

9

Group Therapy Activities Clinical Practice Workbook

A clinically branded, function-preserving edition retaining the original exercises, psychoeducation, checklists, logs, planning tools, and response space.

DSM-5-TR · ICD-11 CLINICAL ALIGNMENT

1 · Icebreaker Questions

2 · Group Agreement Creation

3 · Trust Building Exercises

4 · Role-Playing Scenarios

5 · Art Therapy

6 · Communication Skills

7 · Emotion Identification

8 · Support Circle

9 · Therapeutic Play

How to use this workbook

- Use this workbook selectively and collaboratively; it is educational and does not replace individualized assessment, diagnosis, treatment, medical care, or crisis services.
- Skip, pause, or modify any activity that increases distress, danger, shame, or loss of functioning. Adapt language for culture, disability, neurodivergence, health, resources, and lived context.
- Ratings in this workbook are reflection tools unless a named, validated measure and interpretation are explicitly provided.

Contents

Icebreaker Questions	4
Group Agreement Creation	7
Trust Building Exercises	10
Role-Playing Scenarios	13
Art Therapy	17
Communication Skills	20
Emotion Identification	24
Support Circle	28
Therapeutic Play	30

Icebreaker Questions

Objective: To foster a comfortable and engaging environment for group participants by encouraging personal sharing and interaction.

Personal and Fun Questions:

- What is your favorite hobby and why do you enjoy it?
- If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go and why?
- What is one thing you are really good at?
- If you could have any superpower, what would it be and why?
- What was your favorite childhood memory?
- What is your favorite way to spend a weekend?
- What is your favorite book or movie and why?

Thought-Provoking Questions:

- What is one goal you hope to achieve in the next year?
- What is a lesson you've learned the hard way?
- If you could meet any historical figure, who would it be and why?
- What is one thing you would change about the world if you could?

Reflective and Personal Growth Questions:

- What is something you are passionate about and why?
- Who has been the most influential person in your life and why?
- What is a challenge you've overcome and how did you do it?
- What is a skill you would like to learn and why?
- What does success mean to you?

Self-Reflection:

- What are your top three strengths?
- What is a recent accomplishment you're proud of?
- How do you handle stress?
- What is a long-term goal you have?
- What is something you're working on improving about yourself?

Emotions:

- What emotion have you felt most frequently this week?
- How do you usually express your emotions?
- What makes you feel happy?
- What makes you feel sad?
- How do you cope with feelings of anger?

Relationships:

- Who is someone you admire and why?
- What qualities do you value most in a friend?
- What is a challenging relationship you've had, and what did you learn from it?
- How do you communicate your needs in a relationship?

Challenges:

- What is a current challenge you're facing?
- How do you approach problem-solving?
- What is a fear you have, and how do you deal with it?
- What is a setback you've experienced, and how did you overcome it?
- How do you handle change?

Conflict Resolution:

- How do you handle conflicts?
- What is a conflict you've resolved successfully?
- How do you communicate during disagreements?
- What strategies do you use to resolve conflicts peacefully?
- How do you learn from conflicts?

Personal Fulfillment:

- What brings you the most joy in life?
- How do you find meaning in your daily activities?
- What is a passion you pursue?
- How do you measure personal fulfillment?
- What does a fulfilling life look like to you?

Group Agreement Creation

Objective: To establish clear guidelines and mutual expectations that promote a safe, respectful, and productive group therapy experience.

1. How will we ensure respect and confidentiality within the group?

Example: "We agree to keep all shared information within the group and respect each other's privacy."

2. What should we do if someone accidentally shares something outside the group?

Example: "We will gently remind them of our confidentiality agreement and discuss how to prevent it in the future."

3. How can we encourage active participation from all members?

Example: "We agree to give everyone a chance to speak and actively listen when others are sharing."

4. What should we do if someone feels uncomfortable participating?

Example: "We will create a supportive environment and allow members to pass or share when they feel ready."

5. What guidelines should we follow for giving and receiving feedback?

Example: "We agree to give constructive feedback using 'I' statements and to receive feedback with an open mind."

6. How will we handle disagreements or conflicts within the group?

Example: "We will address conflicts respectfully and seek to understand each other's perspectives before finding a resolution."

7. What are our expectations for attendance and punctuality?

Example: "We agree to attend all sessions on time and inform the group in advance if we need to miss a session."

8. How should we address repeated lateness or absenteeism?

Example: "We will discuss the impact on the group and work together to find a solution."

9. What responsibilities do we each have to the group?

Example: "We agree to be honest, supportive, and committed to the group's goals."

