



Brief Group Module and Icebreaker Collection 3 - Taking the Escalator releases brief icebreakers and group therapy modules about twice per week in the "[Forum](#)" section on the [Taking the Escalator: Group Activities by Topic](#) page of the website. This is a reprint of the brief therapy modules and icebreakers released in that forum for the six-month period from *July 2021 through September 2021*

Brief Discussion - "I Promise"

Read and Discuss: *10 promises that are too often broken: (Have you ever heard any of these?)*

1. "I promise if you let me speak, I'll definitely keep it brief"
2. "I promise I'll only take one"
3. "I promise I'll just have a small bite of your food"
4. "I promise, I just want to cuddle, that's it"
5. "I promise I'll be right there"
6. "I promise I will definitely keep in touch"
7. "I promise I won't tell anyone"
8. "I promise I'll pay you right back as soon as I can"
9. "I promise, I'm telling the truth this time"
10. "I promise, I'll quit tomorrow"

Open Discussion: *What is needed to live the kind of life where you are able to keep your promises to others, and to yourself?*

Coping Skills Brief Discussion - "Rough Day Ahead"

Discussion: There are days when you wake up and you know ahead of time that "today is potentially going to be a rough day". For example, maybe you have to work late, or perhaps you have a court date or a dentist appointment. Whatever it is, discuss how you cope in the morning and throughout the day when you know that challenges are ahead of you

- Example: *"When I wake up knowing that I am facing a long or challenging day, I make sure to envision the time at the end of the day when I will be driving home feeling satisfied that I got through it all and I focus on how good I will feel at that time."*

GROUP DISCUSSION - *What do you do in the morning to prepare and strengthen yourself to endure a potentially difficult or long day that may be ahead of you?*



Brief Module – “Risk”

Directions: First read and discuss the following brief poem by Anais Nin. ***What does it mean to you?*** - Then review the closing discussion questions at the end:

Risk
And then the day came,
when the risk
to remain tight
in a bud
was more painful
than the risk
it took
to blossom.

- What are some healthy risks you are taking or considering taking in order to change and grow for the better?
 - Who and what can help you build and sustain the encouragement, strength and inspiration to successfully “blossom” in your life?
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Brief Group Module: “My Reality”

Background: There are many unrealistic things that happen in movies quite often which rarely (or never) seem to happen in day-to-day life. Consider some examples:

- *"People are up in the morning with enough time to have a home-cooked breakfast, casual family conversation, just relaxing and taking their time, even on a school day!"*
- *"One line of clever or thoughtful dialogue or a spontaneous kiss somehow changes everything and makes it all OK."*
- *"No one has to wait for anything: People phone or email back in time, taxis arrive, the results come back in time to catch the bad guys, perfect parking spaces are always available"*

In reality there is often a lot of red tape, waiting, obstacles, etc. but yet in reality, we still get through it all.

As a group discuss the following:

- ❖ Tell the group about one or more things specific to your reality that you have to contend with from time to time
 - ❖ Reflecting on the positive – What helps you to successfully survive and thrive in spite of the some of the stresses and obstacles you face in your life?
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Group Close Out Activity - Explaining the Answer

Directions: This can be a fun way to close out group at the end of the session. Someone in the group should volunteer to go first. That person should come up with a word or phrase. There are no limitations except that the word or phrase chosen should not be overly obscure or controversial (or offensive)

Then each person in the group should come up with personal explanation for the first person's phrase. For example:

First group member chooses the phrase: ***"Migraine headaches"***

Second group member adds personal explanation to the answer: ***"What talking to stupid people gives me"***

Third group member says: ***"What I experience whenever I have to listen to country music"***

Next group member says: ***"The reason I became addicted to pain medication"***

Next group member says: ***"Something I gratefully have never experienced"***

Next person says: ***"What this game is giving me right now...ha-ha-ha"***

Continue going around the group until it gets back to the first group member who can go last by providing his or her personal explanation for their own answer.

Then the second person should come up with a brand-new phrase as the answer for the rest of the group. Then as a group go around in a circle again the same exact way providing personal explanations for this new phrase as the answer. Continue with this pattern until the group has had enough.

9/2/21 -- Icebreaker - Songs that Inspire

"Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery.

None but ourselves can free our minds."

— Bob Marley

"Don't criticize what you can't understand."

— Bob Dylan

"All you need is love."

