

Catching Feelings: An Activity That Motivates Children To Identify And Utilize Coping Skills

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Purpose:

The purpose of this activity is to assist children in recognizing emotions and identifying and utilizing healthy coping skills appropriate to their environment.

Materials Needed:

Materials needed: Crayons/markers, pen/pencil, a sheet of blank paper, and scissors.

Optional materials: Cootie catcher template(can be found online)

Procedures:

Begin by identifying client stressors, emotions experienced during stressful events, and recognizing healthy/unhealthy coping mechanisms utilized by clients. Introduce activity as a way to aid client in identifying emotions and healthy coping skills that are appropriate to their environment.

Supply client with materials and guide them in the process of creating a customized cootie catcher as followed:

Step 1: Fold the bottom of the paper to the side of the paper to make a triangle.

Step 2: Use scissors to cut off the flap(looks like a rectangle) at the top of the triangle.

Step 3: Open paper and fold to the other corner to create another diagonal fold.

Step 4: Open paper and fold each corner of the paper toward the center point of the sheet.

Step 5: Turn paper over so the folded sides are face down, now fold all the corners to the center point.

Step 6: Once you have folded the four corners, write the numbers 1-8 on each triangle (color/decorate as desired).

Step 7: Fold paper in half and then unfold in the other direction.

Step 8: Open each flap and write appropriate coping skill (Take a 5 minute time-out, Take 3 deep breaths, sing a song, etc..) on each outer triangle (color/decorate as desired).

Step 9: Flip the cootie catcher over and write the emotions your client experiences (anger, anxiety, disappointment, etc..) during stressful situations (color/decorate as desired).

Step 10: Flip the cootie catcher over so that the emotion words are face up, fold the square in half, and place your thumbs and pointer fingers under the four flaps.

Optional Step: Print out a blank cootie catcher template online and follow steps 1-10.

How to Play:

Step 1: Choose a number at random.

Step 2: Move the flaps in and out and side to side to count out the number.

Step 3: Open the cootie catcher to reveal the emotions, ask them to choose the emotion they are feeling based on the situation and spell it out with the flaps.

Step 4: Ask them to choose another emotion and open the flap.

Step 5: Reveal the coping skill and utilize it.

Step 6: Repeat as needed.

Process Questions and Follow-Up:

Did this activity help you utilize your healthy coping skills?

Were you able to identify other healthy coping skills that you did not write down?

How will you encourage yourself to use this activity when feeling stressed?

Theoretical Rationale and/or Research Base:

This activity can be utilized in a multitude of theoretical approaches. Based on the setting in which I conduct therapy, CBT is most beneficial in working the program. Cognitive behavioral therapy's primary goal is to change patterns of thinking or behavior that are behind people's difficulties, in turn changing the way they feel. Therefore, by learning to recognize emotions and identifying healthy coping skills, the client will be increasing their time spent recognizing irrational thinking/beliefs and actively engaging in ways to challenge their thoughts/feelings.

Limitations:

Limitations identified are: difficulties in creating the cootie catcher without step-by-step guidance and making sure the size of the catcher is suitable for the clients fingers.

Practice Settings:

- ☐ College Counseling
- ☐ Counselor Education and Supervision
- ☒ Mental Health Agency/Private Practice Counseling
- ☐ Rehabilitation Counseling
- ☐ School Counseling