The Thriving Adolescent: Session-by-session outline

For 2x a week, half hour sessions

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| Week | Topic (2x a week) |
| 1 | Introductions, confidentiality |
| 2 | Values |
| 3 | Advisor |
| 4 | Noticer |
| 5 | Discoverer |
| 6 | Committed action and review of values |
| 7 | Flexible strength and self-view |
| 8 | Final session: review, self-compassion, celebration |

1. Session 1- day 1
   1. Introductions
      1. Icebreaker game
   2. Confidentiality discussion
   3. Ground rules/group norms
2. Session 1 – day 2
   1. Welcome back
   2. Introduction to DNA-V – page 22 of manual
      1. Large pieces of paper on the floor saying DNA
         1. Invite teens up for each step
      2. A – Advisor
         1. SAY: *This A stands for advisor. It’s something we all have. I have it. You have it. It’s that inner voice in our heads, evaluating everything and trying to tell us how good or bad we are. Have you ever seen a movie where there’s a little creature sitting on someone’s shoulder, whispering advice in the person’s ear? It’s kind of like that. Let’s illustrate what the advisor does. We’ll both do this together. Think of some critical ways you evaluate yourself, and I’ll do the same. I’ll write mine first. I’ll start with “I’m not good enough. I’m unlovable.”*
         2. You, along with invited teens, write evaluations on the paper
            1. “What’s it like to be standing here?”
            2. Wait until a teen prompts you to move to the next one (e.g. “what else can we do?” or “what else is there”)
      3. N – Noticer
         1. SAY: *What we just did is the most important skill in our work. If we feel stuck, we move to something else. Whenever you’re stuck, you can move— you can do something new with your hands and feet. Okay, so here we are. N stands for noticing. This is a space we can move to when we feel stuck and want to increase our awareness of where we are and the choices available to us. Let’s do a noticing practice right now.*
         2. BRIEF mindfulness exercise – everyone take a few deep breaths (eyes closed or not) and notice their breath for a minute
         3. ASK: *“Do you notice any differences between the advisor and noticer?” and explain we all can be noticers and advisors*
         4. Get the teens to notice the next letter by eliciting it….
      4. D – Discoverer
         1. Praise group for being curious about the D and how its good to move around rather than just sit on one letter
         2. SAY: *D stands for discoverer. This is where we try new things and see what works. It’s where we discover what we care about. We can be discoverers even when our advisor says we can’t be. For example, has your mind, or advisor, ever told you that you can’t do something, but you did it anyway? When you did that, you discovered for yourself whether or not you could do it, instead of relying on the advisor. Now let’s return to A. I don’t want to suggest A is always bad and that D and N are always good. They’re just different spaces we can move to, or different skills we all have. Can you give me some examples of when the advisor might make some useful evaluations? (Elicit some examples, such as “it’s a bad idea to drink and drive,” or “it’s a bad idea to put off studying until the last minute.”)*
         3. Discuss advisor vs. discoverer
         4. Move on to values to tie it together…
      5. V – Values
         1. Get a new sheet of paper and write a V on it – *there is something driving the DNA model*
         2. SAY: *We use our DNA skills in the service of what you care about. I call this valuing, or values. Values might be having fun, playing sports, or connecting with others. It just depends on the person. For each of us, everything we do is in the service of this. So everything we do in our work together will be about helping you to have more things you care about and value in your life.*
3. Session 2 – day 1
   1. Review DNA-V overview
   2. Lead a broader values discussion
      1. *What do you want to get out of these sessions?*
      2. *What are we working for?*
      3. *What do you hope I will help you guys with?*
   3. ASK: *What makes a good life?*
      1. Allow for discussion
      2. If needed, introduce visualization exercise
         1. SAY: *Imagine that someone who’s important to you is standing in front of you. This is someone you hold dear, perhaps a friend or family member. Take some time and imagine a person you’re close to… Now imagine that this person asks you, “What makes a good life?” As you consider your answer, assume it will have important implications for this person’s life… Pause and be with the question… Let your mind wander as you try to choose just the right words to respond to this person, then imagine yourself answering the question.*
      3. Discuss visualization exercise
4. Session 2 – day 2
   1. Review values discussion from the other session
   2. Values exercise: conversation cards (page 34)
      1. Have teens pair off or stay in the big group, depending on size
      2. IF IN PAIRS
         1. **Demonstrate** with group assistant
            1. Place cards on table between them
            2. Select different cards to discuss
         2. Allow 20-30 minutes, go between groups and help with discussion and to learn more about kids
            1. Consider prompts like: *What’s it like to have that? What would it be like if you never had that? Would you like to have more of that?*
         3. Come back together as a group and have each pair tell the group what they discussed
            1. Summarize things by writing on the board/easel
      3. If staying in a big group
         1. Write some conversation card topics on the board OR make large posters of the conversation card topics, have teens come and pick one up
         2. Discuss each one as a big group
            1. Consider prompts like: *What’s it like to have that? What would it be like if you never had that? Would you like to have more of that?*
         3. Summarize discussion on the board as they go along (highlighting common themes, etc.)
   3. Homework: Pick one value to focus on for the week (have them name each value)
5. Session 3 – day 1
   1. Review values and HW
   2. Introduce the advisor
      1. Introduce via printed out below image (or using the video from Emperor’s New Groove) – hand out papers with this image and space below to write

