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# Telephone Support Group Program

## ***Participant Workbook***

## **INTRODUCTION**

**This workbook has been developed for use in the Telephone Support Group Program Project co-sponsored by Senior Services of the Albany Area, Inc., and the Institute of Gerontology at the School of Social Welfare of the University of Albany. This project was supported, in part, by a grant, number 90-CG-2549, from the Administration on Aging, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. Grantees undertaking projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Administration on Aging policy.**

**The Telephone Support Group Program (TSG) consists of 12 weekly 1-hour and 15 minute group meetings. These sessions shall focus upon ideas for more effective Stress Management and Problem-Solving, Coping Styles and Mutual Support. The group meetings will include the presentation of educational information, time for actual problem-solving, and opportunities to practice the coping techniques being taught. Various worksheets are included to aid in your learning, and a list of resources offers other sources of information you may find helpful. Other informational materials will be distributed ahead of time for certain group sessions.**

**It is our sincere hope that this information and your experience in the groups will be of assistance in helping you cope with your stressful caregiving responsibilities. What we shall learn from your participation, shall also be helpful to others living with similar circumstances.**

**Thank you very much for your time and efforts.**

**Ronald W. Toseland**

**Victoria M. Rizzo**

**Tianna Moscinski**

## RESEARCH STUDY CONTACT INFORMATION

### UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY

If you have questions regarding the research study, you can contact the principal investigator, Ronald Toseland, at the Institute of Gerontology, at (518) 442-5353. **Also, if you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant, you may contact the Compliance Office, Office of Sponsored Programs, University at Albany, at (518) 437 - 4569.**

### SENIOR SERVICES OF ALBANY

If you have questions or concerns regarding group sessions, or cannot attend a group session, you can contact the group leader **Tianna Moscinski, CSW at (518) 465 -6465.**

# OUTLINE OF TOPICS FOR MEETINGS

## Weekly Sessions:

<b>Session 1</b>	<b>Introductions &amp; Overview Telephone Buddies Problem Solving /Taking Time for Oneself</b>	<b>DATE:</b>
<b>Session 2</b>	<b>Telephone Buddies Caregivers' Reactions to Caring for an ill Spouse/Parent Impact of Chronic Illness Problem-Solving /Taking Time for Oneself</b>	<b>DATE:</b>
<b>Session 3</b>	<b>Telephone Buddies Problem-Solving /Taking Time for Oneself Care Recipients' Reactions to to Chronic Illness</b>	<b>DATE:</b>
<b>Session 4</b>	<b>Coping Skills Problem-Solving /Taking Time for Oneself</b>	<b>DATE:</b>
<b>Session 5</b>	<b>Progress Towards Goals Taking Time for Oneself Problem-Solving /Taking Time for Oneself</b>	<b>DATE:</b>
<b>Session 6</b>	<b>Progress Towards Goals Informal Supports Problem-Solving /Taking Time for Oneself</b>	<b>DATE:</b>
<b>Session 7</b>	<b>Community Services &amp; Resources Problem-Solving /Taking Time for Oneself</b>	<b>DATE:</b>

- Session 8**                      **Progress Toward Goals**  
**Deep Breathing Exercise**  
**Problem-Solving /Taking Time**  
**for Oneself**                      **DATE:**
- Session 9**                      **Progress Toward Goals**  
**Deep Breathing**  
**Progressive Muscle Relaxation**  
**Problem-Solving /Taking Time**  
**for Oneself**                      **DATE:**
- Session 10**                      **Progress Toward Goals**  
**Continuation of Deep Breathing**  
**And Muscle Relaxation**  
**Problem-Solving /Taking Time**  
**for Oneself**                      **DATE:**
- Session 11**                      **Progress Toward Goals**  
**Role of Self-Talk**  
**Problem-Solving /Taking Time**  
**for Oneself**                      **DATE:**
- Session 12**                      **Self-Talk, Perspective Taking**  
**And Cognitive Imagery**  
**Using Strategies Selectively**  
**Evaluation and Wrap-Up**                      **DATE:**

