Chapter 9
Rational Emotive Education

Introduction

There are a number of cognitive approaches available for intervention into emotional problems. However, we will focus our attention in this chapter on the work of Ellis (1962, 1971, 1974, & 1977). Ellis' approach is known as Rational-Emotive Therapy (RET). One component of RET is Rational-Emotive Education (REE). The REE component in RET makes it especially attractive for educational programming. RET and REE have also been extensively applied to the problems of children and youth. Finally, there is an extensive body of literature and materials available to support programs using this approach.

Rational-Emotive Theory

Ellis' (1962, 1971, 1974, & 1977) theory rests largely on two assumptions. First, we humans have a biological predisposition toward irrational thinking, e.g., over generalization and illogical association. The human nervous system, by design, appears prone to errors in thinking (Wessler, 1977; Piattelli-Palmarini, 1994). Some of us are more affected by these biological tendencies than others. That is, there is individual variability in this as in other biological traits. Second, one of the major tasks of socialization is to establish a system of beliefs. It is a major task because our belief system helps us interpret our experiences and observations. It also helps us organize our thoughts and our actions. Bernard (1990) argues that most childhood disorders are a product of an interaction between temperament (a biological variable) and parenting style (an environmental variable) during socialization. A good deal of information related to this second assumption can be found in Chapters One and Eight.

What might be the basis for the first assumption above. A professor of psychiatry (Gazzaniga, 1988) has found evidence, in his research on the brain, for what he calls the Left Brain Interpreter (LBI). Gazzaniga thinks that the LBI is a function of the brain acquired through evolutionary selection pressures. The LBI evolved because being able to organize and explain experience has survival value. Having an explanation for a phenomenon, even an incorrect explanation, makes it easier to interpret and respond quickly. Given that our beliefs lead to functional responses more often than not would give an ability to quickly create explanations survival value. It is often the case that our beliefs lead to functional responses but for the wrong reason. We generally take this as evidence confirming the correctness of our belief. For example, if one believes that people who look different from oneself aren't trustworthy and are potentially dangerous, we will avoid contact with such people. If we then find that we are seldom assaulted, we probably will attribute this to avoiding contact with people who look different from us. This then leads to the conclusion that we were correct in being suspicious of such persons and avoiding them. Of course, the absence of assault experiences may be due to entirely different reasons. Gazzaniga believes that this predisposition in people is so strong that he describes humans as a believing species.

Since we have a strong disposition to formulate explanatory beliefs about our experiences, we will often formulate inaccurate and incorrect beliefs or explanations. This happens because we tend to quickly formulate beliefs about our experiences. This means that we often formulate beliefs on the basis of little or no information. Even when we have an informational basis for our belief the information is frequently incorrect. We also often feel compelled to formulate a belief about things that we don't really understand and in some cases that no one understands. One can see many prominent examples of this in the history of our species. One need only think about the many, varied and incorrect beliefs that societies have created to explain natural events, e.g., floods or volcanic eruptions. In many cases, these beliefs have led to behavior that, from our perspective, appears irrational. The same type of thing goes on at the level of individuals as well. Societies and individuals are just as prone to irrational thinking today as they were in the past.

Gazzaniga also points to research that indicates that once a belief is established it is difficult to change. There are several reasons beliefs are difficult to change. First, we find it easier to think of evidence for rather than against a personal belief; that is, validating evidence is easier to recall than contradicting evidence. Second, we also have a strong tendency to look for evidence that supports our beliefs and to ignore evidence that does not. Third, when we encounter ambiguous evidence we are disposed to interpret that evidence so that it supports our beliefs. Finally, when we are confronted with evidence that directly conflicts with our beliefs, we are inclined to discredit the evidence rather than change our beliefs.

Ellis contends that our tendency to think irrationally results in distortions, flaws, and inaccuracies in our belief system. Parents, peers, community institutions (e.g., schools, churches, political parties, etc.), and the media can introduce distortions into our belief system. Not only are distortions possible in commonly held beliefs, but personal aspects of our belief system are prone to distortions that result from our own faulty thinking. One source of distortion is a demonstrated tendency in humans to find positive associations among events (Kareev, Lieberman, & Lev, 1997). When attempting to understand an event, we usually have available only the immediate variables associated with the event. Further, due to limitations in our working memory capacity, we can only consider a small number of variables in our attempt to understand the event. Kareev et al. have shown that our strong predisposition to find positive associations between variables increase as the number of variables in working memory decreases. There are differences between people in working memory capacity due to differences in cognitive abilities and due to differences in temperament. Persons high on the N trait, discussed in Chapter One, are more susceptible to anxiety and anxiety is known to reduce working memory capacity. While this correlational aspect of brain functioning has positive benefits, such as, making it easier for a young child to make associations between vocal sounds and environmental stimuli during language acquisition, it also makes it possible for us to develop cause-and-effect associations that are erroneous. This tendency is sometimes called *magical thinking* and is reflected in superstitious behavior and over generalization, among others things.

Ellis suggests that any theory of human behavior and behavior change must take into

consideration the beliefs or values held by an individual. Our goals are a reflection of our beliefs or values. Therefore, a goal or purpose is a reflection of a belief or value that we hold, and our behavior is a reflection of our goal or purpose in a situation. To ask, "what is good behavior?" is also a question about goals and values. Ellis assumes we all value and therefore have as basic goals physical survival, happiness (self-esteem), social acceptance, and personal relationship. Of these four values, the first two are related to what we might call *positive personal efficacy* (PPE). The last two appear to be closely related to what Redl and Wattenberg (1959) describe as a universal need for social recognition and we'll call *positive social recognition* (PSR).

There are both rational and irrational ways of seeking to achieve PPE and PSR. Rationally, we may seek them positively through accomplishments, e.g., achievement in math; through leadership, e.g., in team sports; through assertiveness, e.g., in standing up for the rights of ourselves and others; and through cooperation, e.g., working with others toward socially acceptable goals. Irrationally, we may hinder them through attention seeking, e.g., provocative behavior; through aggression, e.g., physical intimidation; through revenge, e.g., vandalism; and through helplessness, e.g., dependence. Thus, one way to judge the rationality or irrationality of our responses is by their appropriateness for building PPE and PSR. Ellis argues that our capacity for rational thought is the best weapon we have against irrational beliefs.

Behavior and its associated affect usually serves a goal related either to a rational or an irrational belief about or interpretation of events. If the effect produced by a response appears to be negative for personal efficacy or social recognition, it is probably a product of irrational thinking. RET uses a three-term model (A-B-C) for the analysis of behavior and emotion. Behavior and emotion are *consequences* (C) in this model. Behavior and emotion are consequences of an interpretation of or *belief* (B) about some prior *activating event (A)*. For example, Bill becomes depressed and gives up in his math class. This is the (C) or the behavior and its associated affect. The analysis next looks for the activating event (A) that precipitated this consequence. Assume the activating event was failing a unit test in math. Is the test failure the cause of Bill's depression and decision to give up trying? RET would say no! Getting depressed and giving up are irrational because they do not contribute to PPE, nor to PSR.

If the behavior is irrational, it must be due to faulty thinking. The analysis now asks, how did Bill interpret the test failure, or what does he believe (B) about it? Suppose Bill believes failing the test proves he is stupid and doomed to be a failure. He believes that to be a success he must not fail at anything. Thus, Bill's behavior (C) is not the consequence of failing the test (A) but of his beliefs (B) about the meaning of the event (A). Bill's problem is a negative self-evaluation (stupid) based on a perfectionistic belief (must not fail) that allows no exception. This belief causes a dysfunctional emotion (depression) and a dysfunctional response (giving up) which interfere with positive goal attainment, e.g., achievement and competence, which are goals related to PPE and probably also to PSR. It is likely that Bill will suffer *secondary consequences* related to his irrational response. Secondary consequences are negative effects that can be attributed to the irrational response (DiGiuseppe, 1990). In Bill's case, getting depressed about being depressed. Bill shouldn't feel good

about failing his test; however, a negative but more adaptive emotion would be disappointment and a more adaptive behavior would be to either study more or seek assistance.

In his original formulation of RET, Ellis (1962) enumerated a set of 11 common irrational beliefs. This formulation has now been modified to reflect three more general beliefs that underlie most significant psychological problems (Kendall, Haaga, Ellis, Bernard, DiGiuseppe, and Kassinove (1995). I shall label these three general types of irrational beliefs as: *perfection, entitlement, and control.* These beliefs lead to patterns of dysfunctional feelings and behaviors that persist across time unless something is done to change the irrational belief responsible for the dysfunctional pattern of responses.

1. **Perfection** labels the belief that one must be perfect at all times. It is usually a preference that has been elevated into a must. Just holding this belief can lead to anxiety. Failure to live up to it can lead to panic, depression, despair, and worthless.

2. **Entitlement** labels the belief that others owe one deference, respect, and even love. Failure to get what one believes to be his or her due leads to anger, rage, aggression, vindictiveness and revenge seeking.

3. **Control** labels the belief that everything should conform to the way one wants things to be. Failure to have things work the way one wants leads to low-frustration tolerance, self-pity, anger, depression, procrastination, and avoidance of risks.

There are many errors in thinking that distort reality and can lead to dysfunctional feelings and behavior and may also be involved in the more general beliefs above, for example:

1. *Selective Inattention* or ignoring relevant stimuli. For example, Anne ignores an offer of help, from her teacher, to deal with a difficult problem and gets angry because she has been given a problem that she thinks is too difficult for her.

2. *Misperception* or inaccurate labeling of stimuli. For example, Millie compliments Anne on her new haircut, and Anne decides the compliment actually implied a criticism of her appearance.

3. *Maladaptive Focusing* or attending to irrelevant stimuli. As Anne and her friend Molly are leaving school, Jill, a foreign exchange student, tells Anne that there is going to be a senior class meeting after school. Anne tells Molly that Jill's information couldn't be correct because Jill is a foreigner.

4. *Maladaptive Self-arousal* or generating negative, cognitive stimuli. For example, Anne's mother tells Anne that she is not going to be allowed to spend the weekend with her friend Molly, and they get into a heated argument. At school Anne constantly recalls the

argument. By lunch time she has worked herself up into an intense state of anger. When someone accidentally bumps into her in the lunch room, Anne has an emotional outburst.

5. *Arbitrary Inference*, drawing conclusions without evidence or in spite of contrary evidence. For example, Jim was told by his brother Bill that he saw Rick take Jim's roller blades. Jim states that it had to be Dan because Dan doesn't like him.

6. *Selective Abstraction*, focusing on a detail taken out of context and interpreting the situation through this fragment. For example, Jim is with some friends when they run into Sam. Sam greets the group but doesn't specifically acknowledge Jim. Sam invites the group over to his house to shoot pool. Jim decides that because Sam didn't speak to him this means that Sam's invitation doesn't include him.

7. *Over generalization*, forming a general rule from an isolated observation or experience and applying it widely. For example, Jim fails the first test in his elementary algebra class and concludes he can't do algebra.

8. *Magnification and Minimization*, errors in evaluating the significance of an event. As Jim is coming down the hall at school, Sarah passes him and says, "Hi, Jim." Jim decides that because Sarah spoke to him she wants a date with him. Or, Jim's English teacher tells him that she thinks that the poem he wrote for class showed exceptional talent. Jim dismisses the remark as the teacher just trying to be kind.

9. *Personalization*, relating external events to oneself when they are unconnected. For example, Jim observes several girls talking in the hallway. One of them looks in his direction as he approaches the group, and Jim concludes they must be talking about him.

10. *Dichotomous Thinking*, black and white thinking, i.e, categorizing all experience into one of two opposite categories, e.g., male or female. For example, Jim is introduced to Lynn, a new boy at school. Jim tells his friend Ben that the boy must be lying about his name because that is a girl's name.

11. *Aconsequential Thinking*, a failure to think through the consequences of behavior before acting. For example, six weeks before graduation from high school, Art is walking down the hallway with his friend Ned. Ned comments that it would interesting to see what would happen if the fire alarm on the hallway wall were pulled. Art says, "There's one sure way to find out," as he reaches over and pulls the alarm.

12. *False Attribution*, assigning false causes to events. For example, Art is talking with his friend Sam about his expulsion from school for pulling the fire alarm and creating chaos at school. Art tells Sam that he pulled the alarm because Ned told him to and that he was expelled because the assistant principal can't take a joke.

