Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) Group Counseling Fact Sheet (Double Sided)

What is CBT?
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is a type of talk therapy. In CBT group counseling, you talk to members of the group and a trained therapist about worries to try to understand them better, learn new, more helpful ways of making sense of them, and take action to change your life for the better. CBT works by breaking problems down to your feelings, thoughts, and actions.

How can CBT help me?
Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) can help you make sense of overwhelming problems by breaking them down into smaller parts. In CBT, problems are broken down into 5 main areas; situations, thoughts, emotions, physical feelings, and actions. CBT uses a structured, collaborative, approach to identify and find solutions to current problems. This type of counseling helps improve mood by helping you to understand your thoughts, but also encourages you to try new actions to help your mood and overall well being.

How can Group Counseling help me?
Group counseling offers a cool opportunity to build a community with people experiencing similar challenges, and to explore your needs, share your experiences, offer support to others, and develop ways to manage different problems. Group will also focus on teaching you specific skills to help you cope.

CBT Group Basics
This CBT group will have 4-10 members, be a closed group (where new people are not able to drop in), and be 4-6 weeks long. There will be one hour long weekly sessions. The day and time of these weekly sessions is yet to be announced.

Who Can Benefit From Group Therapy?
Group counseling is great for those who are open to participating in group discussions and activities. It is appropriate for those who are able to honor group agreements, including confidentiality, who are able to make it to every group session, and are ready to learn skills to manage their anxiety. Group may not be right for you if you experience severe internal discomfort in groups, have a history of your trust being dishonored, need more flexible counseling times, have chronic suicidal ideation, and are actively using illicit substances.

Tips for Thriving in Group

- Be yourself, share yourself, express yourself
- Decide for yourself how much to disclose
- Experiment
- Be an active participant
- Be flexible
- Don’t wait to work
- Be “greedy” – ask for what you need
- Pay attention to feelings
● Don’t expect change to be instantaneous
● Give feedback
● Avoid giving advice
● Be open to feedback
● Approach conflict with compassion
● Carry your work outside the group
● Express your feelings

● Write in your journal
● Be willing to set action-oriented homework assignments for
● Think about your thinking
● Respect confidentiality
● Avoid storytelling – focus on internal not external
● Risk boldly

Misperceptions about Group Counseling
● "I will be forced to tell all of my deepest thoughts, feelings and secrets to the group."
● "Group therapy will take longer than individual therapy because I will have to share the time with others.
● "I will be verbally attacked by the leaders and by other group members."
● "Group therapy is second-best to individual therapy."
● "I have so much trouble talking with people, I'll never be able to share in a group."

Truths about Group Counseling
● It can increase your sense of hope when you feel like giving up
● You may build connection with others, which can help combat loneliness and isolation
● It can remind you that you are not alone in your concerns and experiences
● Learning how to build and maintain healthier relationships
● It may increase self-compassion
● You will explore changes in your life
● It may be uncomfortable at times
● You may not get along with everyone in group
● Your feelings may be hurt sometimes
● You may not feel like you belong
● You can learn how to manage symptoms of anxiety
● It can help you understand why you do things that you don’t want to do
● It can a stable and understanding place to go, although it sometimes might feel chaotic
● Group counseling might not be right for you

Reflection Questions to Consider
● What are my goals for group therapy?
● What excites me most about participating in group therapy?
● What makes me feel nervous/uneasy about participating in group therapy?
● What can I do to feel more comfortable in a group?
● What might prevent me from having a successful group experience?
● What can I do to avoid/cope with these obstacles?
● What is one risk I can take during my group therapy experience?
● What questions do I have for the group leader(s)?