

Feelings / Behavior Journal For Children And Teens

Julie Artinian, Ma, Lpc, Ncc

*Private Practice, Adrian, Michigan
julieartinian@gmail.com*

Purpose:

Engage the client in identifying at least one feeling per day and experiencing one positive coping skill per day.

Materials Needed:

Notebook, copy of feelings faces, list of coping skills, scissors, tape, construction paper, markers/crayons.

Procedures:

Tape the feelings faces on the inside panel of the notebook and the list of coping skills on the next page. Examples of coping skills include but are not limited to:

1. Take a deep breath, hold for five seconds, release (repeat four times.)
2. Imagine a happy, safe place, that could be real to pretend. Allow yourself to go there in your mind.
3. Listen to quiet, relaxing music.
4. Draw a picture.
5. Stretch your body out.
6. Look at something beautiful.

Encourage the client to write the date and a feeling (sentence) that she/he experienced today. Then, encourage the client to do one of the coping skills above (in session) and write the number of the coping skill next to the feeling and/or feeling sentence. This can work with small children as well if a parent helps them: they would need to draw a picture of a feeling and the parent would help them with a coping skill.

Througout the week, the client will continue writing down a feeling (or several feelings) daily as well as the coping skill he/she practiced. The journal will be brought back into session. More coping skills can be added, as needed.

Encourage the client to decorate the cover of the notebook using construction paper, markers, etc.

Process Questions and Follow-Up:

Weekly or bi-weekly follow-up to determine how this is working for the client.

Theoretical Rationale and/or Research Base:

Eclectic/behavioral. If the client is able to write one feeling down, not expected to write pages in a journal, this allows the client to identify feelings. Learning coping skills benefits the client especially when she/he is coping with challenging feelings such as anger or sadness. This activity gives the client the opportunity to have on place to write a feeling and document a coping skill, thus integrating coping skills into his/her daily life.

Limitations:

Participation cannot be guaranteed. The client may forget to bring the journal to following sessions or neglect to engage in the journal at all.

Practice Settings:

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