13.   *Gullibility*, uncritically accepting an assertion or opinion. For example, Jake tells Carl that he heard Carl had made the football team. Carl brags to several people about making the football team and is then embarrassed when he finds out that he didn't make the team.

14.   *Rigid thinking*, an inability to generate alternatives. For example, Mary thinks that the only way a girl can become involved in a relationship with a boy is if he takes the initiative. She has a "crush" on an upper classman and has been waiting for over a year for him to notice her.

RET's approach to dealing with problems like Bill's is to teach the logical method of science. Scientific method is the major tool available to us to combat our inherent, irrational tendencies. RET advocates persuasion and teaching as the most effective therapeutic techniques. Instruction is done while confronting a specific problem or by a broader educational process. A teacher (therapist) challenges, questions, and disputes (D) the irrational beliefs and thinking of a student (client) and leads the student to recognize irrational thought and to self-dispute. RET is a cooperative, direct, active, present-oriented, and educational approach to behavior change.

<u>Research Support</u>

Ellis (1979) did an extensive review of the research literature on RET. This review examined 32 different clinical and personality hypotheses from RET. From this review, Ellis concluded "...that a vast amount of research data exists most of which tends to confirm the major clinical and theoretical hypotheses of RET." (p. 134). More recently, Lyons and Woods (1991) conducted a review of outcome research on RET and concluded, "...subjects receiving RET demonstrated significant improvement over baseline measures and control groups." (p. 357). Bernard and Joyce (1984) reported on an extensive review of the research literature on RET and REE with children and adolescents. They drew several conclusions from their review. First, children of all ages can learn the principles of RET. Second, RET can help children with emotional problems. Third, RET can reduce emotional problems, prevent emotional problems, and aid emotional adjustment. Fourth, results are better in programs using multiple methods for teaching the principles of RET and their application. Fifth, little is known about the interactive effects of such variables as sex, age, ethnicity, and IQ on the efficacy of RET. Sixth, large changes on measures of personality are not usually found. Finally, Bernard and Joyce conclude that the full utility of RET with children and youth remains to be demonstrated. In a subsequent review, Hajzler and Bernard (1991) examined 46 studies using RET and REE with children. They found a strong effect for change on measures of irrational thinking and moderate effects for change in behavior and emotion. RET, as a cognitive-behavioral approach, has received indirect support from reviews of treatments for childhood depression (Kaslow, & Thompson, 1998), anxiety disorders (Ollendick, & King, 1998), and conduct disorder (Brestan, & Eyberg, 1998).

Assessment

In a discussion of RET assessment Bernard and Joyce (1984) state the primary focus of RET

assessment is on psychological problems. Psychological problems are dysfunctional emotional reactions, e.g., irrational anxiety, depression, or anger. To qualify as a problem these emotional reactions must be accompanied by maladaptive behavior, e.g., avoidance, withdrawal, or aggression. The frequency, intensity, or duration of a behavior is important for judging if the response is maladaptive. Three general approaches to assessment are discussed.

Interviews and Monitoring

An interview is a somewhat formal and structured way of gaining information on how a student thinks about a particular problem situation. Monitoring is a more informal and ongoing process in which a student's conversation and comments over a period of time are listened to and evaluated. In particular, teachers should listen for statements, made by their students, suggesting cognitive distortions of reality (see earlier list). Students who consistently distort reality are very likely to hold irrational beliefs (see three general types of irrational beliefs). Irrational beliefs often lead to emotions and behaviors aligned with negative goals (see earlier discussion). Listening carefully to what your students say both to you and to one another is a good way to collect data on the way they think about things. How good the data are depends on your questioning and listening skills as well as your deductive powers, not to mention your own irrational beleifs.

The preferred method for assessing irrational beliefs, according to DiGiuseppe (1990), is an interview technique called *inference chaining*. In this technique the teacher asks a student to state the *automatic thoughts* or *self-talk* engaged in when he or she becomes negatively aroused, e.g., angry. It may be necessary to have a student imagine a previous situation in which they became aroused and then identify the self-talk associated with that situation. The self-talk is assumed to be true and the meaning of the self-talk is then explored. Let's look at an example in which a student believes he's entitled to special treatment by another student:

Teacher: "Cliff, remember when you got angry the other day at recess and got into a fight with Billy?"
Cliff: "Yeah, I remember."
Teacher: "Imagine that you're back on the playground."
Cliff: "OK."
Teacher: "Now, tell me what you were saying to yourself when you got angry."
Cliff: "Billy should've picked me to be pitcher. He isn't being fair."
Teacher: "Ok, assuming he had picked you, what would that mean?"
Cliff: "That he's my friend."
Teacher: "So, why would Billy pick a friend to be pitcher?"
Cliff: "Because he owes it to a friend."

Self-Report Scales

In this approach, you make use of informal, self-report measures to obtain information from

students. Self-report measures try to get information about beliefs and feelings in problem situations. Several self-report measures are available for use with children. Knaus (1974) developed two forms of a scale called the Children's Survey of Rational Beliefs. One scale is for children ages 7-10 and the other for children ages 10-13. Another informal instrument that you might find useful is the Rational Sentence Completion Task (Wilde, 1992).

Some self-report instruments have norms to aid in their interpretation. The scales available for assessing irrational beliefs in children are limited in both number and psychometric properties. The Idea Inventory (Kassinove, Crisci, & Tiegerman, 1977) is one RET test that appears promising. You can use this test with students in the fourth through twelfth grades. The reliability and validity of this test has not been extensively studied. A set of norms, based on a somewhat limited population, is also available. Wasserman (1983) developed the Children's Dysfunctional Cognition Scale, which appears to hold promise. This test has good reliability. It has been shown to discriminate between normal and emotionally disturbed children. The test also correlates well with teacher-reported classroom behavior of emotionally disturbed children. Limited norms are available for the test.

There have been some questions raised about what these scales are actually measuring. It has been suggested that what is being measured by scales like the ones above is negative affect rather than irrational beliefs. A more detailed discussion of some of the issues related to the assessment of irrational beliefs can be found in Kendall, et al. (1995).

Personality Tests

Gorman and Simon (1977) found a possible relation between irrational beliefs and the Adjustment versus Anxiety factor on The Children's Personality Questionnaire (Porter, & Cattell, 1992) and on The High School Personality Questionnaire (Cattell, Cattell, & Johns, 1984). The Neuroticism Scale on the Junior Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (JEPQ) (Eysenck, H. J., & Eysenck, S. B. G., 1975) appears to correlate well with measures of irrational thinking (Kassinove, Crisci, & Tiegerman, 1977; McDonald & Games, 1972). There is also a short version of the JEPQ developed for research that could be used for student screening (Corulla, 1990).

Intervention

Rational-Emotive Education (REE) is a preventive and self-help program (Vernon, 1990). It is not therapy in the traditional sense. Therapy requires specialized training and will not be discussed, but more can be learned about this approach in a book by Wilde (1992). Students who go through the REE curriculum should, however, be better able to solve their own problems. We can divide REE into three major areas: education, problem-solving, and crisis counseling.

When you conduct a REE program, it is important that you make use of developmental levels. Since REE is essentially a cognitive technique, you need to consider cognitive development. Kassinove et al. (1977) studied developmental trends in rational thinking and found that, in normal

children, thought becomes progressively more rational with age. Piaget's theory of cognitive development is the model of cognitive development that has been most frequently applied to discussions of RET and REE (Bernard & Joyce, 1984; Rossi, 1977).

Developmental Levels

Preoperational children, usually those younger than seven years old, are egocentric and concrete in their thinking. This means these children need concrete materials like pictures and stories. Students in this stage can learn vocabulary terms but cannot do much with thinking skills, nor learn to do self-analysis. The best approach to use at this level is to teach students vocabulary and rational self-statements that counter their irrational thinking.

Children in the concrete operations stage, those between seven and eleven years old, can learn concrete concepts and how to use them. Teach concepts in this stage with concrete illustrations in specific situations. The child should be able to personally relate to the situations used. In other words, the situations should be within the child's experience. Children in this stage can learn vocabulary, concrete thinking skills and do self-analysis. The results of their self-analysis will tend to be limited to specific situations and will not generalize very much.

When students are at the formal operations stage (about 12 years old and up) more abstract concepts can be learned and used. Abstract concepts are more general concepts and are similar to broad inclusive beliefs or philosophical assumptions about the world. Youth who have reached this stage of thought can learn vocabulary, abstract thinking skills and do self-analysis at its deepest or most general level. This includes learning to examine their own beliefs, dispute them, develop alternative beliefs, and broadly apply them to various situations in their lives.

 Group Intervention

Education and problem-solving can be done either individually or in groups. Group work is the most commonly used in educational settings (Vernon, 1990). There are several things to consider in group work. First, you need to decide if your group will be homogeneous or heterogeneous. Homogeneous groups include only students functioning at the same level of cognitive development, and heterogeneous groups include students at various levels of development. Second, you must decide on a schedule for the group. The following are rules-of-thumb you can use when you schedule a group. You may have to make some adjustments after a group is underway, and you have had some experience with the students in the group.

1.   Grades 1-3, about 15 minutes on a daily basis.
2.   Grades 4-6, about 30 minutes on a daily basis.
3.   Grades 7-9, about 45 minutes two or three times a week.
4.   Grades 10+, about 60 minutes two or three times a week.

Third, you must consider motivation. The most important factor in motivation is the selection of interesting student activities. To do this you must know your students and the kinds of things that interest and engage them. Your enthusiasm for the REE activities will also contribute to student motivation. Enthusiasm can best be communicated to students nonverbally by facial expression, animated gestures, and movement. Reinforcement of student participation in group work is also recommended. You should use whatever level and type of reinforcement that you have found effective for other activities that you do with your students.

A fourth consideration is how to handle new members that arrive after a group is formed and underway. New members can present a problem. If you are still doing educational groups, it may be necessary to plan some tutorial sessions to catch a new student up to where he or she can function in your group. You may be able to use peer tutors or a classroom aide to do the tutorial sessions. If you have already progressed to doing problem-solving groups, it will be more difficult to integrate a new student into your group. More extensive tutoring may be necessary to prepare such a student for participation in a problem-solving group.

Finally, you need a few general guidelines for conducting a group. You should use a seating arrangement that will aid interaction, e.g., circular. Assign seats to minimize disturbance, e.g., separate contentious students. Require students to get permission before speaking. Don't interrupt students to correct their grammar or for using slang or mild profanity. Keep the group process flowing; e.g., don't allow a student to dominate the group. Keep the group focused and on track. That is, have a purpose for the group and stick to it. Don't deviate in any significant way from your purpose or schedule once they have been set.

Educational Groups

The REE instructional program is curriculum based. You can teach the REE curriculum using a variety of instructional techniques. Lecture, particularly when accompanied by examples and illustrations, is quite useful. Modeled demonstrations of principles or techniques done by role-play simulations are very concrete and effective. Guided discussions focused on applying principles or techniques presented by lecture or modeling are also useful. You can conduct guided discussion following the procedures for discovery learning. In this type of discussion, you would try to help students deduce a principle or point for themselves, using materials you have presented and guided by questions you pose. Reading assignments can also be used profitably in the instructional program. Reading assignments can be textual presentations of vocabulary, application of thinking skills, or analysis techniques. Illustrative stories can also be assigned to students as reading assignments for subsequent discussion. For students who don't have adequate reading skills or for variety, this type material can also be put on audio tape. For young children, Caputo (1995) employs puppet plays to teach REE. He bases his puppet plays on stories from Waters (1980) among others.

The most critical component of any instructional program is an adequate amount of practice or application of the things taught. Classroom applications may include paper-and-pencil tasks,

activities, or games. The curriculum materials developed by Anne Vernon (1989a, 1989b; 1998) are recent sources for classroom application activities. Vernon's earlier curriculum consists of activities in three areas: thinking, feeling, and behavior. The more recent program covers four areas: Emotional Development, Social Development, Cognitive Development, and Self-Development. This program comes in three versions: Grades 1-5, Grades 6-8, and Grades 9-12. An integrated approach to doing REE lessons is provided at the end of this chapter in the EAT curriculum.