## GENERAL RESOURCES

## **A Caregiver's Bill of Rights**

**I have the right:**

- 1. To consider my own personal needs. I am equally important, and the better I take care of myself, the more capable I'll be to care for my spouse or parent.**
- 2. To ask for help. I recognize the limits of my energy and strength, and can seek assistance even if my spouse, or parent, objects.**
- 3. To advocate for my spouse, or parent, and to make reasonable demands of health care services and practitioners. I know what my spouse, or parent needs, and I can formally complain about providers that are unresponsive.**
- 4. To feel and to express the anger, sadness and other difficult emotions that are normal to the experience and stress of caregiving.**
- 5. To expect my spouse, or parent, to consider my needs at times, to the degree they are able. I am not to be manipulated, ignored, or abused.**
- 6. To take pride in what I do for my spouse or parent. It takes a great deal of effort, patience and love, and I feel good about my actions.**
- 7. To plan ahead, to anticipate and prepare for future medical, legal and financial concerns.**
- 8. To happiness and enjoyment in life and to not feel guilty about doing some things for pleasure.**
- 9. To change my mind, and to make mistakes.**
- 10. To be myself.**

**[Adapted from: *A Caregiver's Bill of Rights*, by Nancy Peppard, in *Special Needs Dementia Units*, Springer Pub. Co. 1991]**

## **RESOURCES FOR CAREGIVERS**

### **General Organizations**

1. **The American Association for Retired Persons (AARP)**  
1 Commerce Plaza  
Albany, NY 12203  
518-434-4194  
website - <http://www.aarp.org>
2. **New York State/County Offices for the Aging**  
Agency Building 2, Empire State Plaza  
Albany, NY 12203  
1-800-342-9871  
website - <http://aging.state.ny.us>

### **Organizations for Caregiver Support, Networking and Resources**

1. **Children of Aging Parents (CAPS)**  
1609 Woodbourne RD., Suite 302-A  
Levittown PA 19057-1511  
1-800-227-7294  
website - <http://www.careguide.com>
2. **National Alliance for Caregiving**  
4720 Montgomery Lane, Suite 642  
Bethesda MD 20814  
1-301-718-8444  
website - <http://www.caregiving.org>
3. **National Family Caregivers Association**  
9621 E. Bexhill Dr.  
Kensington MD 20895  
1-800-896-3650  
website - <http://www.ncfacares.org>
4. **Well Spouse Foundation**  
610 Lexington Ave, Suite 814  
New York, NY 10022-6005  
1-212-644-1241  
website - <http://www.wellspouse.org>

## **Books on Caregiving**

1. *The Caregiver Resource Directory.* (2000). Fraidin, L., Glajchen, M. & Portenoy, R.K. New York: Beth Isreal Medical Center.
2. *Caregiver's Reprieve: A Guide to Emotional Survival When You're Caring for Someone You Love.* (1997). Brandt, A. Atascadero, CA: Impact Publisher's, Inc.
3. *Helping Yourself Help Others: A Book for Caregivers.* (1994). Carter, R. New York: Times Books.
4. *The Caregiver Helpbook: Powerful Tools for Caregiving.* (2000). Schmall, V., Cleland, M. & Sturdevant, M. Portland, OR: Legacy Health System.
5. *The Fearless Caregiver: How to Get the Best Care for Your Loved One and Still Have a Life of Your Own.* (2001). Barg, G. Capital Books, Inc.
6. *American Medical Association Guide to Home Caregiving.* (2001). Perry, A. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
7. *The Comfort of Home: An Illustrated Step-by-Step Guide for Caregivers.* (1998). Meyer, M., Derr, P., Hatfield, M. Care Trust Publications.
8. *How to Care for Your Aging Parents.* (1996). Morris, V. & Butler, R. New York, NY: Workman Publishing.
9. *Coping with Your Difficult Older Parent: A Guide for Stressed-Out Children.* (1999). Lebow, G., Kane, B. & Lebow, I. New York: Avon Books.
10. *Are Your Parents Driving You Crazy? How to Resolve the Most Common Dilemmas with Aging Parents.* (2001). Ilardo, J. & Rothman, C. VanderWyk & Burnham.
11. *Aging in Good Health: A Complete, Essential Medical Guide for Older Men and Women and Their Families.* (1992). Beers, M. & Urice, S. Pocket Books.