10. How will we hold each other accountable for following the group agreement?

Example: "We will gently remind each other of the agreement and address any concerns as a group."

11. What should we do if someone feels unsafe or unsupported?

Example: "We will address their concerns immediately and work together to ensure everyone feels safe."

Trust Building Exercises

Objective: To build trust and rapport among group members, creating a supportive and cohesive group dynamic.

Exercise 1: Trust Fall

- One person stands with their back to their partner and falls backward, trusting their partner to catch them.
- Switch roles after the first fall.

How did it feel to trust your partner to catch you?

What was challenging about this exercise?

Exercise 2: Blindfolded Walk

- Pair up group members.
- One person is blindfolded, and the other guides them around the room using verbal instructions.
- Switch roles after a few minutes.

How did it feel to rely on your partner's instructions?

What challenges did you face during this exercise?

Exercise 3: Human Knot

- Group members stand in a circle and extend their hands into the center, grabbing someone else's hand.
- Without letting go, the group must work together to untangle themselves into a circle.

How did the group work together to solve the problem?

What strategies were effective in untangling the knot?

Exercise 4: Share a Secret

- Pair up group members.
- Each person shares a personal secret or a piece of information they usually keep private.
- Discuss how it felt to share and listen.

How did it feel to share something personal?

What was it like to listen to your partner's secret?

Exercise 5: Trust Circle

- Group members form a circle.
- One person stands in the middle with their eyes closed and gently leans in different directions, trusting the group to support them and prevent them from falling.
- Rotate so each member has a turn in the middle.

How did it feel to be supported by the group?

What did you learn about trust and teamwork from this exercise?

Role-Playing Scenarios

Objective: To provide participants with opportunities to practice and develop their interpersonal skills and problem-solving abilities in a safe and controlled environment.

Scenario 1: Handling Conflict at Work

- One participant plays the role of an employee who feels overwhelmed by their workload.
- Another participant plays the role of the supervisor who needs to address the issue.

Example:

Employee: "I feel like I'm drowning in tasks and can't keep up with the deadlines."

Supervisor: "I understand your concerns. Let's discuss how we can better manage your workload."

How did it feel to express and address the concerns?

What strategies were effective in resolving the conflict?

Scenario 2: Navigating a Difficult Conversation with a Friend

- One participant plays the role of a person who needs to address a sensitive issue with a friend.
- Another participant plays the role of the friend who might react defensively.

Example:

Person: "I've noticed that you've been distant lately, and I'm worried about our friendship."

Friend: "I didn't realize I was being distant. I've been dealing with a lot of stress."

How did it feel to bring up a sensitive issue with a friend?

What was effective in handling the friend's reaction?

Scenario 3: Assertive Communication in a Relationship

- One participant plays the role of a person who wants to communicate their needs in a relationship.
- Another participant plays the role of the partner who may not fully understand those needs.

Example:

Person: “I need more quality time with you to feel connected in our relationship.”

Partner: “I didn’t realize you felt that way. Let’s make more time for each other.”

How did it feel to assertively communicate your needs?

What was effective in ensuring the partner understood and responded positively?

Scenario 4: Setting Boundaries with Family Members

- One participant plays the role of a person who needs to set boundaries with a family member.
- Another participant plays the role of the family member who might push back against the boundaries.

Example:

Person: “I appreciate your concern, but I need some space to make my own decisions.”

Family Member: “I’m just trying to help, but I understand your need for independence.”

How did it feel to set boundaries with a family member?

What strategies were effective in maintaining the boundaries?

Scenario 5: Handling Peer Pressure

- One participant plays the role of a person facing peer pressure to engage in risky behavior.
- Another participant plays the role of the peer exerting the pressure.

Example:

Person: "I don't feel comfortable doing that. I'd rather do something else."

Peer: "Come on, it's no big deal. Everyone's doing it."

How did it feel to resist peer pressure?

What strategies were effective in standing your ground?

Art Therapy

Objective: To facilitate emotional expression and self-exploration through creative activities, enhancing participants' understanding of their feelings and experiences.

Activity 1: Emotion Wheel

- Draw a large circle on a piece of paper and divide it into sections like a pie chart.
- Label each section with a different emotion (e.g., happy, sad, angry, fearful, surprised, disgusted).
- Use colors, symbols, or drawings to represent each emotion within its section.

How did it feel to represent your emotions visually?

What did you notice about the distribution of your emotions?

