity and embrace the positive things around us.

In addition, it's important that we have balance in our emotions and energy. Take a look at the feelings listed in the Yin Yang diagram. This is just one example of a symbol that can help us remember to be balanced and centered. Are there other symbols that represent balance and harmony that you can think of? Please, check off the emotions that you have been feeling lately. Assess how balanced you've been feeling lately and focus on the positive emotions that can help you feel better.

Positive Emotions

- Compassion
- Joy
- Gratitude
- Satisfaction
- Contentment
- Love
- Thoughtfulness
- Optimism
- Respect
- Valued
- Accomplished
- Useful
- Fortunate
- Belonging
- Supported
- Calm
- Happy



Negative Emotions

- Anger
- Fear
- Sadness
- Jealousy
- Greed
- Suspiciousness
- Worrying too much
- Critical
- Loneliness
- Arrogance
- Pessimism
- Bored
- Empty
- Lost
- Helpless
- Worthless
- Ashamed

Understanding the principles of everyday healthy living

How balanced have your emotions been lately? How might you rebalance your energy and emotions and become more centered? Reflecting upon the principles of everyday healthy living can help you improve your mood, feel more balanced, and have a more positive outlook on life. These principles have helped people for thousands of years and have strengthened and enriched people's lives during difficult times. In addition, they help improve our mood and help us become more emotionally healthy. Talk about how you might better integrate each of the following principles into your life. Why would it be important to regularly remind oneself of each of these healthy living principles? What would help you remember to reflect on these principles?

- Realism (Don't be too critical of self or others and have realistic expectations)
- Impermanence (Life is always changing)
- Cause and effect (Understand the consequences of one's actions)
- Determination (Work hard and try your best)
- Consistency (Following through, being reliable, having stability in life)
- Contentment (Focus on what we do have rather than what we don't have)
- Forgiveness (Learn to forgive and forget)
- Compassion (Towards self and others)
- Letting go (Release the negative emotions that hurt us inside)

With your therapist, discuss some of the problems that you are facing. Integrate the principles of everyday healthy living into your life and use them as guides to help you act and communicate more effectively. What are the advantages and disadvantages of reflecting on these principles? Which principles resonate with you?

In-session discussion:

Practicing the principles of everyday healthy living

Discuss with your therapist some of the problems that you have been facing this week. Try to practice integrating some of the principles of everyday healthy living into your life to better address your problem. Why might this be beneficial? You can choose from any of the principles listed on the previous page or use one of the examples below.

Principle #1: *Letting go.*

Letting go of unhealthy emotions such as anger, jealousy, hate, and excessive sadness can lead to better physical and mental health. Although these emotions are natural and initially can be good for us, holding onto them for too long takes its toll on our physical, mental, and social health. Take a moment to let go of all the negative emotions that have been influencing your life. Although these feelings are natural, life is much more enjoyable when we can focus on enjoyable feelings and activities.

Take a moment to let go of unhealthy thoughts and feelings. Take a moment to let go of negative feelings you hold towards others. Take deep breaths and let go.