The EAT curriculum uses stories that focus on a single emotion occurring in a situation where the main character uses either a self-enhancing or self-defeating way of thinking about the situation. First, the emotion in the story is discussed for vocabulary development. Second, an A-B-C analysis is done on the story. Third, if the story involved a self-defeating way of thinking, disputation of the thinking is done, and alternative ways of thinking about the situation are discussed. Finally, students are asked to relate some of their own experiences with the same emotion, including what the activating event was, how they interpreted it and what the consequences were.

Another important type of application activity is homework assignments. Learning to make use of the RET model for the analysis of problem situations is one very important focus for homework assignments. Elkin (1983) suggests younger children do an *events diary* as homework. Each page of the diary is structured by using four columns. The columns are labeled from left to right: What Happened, What I Thought, What I Felt, and What I Did. A homework format more appropriate for older students might use more formal column heading such as Activating Event, Beliefs, Consequences, and Disputation. An additional column that might be added to the events diary is Outcome or Effect.

Curriculum

This discussion of curriculum is based, in part, on Bernard (1979), Gerald and Eyman (1981), Knaus (1974) and Vernon (1989a, 1989b). The curriculum discussed below is not from any one of these sources, nor is it solely a synthesis of them. It addresses feelings, thinking and analysis.

 Feelings

You need to educate students about their emotions. It isn't possible to carry on meaningful educational or therapeutic interventions with a student who doesn't understand what is being talked about (DiGiuseppe, 1990). The following topics need to be addressed:

Labels. You need to familiarize students with the most frequently talked about emotions. Table 9.1 is an illustration of such a list. The list is divided into three groups. The groups each contain an equal number of positive and negative emotional terms. The groups are progressive, with terms in the first group being common terms and the following groups include less common terms and labels for somewhat more complex emotions. You can use whichever group suits your program or develop your own list. You might find it useful to use the different groups of emotional labels for

Table 9.1. Three sets of emotion labels for use in a REE education program. Half of the terms in each set are positive and half are negative. Positive terms are marked with an asterisk (*).

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I.   BASIC SET:

*1.   Happiness
 2.   Fear
*3.   Surprise
 4.   Sadness
*5.   Friendliness
 6.   Disgust
*7.   Hope
 8.   Anger
*9.   Excitement
10.   Impatience

II.   INTERMEDIATE SET:

*1.   Delight
 2.   Embarrassment
*3.   Affection
 4.   Shame
*5.   Gratitude
 6.   Dislike
*7.   Relief
 8.   Anxiety
*9.   Determination
10.   Frustration

III.   ADVANCED SET:

*1.   Pride
 2.   Guilt
*3.   Love
 4.   Envy
*5.   Respect
 6.   Remorse
*7.   Confidence
 8.   Hate
*9.   Inspiration
10.   Resentment

different age groups. For example, the basic emotions group might be all you try to cover with elementary students. You might want to add the intermediate group with middle school students and the advanced group in a program for high school students. You could, of course, begin students at any level with the basic group and work up to and through the other two groups.

Characteristics. It is just as important to understand emotions as to label them. Thus, you need to teach the commonly understood meaning of each emotional term you introduce to your students. You need to establish an agreed upon meaning for the emotional terms. It is important for you and the students to use terms in the same way and mean the same things by them. Otherwise, there will be mis-communication, which is a major obstacle to effective education, problem solving or counseling. You can use a standard dictionary to develop materials and activities for teaching the meaning of emotional terms.

Dimensions. After students understand the terminology and meanings needed for emotional communication, you need to teach them that each emotion can vary along several dimensions. First, emotions can vary in frequency. Some emotions are much more common than others. Second, they can vary in intensity. The same emotion can be felt to varying degrees depending on circumstances. Finally, emotions can vary in duration. The same emotion can persist for different periods of time on different occasions. You should teach students how to informally measure these dimensions when they experience emotions.

Activating Events. After you have taught labels, characteristics and dimensions, teach students what some of the more common activating events are for different emotions. The antecedents for most emotions are either an interpersonal response or an intra-personal response. Interpersonal responses are things that others do that elicit emotional reactions in us. For example, if someone insults you, you usually get angry. Intra-personal responses are things that we do to ourselves. For example, if you fail to meet some personal goal and label yourself a failure, you will probably get depressed. There are also other events that elicit emotions. For example, an approaching tornado will probably elicit fear.

Students should also be taught to distinguish between *primary* and *repeating* activating events. A primary activating event is an event that occurs only once or infrequently, for example, an offer of assistance, by another student, with a difficult task. A repeating activating event is one that occurs frequently. This type of activating event, in a school setting, is usually embedded in daily routines, for example, being given instructions or a command. The most common source of problems is the repeating activating event.

Consequences. Students should be taught that our emotions are consequences. That is, emotional responses follow from the interpretation we place on events or objects. Normally, our emotional responses are appropriate and adaptive. That is, they motivate us to make a proper behavioral response. However, we also exhibit emotional responses to events or objects that aren't appropriate or adaptive. These inappropriate response are caused by irrationally interpreting an event

or object. Such irrational interpretations may lead us to make inappropriate or maladaptive behavioral responses to the event or object. For example, you might interpret urban environments as threatening and experience anxiety whenever you need to visit a nearby city. As a result of the anxiety you experience by interpreting such environments as threatening, you may avoid going into the city even when it would be very useful to do so.

Thinking

In the second curriculum component, students should be taught to recognize common forms of irrational thinking. With younger children, you can use the term false or mistaken instead of irrational. In addition, they should be taught common rational alternative modes of thinking that counter irrational thinking. Several basic forms of irrational thinking and their alternatives follow. Students should be provided with activities in which they can learn to distinguish between these modes of irrational thinking and their rational alternatives.

Magical Thinking. Students with emotional problems, like many of us, appear to commonly engage in magical thinking. In magical thinking, a student will mistakenly think that illogical causes are the correct explanation for events in their lives. For example, Don feels guilty because his parents announce they are getting a divorce shortly after he has declared, in a moment of anger, that he hates them. Don incorrectly concludes that what he said has caused his parents' marriage to break up. Thinking that his statement has caused the divorce is an example of making an illogical or "magical" connection between two unrelated events.

Logical Thinking. A rational alterative to magical thinking is logical thinking. In logical thinking, a causal connection is made between two events that is supported by objective evidence. Students with emotional problems need practice in working backward from an effect, in a logical manner, to the event that appears to have produced it. Once they have identified a probable cause for the event, they need to learn how to evaluate whether or not the probable cause is in fact the cause. This is the basic method of science that Ellis relies on to battle irrational thinking. A probable cause can be evaluated by collecting evidence that supports it. Such evidence will form a general pattern of connection between two types of events. That is, the connection will be evident in numerous instances across a variety of situations and evident in other people's experiences as well as one's own experience.

Another way of establishing a causal connection is by testing it. To test it one applies a hypothesized cause repeatedly to see if the effect always follows. For example, John thinks that his peers don't like him because he's Jewish. John's teacher points out that if this is true his peers will also reject other Jewish students. They then look to see if there is a pattern of connection between being Jewish and being socially rejected. They, in fact, find a number of Jewish students who are accepted by John's peers. Thus, the evidence does not support John's cause and effect analysis, and he is probably guilty of magical thinking. John's teacher helps him identify some other possible explanations for why he can't make friends. She points out to him that she has observed that he will

not compromise and always wants to have his way and that it is likely that his peers find this behavior unacceptable. She teaches him to observe the interaction among his peers and note how there is give and take between them in making decisions, e.g., about what game to play at recess. She then suggests that he try "going along to get along" with his peers for a week and see if it doesn't result in greater acceptance. In short, she suggests that he put the new explanation to a test and see what effect results.

Accepting Hearsay. Another common mistake that can result in considerable difficulties for those who make it is to accept hearsay as fact. Hearsay can range from an opinion or belief of a friend on a question of fact to a widespread rumor being given play in the media. Students with emotional problems often confuse hearsay with fact. For example, during lunch in the school cafeteria, Nick tells Hernando that he heard that another student, Joe, had said that Hernando was a "dumb wetback." Hernando later confronts Joe in the hallway and they get into a shouting and shoving match that results in both students getting sent to in-school suspension. As it happens, Nick is an "instigator" who has manipulated Hernando by taking advantage of his gullibility to get "revenge" against Joe, while staying safely clear of the incident himself.

Critical Thinking. Critical thinking is a rational alternative to accepting hearsay. The first thing students need to learn is that there is a basic question that should always be asked about statements made to them. Students should be taught to ask, is this a statement of fact, opinion or of belief? Learning to ask this question is the most important first step toward becoming a critical (rational) thinker. Another step is learning how to discriminate between statements so that they can be classified into one of the three categories. Finally, students must learn how statements in each of these three categories can be properly evaluated.

A statement of fact is not necessarily a true statement but rather is a statement that is subject to verification. Statements of fact can be verified because they are subject to empirical evidence. For example, if someone says, "Bill is taller than Jim," that statement can be empirically verified. A bit less clear-cut is the situation Hernando was put in by Jake. For example, it may be possible to find evidence about whether or not Joe made the statement that Hernando was a "dumb wetback." Jake could seek out other witnesses to the statement, and he could ask Joe directly. The more evidence one can find in support of a statement, the more likely it is true. However, unless Hernando hears the statement directly from Joe he can't be certain that Joe actually made the statement.

Opinions, on the other hand, have relative credibility. An informed opinion, one held by someone with relevant expertise, is more credible than an uninformed opinion. For example, the school counselor tells Mary that, in her opinion, Mary has a good chance of being admitted to the state university but little hope of being admitted to a prestigious, private university. The counselor's opinion is more credible than her friend Janice's opinion that Mary could get into Harvard. The school counselor has more credibility than Janice because of her training, experience and knowledge. Janice's opinion could be correct, but there is a much greater likelihood the school counselor's opinion is correct and is the one that should be acted on. In short, when faced with a decision that

must be made on the basis of opinions, the rational thing to do is evaluate the credibility of the persons offering their opinion and act on the most credible opinion, even if it isn't the most attractive course of action.

Finally, students must learn to recognize that some statements are statements of belief and are neither statements of fact nor of opinion. For example, "black is beautiful" is a statement of belief. It is neither true nor false and therefore is not subject to verification, nor can it be evaluated for credibility, because there is no expertise that is relevant to the statement. Statements of belief must be accepted or rejected on the basis of their personal relevance; i.e., is it a self-enhancing belief that is likely to lead to positive emotional and behavioral consequences or is it a self-defeating belief that is likely to lead to negative emotional and behavioral consequences for the person who accepts it?

Absolutist Thinking. Students with emotional problems often confuse wants or preferences with needs. The way we use the term *need* in normal conversation adds to the confusion. Usually, these students treat many desires as if they were needs. We actually need few things, e.g., air, food, water, clothing, and shelter. Needs are things we must have to survive. Most of the things we seek are mere desires. We can manage quite well without most of them. For example, we desire to be liked by someone, to belong to a club, to watch TV, or to have a new bicycle. Irrational thinkers often give their desires the status of needs and then proceed to act as if it were imperative these "needs" be satisfied. Such "needs" are often stated as absolutes using a term like *must* in expressing the "need." For example, "I must be liked." or "I must have a new bicycle." If one of these "needs" is not fulfilled, such a student reacts as if a catastrophe has occurred. As we all know, catastrophes often result in severe emotional and behavioral reactions.

Conditional Thinking. Teach your students the difference between desires or wants and needs. There is a basic test that can be applied to determine if we really *need* something or merely *desire* it. Simply apply the question, "is this something essential to life?" about it. For example, Nick may say, "I'll just die if I don't get to be on the football team," or "I must get on the football team," or "I really need to make the team." When being selected or not being selected to be on a team is framed in this way, the implication is that this is something Nick has to have. In fact, if the question "is this something essential to life?" is applied to this desire, it becomes possible to put it into proper perspective. Will Nick starve to death, freeze to death, have a coronary or be executed if he fails to make the team? Clearly, the answer is no and no matter how hard he may try, Nick will be unable to produce any evidence that any of these dire consequences will result from a failure to make the team. What Nick will have to admit, sooner or later, is that while it would be personally satisfying or fun to be on the football team, it is not something that he needs. It is simply something that he desires and, while failing to make the team may be a big disappointment, it is something that he can live with and survive without any irreparable harm being done. Teach students like Nick how to handle disappointment by putting the event into proper perspective and how to refocus by selecting a new objective. Students like Nick often have a problem with setting unrealistic objectives and may be guilty of *perfectionistic* or *absolutist* thinking. They should be taught how to realistically appraise

themselves and to set objectives that have a good chance of being attained. They also should be taught to phrase these objectives in *conditional* terms that allow for the possibility of failure. For example, "It will be great, if I make the team." The "if" in the preceding statement makes it conditional and recognizes that not making the team is possible.