Activity 2: Self-Portrait

- Create a self-portrait using any materials you like (e.g., drawing, painting, collage).
- Focus on representing not just your physical appearance but also your inner self, emotions, and experiences.

How did it feel to create a self-portrait?

What aspects of yourself did you choose to highlight, and why?

Activity 3: My Safe Place

- Create an artwork that represents your safe place—a place where you feel secure, calm, and happy.
- Use any materials you like and focus on the details that make this place special to you.

How did it feel to create your safe place visually?

What elements did you include, and why are they important to you?

Activity 4: Journey Through Life

- Create a timeline or a path that represents significant events and experiences in your life.
- Use symbols, drawings, or colors to mark different milestones and transitions.

How did it feel to visualize your life journey?

What patterns or themes did you notice in your timeline?

Activity 5: Future Vision

- Create an artwork that represents your hopes, dreams, and goals for the future.
- Use any materials you like and focus on the details that inspire and motivate you.

How did it feel to create a vision for your future?

What elements did you include, and why are they important to you?

Communication Skills

Objective: To develop and strengthen participants' communication abilities, fostering clearer and more effective interpersonal interactions.

Active Listening:

- Pair up participants.
- One person speaks about a topic of their choice for 3 minutes while the other person practices active listening.
- The listener should use non-verbal cues (nodding, eye contact) and verbal cues ("I see," "Tell me more") to show they are listening.
- Switch roles after 3 minutes.

How did it feel to be listened to without interruption?

What was challenging about being the listener?

I-Statements:

- Explain the concept of I-Statements, which focus on the speaker's feelings and experiences rather than blaming the listener.
- Provide the formula: "I feel [emotion] when [situation] because [reason]."
- Have participants practice converting "You-Statements" into "I-Statements."

Example:

You-Statement: "You never listen to me."

I-Statement: "I feel ignored when I'm not listened to because it makes me feel unimportant."

How did it feel to use I-Statements instead of You-Statements?

What differences did you notice in the reactions to I-Statements versus You-Statements?

Body Language:

- Discuss the importance of non-verbal communication, including body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice (e.g., Non-verbal communication conveys emotions and intentions, often enhancing or contradicting verbal messages and significantly influencing interpersonal interactions.)
- Have participants engage in a role-play where they communicate a message using only body language.

How did it feel to communicate without words?

What did you notice about your partner's body language?

Assertiveness Training:

- Explain the difference between passive, aggressive, and assertive communication. (e.g., Passive communication involves avoiding expressing one's own needs and desires, aggressive communication involves expressing one's needs and desires in a forceful and hostile manner, while assertive communication involves expressing one's needs and desires openly and respectfully without infringing on others' rights.)
- Provide examples of each and discuss the benefits of assertive communication.
- Have participants practice assertive communication through role-play scenarios.

Example:

- Scenario: Asking a coworker to lower their voice while on the phone.
- Passive: "Um, if it's not too much trouble, could you maybe speak a bit quieter?"
- Aggressive: "You need to stop talking so loudly right now!"
- Assertive: "I have difficulty concentrating when it's noisy. Could you please lower your voice?"

How did it feel to use assertive communication?

What challenges did you face when trying to be assertive?

Giving and Receiving Feedback:

- Discuss the importance of constructive feedback and how to give and receive it effectively (e.g., it promotes growth and improvement by focusing on specific behaviors and offering actionable suggestions; giving it effectively involves being clear, respectful, and supportive, while receiving it effectively involves listening openly, seeking clarification, and applying the feedback to make positive changes.)
- Provide the feedback formula: "When you [specific behavior], I feel [emotion], because [reason]."
- Have participants practice giving and receiving feedback in pairs.

Example:

- Giving Feedback: "When you interrupt me during meetings, I feel frustrated because it makes me feel unheard."
- Receiving Feedback: "Thank you for sharing your feelings. I will work on being more mindful of interruptions."

How did it feel to give and receive feedback?

What strategies helped you deliver or accept feedback constructively?

Emotion Identification

Objective: To help participants recognize and articulate their emotions, increasing emotional awareness and regulation.

Emotion Wheel:

- Provide each participant with an emotion wheel, which divides emotions into categories and subcategories.
- Ask participants to choose a recent experience and identify the emotions they felt using the wheel.

How did using the emotion wheel help you identify your emotions?

Were there any emotions you were surprised to identify?

Emotion Journaling:

- Have participants write about a recent experience, focusing on the emotions they felt.
- Encourage them to explore the causes and physical sensations associated with each emotion.

What patterns did you notice in your emotional responses?