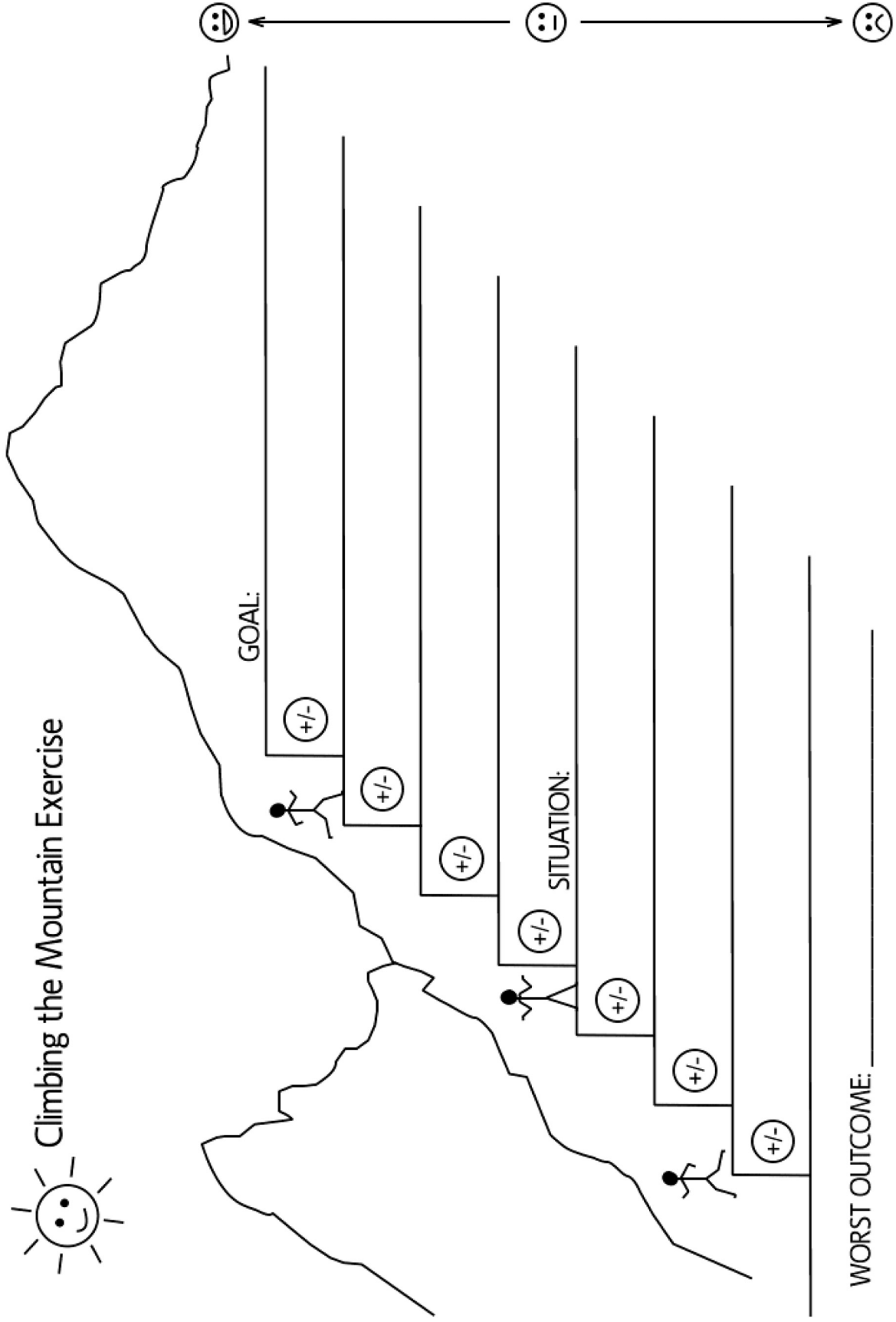
Principle #2: *Realism.*

Realism involves having realistic expectations towards yourself and others. Do you have realistic expectations towards yourself? Do you set realistic expectations towards others? Take a moment to reflect on this and reevaluate your goals and expectations.

How might reflecting upon these principles affect how you think, behave, act, and communicate? Focus on one or more of these principles while practicing the climbing the mountain technique.



Climbing the Mountain Exercise



In-session discussion:

Review your goals and signs of improvement

You are almost finished with the program. What were your initial goals when you came in? How have you been feeling?

Review your progress with your therapist. How can you incorporate each of the principles listed above to better help you achieve your goals?

Take-home exercise:

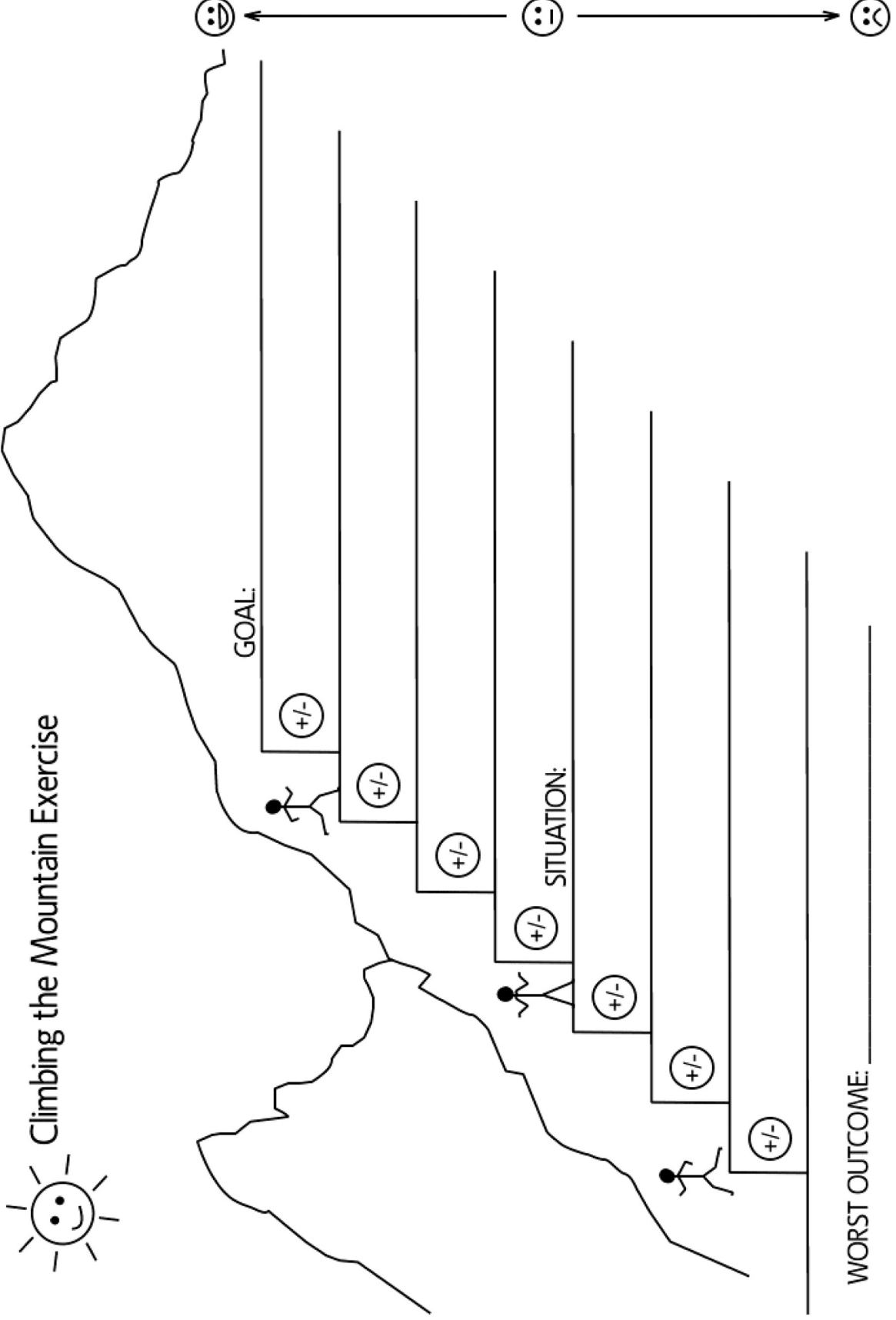
Complete the “Climbing the Mountain” technique (Principles of Everyday Healthy Living) to better reach your goals

Attached, you will find 3 worksheets that you can use to practice the “Climbing the Mountain” technique. This exercise can help you become healthier so that you can better reach your goals.