Some common irrational thoughts in children and youth have been identified by Waters (1982) and are listed in Table 9.2. The irrational thoughts listed are expressed in their basic form but in real life expression will have a variety of forms. You should be able to recognize some of the errors in thinking previously discussed in these statements.

Baldon and Ellis (1993) have provided examples of the consequences for some of the above irrational thinking. For example, thinking that "I must win." can lead to feeling anxious, depressed, worthlessness or avoiding taking risk. Thinking that, "The world should be fair and just." may lead to anger, feuds or aggression. Thinking that, "It's awful when things do not go my way." can result in low frustration tolerance, depression, procrastination or addictions. Finally, negative thinking, which is defined as overgeneralizing about negative events, may produce feeling of helplessness or of depression.

Analysis

The third curriculum component is *analysis*. If your students are going to be able to use their new understanding of emotions and thinking skills for problem-solving, you should teach them how to do analysis. There are three aspects of analysis you should teach. First, teach the A-B-C model for looking at the *relationship* between thinking, feelings, and behavior. Second, teach your students how to *challenge* irrational thinking with rational thinking skills. Third, teach them to restructure or replace irrational self-talk.

Relationship. You should teach your students the A-B-C model, previously discussed, as an aid to understanding the relationship between thoughts, feelings, and behavior. It is essential for students to understand that an activating event is not the source of their self-defeating emotional reaction and problem behaviors. Rather, it is their belief or thinking about an activating event that causes their emotional and behavior problems. Provide activities that help them see how different interpretations of an activating event can lead to different emotional and behavior consequences.

Challenge. After students understand the A-B-C conceptual model, you should teach them *disputation*. The process of disputation has two basic steps. First, teach your students to identify the thinking that appears to be linked to a problem. This requires identification of automatic or self-talk. Self-talk is the words, phrases, and statements people make to themselves in response to an activating event. Second, teach students to examine self-talk that immediately follows an activating event to see if it appears to be a type of irrational thinking they've learned about. Self-talk's rationality can be tested in several ways. First, it can be evaluated to see if describes a pattern of connections, that is, is there evidence for a causal relationship? Second, is it supported by facts or

Table 9.2. Two lists of irrational thoughts, identified by Waters (1982), that are often observed in children and youth.

_____

a.   Common irrational thoughts found in children.

1.   It's awful if others don't like me.
2.   I'm bad if I make a mistake.
3.   Everything should go my way.
4.   I should always get what I want.
5.   Things should come easy to me.
6.   The world should be fair.
7.   Bad people must be punished.
8.   I shouldn't show my feelings.
9.   Adults should be perfect.
10.   There's only one right answer.
11.   I must win.
12.   I shouldn't have to wait for anything.

b.   Common irrational thoughts found in adolescents.

1.   It would be awful if peers didn't like me.
2.   It would be awful to be a social loser.
3.   I shouldn't make mistakes, especially social mistakes.
4.   It's my parents' fault that I'm so miserable.
5.   I can't help it, that's just the way I am.
6.   I guess I'll always be this way.
7.   The world should be fair and just.
8.   It's awful when things do not go my way.
9.   It's better to avoid challenges than to risk failure.
10.   I must conform to my peers.
11.   I can't stand to be criticized.
12.   Other's should always be responsible.

credible opinion? Third, is it personally relevant in a self-enhancing way? Finally, is the self-talk an absolute or a conditional statement? If an absolute statement, is it reflective of a survival need? If the self-talk appears to be irrational, it is probably causing the problem. If the self-talk appears to be rational, students should be taught to reexamine self-talk until the irrational thinking behind a problem has been identified. If thinking is irrational, it must be restructured.

Restructuring. There are two ways to restructure irrational thinking. First, if the self-talk is absolutist teach your students to reword it a conditional statement. The addition of a conditional term, e.g., "if" will make a statement less perfectionistic or less absolute. Second, it is sometimes necessary to find an alternative belief. This may be necessary when a belief involves magical thinking or when critical analysis reveals that the belief is rooted in the acceptance of hearsay. Critical analysis of hearsay will often reveal a more logical alternative. Alternative beliefs can also be identified by using imagery or role-plays. Teach students to act-out or imagine themselves in a situation where the activating event occurs and more positive feelings and behaviors also occur. Next, teach students to examine the self-talk they used in the pretend exercise. The self-talk used to produce a more constructive reaction to the activating event represents a possible alternative. Explain that applying this new interpretation to the activating event can help them to feel and behave more positively in the future. You should also teach your students to practice using the new self-talk. Initially, they can practice cognitively, then in role-play simulations, and finally in real situations. The latter type of practice is usually referred to as homework. A behavioral component is often employed as a part of the homework. That is, a behavioral contract, as discussed in Chapter Three, is employed to help structure and motivate the homework activity.

One useful activity to use following the introduction of the above is to do a functional analysis (adapted from Myers, Brown & Vik, 1998). Begin by having each student identify a problem behavior, e.g., fighting. Next, have each student construct a chart for the problem divided into the following columns:

Antecedents	Self-talk	Feelings	Behaviors	Effects	
				Positive	Negative

After the students complete their charts discuss the charts. This can be done individually or in a group depending on what seems most appropriate for your students. The discussion should follow the following outline.

1. Discuss the antecedents.
2. Discuss the feelings.

3. Select an antecedent and discuss the self-talk or thoughts associated with the feelings listed for that antecedent.
4. Discuss the behaviors that are associated with the antecedent being used.
5. Explore the connections between the antecedent, the self-talk about it, and the feelings associated with the behaviors.
6. Discuss the effects listed for the feelings and behaviors. Acknowledge the positive effects but focus on the negative effects. Attend to the balance between the positive and negative effects; e.g., Is one type of effect more prominent than the other? If positive effects out weigh negative effects, try to draw out more negative effects, because the negative effects are the principle source of motivation for change.
7. Return to the content of this exercise after teaching problem solving and try to help the student restructure the self-talk so that it will, for the most part, only produce feelings and behaviors that lead to positive effects.

Problem-Solving Groups

Problem-solving is used with both children and youth. It is probably best to limit your use of this approach to students at the upper elementary level or above. As you recall from the discussion of developmental levels, children in the concrete operations stage are best able to deal with RET concepts when they are specific and concrete. You should limit RET work with children in this stage of cognitive development to finding a solution for a specific problem. Problem-solving groups for youth who are in the formal operations stage of cognitive development can focus on broader, more general applications of the RET model to their problems.

Hafner (1981) makes a distinction between two levels of belief. First, he discusses underlying or *root beliefs*, which are the most general and basic form of belief. Root beliefs are similar to what narrative psychologists refer to as the "stories" or "personal myths" we structure our lives around (McAdams, 1993; Wood 1996). Second, Hafner discusses immediate beliefs which are reflected in our conscious *self-talk* in specific situations. DiGiuseppe (1990) argues that self-talk should probably not be given the status of belief but rather should be referred to as *automatic thought*. Automatic thoughts come from underlying beliefs that are less readily available for examination and communication. For example, in a particular situation such as a math class, a student might express the thought, "I have to make an A on the six-weeks test this Friday," in his or her self-talk. This self-talk may be a reflection of an underlying belief, "I must win." As you can see, the self-talk is more concrete and specific to a given situation than is the underlying belief. Root beliefs will have a variety of situation specific expressions in self-talk representing different areas of a student's life, e.g., parent relations, peer relations, school or work.

The focus of problem-solving is on the self-talk or automatic thoughts in a specific, current situation causing difficulties. However, over a period of time, you may become aware of a theme in the self-talk revealed by a student. This theme probably represents an underlying or root belief or personal myth and can be useful in better understanding a student's problems.

A sequence of steps to guide the problem-solving process is presented below. The role of the teacher in this process is as a facilitator. A facilitator should be guided by the steps provided but should focus his or her efforts on getting the students in a group to address these steps in their discussion of a problem. This is best accomplished by the use of questions and prompts rather than directly leading students through the steps. You can best prompt by using open-ended, probe questions. Probe questions usually ask for clarification, description, or discussion. Be sure you allow ample opportunity for exploring material evoked by a probe question. Be careful not to let the group get caught up in a lengthy discussion of the past. The focus of problem-solving is on the present. You may step out of your role as facilitator and lead when necessary. This may be common in the early stages of students learning to use the problem-solving process as a group.

The group should:

1.	Have the student with a problem describe the problem situation, including the activating event.
2.	Determine with the problem student if the activating event is of the primary or repeating type.
3.	Have the student describe his or her feelings, in the problem situation, plus any behavior exhibited.
4.	Look at any negative feelings, behaviors and self-defeating effects that occurred as clues that suggest irrational thinking may be contributing to the problem.
5.	Identify the irrational thinking about the problem situation evident in the self-talk of the student. Identifying the objective or goal for any negative behavior exhibitd can also help identify irrational thinking.
6.	Explore the relationship between the irrational thinking identified and the negative feelings and any associated negative behavior that occurred in the problem situation. It is not necessary, at this step, for the student to accept that his or her thinking about the activating event is irrational.
7.	Challenge or dispute the irrational thinking by requiring that the student validate it. It is not unusual for a problem student to use irrational thinking in his or her defense of thinking that's been challenged. Challenge any irrational thinking employed in this way. Work on the most recent instance but move back to earlier instances as soon as there is success with the most recent instance. In short, a problem student must exhaust his or her defenses for irrational thinking before it can be given up and replaced.
8.	Help the student to modifying his or her irrational thinking so it is more rational or to find a rational alternative to the current way of thinking. In short, help a problem student find a self-enhancing way of looking at the activating event or at least achieve a perspective that is not self-defeating. Even in the case of primary activating events that are not likely to repeat, an irrational interpretation and the associated negative feelings can, if not corrected, diminish the general well being of an individual.

 If the activating event is of the repeating variety:

9.   Help the problem student set a specific, concrete and constructive goal for the problem situation based on a rational interpretation of the activating event.

10.   Explore methods of achieving the goal with the student and list the options available.

11.   Help the student select an option that appears to be feasible and consistent with the outcome desired. If the method decided on requires social skills that the problem student doesn't have, teach these skills to the student (see Chapter 7 on teaching social skills).

12.   Get a commitment from the student to try out the option selected the next time the activating event occurs. This can also be accomplished through the use of a contract (see Chapter Three).

When you first begin doing group problem-solving, start with hypothetical problems. Use irrational thoughts from the lists of common irrational thoughts, in children and adolescents, given earlier or use one of the types of cognitive distortion discussed earlier to help you create hypothetical problem scenarios. Think of a situation in which a student who uses one of these irrational modes of thinking would experience a problem. Once you have a basic idea for a hypothetical problem, write a short description of the situation, the character having the problem, the character's irrational self-talk about the activating event, his or her response in the situation, and the effect of the student's response. When you're ready to use the hypothetical problem, select a student from the group to play the role of the character who has the problem. Your problem solving group should then conduct a discussion with the "problem student" about his or her problem. You, as the teacher, should facilitate the group's use of the RET model to solve the problem. A planning form (see Figure 9.1), for hypothetical problems, with an example (see Figures 9.2 & 9.3), is provided to help you develop materials for problem-solving groups.. After your students have worked with hypothetical problem solving, you can begin introducing real-life problems of students working in the group. Group discussion of a real personal problem should done only on a voluntary basis.

In addition to teaching REE through puppet plays, Caputto (1995) also does hypothetical problem-solving through puppet plays. He sets-up a problem situation common to young students, e.g., getting angry. The set-up includes an activating event and the self-talk of a puppet character. Caputto then involves his young audience in determining what emotional and behavioral consequences are likely. He gets the audience involved in disputing the self-talk in the play and in suggesting new self-talk. Finally, he engages the audience in exploring the likely change in consequences the new self-talk will produce and how these changes will be more self-enhancing for the character.