12. *40+ Guide to Good Health*. (1993). Weiss, R. & Subak- Sharpe, G. Columbia University School of Public Health, from the Editors of Consumer Reports Books.
13. *Healthwise for Life: Medical Self-care for Healthy Aging (2nd Ed)*, (1996). Mettler, M. & Kemper, D. Healthwise, Inc.
14. *The Second 50 Years: Promoting Health and Preventing Disability*. (1992). Berg, R. & Cassells, J. (Eds.). Institute of Medicine: National Academy Press.
15. *Elder Care: A Six Step Guide to Balancing Work and Family*. (2002). Marosy, J. Worcester, MA: Bringing Elder Care Home Publishing. Electronic Version available at:  
<http://www.bringingeldercarehome.com>

## **Meeting 1**

1. Conference Call Hook-up
2. Introduction
3. Purpose, Format and Goals of the Group
4. Housekeeping and Group "Rules"
5. Telephone Buddies
6. Problem Solving/Taking Time for Oneself

## **Goals, Ground Rules and Tips**

**It's our desire that this program will assist you in a number of ways:**

- a) that you will get to know one another and benefit by the sharing of ideas and support that occurs.**
- b) that you will learn more about skills and resources to aid you in your caregiving responsibilities.**
- c) that you will begin to take better care of yourself, improving your skills at coping and managing stress.**
- d) that you will find solutions to some actual problems you are experiencing.**

**In order to help make this possible, and be of benefit to everyone, we encourage you to please:**

- 1. participate in all the sessions,**
- 2. actively participate during the group meetings, and**
- 3. keep confidential the things that are said.**
- 4. notify leader if you cannot participate**  
**Leader Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_**

**To add to the quality of your experience, here are some other tips:**

- 1. Make notes in this workbook or keep a journal/diary of changes you notice in your problem-solving efforts and stress reactions.**
- 2. Keep in contact with members of the group for ongoing support, and practice the techniques discussed.**
- 3. Take care of your own health - some symptoms have causes other than stress, and should be checked out.**

**PROBLEM-SOLVING**  
**IN**  
**6 EASY STEPS**

1. Name your problem in very specific language.
2. Identify the things that cause and sustain your problem, and that interfere with your attempts to solve it.
3. Group brain-storming for creative ideas.
4. Weigh the pros and cons of each option.
5. Develop a plan, and discuss and rehearse any steps you feel uncomfortable about.
6. Evaluate the results.

**We will be using this approach throughout the 12 group meetings, so you will be able to work on actual problems you are experiencing, and be able to receive the group's support and ideas to help you.**

**My Telephone Buddy is** \_\_\_\_\_

**His/her telephone number is:** \_\_\_\_\_

**The best time to call is:** \_\_\_\_\_



### **Problem-Solving Worksheet**

**One pressing problem I am trying to resolve:**

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**What I am doing to resolve the problem:**

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## **SESSION NOTES**

## **Meeting 2**

1. Conference Call Hook-up
2. Brief Overview of the First Meeting
3. Check-in on Progress: Telephone Buddies
4. Caregivers' Reactions to Caring for an Ill Spouse/Parent
5. Impact of Chronic Illness
6. Problem Solving/Taking Care of Oneself
7. Between Meetings

## STRESS SYMPTOM CHECKLIST

### PHYSICAL SIGNS

- headaches
  - insomnia
  - teeth grinding
  - neck/shoulder tightness
  - muscle aches
  - breathing difficulty
  - pounding heart
  - change in appetite
  - back aches
  - intestinal upset
  - fatigue
  - skin rash
  - sexual problems
- irritability
  - mood swings
  - impatience
  - feel discouraged
  - anxious/panicky
  - anger
  - insecurity
  - loneliness
  - crying spells
  - the “blues”