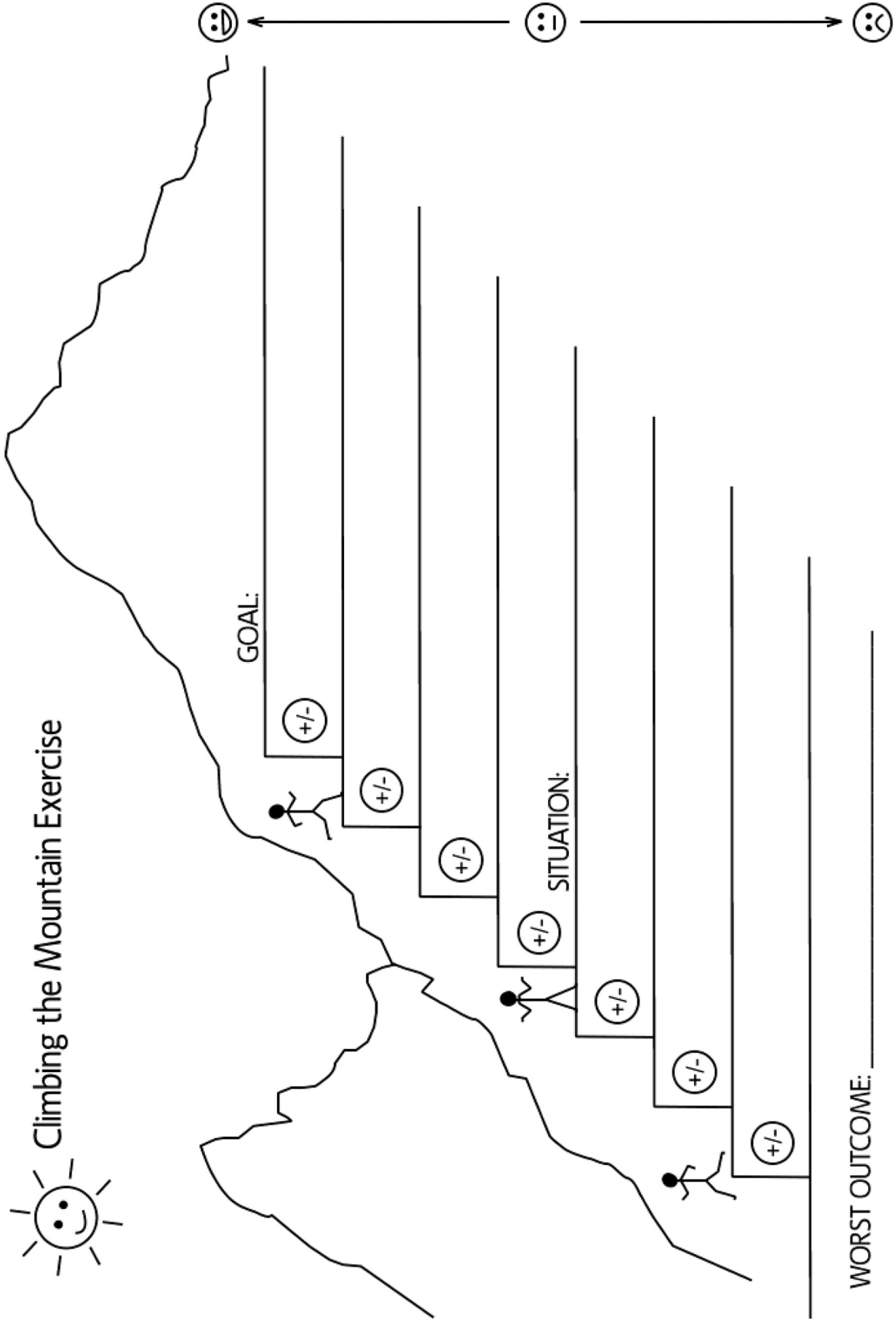
Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of how you think, talk, and act in response to different situations. How might reflecting upon the principles of healthy living change the way you think, talk, and act in different situations.

How does reflecting upon these principles affect your mood?

Please complete the worksheets before next session.