 

* + - 1. ASK/DISCUSS: *What do you notice about this image?*
         1. If necessary, prompt that there are two people in the image, one being like a shadow.)
      2. *We can use this image as a metaphor for your inner voice. Imagine that your inner voice is a person who follows you around all the time, offering advice. Let’s call this person your advisor. The advisor is always talking, judging, evaluating, and predicting. Its job is to help you avoid bad stuff and find good stuff. Sometimes your advisor is negative, saying things like “You can’t do it,” “Nobody likes you,” or “Be careful; there’s danger here.” Sometimes it is positive, saying things like “You’re good at sports,” “You can achieve your goals,” or “Don’t worry; nothing bad could happen.” Every human being has an advisor. Does that make sense? What do you think are some common things people’s advisors say?*
         1. Allow plenty of time for discussion.
      3. *No one’s advisor gives useful advice all the time. And it isn’t just a matter of whether the advice is positive or negative. Sometimes negative advice can be useful, and other times not. Think about this advice: “Be careful; there’s danger here.” Can you think of an example of a time when that would be useful and an example of a time when it wouldn’t?*
         1. Spend some time discussing this – both useful and not useful aspects of the advisor
      4. *How about positive advice, like “Don’t worry; nothing bad could happen”? Can you think of times when this would be useful and times when it wouldn’t be?* 
         1. Again, spend some time discussing this – both useful and not useful
      5. *Okay, so sometimes the advisor isn’t very helpful. This means it probably isn’t a good idea to follow its advice all the time. Can you think of a time when you thought you couldn’t do something, but you did it anyway? That’s an example of succeeding because you didn’t follow the advice of your inner voice. We can become more skillful in working with the advisor. We can learn when to listen to it and when to disregard it. After all, we’re the ones in charge, not our advisors.*
  1. *Let’s do some activities to experience the advisor*: Advisor activity/experiment #1
     1. SAY: *Do you know what an experiment is, like the kind of things you do in science class? (Once you have confirmation, continue.) What’s the main thing we do in an experiment? (Allow the person to answer before proceeding.) What we do in an experiment is try something, with no idea about what will happen. Experiments involve keeping an open mind. So the things we’ll do next, and often in our work together, are like that. They’re experiments. Since I don’t know exactly what will happen for you, your job is to tell me what does happen. It doesn’t matter what happens. There’s no right or wrong. It’s just you telling me so I can know how you experience the world. Okay?*
     2. SAY: *In this experiment, your job for the next three minutes is to write down everything your mind says. Whatever comes to mind, write it down, even if it seems trivial. It’s fine to write the same thing over and over if that’s what your mind is saying. For example, you might write, “How much longer? How much longer? It’s hot. How much longer?” Your task is to just write for three minutes without stopping. Don’t worry about grammar or punctuation. If your thoughts are fast, you can capture them with just a word; there’s no need for complete sentences. Just write whatever shows up. You don’t have to share what you write with me afterward if you don’t want to, and you can even destroy it if you like. So feel free to write any thoughts that come to mind, no matter what they are.*
        1. Time for three minutes, encourage any teen that is stuck, etc.
        2. Do the experiment with them
     3. ASK: What was your experience of that?
        1. Did you notice how busy the advisor is?
           1. Discuss!!
        2. *You’re just sitting here with me and all these words and feelings are flowing through you. You may have noticed that your advisor is busy labeling, evaluating, judging, saying positive things, saying negative things, worrying, and on and on. Do you notice how much is chatter, repeated over and over? It never stops, really.*
     4. Wrap up experiment: *When we listen to the advisor and take it at its word, it’s like we left the room. We went into the advisor’s world. Let’s do a quick exercise to bring ourselves back into the room. Just take a few slow, deep breaths and notice the rise and fall of your breath for a few moments.* (**Demonstrate**)
  2. Homework!
     1. Ask teens to practice noticing when their advisor shows up in their daily lives
        1. Notice when you are feeling stuck, being harm on yourself, worrying about the future, etc.
        2. Write down 3 incidences where its showing up?