— John Lennon

Directions: As a group discuss a song or song lyric or verse that you have found to be motivational or inspirational (or both)

Icebreaker: Amazing Phrases

Directions - If possible, text someone you know who you think will respond and ask them: *"What is a phrase that describes me?"* - If you do not have someone available to text or if no one responds to your text then just come up with your own phrase about yourself

Share and discuss your phrases as a group



Brief Discussion Module – Ugliness and Beauty

Discuss the following as group (while respecting views and thoughts of others):

- **Ugly** – *adj. - disagreeable; unpleasant; objectionable: morally revolting:*
 1. What behaviors or actions do you feel are ugly?
 2. What types of attitudes and viewpoints are ugly in your opinion?
 3. What is ugly in this world?
- **Beauty** - *the quality present in a thing or person that gives intense pleasure or deep satisfaction to the mind*
 1. What is something beautiful that you have either heard about, seen or witnessed?
 2. Complete the following: A beautiful thing that someone can do for others is: _____
 3. What do you find to be beautiful in this world?

Closing Discussion

- **How can you decrease ugliness and increase beauty in your own world?**
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Icebreaker - "Peaceful Place"

Almost everyone has a "peaceful place". Your peaceful place is that special location where you can naturally escape anxiety and stress even if it's just for a little while. As a group, discuss the following points about your peaceful place:

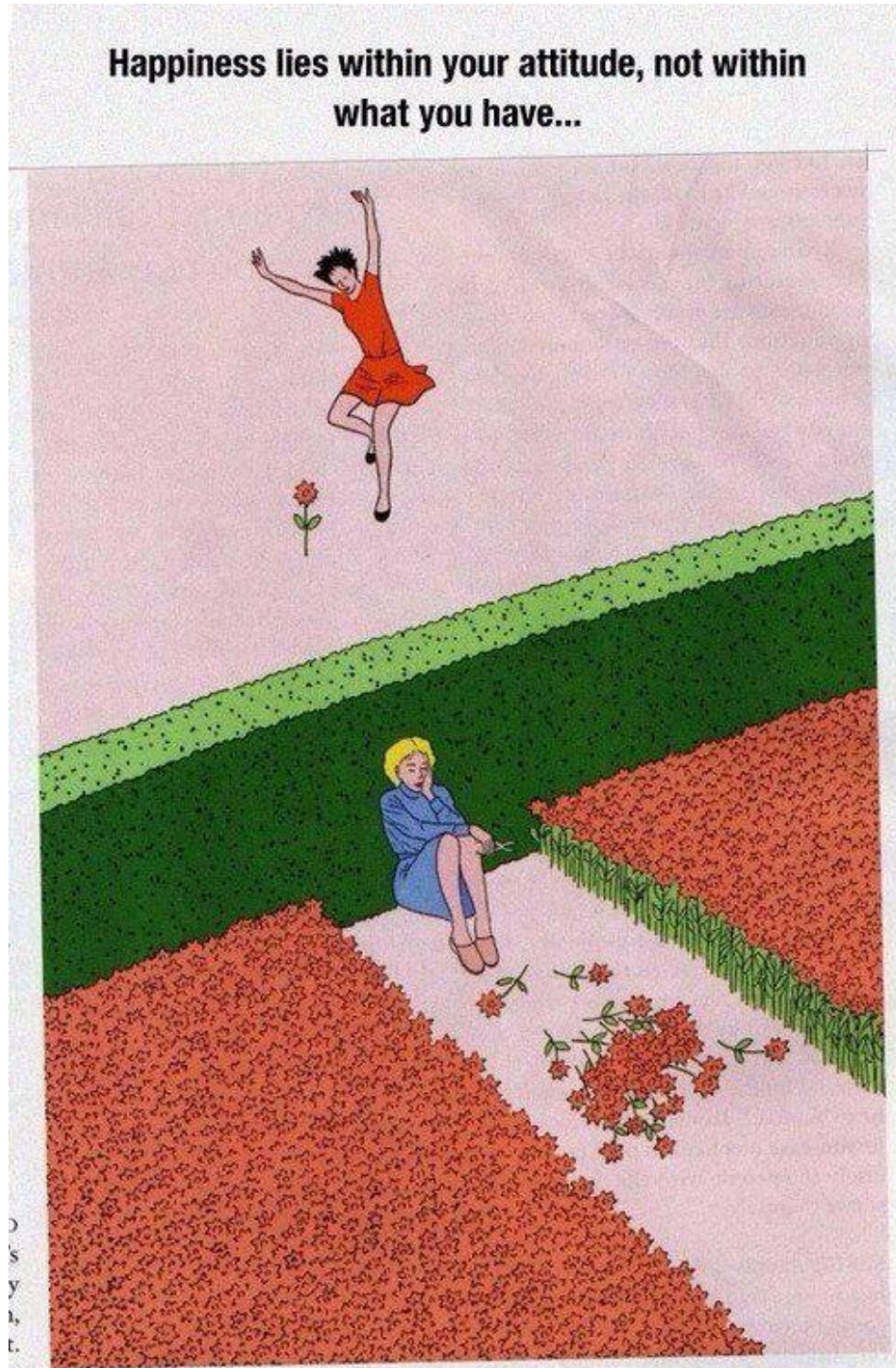
1 - Describe your peaceful place with the group including where it is, when the last time you went there and when you plan on going back - Also, what is the feeling of peace like for you when you are there?