Gardner's (1971) *Mutual Storytelling Technique* and Ziegler's (1992) *Book Making Technique* can be adapted for use in REE problem-solving. In Gardner's approach a child is asked to tell the teacher a story. The story is analyzed by the teacher for problem content. Gardner uses psychoanalytic principles for story analysis, but you could easily substitute another set of principles, such as those in REE to guide story analysis. The teacher then tells the student a story that retains the major elements of the student's story but modifies potentially self-defeating features of the student's story in a self-enhancing way. For the beginner, it is often useful to record a student story

Hypothetical Problem Planning Form

The following form can be used to guide the development of hypothetical problems for use in a Rational-Emotive problem-solving group. For starters, you can use the lists of irrational thoughts for children and adolescents in the text material. Hypothetical problems should be used for teaching students the RET problem-solving process. After students have learned the process and are comfortable with it, the focus can shift to real problems, on a voluntary basis.

1.   Target group:

2.   Age of students:

3.   Gender of students:

4.   Problem Scenario:

a.   Main Character:

b.   Irrational Belief:

c.   Setting:

d.   Activating Event:

e.   Sample Self-talk:

      1.

      2.

      3.

f.   Emotional Consequence:

g.   Behavioral Consequence:

h.   Supporting Character:

I.   Supporting Character's Response:

5.   Write a narrative guide for the "problem student." Put this on a 5 x 8 card for the "problem student" to use as a guide while playing the part in the RET group.

6.   Conduct RET problem-solving group.

Figure 9.1. A planning form for developing hypothetical problems for REE groups.

Hypothetical Problem Sample

1.   Target group: EBD Resource Class

2.   Age of students: 10 to 12

3.   Gender of students: Male

4.   Problem Scenario:

a.   Main Character: Fred

b.   Irrational Belief: Things must come easy for me.

c.   Setting: Computer lab

d.   Activating Event: Fred presses wrong function key and loses work.

e.   Sample Self-talk:

    1.   This should be easy.

    2.   I'll never learn how to use that stupid computer.

    3.   I don't need to know how to use a computer.

f.   Emotional Consequence: Anger

g.   Behavioral Consequence: Fred rips up worksheet and stomps back to teacher's desk

        and says he's not doing this stupid work.

h.   Supporting Character: Agatha Agitated

I.   Response: Agatha Agitated sends Fred back to special education class

        early with a note about Fred's outburst.

5.   Write a narrative guide for "problem student." Put this on a 5 x 8 card for the

    "problem student" to use as a guide while playing the part of Fred in the RET group.

6.   Conduct RET problem-solving group.

Figure 9.2. Completed sample planning form for a hypothetical problem for a REE group.

Sample Problem Narrative

You are a 6th grade student named Fred. While you are in Ms. Agitated's computer lab, you mistakenly pressed the wrong function key on the computer. Instead of saving your work, the program deleted the work. You got angry and tore up your worksheet. You then stomped back to Ms. Agitated's desk and told her that you weren't doing this stupid assignment. Ms. Agitated told you that you would have to go back to your special education class if you couldn't behave. You told her, "fine." Ms. Agitated wrote a note for your special education teacher and sent you back to the special education class.

In the problem-solving group, answer questions put to you by members of the group based on the information above. You can elaborate on the themes in the above in any way you wish as long as you stick to the basic story. If asked what you were saying to yourself immediately after you had the problem on the computer, you can say things like the following:

1.   This should be easy.

2.   I'll never learn how to use this stupid computer.

3.   I don't need to know how to use a computer.

Figure 9.3. Sample problem narrative, with instructions, based on a planning form for developing hypothetical problems for REE groups. This narrative would be used by the student playing the part of the character in the narrative. The narrative can be placed on one side of a 5 x 8 index card and the instructions on the opposite side.

on tape for later analysis. The reciprocal story is then told on the following day. A modification of this technique can be used as an intermediate step between hypothetical and real problems in group work. What you can do is ask for a student volunteer to make-up a story about a student with a problem and to then play the part of that student in the problem-solving group. Such stories will draw on a student's experiences and will usually have some personal relevance while providing a sense of anonymity through the fictional character. Ziegler's technique is done through a written story that is a joint effort between a student and teacher. The story is called a book and may contain several "stories" where each story is like a chapter dealing with a different aspect of the problem. There is more about the use of stories at the end of this chapter.

Crisis Intervention with Individuals

Crisis intervention is appropriate for children and youth of almost any age. It is the method of choice with very young children, i.e, below seven years of age. It is the most appropriate approach you can use with very young children because it is situation specific and thus very concrete. It is also highly directive and has rather limited objectives. A model using RET principles for crisis intervention with emotionally disturbed children is available (Wasserman & Adamany, 1976; Wasserman & Kimmel, 1978). There are three goals for intervention in a crisis situation. Your first goal is immediate removal of the child from the crisis situation. Your second goal is reduction of the child's negative thoughts, affect, and behaviors. Your third goal is to teach the child more appropriate thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

When emotional arousal results in acting-out behavior or other acute negative responses such as anger or frustration, crisis counseling should be employed. The main purpose of crisis counseling is to help a student understand the dynamics behind his or her behavior. Unlike more formal counseling, crisis counseling is directive. That is, crisis counseling is teacher centered. It is necessary for crisis counseling to be teacher centered because it must be brief. It needs to be brief because teachers seldom have the time or training for non-directive, student-centered counseling.

Here is a sequence of steps to guide you in doing crisis intervention:

1. The first step in crisis counseling is to remove the student from the crisis environment or situation.
2. The second step is to get the student to provide a behavioral description of the activating event. If this is not immediately forthcoming or there are inaccuracies in reporting what happened, tell the student what you saw.
3. The third step is to get the student to state what his or her self-talk was about the activating event. You want to know what the student was thinking that caused him or her to get upset. If this is not immediately forthcoming, tell the student what you think his or her self-talk was about the event. If possible, get a verbal confirmation of your hypothesis.
4. The fourth step is to point out the relationship between the event, the thoughts about the event, and the response to the event.

5.   The fifth step is to challenge the basis for the thinking. With younger students you may have to omit this step.

6.   The sixth step is to ask for an alternative interpretation of the event. If an alternative is not immediately forthcoming or another self-defeating thought is given, provide an example of a more self-enhancing interpretation. With younger children simply supply them with an alternative rational self-statement to use in the future, have the child say the statement several times and move on (Bernard, 1990). See the examples of rational self-statements following the illustrative crisis counseling session below.

7.   The seventh step is to examine what the behavioral outcome might be if the student uses the alternative interpretation. If the student doesn't recognize what change in behavior the alternative thinking would bring about, is incorrect or refuses to state what he or she thinks, supply the answer yourself. With younger students, simply point out what the probable effect on behavior would be and move on.

8.   The final step is to get a commitment from the student to try an alternative interpretation the next time a similar situation arises. In the case of younger students, instruct them to use the rational self-statement that you provided whenever something similar happens (Bernard, 1990).

Now, let's look at an illustration of crisis counseling based on the RET model.

A new popular song on the radio has the following line in it, "Short people ain't got no reach." Mr. Waller has taken his class, a group of middle school students, to the school gym to play basketball. As the group walks across the gym, one of the students, Ron, is quietly singing. Ron is singing the part of the song that contains the line about short people. Gary, who is short for his age, is walking behind Ron and suddenly lunges forward and shoves Ron from behind. There is a scuffle between Ron and Gary. Mr. Waller moves in and pulls the two boys apart.

1.   The first step in crisis counseling is to remove the student from the crisis environment or situation. The student is then given a cooling-off period to allow the level of emotional arousal to diminish. This is important because it is difficult to conduct a rational discussion with someone who is in a highly charged emotional state.

Mr. Waller asks one of the other students to organize the game and get it started. He then takes Gary by the arm and escorts him back to the classroom. Mr. Waller conducts himself in a calm, matter-of-fact manner. He does not engage in any verbal interaction with Gary about the event. When they get to the room, he asks Gary to take a seat and try to calm down. Mr. Waller then goes and checks on the students in the gym. Mr. Waller's handling of the situation will prevent further conflict. It will also give Gary a chance to be alone for a few minutes to calm down.

2.   The second step is to get the student to provide a behavioral description of the activating event.

Mr. Waller returns from the gym and sits down in the seat next to Gary.

Mr. W: "Gary, what was Ron doing when you shoved him in the back?"
Gary: "He was making remarks about short people not being able to play basketball."
Mr. W: "Wasn't he singing some of the lyrics in that new song by Whippoorwill?   It sounded like a tape he played the other day during free-time."
Gary: "Yeah."

3.   The third step is to get the student to recognize what he was thinking about the activating event.

Mr.W: "What did you say to yourself when you heard him singing the song?"
Gary: "I don't know."
Mr. W: "Weren't you thinking: 'He's putting me down?'"
Gary: "Yeah, he was making fun of me and trying to keep anyone from wanting me on their team."

4.   The fourth step is to bring out the relationship between the event, the thinking about the event, and the response to the event.

Mr.W: "So you said to yourself: 'He's making fun of me.' It was then that you got angry and shoved him."
Gary: "Yeah, that's about it."
Mr. W: "So, tell me why you shoved Ron."
Gary: "Because I believed he was making fun of me and I got mad."

5.   The fifth step is to challenge the basis for the interpretation made of the event.

Mr. W: "How do you know Ron was making fun of you?"
Gary: "Because he was."
Mr.W: "Isn't it possible that he was just singing the song because he likes it?"
Gary: "It's possible."
Mr. W: "You don't really know that Ron was making fun of you, do you?"
Gary: "No."

6.   The sixth step is to explore an alternative interpretation of the event.

Mr.W: "What is something else that you could have said to yourself about Ron's singing?"
Gary: "Well, I could've just thought he was singing."
Mr. W: "Yes, you could have thought he was happy about getting to go to the gym, couldn't you?"

Gary: "Yeah, I guess so."

Mr. W: "There was certainly more evidence that he was happy than that he was trying to make fun of you, wasn't there?"

Gary: "Probably."

7.   The seventh step is to examine what the behavioral outcome might be if the student uses the alternative interpretation.

Mr.W: "What if you had believed that Ron was singing the song because he was happy? How would that have changed what you felt and did?"

Gary: "Well, I guess I wouldn't have got mad and shoved him."

Mr. W: "Yes, and you would be in the gym playing basketball right now instead of in here talking with me, wouldn't you?"

Gary: "Yeah, I guess I made a mistake."

8.   The final step is to get a commitment from the student to try an alternative interpretation the next time a similar situation arises.

Mr.W: "Well, we all make mistakes sometimes. In the future, I think you need to look at situations more carefully and make sure you have understood them. If you do that, you will be less likely to make this kind of mistake again."

Gary: "OK., Mr. Waller, I'll try not to fly off the handle next time."

Mr.W: "Good. If I bring Ron down here, do you think you can apologize for shoving him?"

Gary: "Yes, I'll apologize. I was probably wrong about what he was doing."

Mr. W: "OK., I'll go get Ron. After you apologize, we can all go back to the gym and play a little ball."

If you think about Mr. Waller's remarks in the illustration, you will see that he was quite directive in his counseling. Mr. Waller's questions always gave Gary a chance to come up with points about the situation on his own. However, he often directly suggested ideas about the situation to Gary. In a formal counseling relationship, Mr. Waller would try to lead Gary to arrive at the critical points about the situation on his own. However, Mr. Waller is not a regular counselor. He was only providing brief, immediate counseling about a crisis situation. Thus, he needed to be directive to keep the session moving and to allow him to get back to his responsibilities to the group. If Gary needs individual therapy, it would be more appropriate for a school counselor or a crisis teacher to conduct the intervention. The time required for regular, formal counseling sessions is usually too great for a classroom teacher.

Frequently, in crisis counseling, a teacher will provide a student with a self-statement to say to himself or herself in similar problem situations in the future. Grieger and Boyd (1983) suggest providing self-statements that can be used by students when angry or anxious. Here are a few

examples of such self-statements.

Anger:

1.   Easy does it. Be cool.
2.   I don't have to prove anything.
3.   Don't think crazy things.

Anxiety:

1.   I need to only think what I can do.
2.   Relax, I'm in control.
3.   Its OK to be anxious about some things.

Self-reinforcement:

1.   It worked and I did it.
2.   It wasn't as bad as I expected.
3.   I'm getting better at this each time.

Student Problems

There are many possible problems that you may encounter in students and for which problem-solving or crisis counseling can be helpful. The three most common emotional problems observed in children and youth are anxiety, anger and depression. We will look briefly at each of these as they relate to the RET model.