1. Session 3 – day 2
   1. Review advisor from previous session – any thoughts on what you observed? What happened?
   2. Another exercise (if needed/seems good): Is your advisor all-powerful?
      1. ASK: *Can you remember a time when you had to do something hard and you weren’t sure you could do it— a time when your advisor was saying you couldn’t do it but you did it anyway?*
         1. Be sure to get at least one example from someone
            1. *So what would have happened if you had listened to your advisor? What if you’d let it push you around?* (make sure teen answers)
            2. *But look at what actually happened. Your advisor was being discouraging, but you did something you cared about anyway. That’s a great example of courage, by the way, and it’s something you can build on.*
      2. SAY: *Now we’ll do a quick experiment to illustrate this point. Ready? Close your eyes and tell yourself to stand up, and then imagine yourself standing up, without actually standing. Really imagine your body leaving the chair and standing up in front of it. In this example, your advisor was at work, telling you to stand up as you imagined doing it. Would you agree there’s a difference between your advisor telling you to stand up and the physical reality of standing?*
      3. SAY: *Okay, let’s do another quick experiment now. Repeat this sentence: “I can’t stand up. I can’t stand up.” While you say this sentence out loud, really stand up. Physically move your body upright. Did you notice how you could have discouraging words like “I can’t stand up” and still stand? The thing about the advisor is this: What it says is just advice, and it can be quite separate from what we do in the physical world. We have to decide whether the advice is good or bad, and the best way I know to do that is to connect it to the physical world and what we value. Sometimes the advisor says, “You can’t do it,” and we give up. Sometimes the advisor says, “You can’t do it,” and we don’t listen— we just keep trying. And sometimes when we keep trying, we succeed.*
   3. Exercise 3: watching for the advisor
      1. Write or present example advisor statements
         1. Examples: Don’t worry, nothing bad can happen, I can’t speak in front of the whole class, I can achieve my goals, Nobody likes you, etc. (Try to make these anxiety oriented)
         2. ASK: *What does your advisor say here?*
            1. If person gives a long answer, note *Wow, your advisor is really busy right now*
         3. Discuss the experience of noticing
      2. Ask group members to present different scenarios and see how others’ advisors react
   4. Homework!
      1. Ask teens to continue the practice of noticing when their advisor shows up in their daily lives
         1. Notice when you are feeling stuck, being harm on yourself, worrying about the future, etc.
2. Session 4 – day 1
   1. Introduce the noticer – put the below image on some sort of worksheet or find some sort of relevant video
      1. 
      2. *What do you notice about this image? What is the person doing?*
      3. *What happens when you don’t notice?* 
         1. Can use an example of what might happen when you don’t notice your own emotions
      4. *Noticing involves pausing and taking a look around. How does this increase your ability to choose?*
   2. Introduce the 3-step process of the noticer
      1. Step 1: Normalize
         1. You aren’t weird
            1. SAY (something like): *How many kids are in your class? (For this example, we’ll assume that there are twenty-four.) You may not have heard this, but this year, about one in four young people will be struggling with some tough stuff in life. This means that one in four of us are struggling with anxiety, sadness, insecurity, or any of a number of strong emotions. That one-in-four statistic applies to adults as well as young people. Are you surprised that adults struggle too? It’s true. We adults haven’t figured out how to stop negative feelings from occurring. Given that there are twenty-four kids in your class, that means six of them are probably going to struggle in some way this year. If you know twenty teachers, that means it’s likely that five of them are struggling with something. You may not even know which ones they are. Most people are pretty good at hiding their feelings. It’s normal for us humans to struggle. And even those of us who aren’t struggling right now probably will in the future. Life throws a lot of unpleasant surprises at us. So struggling with feelings or needing help doesn’t make you weird or stupid. It makes you human. Society has let you and other people down by teaching you that negative emotions are a problem to be fixed.*
         2. The advisor has rules about emotions and they aren’t always helpful
            1. SAY: *Over the course of your life you learn different rules about emotions through overhearing people or even just by accident. The problem is that these rules tend to emphasize avoiding emotions and they aren’t testing to see if they are helpful. Some examples might include things like “I can’t cope with this feeling” or “It’s bad to feel like this.*” *Can anyone give me some examples of rules around emotions their advisor has told them? (Elicit some examples)*
            2. *What are some new, more flexible rules you can try out?*