Body Mapping:

- Provide participants with a body outline template.
- Ask them to mark areas where they feel different emotions (e.g., tension in shoulders for stress, butterflies in the stomach for excitement).

How did mapping your emotions on your body help you understand your feelings?

Were there any physical sensations that surprised you?

Emotion Cards:

- Provide participants with a set of emotion cards, each with a different emotion written on it.
- Ask participants to select cards that represent how they've felt over the past week and share the context of these emotions with the group.

How did selecting and sharing the emotion cards help you articulate your feelings?

Were there any emotions that were difficult to identify or share?

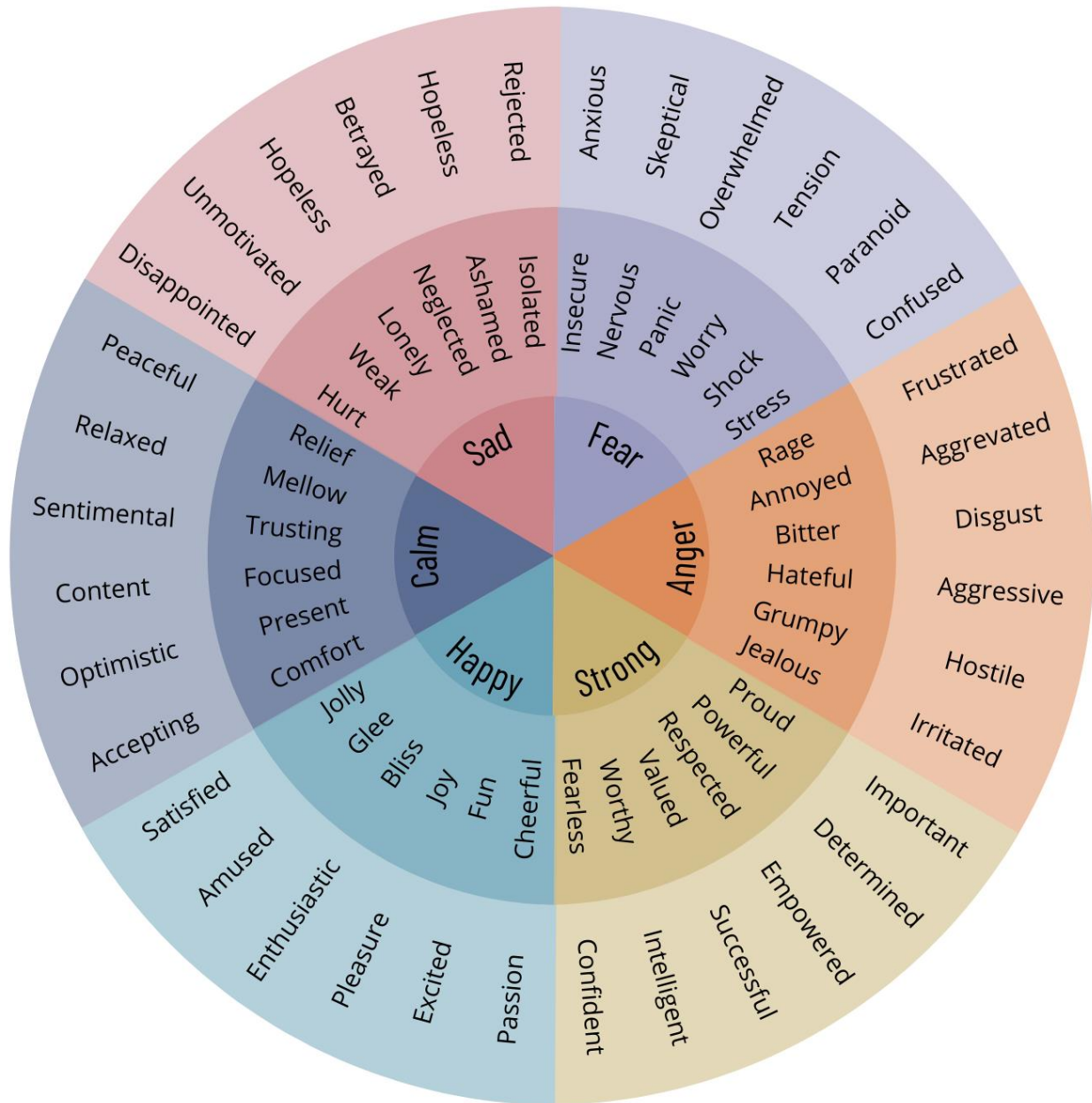
Group Discussion:

- Facilitate a group discussion where participants take turns sharing a recent emotional experience and how they identified their emotions.
- Encourage group members to ask questions and provide supportive feedback.