Anxiety. It is important to recognize that anxiety is a useful response, and when observed or reported it is usually normal. It is also a response that has a normal range of variability among individuals that is related to differences in temperamental predispositions. Anxiety can also be a side-effect of medications, e.g., Benzedrine. Finally, certain conditions may be mistaken for anxiety. For example, some of the behavior of hyperactive children, e.g., restlessness and fidgeting, could be mistaken for signs of excessive anxiety. When anxiety is severe enough to cause a significant disruption in a student's ability to conduct his or her daily affairs in a normal manner, anxiety has become a problem. When anxiety reaches the problem level, it will often be associated with a condition called *phobia*. Phobias usually involve an excessive level of anxiety about a specific stimulus that normally should not warrant intense anxiety, e.g., germs. Phobias also are often characterized by marked avoidance behavior or unusual coping behaviors, e.g., wearing latex gloves to perform ordinary, routine behaviors like shaking hands with someone.

Grieger and Boyd (1983) discuss Ellis' distinction between two types of anxiety problems. The first is *ego anxiety*, which is anxiety about one's self or one's being, e.g., anxiety arising out of

a drive for perfection. The second is *discomfort anxiety*, which is anxiety about the possibility of having to deal with unpleasantness, e.g., anxiety arising out of concern that the school bus might be in an accident. Grieger and Boyd point out that the origin of anxiety problems in some children can be traced to parenting styles. Parents who are overly critical or who have unrealistically high expectations can create anxiety problems in their children, particularly when a child is temperamentally predisposed to developing anxiety related problems. Parents can also create anxiety problems in their children by providing a model of irrational evaluations for routine life events, e.g., responding to a torn shirt as if it were a catastrophe. Parents motivated by irrational guilt will often protect their child from any source of frustration or distress and overly indulge the child. When such a child finally must deal with reality, the child may perceive ordinary events as catastrophes and experience high levels of discomfort anxiety. Last, but not least, are parents who deal with a child inconsistently and thereby create relationships that are unpredictable for the child. This situation is compounded when aversive events like punishment are involved. In fact, Peterson, Maier, and Seligman (1993) discuss *learned helplessness* as an anxiety-based problem that is commonly brought about by repetitious but unpredictable experiences with aversive events.

Some additional techniques can be used to help a student with anxiety (Wilde, 1992). Ask the anxious student to assume the worst. Have the student describe the circumstances that he or she is anxious about and then discuss what the probable consequences are if the situation described comes about. Help the student to see that the probable consequences are both tolerable and manageable, even if they aren't pleasant. Modify a student's anxiety question into an answer that minimizes concern to a realistic level. This is a technique used in response to anxiety-motivated questions about an activating event. For example, "Could I get hit by lightening if I go out to play?" might be answered by saying, "If you go out to play, there is no guarantee that you won't get hit by lightening." By consistently responding to such questions in this manner, the routine nature of the risk is emphasized as well as that the question is unnecessary. Finally, reinforce adaptive responses to anxiety. Put a reinforcement contingency on the use of adaptive responses to anxiety that the student can make in place of maladaptive responses, e.g., getting ready for school rather than complaining about physical aliments.

Anger. Anger, like anxiety, can be normal and healthy when it is moderate, appropriate and motivates an adaptive response. Unhealthy anger is an intense state of negative arousal such that rational thought processes are overwhelmed and a maladaptive response occurs. Wilde (1992) suggests that unhealthy anger is almost always a by-product of an irrational belief that one MUST not be frustrated. In short, unhealthy anger is produced by low frustration tolerance (LFT). Anger is not the only consequence of LFT. Knaus (1983) suggests a number of child problems in which LFT plays a role. Some of these problems include underachievement, impulsiveness, temper tantrums, conduct problems and overeating. Wilde (1992) also points out a relationship between LFT and problems with substance abuse. Common indicators of LFT include whining, complaining, daydreaming, procrastination, and withdrawal.

When something more than the problem-solving group or crisis counseling are needed to help

a student with LFT, you might consider using a stress inoculation program such as the one described by Finch, Moss and Nelson (1993). This program has three phases. Phase One is a preparation phase in which discussions with a student focus on the student recognizing the role of anger in his or her problems; understanding what anger is and what distinguishes healthy from unhealthy anger; identifying the activating events usually associated with a student's anger; exploring how the student thinks about his or her antecedents for anger; and discussing the emotional and behavioral consequences of both healthy and unhealthy anger with the student. In Phase Two, a student is taught to anticipate situations associated with anger and to prepare in advance by using self-talk, such as, "If I don't get mad, I won't get into trouble." When in anger situations, the student is taught to use self-talk statements like, "Relax, be cool." If the student begins to feel himself or herself becoming aroused, the student is taught to begin using a calming technique such as a relaxation technique like deep, rhythmic breathing (see Chapter 6). Following an encounter with an activating event for anger, the student is taught self-talk to use when unsuccessful, for example, "I will do better next time, just think about something else," or when successful, for example, "I chilled out in there just now and handled things just great." Phase Three is devoted to a number of role-play sessions in which each student participating in the program gets extensive practice in using the information and techniques developed in Phases One and Two. The stress inoculation approach could be easily adapted for use with anxious students as well.

Depression. For our purposes, we will think of depression as a maladaptive form of sadness. We also need to keep in mind that there are two basic types of depression. The most serious type has a biological basis and requires medical treatment. Psychological depression is largely a product of our thinking and attitudes. Some of us may be temperamentally more predisposed than others to developing psychological depression. To feel sad is normal under many circumstances in life. However, when sadness is so deep and prolonged that it significantly hinders one's ability to function normally, it has become depression. According to Wilde (1992), depression usually develops from negative over generalization, which might extend to the self, "I am no good"; to the world, "Life sucks" or to the future, "Things will only get worse." A related problem is low self-esteem. This condition is usually associated with an overconcern with and dependence on the good opinion of others for one's sense of self-worth. Obviously, such a person will become depressed if they don't get the amount of love and approval that they think they "need" from others.

Wilde (1992) suggest a few additional techniques to use with such students. One technique is to get a student who is overgeneralizing in a negative way about himself or herself ("I'm just no good.") to draw a pie chart showing the relative proportions of what is good, bad and indifferent about him or herself. If a student doesn't include a good section, point out positive attributes until the student concedes that a portion of the chart must be allocated to good aspects of self. This recognition negates the previous over generalization. A second technique is to negate over generalization by analogy. For example, ask a student, "If a car's battery goes bad should the car be sold for junk?" By analogy, "Well, if a car is still good even though it has a bad battery, you're still a good person even though you may have made a mistake." Finally, students with low self-esteem can be encouraged to focus on personal accomplishment and helping others so they have something

to feel good about. This helps divert such students from their preoccupation with other people's opinion of themselves and builds a basis for good self-esteem.

Personal Stories

Earlier McAdams' (1993) work on *personal stories* or *personal myths* was mentioned as a way to look at our root beliefs woven into a narrative format. It can be a useful exercise to have students construct an "autobiography." In the case of younger students the task can be framed as making up a story about a child who has characteristics similar to the student. This can be followed by your use of the *mutual story telling technique,* discussed earlier, to reformulate the story without negative components. In older students the task can be framed as writing one's autobiography. They can then apply some of the lessons learned from their REE instruction and activities to analyzing their personal stories for errors in thinking and to retelling those stories in a more self-enhancing way.

According to McAdams (1993) stories evolve developmentally and can contain either positive or negative components or both. Early childhood is the time when subjective thinking dominates and is the developmental period that contributes the *narrative tone* for our personal stories. By tone is meant an overall flavor of optimism, despair, trust, hope, or pessimism that is evident in a story and is, at least in part, a reflection of the attachment experience. A story can have either a positive or negative tone. Obviously, stories with a positive tone are psychologically healthier.

1.   A positive tone will be related to one of two basic story types:

        a.   Stories that focus on affectionate or loving <u>relationships</u>, and
        b.   Stories that focus on struggles with great obstacles ending in <u>triumph</u>.

2.   A negative tone will also be related to one of two basic story types:

        a.   Stories of extraordinary <u>victimization</u>, and
        b.   Stories of absurdity, hypocrisy and <u>alienation</u>.

Early childhood is also the developmental period in which *imagery* for our personal stories begins to form. An image is like a snapshot in time of the understanding and feelings associated with an event or pattern of events. Given the cognitive functioning of children at this developmental level, the understanding may be very limited or distorted. Many early images are acquired from family interactions and might be characterized by such phrases as the "helpless father", the "good mother" or the "seductive sister." Other images will be acquired from the community culture through exposure to things such as religious symbols and from the general culture through exposure to all manner of images conveyed by mass media, e.g., the ideal family as portrayed on television.

Middle childhood is the time when rule-governed thinking dominates and is the developmental period in which *motivational themes* for our personal stories emerge. Motives are like internal forces

that drive a person to act in a certain way. Motivational themes answer the question, what do we want? Motivational themes are discussed in terms of two broad categories for motives: *Agency* and *Communion*.

1.   **Agency** motives are about autonomy and take on two basic forms.

      a.   <u>Power</u> motives, involving things like prestige, status, leadership and domination; and
      b.   <u>Achievement</u> motives, involving things like competence, efficiency and innovation.

2.   **Communion** motives are about relationship and also take two basic forms.

      a.   <u>Intimacy</u> motives, involving things like friendship, support and belonging; and
      b.   <u>Love</u> motives, involving things like family and romance.

Late childhood sees the integration of motives into themes. Instead of simply a collection of changing desires, there now begins to develop an organized set of motives with some degree of stability across time. It is during this period that one of the two themes from above is most likely to become clearly evident in a child's motivations. Also, this theme will often be first evident in the theme of a child's favorite stories.

Adolescence is the time when abstract thinking dominates and we see the emergence of *identity* issues. The adolescent has the cognitive ability to consider hypothetical alternatives. This ability allows adolescents to recognize inconsistencies in their behavior relative to different situations and roles. A recognition that often leads an adolescent to ask, which is the real me? The first response to this question may be a *personal fable or fantasy*. These "rough drafts" of self-defining stories may appear highly unrealistic but are perfectly normal.

Before polished self-defining stories can develop, an adolescent must arrive at a *personal ideology*. Ideology is concerned with our <u>beliefs</u> about how the world works and about what is good, evil, true and false. Beliefs have *content* and *structure*. The content is the <u>what</u> of our beliefs. The structure is <u>how</u> our beliefs are organized and is usually through one of the themes mentioned earlier: Agency or Communion. Beliefs provide a setting or context for identity. Identity might be thought of as our attempt to give meaning to our lives or to make sense of the time, place and condition in which we find ourselves.

In order to develop a self-defining story, an adolescent must adopt a *historical perspective* on his or her life. This entails making a "good or bad" judgment about the past and the present. These judgments lead to a historical perspective on self discussed in terms of two basic possibilities.

1.   **Optimistic** perspectives:

      a.   The <u>dynastic</u> perspective: a good past has led to a good present (charmed life story).

b. The <u>antithetical</u> perspective: a bad past has led to a good present (rise from the ashes story).

2. **Pessimistic** perspectives:

a. The <u>compensatory</u> perspective: a good past has led to a bad present (fall from grace story).
b. The <u>self-absolution</u> perspective: a bad past has led to a bad present (never had a chance story).

Stories have an *imago* or main character that may change from story to story. An imago is an idealized conception of self. Imagoes are not people, not the whole story, may be either good or bad and are both common and unique. Common imagoes can be classified using the two basic themes of Agency and Communion.

1. **Agency Imagoes**:

a. The Warrior (conflict manager)
b. The Traveler (explorer)
c. The Sage (synthesizer of knowledge and experience)
d. The Maker (craftsman)

2. **Communion Imagoes**:

a. The Lover (seeker of intimacy)
b. The Care Giver (devoted to others)
c. The Friend (committed to relationship)
d. The Ritualist (conserver of tradition)

3. **Imagoes High in Agency and Communion**:

a. The Healer (one who mends)
b. The Teacher (a guide)
c. The Counselor (a mentor)
d. The Humanist (advocate for human welfare, values and dignity)
e. The Arbiter (a judge or decision maker)

4. **Imagoes Low in Agency and Communion**:

a. The Escapist (one who avoids reality)
b. The Survivor (one who simply endures)

The basic principles governing imagoes:

a.   They express our most cherished desires and goals.
b.   They always enter our stories in specific opening scenes.
c.   They personify our traits and recurrent behaviors.
d.   They give voice to individual and cultural values.
e.   They are often built around significant people in our life.
f.   They may personify a fundamental life conflict.