Examples: it’s to to feel, feelings just are, all feelings are ok, etc.

* + 1. Step 2: practice Aware, Name, Describe (AND)
       1. Introduce AND
          1. Lead exercise to teach this:
          2. Aware: *Close your eyes, become aware of your sensations. Scan your body and notice whatever physical sensations are there* (**Demonstrate**: lead body scan)
          3. Name: *Put names and labels on those sensations. Use any name that comes to your mind: ‘tight’ or ‘churned up’ or ‘tingly.’ Whatever makes sense for you*
          4. Describe: *Now try to describe the sensation as an emotion with a feeling label – angry, happy, sad, burned-out, etc.*
          5. Debrief introductory AND exercise
       2. Let’s use AND again in another exercise…
          1. Contacting a pleasant event

SAY: *Now let’s try the AND steps to build your noticer skills. Recall a recent pleasant event— something that happened in the past week. It can be something as small as a laugh with a friend or your pet greeting you at the end of a long day. Close your eyes and fully immerse yourself in the memory. Imagine yourself in that experience again and let it unfold for a minute or so. Now scan your body and notice any physical sensations this memory has brought up for you. What are you feeling in your body right now? Notice your chest, stomach, hands, face, arms, legs— any part of you at all— tuning in to your physical sensations right now, not thinking about how your body felt back then. Now give the sensations some sort of name. It doesn’t have to be “right”; just come up with a way to speak about it. It could be “bouncy,” “light,” “heavy,” “tight,” “exhausted,” “free”—just whatever you feel. Now describe it as an emotion. You might say “happy,” “angry,” “sad,” “excited”— whatever fits. To bring this visualization to a close, you can take a few slow breaths if you like.*

Debrief

* + - * 1. Contacting an unpleasant event (anxiety-based event?)

SAY: *Now recall an unpleasant event that happened in the past week. Again, it can be something small, maybe being late for school or struggling with homework. Close your eyes and fully immerse yourself in the memory. Imagine yourself in that experience again and let it unfold for a minute or so.*

Then continue the same way you did for the pleasant event

* + 1. Step 3: Allow
       1. Exercise 1: Seaweed goes with the ocean
          1. Have everyone stand up
          2. SAY: Imagine you’re a seaweed plant. You’re strong and have been growing for a long time, and your roots are firmly anchored into the seafloor. The sea is calm, with only small waves. You’re gently swaying backward and forward, and it’s peaceful. Notice how it feels to be swaying gently and going with the ocean. (Continue with this visualization for about thirty seconds, giving occasional verbal cues and swaying gently together.) Now along comes a big wave, and then many big waves. You sway way backward and forward much farther, moved by the powerful waves. Your roots remain firmly planted in the seafloor even as you’re rocked backward and forward more powerfully by the sea. Notice how it feels to be rocking with the waves. (Continue with this visualization for about thirty seconds, giving occasional verbal cues.) Now imagine massive waves crashing over you. They’re so strong that you want to fight them. So you become rigid. Imagine the waves crashing around you, and notice the effort it takes to force yourself to stay rigid while these massive waves wash over you. (Continue with this visualization for about twenty seconds, providing occasional verbal cues and standing rigid.) Now the sea becomes calm once again, and you go back to gently swaying with the peaceful ocean. Notice how it feels to be swaying gently and going with the waves.
          3. Debrief
    2. Homework?