2 - How can you replicate the feeling you get from your peaceful place, even when you are not there? - There is a concept of taking "two-minute vacations" where you use your imagination to "travel" somewhere relaxing in your own mind in order to get a healthy escape for a few minutes. - What can you do in order to find a few minutes of peace when you need it each day?



Picture Icebreaker and Discussion - "Perspective, Gratitude and Attitude"

- View the picture below as a group. Openly discuss: "What is one positive change you can make with your attitude that will increase your happiness and inner peace?"





Icebreaker – Filinda Blanx

Directions: Select one or more of the "Fill in the Blanks" sentences and share your answer out loud with the rest of the group:

1. If _____(Person) would just _____(Action), then I would finally feel _____ (Feeling)
 2. When I finally learn to _____(Action) then my life will stop being _____ (Adjective) and I can start feeling _____ (Feeling)
 3. When you have too many _____ (Plural Noun) then eventually you will _____ (Action) which will leave you feeling _____ (Descriptive adjective)
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Discussion Article: "6 Little Tips for a Happier Life"

The following article (link below) is very simple and easy to read and discuss in group therapy. In addition, the material is practical and easy to understand. Simply read each of the six points as a group and discuss.

A simple follow up discussion question for each of the six points could be: *"How can you specifically apply this in your own life?"*

LINK TO ARTICLE: [6 Little Tips for a Happier Life](#) - (By Lifehack.org)

Brief Group Module – “Weird”

- *Weird* – adj: strange, odd, bizarre

Discuss the following questions:

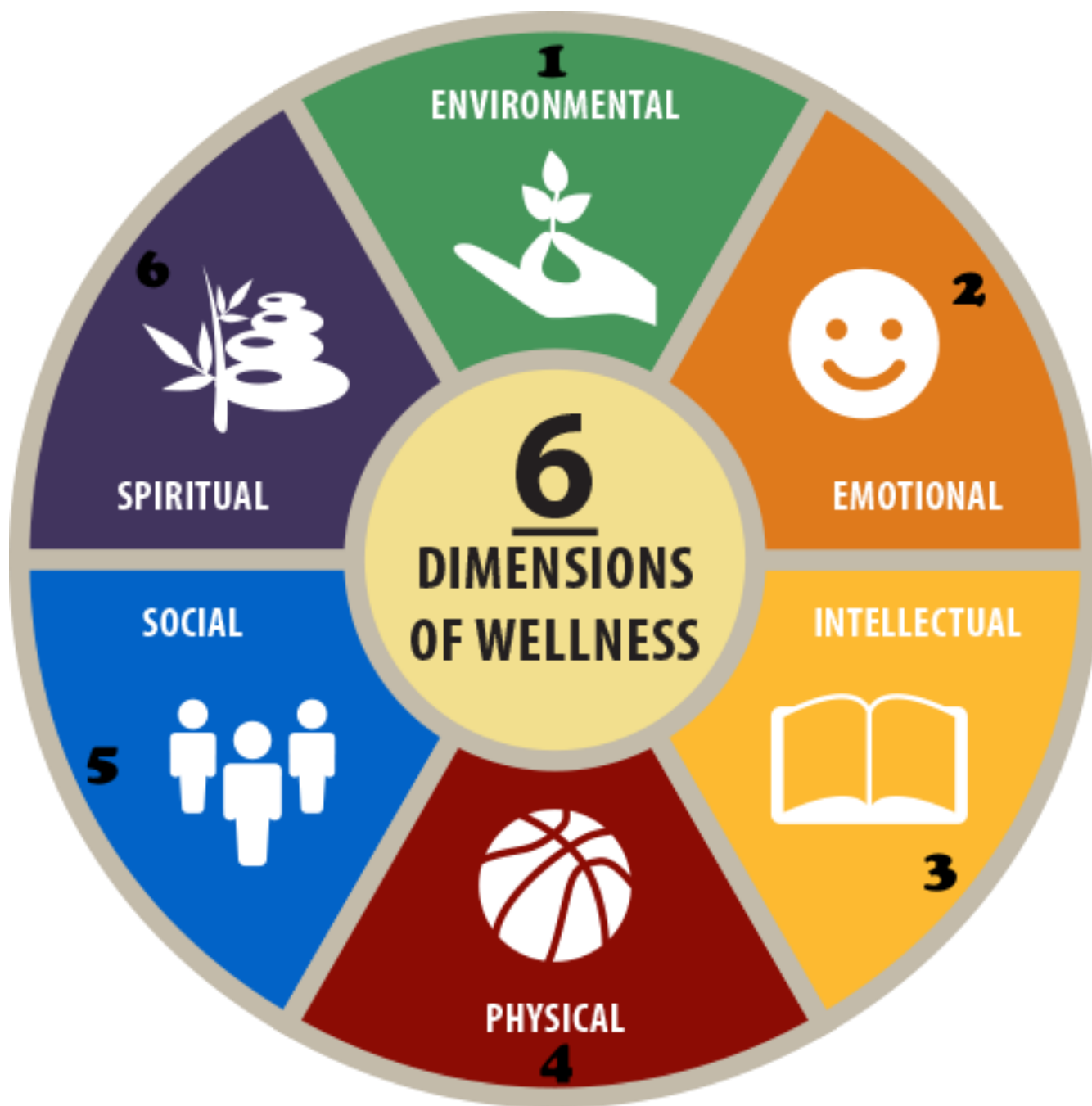
1. What is something you think is weird in the world today?
 2. What is something that you think is weird about life?
 3. Is there something about yourself that you would say is weird, in a good way? (Something that makes you special or unique)
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Icebreaker - "6 Dimensions of Wellness Game"

Directions: One 6-sided die is needed. Below is a picture of the "6 Dimensions of Wellness" (Copied from <https://www.clark.edu/tlc/healthy-penguin/wellness-dimensions.php>)

Group members should take turns rolling the die and then discuss one thing that you can do to make improvement in the dimension of wellness that corresponds to your die roll (1-6)





Brief Motivational Story for Group Discussion - "The Elephant Rope"

Directions: Click the following link to the brief but thought provoking and motivational story "The Elephant Rope" then discuss as a group. (Make application to substance use and mental health)

LINK TO "THE ELEPHANT ROPE" - <https://medium.com/motivationapp/the-elephant-rope-c22ee790a226>

"Same and Changing" Icebreaker

Complete these four sentences about things that seem to stay the same and things that change:

One thing that always seems to stay the same is...

One thing that frequently seems to change is...

Something in my life that I want to stay the same is...

Something in my life that I want to change is...

Brief Group Module: Toxic Statements in Relationships (and Friendships)

Depending upon the context, the following statements are potentially very manipulative and dangerous in relationships including friendships. Review and discuss the following list as a group and discuss if you ever heard any of these statements and what you did (or would do about it if you ever did hear something like this)

- ❖ **If you really love me (or if you truly are my friend), then you'll do it**
- ❖ **If you don't do what I ask I am going to cut you out of my life**
- ❖ **What's wrong with you, can't you take a joke?**
- ❖ **You won't be able to make it without me**
- ❖ **It is all your fault that I did this, not mine**
- ❖ **No one will believe you if you tell them what I did (or said)**