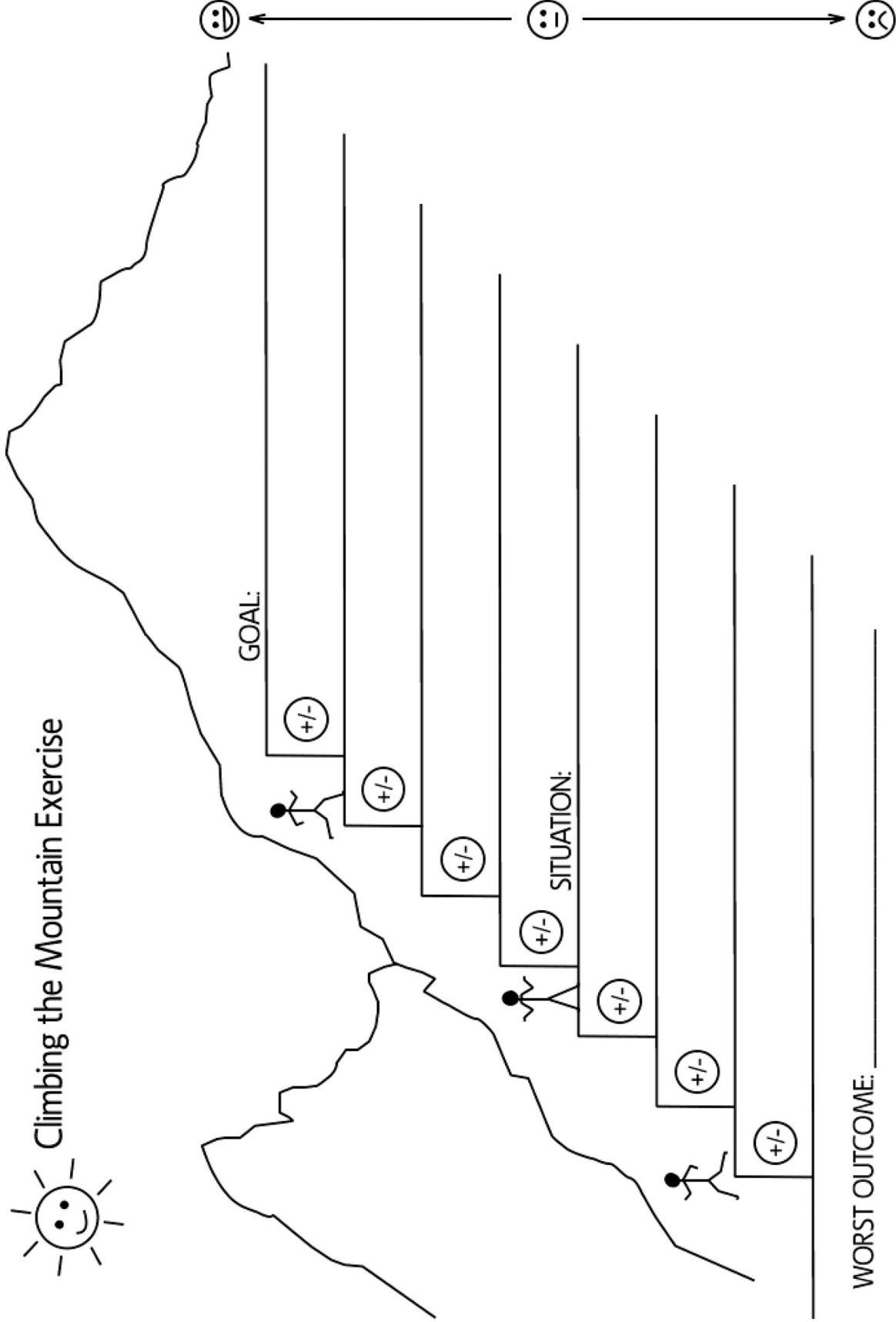
Climbing the Mountain Exercise



WORST OUTCOME: _____



Climbing the Mountain Exercise



SESSION 11



Strengthening family relationships

(Note: This is a flexible family-focused parent-child module. If you are having difficulties with your child(ren)/parent(s), then you should complete this session immediately after Session 5. If you are not facing difficult parent-child family issues, then skip this module and tell your therapist what you would like to work on during Session 11. You can also reflect upon what you've learned in some of the previous sessions and try to apply it to the current problems you are facing.)

Session Goals:

- Weekly check-in and review of take-home exercises
- Understand Immigration's impact on parent-child relations
- Understand Acculturative Family Distancing (AFD) and your family
- Understand how to be a better parent or child
- Learn to get along despite differences in cultural values
- Strengthen your family communication
- Practice communication skills to resolve disagreements
- Complete family strengthening exercises before next session

In-session discussion:

Weekly check-in and review of take-home exercises

Please discuss how your week went with your therapist.

Were you able to complete your take-home emotional strengthening (Principles of Everyday Healthy Living) exercises? What was helpful? What wasn't so helpful? Please explain. What would help you feel better?