### MENTAL SIGNS

- excessive worry
  - forgetfulness
  - poor concentration
  - repetitive thoughts
  - difficulty making decisions
  - self-doubt
  - boredom
  - questioning God
  - humorless
- ### BEHAVIORAL SIGNS
- over-eating
  - nail biting
  - accident prone
  - accomplish less
  - argumentative
  - sleep more/less
  - smoke/drink more
  - procrastinate
  - exercise less
  - watch more TV

### EMOTIONAL SIGNS

## COPING STYLES

In our efforts at coping with life's challenges, we are aided or hindered by our habitual attitudes and actions, and how we think and feel about things. Reflecting upon our particular *Coping Styles* will help us to choose those that are most effective. Some of the common ways people cope are by:

<b>Information-seeking</b>	<b>Talking to someone or reading something to learn more</b>
<b>Avoidance</b>	<b>Minimizing the situation; pretending it's not so bad</b>
<b>Logical thinking</b>	<b>Reasoning out the facts and considering alternatives</b>
<b>Positive attitude</b>	<b>Looking for the silver lining, finding the good side of things</b>
<b>Emotional expression</b>	<b>Letting the feelings out through words and tears</b>
<b>Awfulizing</b>	<b>Over-worrying about it to the point of being overwhelmed</b>
<b>Tension reduction</b>	<b>for example: exercising more, relaxation, diversions</b>
<b>Problem-solving</b>	<b>Making a plan and following it</b>
<b>Seeking Support</b>	<b>Friends, groups, professionals</b>

Consider which of these styles of coping, or others, you usually rely upon to get you through difficult times. Are they helpful to you in your current circumstances? Are there any changes you'd like to make?

**My Telephone Buddy is** \_\_\_\_\_

**His/her telephone number is:** \_\_\_\_\_

**The best time to call is:** \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Problem-Solving Worksheet**

**One pressing problem I am trying to resolve:**

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**What I am doing to resolve the problem:**

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**One effective coping skill I'd like to use more often:**

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**One ineffective coping skill I would like to change:**

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**One thing I do to take care of myself:**

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**One pleasurable activity I engage in currently:**

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**Effect of the pleasurable event on my mood:**

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**Stressor I experienced:**

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**What I did to respond to the stressor:**

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## **Meeting 3**

1. Conference Call Hook-up
2. Brief Overview of the Second Meeting
3. Check-in on Progress: Telephone Buddies
4. Problem Solving/Taking Care of Oneself
5. Care Recipients' Reactions to Chronic Illness
6. Between Meetings

**My Telephone Buddy is** \_\_\_\_\_

**His/her telephone number is:** \_\_\_\_\_

**The best time to call is:** \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Problem-Solving Worksheet**

**One pressing problem I am trying to resolve:**

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**What I am doing to resolve the problem:**

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**One effective coping skill I'd like to use more often:**

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**One ineffective coping skill I would like to change:**

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**One thing I do to take care of myself:**

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**One pleasurable activity I engage in currently:**

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**Effect of the pleasurable event on my mood:**

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**Stressor I experienced:**

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**What I did to respond to the stressor:**

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## **Meeting 4**

1. Conference Call Hook-up
2. Brief Overview of the Third Meeting
3. Coping Skills
4. Problem Solving/Taking Time for Oneself
5. Between Meetings

**My Telephone Buddy is** \_\_\_\_\_

**His/her telephone number is:** \_\_\_\_\_

**The best time to call is:** \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Problem-Solving Worksheet**

**One pressing problem I am trying to resolve:**

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**What I am doing to resolve the problem:**

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**One effective coping skill I'd like to use more often:**

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**One ineffective coping skill I would like to change:**

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**One thing I do to take care of myself:**

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**One pleasurable activity I engage in currently:**

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**Effect of the pleasurable event on my mood:**