1. Session 4 – day 2
   1. Reviewing the noticer and AND
      1. More exercises/practice
         1. Exercise 2: balloon breathing
            1. Balloon breathing meditation audio file: <https://thrivingadolescent.com/adolescent-resources/new-ideas-for-you/audio-ideas/>
            2. Or lead yourself: *Start by sitting upright and placing one hand on your chest and the other on your belly. Relax your hands in these positions and just observe your breath for a moment. Is the hand on your belly rising when you breathe in, or is the hand on your chest rising? Maybe it’s a bit of both. Most people tend to breathe into their chest. This is normal. What you’re about to learn is something slightly different: breathing into your belly. Now I’m going to ask you to use your imagination to do something a bit unusual. Keep your hands in the same positions and imagine that you have a balloon in your belly. When you breathe in, the balloon in your belly inflates and gets bigger, and this makes your belly rise. And when you breathe out, the balloon deflates; it gets smaller and your belly goes down. When you breathe this way, the hand on your chest shouldn’t move very much. It may take some time to get used to breathing this way. You may need to practice, since this is probably different from the way you’ve been breathing. Just stay with it and keep observing your breath. As you breathe in, the balloon inflates and gets bigger. As you breathe out, the balloon deflates and gets smaller. It’s okay if you have trouble staying focused on your breath. That happens to everybody. Counting as you breathe may help. When you inhale, say, “In, two, three.” Then, when you exhale, say, “Out, two, three.” Practice breathing this way for at least a minute. If you’re really stressed, you might even go to three minutes.*
   2. Homework: encourage practicing the noticer before the next sessions
      1. Set goals for how many times and when they can practice calm breathing – make link available if wanted
      2. Complete mid-questionnaires
2. Session 5 – day 1
   1. Review noticer – start with brief mindfulness exercise?



* 1. Introduce the discoverer – put the image above on a worksheet or find some type of other video/representation
     1. SAY: *Here’s an image, what do you notice about it?*
        1. *Is discovery and trying new things risky?*
        2. *What happens when you don’t discover? For example, what happens when you don’t see, hear, or learn new things?*
        3. Generally discuss how the person in the image is discovering new and interesting things in the world
  2. Distinguishing between the discoverer and the advisor exercise
     1. Pass out “DNA-V of your life” worksheet
        1. Part 1: Feed the advisor
           1. *Pause for a moment and think about the past few years… When you’re ready, list five memorable events from those years on the worksheet.*
           2. *What do you notice about the things you listed? Were they major events, or did you also recall more minor incidents? Also notice the type of events you listed. Are there dominant themes, like school, friends, or love? For each memory you listed, would you say it was a good time or a bad time?*
           3. *Now get your advisor to make a conclusion about your life based on these five events. You don’t have to actually believe the conclusion you come up with. Just be playful. Did you notice how easy it is for the advisor to make conclusions?*
           4. Discuss: note that the advisor makes evaluations and judgments, normalize this, discuss then implications of focusing on evaluations/judgments

Want to elicit that we feed our advisors negative past memories, making it easy for the advisor to predict future bad things from happening/good things are unlikely

* + - 1. Part 2: Become a discoverer
         1. SAY: *There are lots of activities that we value but tend to totally forget about. We can find these valued activities again if we’re willing to enter discoverer space. Would you like to try that? There’s no risk. You can always return to advisor space if you think that will help. We can discover what we care about by becoming “life detectives,” searching our lives for clues about our values. To do this, we need to get out of our heads and into our lives.*
         2. Work with the teens to look at their phone and find things that are meaningful (do NOT need to be only positive things): photos, movies, videos, music, websites, things they like/share on social media

Each teen gets a moment to write on the worksheet and then to share – describe one thing, why they care about it, etc.

* + - 1. Part 3: discuss and notice the differences between the advisor and discoverer
         1. Give them a moment to complete the last part of the worksheet before guiding discussion
         2. SAY: *Notice that we forget many of our joys and vital experiences, especially the day-to-day ones. Sometimes the advisor tries to make conclusions about our whole life based on the few things we remember. This can cause us to lose touch with our values. Notice that we forget whole chunks of time or events that are important, meaningful, or fun, whereas we tend to readily recall the hard times.*
         3. Ultimate key point to make: Discovering requires that we touch the physical experiences of life. This is too important to be left to imperfect memory and the advisor’s quick conclusions.