Understanding immigration's impact on parent-child relations

Unlike other families in the U.S. or families living in Asia, immigrants to this country face different challenges. Some of these challenges are individual and related to personal adjustment and finding a new way to do things. Others are family related and affect how families are able to get along and stay healthy. We know that immigration and Americanization can sometimes negatively affect families because different family members develop different cultural values. In addition, communication difficulties develop because parents and children sometimes feel more comfortable speaking different languages. This is called Acculturative Family Distancing (AFD) and it can lead to misunderstanding, family conflict, and depression in parents and children.

Cultural value differences:

This becomes a problem because parents grow up in a different cultural environment than their children. As a result, both sides develop differences in values and beliefs, which can lead to discomfort and family conflict. For example, parents and children may have different ideas about what they want to or should study, when they can date, and even what it means to be a good child or good parent.

Communication problems:

Breakdowns in communication between parents and children occur because of differences in primary and secondary language fluency. For example, parents often speak Chinese better than they can speak English, and children eventually learn how to speak and express themselves better in English than in Chinese. Not being able to communicate effectively leads to problems in understanding, patience, sharing, and emotional bonding. Communication difficulties are also influenced by how old parents and children are when they immigrate. For example if your child came to the U.S. after their teenage years, language-based communication problems may be less of an issue.

Because AFD is a real phenomenon, families should not focus on blaming one another for having or not understanding each other's values and beliefs. Instead, families should focus on developing empathy for one another, understanding why family members think and act in the ways they do, and practicing communicating in more flexible and effective ways.



In-session discussion:

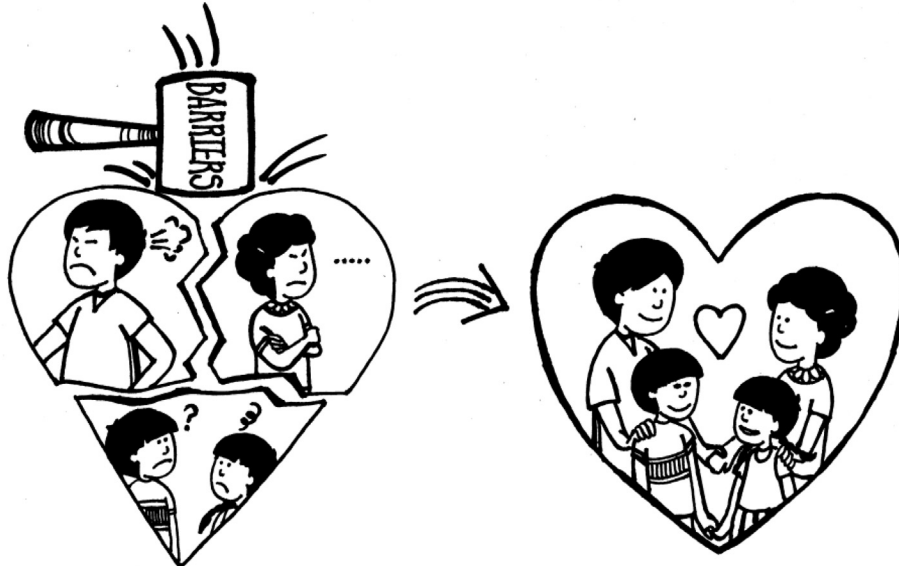
Understanding Acculturative Family Distancing (AFD) and your family

Do you feel like AFD has influenced your family relations? Why or why not?

How does growing up in different cultural environments affect people's beliefs and value systems? How is American culture different from Chinese culture?

Do you and your child/parents feel more comfortable communicating in Chinese or English? How has differential language fluency influenced your family relationships? How do Americans and Chinese people communicate differently?

How might you address the impact that AFD has on your family?



In-session discussion:

Understanding how to be a better parent or child

What are the characteristics of a good parent in your culture of origin? What are the characteristics of a good parent in the U.S.? What are the characteristics of a good parent in any culture? What are some of the things parents shouldn't do? How might you need to adjust your parenting style to better meet the needs of your children?

What are the characteristics of a good child in your culture of origin? What are the characteristics of a good child in the U.S.? What are the characteristics of a good child in any culture? What are some of the things children shouldn't do? How might you need to adjust how you treat your parents in order to improve your family relations?

How might you address each of the following top 5 mistakes made by parents and children? Given cultural differences between parents and children, why might each of these issues need to be handled better?