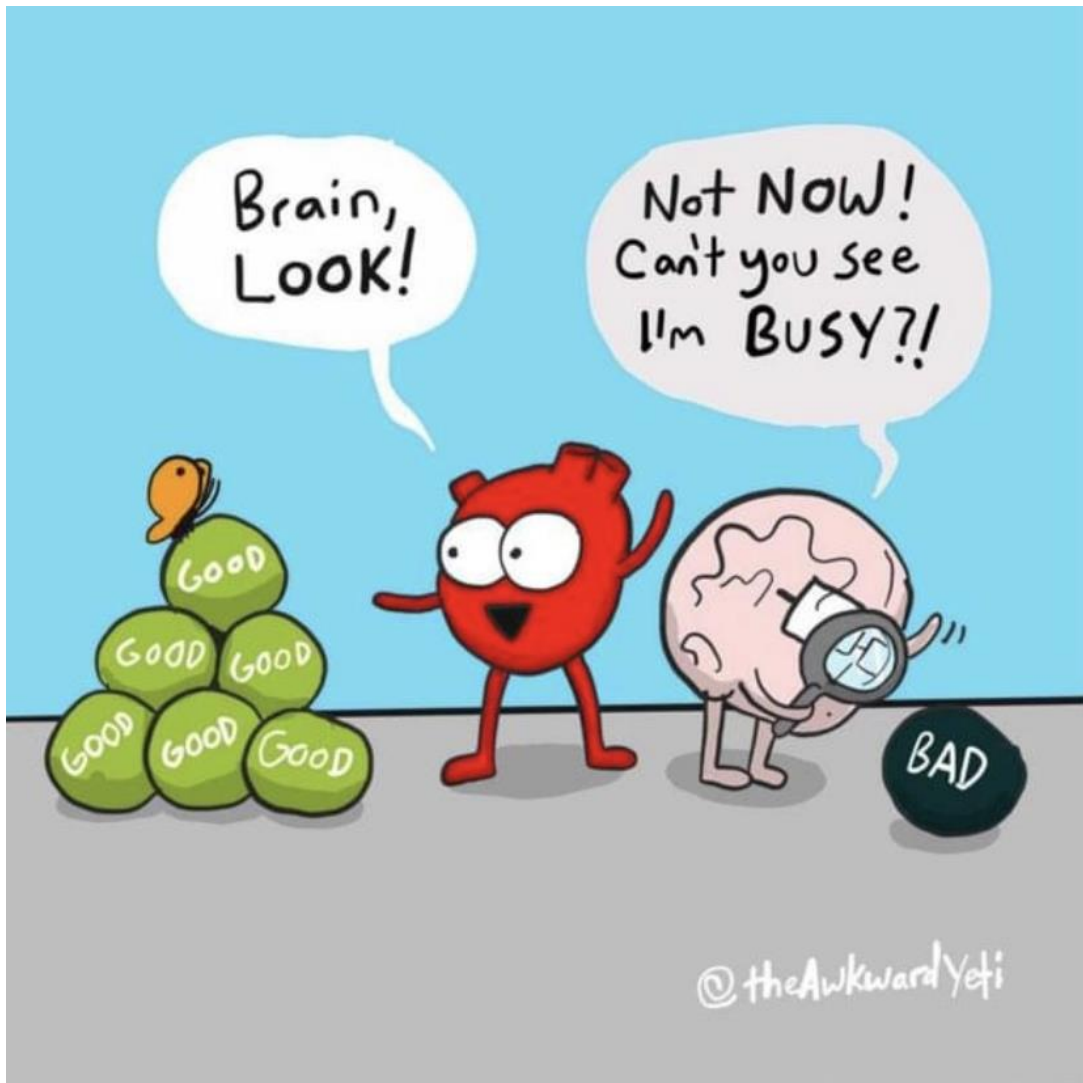
Closing questions:

1. Are there any other potentially toxic statements you have heard or could think of?
 2. *Discuss as a group:* What should be done when you sense someone may be trying to coerce or manipulate you to do something that you do not feel right about?
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Visual Group Icebreaker - Refocusing the Brain

For this icebreaker simply display and discuss the following picture:



Some suggested questions:

What does this picture say?

Does this apply at times in your own life?

What can people do to change this kind of thinking?



Brief Therapy Module – Just Did It

Everyone is familiar with the famous slogan “Just Do It” which is a motivational phrase designed to inspire people to take action toward their goals. For this brief group module, the group will look at successes that already have been accomplished

Discuss:

1. What is one thing (even if it seems small or insignificant) that at one time in life was difficult or felt impossible for you that now you are able to do regularly or whenever needed? – Some examples:

a. *"When I was a kid, I was overweight and ate unhealthy but now I am in great shape and I eat right"*

b. *"I used to be so awkward socially but now I am pretty good at starting conversations with new people"*

c. *"When I was younger, I couldn't focus enough to read but now I read all of the time and I love it!"*

2. How did you get to where you are today? (Be specific and consider who or what helped, how did you build and sustain motivation, what kept you from giving up, etc.?)

3. Finally, when it comes to your current issues for being in this group, what positive lessons can you draw from this past accomplishment that you just discussed in questions 1 and 2?