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**Stressor I experienced:**

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**What I did to respond to the stressor:**

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## **Meeting 5**

1. Conference Call Hook-up
2. Brief Overview of the Fourth Meeting
3. Check-in on Progress Towards Goals
4. Taking Time for Oneself Discussion
5. Problem Solving/Taking Time for Oneself
6. Between Meetings

**My Telephone Buddy is** \_\_\_\_\_

**His/her telephone number is:** \_\_\_\_\_

**The best time to call is:** \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Problem-Solving Worksheet**

**One pressing problem I am trying to resolve:**

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**What I am doing to resolve the problem:**

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**One effective coping skill I'd like to use more often:**

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**One ineffective coping skill I would like to change:**

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**One thing I do to take care of myself:**

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**One pleasurable activity I engage in currently:**

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**Effect of the pleasurable event on my mood:**

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**Stressor I experienced:**

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**What I did to respond to the stressor:**

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## **Meeting 6**

1. Conference Call Hook-up
2. Brief Overview of the Fifth Meeting
3. Check-in on Progress Towards Goals
4. Informal Supports
5. Problem Solving/Taking Time for Oneself
6. Between Meetings

**My Telephone Buddy is** \_\_\_\_\_

**His/her telephone number is:** \_\_\_\_\_

**The best time to call is:** \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Problem-Solving Worksheet**

**One pressing problem I am trying to resolve:**

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**What I am doing to resolve the problem:**

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**One effective coping skill I'd like to use more often:**

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**One ineffective coping skill I would like to change:**

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**One thing I do to take care of myself:**

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**One pleasurable activity I engage in currently:**

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**Effect of the pleasurable event on my mood:**

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**Stressor I experienced:**

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**What I did to respond to the stressor:**

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## **Meeting 7**

1. Conference Call Hook-up
2. Brief Overview of the Sixth Meeting
3. Community Services & Resources
4. Problem Solving/Taking Care of Oneself
5. Between Meetings

**My Telephone Buddy is** \_\_\_\_\_

**His/her telephone number is:** \_\_\_\_\_

**The best time to call is:** \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Problem-Solving Worksheet**

**One pressing problem I am trying to resolve:**

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**What I am doing to resolve the problem:**

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**One effective coping skill I'd like to use more often:**

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**One ineffective coping skill I would like to change:**

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**One thing I do to take care of myself:**

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**One pleasurable activity I engage in currently:**

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**Effect of the pleasurable event on my mood:**

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**Stressor I experienced:**

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**What I did to respond to the stressor:**

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## **Meeting 8**

1. Conference Call Hook-up
2. Brief Overview of the Seventh Meeting
3. Check-in About Progress Toward Goals
4. Deep Breathing
5. Problem Solving/Taking Time for Oneself
6. Between Meetings

## **Deep Breathing Exercise**

### **The procedure:**

- a. Sit comfortably, feet flat on the floor, eyes closed.**
- b. Take a deep breath. Breathe deeply from your diaphragm so that the lower ribs are going in and out. While breathing, focus on your breath going in and out. You can think "I am" while breathing in and "relaxing" when breathing out.**
- c. Repeat three times before opening your eyes.**
- d. Practice this at least one time daily.**

**My Telephone Buddy is** \_\_\_\_\_

**His/her telephone number is:** \_\_\_\_\_

**The best time to call is:** \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Problem-Solving Worksheet**

**One pressing problem I am trying to resolve:**

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**What I am doing to resolve the problem:**

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**One effective coping skill I'd like to use more often:**

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**One ineffective coping skill I would like to change:**

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**One thing I do to take care of myself:**

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**One pleasurable activity I engage in currently:**

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**Effect of the pleasurable event on my mood:**

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**Stressor I experienced:**

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**What I did to respond to the stressor:**

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## **Meeting 9**

1. Conference Call Hook-up
2. Brief Overview of the Eighth Meeting
3. Check-in About Progress Toward Goals
4. Deep Breathing
5. Progressive Muscle Relaxation
6. Problem Solving/Taking Time for Oneself
7. Between Meetings

## **Progressive Muscle Relaxation**

We can reduce the tension in our muscles in many ways, including a process referred to as “tense/release.” We over-tense a muscle group, hold that tension for a few moments, and then fully release it, coordinating this action with our breathing. Doing this throughout all the major muscle groups of our bodies is called Progressive Muscle Relaxation. The procedure outlined below, follows the procedure explained in the audio tape used in class.