Top 5 mistakes made by immigrant parents:



1. Not understanding how immigration has an impact on their family.
2. Criticizing their children too much, overusing guilt-inducing parenting techniques, and comparing children to other children.
3. Not being verbally and physically affectionate enough towards their children who are growing up in the U.S.
4. Focusing too much on academics, work, and finances, while neglecting developmental and social needs of the family.
5. Being too controlling or overprotective.



Top 5 mistakes made by children growing up in the U.S.:

1. Not understanding how immigration has an impact on their family.
2. Not showing their parents that they appreciate and respect them.
3. Not understanding cultural differences in how parents express caring.
4. Not learning enough about their culture of origin.
5. Focusing too much on their individual needs and not enough on family roles and responsibilities. Not taking care of their parents when they get older.

Strengthening your family communication

There are many things you can do to strengthen your communication...

1. **Practice good communications skills (verbal/nonverbal and direct/indirect) that you learned about in Session 5.**
 - a. Use the climbing the mountain technique to figure out a range of productive things to say.
 - b. Use nonverbal communication with supportive actions to help others feel understood, and in turn, help them be more responsive to your needs.
 - c. Use active listening and reflective empathy to help the other person feel heard and supported.
 - d. Put yourself in the other person's shoes to help you understand how they feel.
2. **Use a healthy communication style, rather than a passive-aggressive, passive, or aggressive style.**
3. **Be more affectionate and expressive towards your child.** This is important because your children are growing up in a different cultural and generational environment than you. Because of this, they have certain needs that you as parents need to address even if it does feel awkward.
4. **Do something different.** Acting in the same way over and over again doesn't change the problem or break vicious cycles. Try speaking and acting in a completely different way. For example, instead of criticizing someone for not doing something correctly or taking too long, let them know that things will be okay and to take their time. Instead of not saying anything when something bothers you, respectfully let people know how you feel. Instead of grimacing and frowning all the time, try to smile more and be happy.
5. **Go home and tell the people you care about how much you appreciate them.** Communicating to others how much you care about them helps strengthen emotional connection and trust. Be compassionate towards others and imagine what life would be like without them. Communicate your caring and appreciation to the people you care about.



Learn to get along despite differences in cultural values or beliefs

Sometimes, parents and children have different beliefs about what is right and wrong. Because our cultural environment and situations influence our values, it's important to understand that these disagreements are natural. One should avoid feeling that other people are purposefully trying to disrespect them. In order to improve family relations and ensure that they do not get worse, both sides must within reason be flexible, understanding, and respectful to each other's beliefs.

Remember, you can't force other people to change. You can express your thoughts and feelings, but trying to force them to change sometimes leads to the opposite outcome. Remember, even though your circumstances might not always change, you have a choice in how you "respond" and deal with different situations.

Do you want to respond in a way that is beneficial or in a manner that makes things worse?

What strategies and ways of dealing with disagreements would be most productive for you and your family?

What are the implicit and explicit family rules that you want your family to adhere to? Are they clear to everyone? Are they reasonable and fair based on the cultural environment that your child is growing up in?

In-session discussion:

Practicing communication skills to resolve disagreements

Spend some time practicing and strengthening your communication skills. With your therapist, role-play different ways of resolving your problems.

When disagreements on what is right and wrong occur, the mere act of letting the other person know that you understand how they feel can be beneficial. In addition, educating your child about cultural differences in parenting and expression of care can also be beneficial.

Practice nonverbal communication with supportive actions and active listening and reflective empathy. Role-play with your therapist.

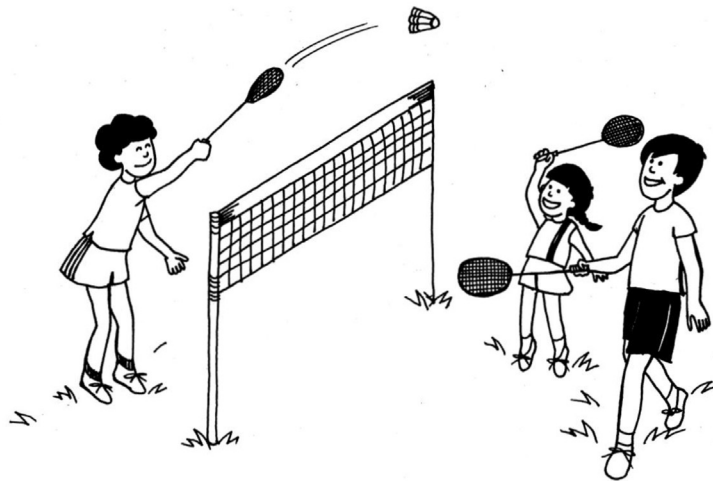
Take-home exercise:
Family strengthening exercises

Practice some of the communication skills that you learned about today to help strengthen your family relations. Which ones will you practice?