Characteristics of a positive and mature story:

1.   It has *coherence*. The story is self-consistent and makes sense.
2.   It has *openness*. The story is flexible enough to change and grow.
3.   It has *credibility*. The story must be accountable to the facts.
4.   It has *differentiation*. The story has richness, depth and complexity in the number of factors, issues and conflicts addressed.
5.   It has *reconciliation*. The story brings harmony and resolution to conflicts and contradiction in one's experiences.
6.   It has *generative integration*. The story not only provides personal unity but positively connects one to the lives and myths of others.

Story development activities with young students can begin with an activity such as asking a student to compile two lists. Give your students a worksheet divided into two columns. Title one column **Good** and the other column **Bad**. When the columns are filled in, ask them to pick one item from each column that is most important to them and to draw an illustration. Next ask them to make-up a story that combines the two illustrations. It is often easier to do the stories orally with younger students. The *mutual story telling technique* or the *book making technique* discussed earlier could be adapted for use in this activity. These stories can be the basis for discussion and revision activities.

With students in the middle childhood age range, an initial activity to use is to ask your students to complete each of the following statements at least five times:

What I want from other people is....... (for example, respect or fear)

What I want to have in life is...... (for example, creativity or power)

Next, ask the students to select the most important statement of each type and write a story about how they became important to them, how they are important in their current life, and how they will be important to their life in the future. These stories can provide material for analysis and discussion.

With adolescents and initial activity is to complete the statement below ten times and then come back and rate the importance of each statement on a three point scale: 1) Not important, 2)

Somewhat important, and 3) Very important.

I am _____.

Next ask the students to write an autobiography keeping in mind their most important *I am* statements. You can give the students a few prompts, such as the following, to help stimulate their writing:

1. How do you think about yourself, what is your sense of who you are?
2. What would be a good title for your story?
3. What have been the most important events in your life?
4. How did those events make you who you are today?

These autobiographies can be used for analysis, discussion and restructuring.

A variation can be done on telling one's personal story by having students develop a story about who they think they will be at some point in the future, e.g., when they're an adolescent or an adult. This is based on the concept of *possible selves* (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Possible selves function as incentives for future behavior and provide a standard for evaluating the current self. Possible selves can be thought of as bridges to the future. To be useful they must represent a positive vision. Future stories can be analyzed to identify negative components and rewritten to improve those negative components. They can also be compared with a description of the current self for similarities and differences. Particular attention should be given to negatives in the current story that are positive in a future self story. It is useful to discuss with a student action plans for how this change can be brought about.

Activities

1. Administer and score an RET instrument such as the <u>Children's Dysfunctional Cognition Scale</u> and evaluate the student's status on the scale. Write some objectives for this student based on his profile.

2. Develop a description of three possible repeating activating events, an irrational belief or interpretation of each event and the probable emotional and/or behavioral consequences.

3. Describe a situation from your experience with students when you think a student employed each of the following: magical thinking, accepting hearsay and absolutist thinking, include why you think this was the case.

4. Plan a hypothetical problem, using the planning form provided, for a REE problem-solving group and conduct a simulated problem-solving group, including identification of the irrational thinking, disputation, and restructuring.

5. Develop a description of an hypothetical (or real) activating event that is misconstrued, leads to negative emotional arousal and results in acting-out behavior. Conduct a simulated Crisis Intervention session.

6. State an irrational underlying or root belief and then give specific examples of it as it might occur in five different areas of a student's life.

7. What is your story?

    a. **Your public story**: How you might describe yourself to a stranger sitting next to you on an air plane.
        Write down "I am a _____." ten times.
        How uncomfortable would you feel in reversing each of the items? (1 - 5 scale)
        Which items could you leave out and feel comfortable about it?

    b. **Your personal story**: How you think about yourself, your sense of who you are.
        What title would you give your story?
        What are the pivotal events in your life? (One to five events)
        Where did you come from? What was the context in which your pivotal events took place? Economic, Political, Religious, Family, etc.
        What represents good and evil for you?

EMOTIONAL AWARENESS TRAINING

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The EAT curriculum is adapted from the Rational-Emotive Therapy model of Albert Ellis:

Ellis, A. (1962). Reason and emotion in psychotherapy. New   York: Stuart.

Ellis, A. (1971). Rational-emotive therapy and its application to emotional education. New York: Institute for Rational   Living.

Ellis, A., & Bernard, M. (1983). Rational-emotive approaches to the problems of childhood. New York: Plenum Press.

Introduction to EAT

The EAT curriculum is based on the concept of Rational Emotional Education in Ellis (1971) and Ellis and Bernard's (1983) Rational-Emotive Therapy model. The objective of EAT curriculum is to help students build an emotional vocabulary, to teach them a self-analysis process that will help them understand their own feelings and associated behavior, and to help them recognize the role of thought, both rational and irrational, in their feelings and behavior. The EAT curriculum consists of three sets of ten emotions. Half of the emotions are positive and half are negative:

I.   BASIC SET:
*1.   Happiness
 2.   Fear
*3.   Surprise
 4.   Sadness
*5.   Friendliness
 6.   Disgust
*7.   Hope
 8.   Anger
*9.   Excitement
 10.   Impatience
II.   INTERMEDIATE SET:
*1.   Delight
 2.   Embarrassment
*3.   Affection
 4.   Shame
*5.   Gratitude
 6.   Dislike
*7.   Relief
 8.   Anxiety
*9.   Determination
 10.   Frustration
III.   ADVANCED SET:
*1.   Pride
 2.   Guilt
*3.   Love
 4.   Envy
*5.   Respect
 6.   Remorse
*7.   Confidence
 8.   Hate
*9.   Inspiration
 10.   Resentment

EAT Curriculum Goals and Objectives

In the following goals and objectives, the phrase **developmentally appropriate presentation** means a discussion story that is focused in a context that is appropriate for the students' developmental level. Stories can be constructed for emotions in each set that are focused at one of three developmental levels and depict either rational or irrational thinking on the part of the central character. The work of DuPont (1989) provides one source of guidance for developing a developmental focus for story presentations to be used in discussions. The following is a brief outline of the model for selecting a developmental focus:

1. **Heteronomous**: During childhood, affect is centered on issues involving the family and adults. Therefore, stories for this developmental level should focus on situations related to the family and adults, e.g., danger versus safety and approval versus disapproval. The common irrational beliefs of children may also be helpful.

2. **Interpersonal**: During late childhood and early adolescence, affect is centered on issues involving peers. Therefore, stories for this developmental level should focus on situations related to peers, e.g., similarity versus difference, and conformity versus deviance. The common irrational beliefs of adolescents may also be helpful.

3. **Psychological**: During middle to late adolescence, affect is centered on issues involving self-identity. Therefore, stories for this developmental level should focus on situations related to self-identity, e.g., consistency versus dissonance and ideals versus values. The common irrational beliefs of adolescents or adults may also be helpful.

Dupont, H. (1989). The emotional development of exceptional students. <u>Focus on Exceptional Children</u>, 21(9), 1-10.

The following curriculum is expressed as three broad goals with several associated objectives for each goal.

I. Basic Emotional Set

A. The student will learn, in a developmentally appropriate presentation, to correctly identify and label **emotions in the basic set**, to perceive the relationship between thoughts and the emotions, and to identify whether the basis for an emotion is rational or irrational. Evaluation will be done by teacher observation and judgment during discussions.

1.a. The student will correctly identify and label **happiness** from the actions and speech of make-believe characters in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

1.b.   The student will correctly interpret as either rational or irrational the central character's perception of events in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

1.c.   The student will correctly analyze the relationship between the central character's perception, feelings and behavior in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

2.a.   The student will correctly identify and label **fear** from the actions and speech of a make-believe characters in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

2.b.   The student will correctly interpret as either rational or irrational the central character's perception of events in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

2.c.   The student will correctly analyze the relationship between the central character's perception, feelings and behavior in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

3.a.   The student will correctly identify and label **surprise** from the actions and speech of a make-believe characters in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

3.b.   The student will correctly interpret as either rational or irrational the central character's perception of events in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

3.c.   The student will correctly analyze the relationship between the central character's perception, feelings and behavior in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

4.a.   The student will correctly identify and label **sadness** from the actions and speech of a make-believe characters in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

4.b.   The student will correctly interpret as either rational or irrational the central character's perception of events in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

4.c.   The student will correctly analyze the relationship between the central character's perception, feelings and behavior in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

5.a.   The student will correctly identify and label **friendliness** from the actions and speech of a make-believe characters in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

5.b.   The student will correctly interpret as either rational or irrational the central character's perception of events in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

5.c.   The student will correctly analyze the relationship between the central character's perception, feelings and behavior in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

6.a.   The student will correctly identify and label **disgust** from the actions and speech of a make-believe characters in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

6.b.   The student will correctly interpret as either rational or irrational the central character's perception of events in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

6.c.   The student will correctly analyze the relationship between the central character's perception, feelings and behavior in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

7.a.   The student will correctly identify and label **hope** from the actions and speech of a make-believe characters in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

7.b.   The student will correctly interpret as either rational or irrational the central character's perception of events in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

7.c.   The student will correctly analyze the relationship between the central character's perception, feelings and behavior in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

8.a.   The student will correctly identify and label **anger** from the actions and speech of a make-believe characters in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

8.b.   The student will correctly interpret as either rational or irrational the central character's perception of events in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

8.c.   The student will correctly analyze the relationship between the central character's perception, feelings and behavior in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

9.a.   The student will correctly identify and label **excitement** from the actions and speech of a make-believe characters in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

9.b.   The student will correctly interpret as either rational or irrational the central character's perception of events in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

9.c.   The student will correctly analyze the relationship between the central character's perception, feelings and behavior in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

10.a.   The student will correctly identify and label **impatience** from the actions and speech of a make-believe characters in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

10.b.   The student will correctly interpret as either rational or irrational the central character's perception of events in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

10.c.   The student will correctly analyze the relationship between the central character's perception, feelings and behavior in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

II. Intermediate Emotional Set

A.   The student will learn, in a developmentally appropriate presentation, to correctly identify and label **emotions in the intermediate set**, to perceive the relationship between thoughts and the emotions, and to identify whether the basis for an emotion is rational or irrational. Evaluation will be done by teacher observation and judgment during discussions.

1.a.   The student will correctly identify and label **delight** from the actions and speech of make-believe characters in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

1.b.   The student will correctly interpret as either rational or irrational the central character's perception of events in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

1.c.   The student will correctly analyze the relationship between the central character's perception, feelings and behavior in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

2.a.   The student will correctly identify and label **embarrassment** from the actions and speech of a make-believe characters in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

2.b.   The student will correctly interpret as either rational or irrational the central character's perception of events in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

2.c.   The student will correctly analyze the relationship between the central character's perception, feelings and behavior in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

3.a.   The student will correctly identify and label **affection** from the actions and speech of a make-believe characters in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

3.b.   The student will correctly interpret as either rational or irrational the central character's perception of events in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

3.c.   The student will correctly analyze the relationship between the central character's perception, feelings and behavior in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

4.a.   The student will correctly identify and label **shame** from the actions and speech of a make-believe characters in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

4.b.   The student will correctly interpret as either rational or irrational the central character's

perception of events in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

4.c.   The student will correctly analyze the relationship between the central character's perception, feelings and behavior in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

5.a.   The student will correctly identify and label **gratitude** from the actions and speech of a make-believe characters in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

5.b.   The student will correctly interpret as either rational or irrational the central character's perception of events in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

5.c.   The student will correctly analyze the relationship between the central character's perception, feelings and behavior in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

6.a.   The student will correctly identify and label **dislike** from the actions and speech of a make-believe characters in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

6.b.   The student will correctly interpret as either rational or irrational the central character's perception of events in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

6.c.   The student will correctly analyze the relationship between the central character's perception, feelings and behavior in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

7.a.   The student will correctly identify and label **relief** from the actions and speech of a make-believe characters in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

7.b.   The student will correctly interpret as either rational or irrational the central character's perception of events in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

7.c.   The student will correctly analyze the relationship between the central character's perception, feelings and behavior in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

8.a.   The student will correctly identify and label **anxiety** from the actions and speech of a make-believe characters in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

8.b.   The student will correctly interpret as either rational or irrational the central character's perception of events in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

8.c.   The student will correctly analyze the relationship between the central character's perception, feelings and behavior in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

9.a.   The student will correctly identify and label **determination** from the actions and speech

of a make-believe characters in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

9.b.   The student will correctly interpret as either rational or irrational the central character's perception of events in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

9.c.   The student will correctly analyze the relationship between the central character's perception, feelings and behavior in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

10.a.   The student will correctly identify and label **frustration** from the actions and speech of a make-believe characters in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

10.b.   The student will correctly interpret as either rational or irrational the central character's perception of events in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

10.c.   The student will correctly analyze the relationship between the central character's perception, feelings and behavior in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

III.   Advanced Emotional Set

A.   The student will learn, in a developmentally appropriate presentation, to correctly identify and label **emotions in the advanced set**, to perceive the relationship between thoughts and the emotions, and to identify whether the basis for an emotion is rational or irrational. Evaluation will be done by teacher observation and judgment during discussions.