Begin by getting into a comfortable position, and be sure you will be free from distractions. Loosen any tight fitting clothes, and begin breathing calmly, as you prepare to enter a deeper state of relaxation.

Bring your attention to your feet. Notice how they feel. Now tense the muscles in your feet as you inhale. Squeeze the muscles tightly and feel the tension. Hold it. Now, release it completely, as you exhale. Notice the difference between the tension and relaxation. Repeat this a second time.

Bring your attention to your legs - to your calves and thighs. Notice how they feel. Now tense these muscles....

Continue this procedure with the remaining muscle groups of your body:

- the buttocks
- the abdomen
- the back
- the arms and hands
- the shoulders
- the neck
- the face.

After you have completed this sequence, take time to remain quiet and calm. Keep breathing with a comfortable and easy rhythm. Notice and enjoy your state of relaxation. Be aware of how much better you feel from when you began.

This exercise and this state of relaxation can be accomplished whenever you need it. Use it to take good care of yourself during the day, or before you go to sleep.

Be well.

**My Telephone Buddy is** \_\_\_\_\_

**His/her telephone number is:** \_\_\_\_\_

**The best time to call is:** \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Problem-Solving Worksheet**

**One pressing problem I am trying to resolve:**

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**What I am doing to resolve the problem:**

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**One effective coping skill I'd like to use more often:**

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**One ineffective coping skill I would like to change:**

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**One thing I do to take care of myself:**

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**One pleasurable activity I engage in currently:**

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**Effect of the pleasurable event on my mood:**

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**Stressor I experienced:**

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**What I did to respond to the stressor:**

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## **Meeting 10**

1. Conference Call Hook-up
2. Brief Overview of the Ninth Meeting
3. Check-in About Progress Toward Goals
4. Progressive Muscle Relaxation
5. Problem Solving/Taking Care of Oneself
6. Between Meetings

**My Telephone Buddy is** \_\_\_\_\_

**His/her telephone number is:** \_\_\_\_\_

**The best time to call is:** \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Problem-Solving Worksheet**

**One pressing problem I am trying to resolve:**

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**What I am doing to resolve the problem:**

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**One effective coping skill I'd like to use more often:**

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**One ineffective coping skill I would like to change:**

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**One thing I do to take care of myself:**

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**One pleasurable activity I engage in currently:**

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**Effect of the pleasurable event on my mood:**

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**Stressor I experienced:**

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**What I did to respond to the stressor:**

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## **Meeting 11**

1. Conference Call Hook-up
2. Brief Overview of the Tenth Meeting
3. Check-in About Progress Toward Goals
4. Self-Talk
5. Problem Solving/Taking Care of Oneself
6. Between Meetings

**My Telephone Buddy is** \_\_\_\_\_

**His/her telephone number is:** \_\_\_\_\_

**The best time to call is:** \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Problem-Solving Worksheet**

**One pressing problem I am trying to resolve:**

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**What I am doing to resolve the problem:**

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**One effective coping skill I'd like to use more often:**

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**One ineffective coping skill I would like to change:**

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**One thing I do to take care of myself:**

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**One pleasurable activity I engage in currently:**

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**Effect of the pleasurable event on my mood:**

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**Stressor I experienced:**

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**What I did to respond to the stressor:**

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## **Meeting 12**

1. Conference Call Hook-up
2. Brief Overview of the Eleventh Meeting
3. Self-talk, Perspective Taking & Cognitive Imagery
4. Using Strategies Selectively
5. Evaluation & Wrap-up