Prompts:

1. Describe a recent emotional experience you had. What happened, and how did it make you feel?
2. How did you identify the specific emotions you were feeling during this experience? Did you notice any physical sensations or thoughts that helped you recognize these emotions?
3. What strategies or tools did you use to understand your emotions? Did you use an emotion wheel, journaling, or talk to someone about your feelings?
4. How did recognizing your emotions impact your response to the situation? Did it help you manage your reactions more effectively?
5. Were there any challenges in identifying your emotions? What made it difficult, and how did you overcome these challenges?
6. How did the emotional experience affect your behavior or interactions with others? Did it influence your communication or actions in any way?

THE FEEL WHEEL



Support Circle

Objective: To create a supportive network within the group, fostering mutual encouragement and shared experiences.

Sharing Personal Stories:

- Each participant takes turns sharing a personal story or experience with the group.
- Encourage active listening and empathetic responses from other group members.

How did it feel to share your personal story with the group?

How did the group's response make you feel?

Offering and Receiving Support:

- Each participant takes turns expressing a current challenge or need for support.
- Group members offer suggestions, resources, or words of encouragement.

How did it feel to express your need for support?

How did the group's support make you feel?

Strengths and Compliments:

- Each participant takes turns sharing a strength they see in another group member and providing a specific example.
- Rotate until every participant has received feedback from the group.

How did it feel to receive positive feedback about your strengths?

What strengths did you notice in others?

Gratitude Sharing:

- Each participant takes turns sharing something they are grateful for, either within the group or in their personal life.
- Encourage group members to reflect on their gratitude and share how it impacts their well-being.

What did you learn from hearing others' expressions of gratitude?

Therapeutic Play

Objective: To use play-based activities to facilitate emotional expression and social skill development in a fun and engaging way.

Creative Arts:

- Provide various art supplies (e.g., markers, paints, clay, collage materials).
- Ask participants to create something that represents their current emotions or a recent experience.
- Allow time for participants to share and explain their creations with the group.

How did the creative process help you express your emotions?

What did you learn about yourself through your artwork?

Storytelling:

- Ask participants to create a short story or narrative that reflects a personal experience or a theme relevant to the group (e.g., overcoming obstacles, finding hope).
- Allow time for participants to share their stories with the group.

How did it feel to create and share your story?

What insights did you gain from hearing others' stories?

Movement and Dance:

- Play different types of music and encourage participants to move or dance in a way that expresses their emotions.
- After the activity, discuss how movement and dance helped participants express themselves.

How did moving to the music help you express your emotions?

What emotions did you feel and express through movement?

Unknown Wish

- Provide each participant with a piece of paper and a pen.
- Ask each group member to write down a secret wish they have, without revealing it to anyone else.
- Collect all the written wishes and place them in a bowl.

- One by one, read each wish aloud to the group.
- The group then guesses who they think the wish belongs to.
- After all wishes have been guessed, reveal the true authors of each wish.

How well do you think the group knows each other based on the guessing?

What surprised you the most about the wishes and the group's guesses?

Beach Ball Activity

- Write down a list of questions related to the group's theme.
- Attach or write these questions on a beach ball.
- Gather participants in a circle.
- Explain that the ball will be tossed around, and whoever catches it must answer the question closest to their right thumb.
- Begin by tossing the beach ball to a participant.
- After answering, the participant tosses the ball to someone else.
- Continue until everyone has had a chance to answer at least one question.

What question or answer resonated with you the most, and why?

Two Truths and a Lie

- Provide each participant with an index card and a pen.
- Ask each participant to write down three statements about themselves on the index card: two true statements and one false statement (the lie).
- One by one, participants read their three statements aloud to the group.
- The group then guesses which statement is the lie.
- After everyone has guessed, the participant reveals which statement was the lie.

What surprised you about the guesses and the truths revealed by others?

Desert Island

- Ask participants to think about being trapped on a desert island and to consider three items they would bring: one luxury item, one entertainment item, and one survival item.
- Participants take turns sharing their three chosen items with the group.
- Encourage participants to explain why they chose each item.

What do your choices reveal about your values and priorities?

2026 Clinical Alignment

DSM-5-TR (including Sept. 2025 update) · ICD-11 CDDR / 2026 MMS

Classification status

- DSM-5-TR: No diagnosis under this title · No diagnosis is established by the title.
- ICD-11 CDDR: · No diagnosis is established by the title.
- This workbook is non-diagnostic. A title, checklist, or completed activity never establishes a diagnosis.