1. Session 5 – day 2
   1. Review the discoverer from earlier in the week
   2. Discoverer exercise 1
      1. Pass out “How did it go?” worksheet
      2. SAY: *Let’s do a quick exercise to practice being a discoverer. One of the most important qualities of a discoverer involves paying attention to what happens after we do something. Did the behavior improve our life and give it more meaning, or make it worse? A discoverer is good at finding out what works and doesn’t work. Let’s do that now. Start by thinking of some challenging situations you’ve faced in your life. Once you’ve thought of a few, take a little time to write about them on this worksheet.*
      3. Discuss what they wrote – ask if they are willing to step into the discoverer space and try something new.
      4. Transition into the next activity…
   3. Discoverer exercise 4: strength spotting card sort
      1. Give each young person a set of cards and ask them to sort the cards into three piles: their top five strengths, their next ten, and the rest
      2. Once they have sorted the cards have them each share and then…ASK
         1. In what way does each personal strength link to your values or sense of vitality?
         2. How do your strengths help you engage in activities you value?
         3. What do you want to do with your strengths—now or in the future?
      3. Now change perspectives: have them pair up and sort for the strengths they see in each other and share
   4. Practice being a discoverer and try something new once this week
2. Session 6 – day 1
   1. Review last session: discoverer, values
   2. Valued exercise 3: Being BOLD – using values in your daily life
      1. Downloadable video to show: <https://vimeo.com/109092988/64f50de985>
         1. Discuss – *What were your thoughts on the video? What elements of DNA-V showed up here?*
      2. BOLD
         1. B – breath deeply and slow down
         2. O – observe thoughts and feelings, observe what is around you
         3. L – listen to your values in the moment. What sort of person do you want to be?
         4. D – decide on how you want to act in this moment. What would it look like if you were acting out your values?
      3. Practice BOLD in session – have someone share?
   3. HW: use BOLD at least once in the next few days and record it
3. Session 6 – day 2
   1. Review BOLD – have someone share from the HW
   2. Valued action 1: setting goals
      1. Worksheet: setting goals that reflect your values
      2. Go through the worksheet, allow time to complete areas (they don’t have to do the whole thing, just areas that are meaningful to them)
         1. Encourage them to use the DNA-V diagram to set goals (hand out worksheet and/or draw it on the board)
   3. Valued action 2: contrast and prepare – more specific breakdown of the goal-setting (doing this as a big group with one individual and then splitting up and doing it separately)
      1. Step 1: identify the goal
         1. ASK: *What is your goal?*
            1. Make sure you elicit specifics like where/when/how/etc
      2. Step 2: identify benefits
         1. ASK: *What are the benefits to achieving the goal?* *What would that look like? How would your goal link to your values?*
      3. Step 3: Identify barriers
         1. *What are the most critical obstacles to achieving the goal?*
      4. Step 4: Prepare for barriers
         1. *What will you do if you encounter critical obstacles?*
            1. Get a specific plan for what the teen will do to continue working toward the goal in the face of the barriers
      5. Step 5: Prepare for opportunities
         1. *What opportunities might you have to take action on this goal that you haven’t already mentioned?*
            1. Help teen consider situations that will facilitate achieving the goal
      6. Step 6: return to workability
         1. *After you’ve tried these actions, step into the discoverer space to see if it helped you connect to your values*
            1. Encourage teen to use the discoverer to see if this goal/these steps helped them connect to their values
4. Session 7 – day 1
   1. Review the entire DNA-V model
   2. Flexible strength and self-view – developing a more flexible self-view
      1. Exercise 1: how do you view yourself?
         1. Use how do you view yourself worksheets: Is change possible? And “Stepping from a fixed self-view to a flexible self-view” (pages 178-9 but can download from website)
            1. Between each worksheet, *discuss* and make sure to help adolescents identify when they are in an advisor space vs. noticer space

Ultimate goal is to help shift to the discoverer space

* + - 1. Want to connect these worksheets to the self-view perspective switching exercise below…maybe something like *Let’s practice different ways to flexibly view ourselves*
  1. Homework!