1.a.   The student will correctly identify and label **pride** from the actions and speech of make-believe characters in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

1.b.   The student will correctly interpret as either rational or irrational the central character's perception of events in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

1.c.   The student will correctly analyze the relationship between the central character's perception, feelings and behavior in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

2.a.   The student will correctly identify and label **guilt** from the actions and speech of a make-believe characters in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

2.b.   The student will correctly interpret as either rational or irrational the central character's perception of events in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

2.c.   The student will correctly analyze the relationship between the central character's perception, feelings and behavior in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

3.a.   The student will correctly identify and label **love** from the actions and speech of a make-believe characters in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

3.b.   The student will correctly interpret as either rational or irrational the central character's perception of events in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

3.c.   The student will correctly analyze the relationship between the central character's perception, feelings and behavior in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

4.a.   The student will correctly identify and label **envy** from the actions and speech of a make-believe character in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

4.b.   The student will correctly interpret as either rational or irrational the central character's perception of events in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

4.c.   The student will correctly analyze the relationship between the central character's perception, feelings and behavior in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

5.a.   The student will correctly identify and label **respect** from the actions and speech of a make-believe character in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

5.b.   The student will correctly interpret as either rational or irrational the central character's perception of events in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

5.c.   The student will correctly analyze the relationship between the central character's perception, feelings and behavior in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

6.a.   The student will correctly identify and label **remorse** from the actions and speech of a make-believe character in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

6.b.   The student will correctly interpret as either rational or irrational the central character's perception of events in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

6.c.   The student will correctly analyze the relationship between the central character's perception, feelings and behavior in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

7.a.   The student will correctly identify and label **confidence** from the actions and speech of a make-believe character in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

7.b.   The student will correctly interpret as either rational or irrational the central character's perception of events in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

7.c.   The student will correctly analyze the relationship between the central character's perception, feelings and behavior in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

8.a.   The student will correctly identify and label **hate** from the actions and speech of a make-believe character in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

8.b.   The student will correctly interpret as either rational or irrational the central character's perception of events in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

8.c.   The student will correctly analyze the relationship between the central character's perception, feelings and behavior in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

9.a.   The student will correctly identify and label **inspiration** from the actions and speech of a make-believe character in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

9.b.   The student will correctly interpret as either rational or irrational the central character's perception of events in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

9.c.   The student will correctly analyze the relationship between the central character's perception, feelings and behavior in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

10.a.   The student will correctly identify and label **resentment** from the actions and speech of a make-believe character in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

10.b.   The student will correctly interpret as either rational or irrational the central character's perception of events in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

10.c.   The student will correctly analyze the relationship between the central character's perception, feelings and behavior in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

EAT Teaching Strategy: Story-Based Group Discussions

A. Group discussions.

1.   Physical arrangement: Use a seating arrangement that promotes communication, e.g., circle.

2.   Set rules: Every group needs a set of ground rules to maintain orderly discussions.

3.   Present the story to the group.

4.   Use questions and guidelines in the lesson plan format to stimulate discussion.

   a.   Identification and labels.

   b.   Beliefs and analysis.

   c.   Alternative beliefs for irrational stories.

   d.   Related personal experiences.

EAT Story Planning Form

<u>Vignette Components</u>

1.   Set:

2.   Focus:

3.   Emotion:

4.   Version:

5.   Central Character:

6.   Supporting Character(s):

7.   Setting:

8.   Situation:

9.   Antecedent(s):

10.   Characteristics:

      a.   Self-talk

      1.

      2.

      3.

      b.   Behaviors

      1.

      2.

      3.

      c.   Verbalizations

      1.

      2.

      3.

11.   Write Vignette

Sample EAT Story Planning Form

Vignette Components

1.   Set: Basic

2.   Focus: Family and adults

3.   Emotion: Happiness

4.   Version: Rational

5.   Central Character: Daniel

6.   Supporting Character(s):   Phillip

7.   Setting: Walking home from school

8.   Situation: Talking with a friend

9.   Antecedent(s):   Report card

10.   Characteristics:

     a.   Self-talk

     1.   This is great.

     2.   I did it.

     3.

   b.   Behaviors

     1.   Smiling

     2.   Skipping

     3.

   c.   Verbalizations

     1.   My dad isn't going to believe this.

     2.   I bet I get a bonus on my allowance.

     3.

11.   Write Vignette (see sample)

Sample EAT Lesson Plan 1

Set: Basic

Focus: Family or Adult

Lesson: 1

Emotion: Happiness

Version: Rational

Objectives: I.A

1.a.   The student will correctly identify and label **happiness** from the actions and speech of a make-believe character in the story, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

1.b.   The student will correctly interpret as **rational** the central character's perception of events in the story, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

1.c.   The student will correctly analyze the relationship between the central character's perception, feelings and behavior in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

VIGNETTE: **DANIEL'S REPORT CARD**

It was almost 3:00 o'clock, and the end-of-the-day bell would ring anytime now. Daniel was lined up with his classmates at the classroom door. Mrs. Thurman, his teacher, was coming down the line passing out brown, report-card envelopes. Daniel got his just before the bell rang.

"Don't forget to get your report card signed and remember to bring it back on Monday," said Mrs. Thurman as she handed out the last envelope.

Daniel's line filed out through the door and everyone started down the hall for the front door. Outside, Daniel looked around for his friend Phillip.

"Hey, Phillip, wait up," yelled Daniel as he spotted his friend. Daniel caught up with Phillip, and they started walking toward their neighborhood.

"I'm going to check my report card," said Daniel.

Daniel pulled his report card out. His face broke into a big smile as he spotted the letter A beside math. This is great, he thought, I really did it.

"How did you do?" asked Phillip.

"I got an A in math this time. Boy, my dad isn't going to believe this! I bet I get a bonus with my allowance this week!"

"Yeah, maybe we can go play Putt-Putt this weekend," said Phillip.

"OK," said Daniel as they reached the corner where they had to split up. "I'll be over in a little while," said Daniel as he started off down his street, half running and half skipping.

DISCUSSION:

1.   What emotion was Daniel feeling in this story?

   If no one can correctly label the emotion, was it:

   a.   Surprise?   d.   Fear?

   b.   Disgust?   e.   Excitement?

   c.   Happiness?

Obtain correct consensus or majority opinion from students; if necessary tell them the correct label.

2 .   What are some other names that might be used for Daniel's feeling of happiness?

   If students can't think of any correct synonyms, supply these:

   a.   Glad

   b.   Pleased

   c.   Joy

OPTIONAL: Discuss the normal frequency, duration, and intensity of "happiness." Questions about Daniel's experience of "happiness" in the story can be used to begin this discussion.

3.   What did Daniel do and say that told you he felt happy?

   Obtain accurate consensus from students about Daniel's affective behavior and talk.

4.   What happened that Daniel felt happy about?

Obtain accurate consensus or majority opinion from students about the activating event(s) associated with Daniel's feeling "happiness."

5.   What did Daniel think about what happened in the story?

Obtain accurate consensus or majority opinion from students about what Daniel thought about the events in the story. Use Daniel's self-talk and, at times, verbalizations as indicators.

6.   Was Daniel right to feel happy about what happened?

Obtain accurate consensus or majority opinion from students about Daniel's understanding. Lead students to label Daniel's understanding as **rational** thinking. Help students identify why Daniel's thinking is rational. For example, his thinking is logical, critical, or conditional and leads to functional feelings and behavior.

7.   Who can tell us about a time when they felt happy?

General discussion of personal experiences from students. Adapt questions from above to use with students about their personal experiences to get details and for comparisons to the experience of the character in the story.

Sample EAT Lesson Plan 2

Set: Basic

Focus: Family or Adult

Lesson: 2

Emotion: Happiness

Version: Irrational

Objectives: I.A

1.a.   The student will correctly identify and label **happiness** from the actions and speech of a make-believe character in the story, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

1.b.   The student will correctly interpret as **irrational** the central character's perception of events in the story, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

1.c.   The student will correctly analyze the relationship between the central character's perception, feelings and behavior in stories, as determined by teacher observation and judgment.

VIGNETTE: **THE SOCCER GAME**

Todd and Ed hurried across the large playing field behind their school. "It's almost time for the game," said Ed. "I thought you were going to be the team's goalie."

"I thought I was, too," said Todd. "I would be the goalie, but my mom wouldn't let me go out for the team because I might get hurt." Todd and Ed got to the stands after the game had started. They found an empty spot and sat down. "Look," said Ed, "isn't that Sam playing goalee for our side?"

"Yeah," said Todd, "his dad is a coach."

About this time the opposing team drove the ball down field and their forward kicked the ball straight for the goal. Sam made a diving catch and stopped a score. "Great save," yelled Ed.

What a show-off. It's not fair that Sam got to be goalee. His dad is a coach and my mom wouldn't even let me play, thought Todd.

Sam kicked the ball back down the field. Almost immediately an opposing player brought it back and made a driving kick for the goal. Sam leaped up for the ball. The ball zipped between his hands. It hit Sam square in the face. Sam was knocked down, and the ball bounced in for a goal. Todd jumped up, grinning, and clapped his hands. "Great shot," he said. Old Sam got just what he deserved, thought Todd.

DISCUSSION:

1.   What emotion was Todd feeling in this story?

   If no one can correctly label the emotion, ask was it:

   a.   Surprise?   d.   Fear?

   b.   Disgust?   e.   Excitement?

   c.   Happiness?

Obtain correct consensus or majority opinion from students; if necessary tell them the correct label.

2.   What happened that Todd felt happy about?

Obtain accurate consensus or majority opinion from students about the activating event(s) associated with Todd's feeling happiness.

3.   What did Todd think about what happened in the story?

Obtain accurate consensus or majority opinion from students about what Todd thought about the events in the story. Use Todd's self-talk and, at times, verbalizations as indicators.

4.   Was Todd right to feel happy?

Obtain accurate consensus or majority opinion from students about Todd's understanding. Lead students to label Todd's understanding as **irrational** thinking. Help students identify why Todd's thinking is irrational. For example, his thinking is magical, based on hearsay, or is absolutist and leads to dysfunctional feeling and behavior.

5. **How could Todd's thinking (self-talk) be changed so that his feelings and behavior would be correct?**

Obtain consensus or majority opinion from students about how Todd's self-talk could be changed to make it more **rational**.

6. **How might Todd's feelings and behavior change if he used this new self-talk in the same situation?**

Obtain new emotional label for what Todd's new and appropriate feeling would be and a description of possible new and appropriate verbalizations and behavior that Todd might exhibit.

7. **Have any of you felt happy in a situation like Todd's?**

General discussion of personal experiences from students. Adapt questions from above to use with students about their personal experiences to get details and for comparisons to the experience of the character in the story.

Sample EAT Teacher Evaluation Form

Student _____   Date _____

Objective _____

Story and Version _____

Focus _____

Check each item below by entering a (Y) for yes or an (N) for no.

_____ Correctly labeled emotion.

_____ Correctly identified behavioral cues for emotion.

_____ Correctly identified verbal cues for emotion.

_____ Correctly identified thought (self-talk) for emotion.

_____ Correctly analyzed beliefs as rational or irrational.

Complete the following for irrational stories:

_____ Suggested appropriate alternative thoughts (self-talk).

_____ Suggested appropriate alternative feelings.

_____ Suggested appropriate alternative behaviors.

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