Pages requiring the updated interpretation

- The audit identified source pages 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33. The statements below supersede incompatible diagnostic, scoring, safety, or resource wording on those pages.

Diagnostic and differential limits

- Assess duration, distress/functional impairment, cultural and medical context, substance/medication effects, and relevant differential diagnoses before assigning any diagnosis.

Document-specific corrections

- Keep Adult Group Therapy Activities explicitly non-diagnostic; its exercises organize experience and goals but do not establish a mental disorder or causal explanation.
- Supersede diagnostic-sounding scoring on pages [2, 33]: disclose whether each tool is validated or author-created, remove unsupported thresholds, and separate symptom monitoring from diagnosis.
- Revise trauma/protocol material on pages [18]: distinguish stabilization and reflection from trauma processing, state training/scope requirements, and add dissociation, acute-risk, and destabilization safeguards.
- Replace crisis wording on pages [2] with the current U.S. 988 call/text/chat pathway, 911 or nearest emergency department for immediate danger/medical emergency, and a direction to use verified local services outside the United States.
- Pages [2] · Frame ·Adult Group Therapy Activities· using the DSM/ICD status below; add duration, impairment, exclusions, and differentials without reproducing criteria. The title alone must never be treated as a diagnosis.
- Pages [1, 2, 22] · Treat the Adult Group Therapy Activities ratings/checklists as author-created reflection tools only. Remove unsupported severity bands, cutoffs, totals, or language suggesting diagnostic validity; label response anchors and recall period explicitly.
- Pages [1, 2, 3, 7, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 20, 23, 24, 25, 26, 30, 31] · Group exercises require screening, informed participation/right to pass, confidentiality limits, accessibility, culturally responsive facilitation, and a plan for destabilization or disclosures; trauma enactment and trust exercises require advanced caution. Apply this specifically to the workbook's Icebreaker Questions, Group Agreement Creation, Trust Building Exercises, Role-Playing Scenarios sections.
- Pages [1, 3, 10, 11, 12, 17, 30] · Review all medical assertions in Adult Group Therapy Activities with a qualified medical professional; distinguish psychoeducation from individualized advice and add referral thresholds, contraindications, and medication/procedure cautions appropriate to this population.

Measures, scoring, and permissions

- Pages [2, 33] contain named, implied, or author-created screening/rating content . These scores are not diagnostic unless the exact instrument, version, validation population, administration, and interpretation are established. Identify provenance for every item set and scoring rule. Obtain publisher permission/license when required; otherwise remove cutoffs and label it as a nonvalidated reflection checklist, or replace it with a properly licensed measure without altering its wording/scoring. Treat the Adult Group Therapy Activities ratings/checklists as author-created reflection tools only. Remove unsupported severity bands, cutoffs, totals, or language suggesting diagnostic validity; label response anchors and recall period explicitly. custom/unvalidated unless evidence is supplied confirm no third-party item wording was adapted

Intervention scope and contraindications

2026 Clinical Alignment

DSM-5-TR (including Sept. 2025 update) · ICD-11 CDDR / 2026 MMS

- Use Adult Group Therapy Activities activities as psychoeducation and structured reflection, not diagnosis or a stand-alone treatment plan. Adapt or stop any exercise that worsens distress, functioning, conflict, pain, or dissociation, and escalate care according to the actual presentation. Group exercises require screening, informed participation/right to pass, confidentiality limits, accessibility, culturally responsive facilitation, and a plan for destabilization or disclosures; trauma enactment and trust exercises require advanced caution.

Crisis and current resources

- For Adult Group Therapy Activities, use: ·If there is immediate danger or a medical emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department. In the U.S., call or text 988 or use 988lifeline.org for 24/7 crisis support. Outside the U.S., use verified local emergency and crisis services.· Verify all topic-specific agencies and links at publication.

Authoritative references

- <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/dsm/updates-to-dsm/updates-to-dsm-5-tr-criteria-text>
- <https://www.psychiatry.org/getmedia/b68a5776-f88c-45c7-9535-fd219d7aa5cb/APA-DSM5TR-Update-September-2025.pdf>
- <https://icd.who.int/browse/2026-01/mms/en>
- <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240077263>
- <https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/988>
- <https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/national-behavioral-health-crisis-care>
- <https://www.healthquality.va.gov/guidelines/MH/ptsd/>
- <https://988lifeline.org/>