1. Session 7 - day 2
   1. Review DNA-V again
   2. Practicing flexible strength/self-view
      1. (option 1, may be better for shorter interventions): developing a flexible self-view by shifting perspectives
         1. *Let’s do an exercise that allows you to see yourself in different ways, okay? We’ll start by identifying a difficult event in your life, something that you’re struggling with. Can you describe this event now? (have group go around in a circle if time, or just keep private) Okay, now let’s do something a bit different. Imagine this same event is unfolding with you as a distant observer. One way to do this is to simply talk about yourself in the third person, referring to yourself by name. For example, I struggle to balance my work life with my home life. So if I was a distant observer, I might say, “I see Julie struggling….” Does that make sense? Okay, so now bring that difficult event to mind and metaphorically take a few steps back from yourself. Here are some questions that might help you to connect with this observer perspective and talk about yourself in the third person. “How does Julie feel in this situation?” “What thoughts does Julie have in this situation?” “Is Julie getting caught up in her thoughts?” “What does Julie look like when she’s caught up in his thoughts?” “Is Julie aware of how she’s feeling?” “Is Julie aware of her values?”*
         2. *Or “Let’s do an exercise that allows you to see yourself in different ways, okay? We’ll start by identifying a difficult event in your life, something that you’re struggling with. Can you describe this event now? (If time, group members share?) Okay, now let’s do something a bit different. Imagine this same event is unfolding with you as a distant observer. One way to do this is to simply talk about yourself in the third person, referring to yourself by name. For example, I struggle to balance my work life with my home life. So if I was a distant observer, I might say, “I see Julie struggling to do everything she needs to do at work and at home. I see her worrying that she’s going to let people down.” Does that make sense? Okay, so now bring that difficult event to mind and metaphorically take a few steps back from yourself. Here are some questions that might help you to connect with this observer perspective and talk about yourself in the third person. “How does Julie feel in this situation?” “What thoughts does Julie have in this situation?” “Is Julie getting caught up in her thoughts?” “What does Julie look like when she’s caught up in his thoughts?” “Is Julie aware of how she’s feeling?” “Is Julie aware of her values?”*
         3. Discuss: how can perspective switching help you with your anxiety?
      2. (option 2): self-as-discoverer exercise – seeing yourself as changing and growing
         1. Use strengthening my self view worksheet and drawing materials
         2. Introduce exercise: *This exercise aims to help you create some new ways of seeing yourself. I say “create” because when we discuss ourselves, we often create our self at the same time. You create you, and that’s both liberating and scary. I’d like you to take some time to doodle or draw different aspects of your experiences. I say “doodle” because it doesn’t have to be beautiful artwork. When drawing, include four roles you play in life, such as sibling, student, and friend. Also include three self-concepts that are positive, and three that are negative. You can also write sentences, but getting a little creative and using images makes for a richer experience. Express yourself however feels right to you, with only one rule: don’t use your name.*
         3. Have each group member present their self-view worksheets, starting with roles in life section
            1. Roles in life: ask *did you have the same roles ten years ago? Will you have the same roles in 10 years? How did your self-view change looking at these roles?*

Ask similar things for positive/negative self-concepts

* + - * 1. Discuss drawing as a whole: *How can you be all these things? Did you notice that your roles and self-concepts can change or get weaker over time?*
        2. Metaphor to end discussion: *You’re like the page that holds all of this content. You’re like an infinitely wide and long piece of paper that can hold any content, whether it seems positive, negative, or neutral. And if your content changes, you have plenty of space to hold the new content. This is flexible self-view.*
    1. Brief discussion of how to celebrate last upcoming section

1. Session 8 – day 1
   1. Review of DNAV again and flexible self-view
   2. Self-compassion building
      1. Exercise 1: Becoming a friend to yourself
         1. Pass out “becoming a friend to yourself” worksheet
         2. Give time to complete and then ask people to share/discuss
      2. Exercise 2: the kindness creed
         1. Introduce kindness creed
            1. State how you view your problem.
            2. Describe what you notice when you practice AND in the presence of thoughts and self-concepts about the problem.
            3. Normalize responses by acknowledging that this is the human condition and then allow difficult feelings to just be.
            4. Choose to value yourself. Forgive yourself, recommit to values, and come up with a plan to act differently in the future.
         2. Discuss, pass around handout
2. Session 8 – day 2
   1. Discussion of group overall
   2. Celebration end of group!
      1. Reminder to fill out questionnaires