

Coping Skills Groups for Middle Schoolers Additional Information

- Group sessions are each 90 minutes long. Each session focuses on teaching and practicing skills as well as allowing some time for socializing and appropriately processing life experiences.
- Each child receives a workbook binder containing handouts that explain skills and provide structured ways to practice skills in between sessions (aka "homework").
- With consent, and as desired, leaders coordinate with individual therapists to share skills learned, progress made, and issues that may need to be addressed outside of group in individual therapy.
- A lot of skills are covered in these groups! Those who practice them in between sessions, on their own, and/or with their individual therapists, will benefit most. Some may even want to repeat the group to continue reinforcing skills and benefiting from the supportive peer environment.
- A parent-only session is provided to review the skills taught in group as well as to provide support and education around adolescent development.

Coping Skills Group Curriculum

Group Goals:

- Improve Emotion Regulation
- Increase Distress Tolerance
- Develop more Rationale and Realistic Thinking
- Improve Social Skills and Ability to Make and Maintain Friendships

Skills taught to reach group goals:

- Emotional awareness and self-monitoring
- Awareness of how distorted thinking impacts mood and behaviors
- Examining thoughts and identifying more rationale or realistic ways of thinking
- Meeting new people and starting conversations

- Validating Others to show empathy and compassion (DBT Validation Skills)
- Validating Self to develop more self-compassion and gentle behaviors towards self (DBT Validation Skills)
- Interacting with others in a more giving way (DBT Give Skills)
- Identifying and coping with worry thoughts that interfere with interpersonal effectiveness
- Skills for calming extreme emotions. (DBT TIPP Skills)
- Mindfulness Skills (Observing, Describing, Not Judging, and Riding Emotional Waves)
- Acceptance of uncontrollable stressors and of present reality (CBT and DBT Acceptance Skills)
- Effective and appropriate use of Distraction
- Problem-solving controllable stressors
- Using Opposite Action to decrease emotional intensity and engage in more helpful and healthy behaviors (DBT Opposite Action)
- Reducing Vulnerabilities to stress (DBT Please Skills)
- Perspective Taking - What to do when stuck thinking the worst about other people and social situations (DBT Think Skills)