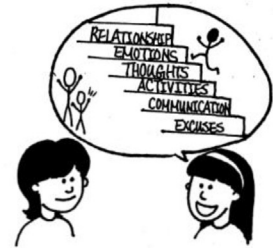
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of how you think, talk, and act in response to different situations. Try not to blame others for differences in beliefs. Instead, focus on understanding them and developing empathy and compassion for them. Let go of negative emotions that may be damaging your relationships. Set appropriate boundaries and communicate in healthy ways.

Be prepared to discuss your experiences with your therapist next session.



SESSION 12



Reflecting upon our journey and planning the road ahead

Session Goals:

- Weekly check-in and review of take-home exercises
- Review what you have accomplished in the program
- Understand why you should be proud of your achievements
- Reflect upon your journey thus far
- Discuss what to do on the road ahead
- Say goodbye

In-session discussion:

Weekly check-in and review of take-home exercises

Please discuss how your week went with your therapist. Were you able to apply the skills that you learned in the previous session to your life? Why or why not? What would help you feel better?

Program review

In this program, you've learned to improve your mood and your life situations by doing the following...

1. Better manage your problems and cope with difficult situations.
2. Act and behave in more productive ways.
3. Communicate in more effective ways.
4. Look at things in more positive ways.
5. Engage in healthy activities and self-care.
6. Strengthen your internal self.
7. Use principles of everyday healthy living to achieve a different outlook on life.
8. Understand and improve your family and social relationships.
9. Live in healthier ways and better plan for the future.



Why you should be proud of your achievements

1. You worked hard and faced your problems with courage and strength.
2. You successfully learned new skills to solve your problems.
3. You developed a healthier mindset.
4. You learned to address your problems by using the principle of “wise action.”
5. You developed greater internal strength and balance.
6. You prevented your problems from getting worse.
7. You protected your family and improved your social relationships.
8. You improved your physical and mental health.
9. You were able to accomplish a lot in 12 sessions. Imagine what you could achieve if you continue working hard and addressing your problems if you continue working in productive, effective, and healthy ways.

In-session discussion:
Reflections on your journey thus far

Please take a moment to reflect on your experiences participating in this program.

- 1) How was your mood when you first started this program? How is your mood now? Has your mood improved? Are you feeling less depressed? Were you able to reach your goals? Why or why not? What are your signs of improvement? What might help you feel better?
- 2) What did you learn while participating in this program? Was there anything that was particularly helpful? What was not so helpful? How might we improve this program?
- 3) What were your areas of strength? What helped you overcome some of the difficulties you faced? Where are some of the areas you might need to continue working on after this program is over?

In-session discussion:
What to do on the road ahead

1. What were your goals when you first came in? Were you able to reach them? Why or why not? Please take a moment to re-evaluate and develop new short-term and long-term goals for the road ahead. Make sure they are realistic.

Short-term Goals:

Long-term Goals:

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____

2. Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of staying at the clinic after this program is over. Discuss whether you will continue working with the same therapist. Are there any emergencies or pressing issues that need to be immediately taken care of before you end this program?

Advantages:

Disadvantages:

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____

In-session discussion:
Saying goodbye

1. What was it like working with your therapist? Is there anything that you want to say to your therapist before you end this program today? Do you have any questions that you want to ask?
2. Your therapist will now take a moment and give you some feedback on your areas of strength and areas for improvement. Your therapist will also share with you what it has been like working with you and say a few things before you say goodbye to each other.
3. Say goodbye to your therapist and wish each other well.
4. Please remember to continue strengthening and exercising your mind, body, emotions, and spirit!



山窮水盡疑無路，柳暗花明又一村！

“No matter how long the night, the day will come.”