Augmentation Strategies

Additional strategies are often needed to augment Ex-CBT to fully address youth's needs. Because traditional Ex-CBT was not originally developed to specifically address cultural and contextual factors, we provide basic guidance in this section for evidence-informed strategies that can supplement Ex-CBT to address cultural and contextual factors (which includes clinical complexities) - that can influence youth presentations in treatment. This list contains common strategies that arose from our practice-based, community-partnered research alongside an extensive literature review. **This list is not exhaustive.**

We recommend that you utilize the Person-Centered Cultural Assessment Guide to determine your client's individual needs, followed by the Case Conceptualization Guide to select the appropriate Ex-CBT and Augmentation Strategies for your client.

Strategies are listed alphabetically. Each strategy includes a brief overview, followed by a notation describing which cultural and contextual factor(s) the strategy is intended to address. Then, brief information is provided about when and how the strategy might be used.

Note: The information contained in this section is intended to be an overview only, rather than a comprehensive guide to each strategy. However, whenever possible, we link to free external resources that have been developed by other scholars and practitioners for each of the strategies included.

Acknowledge and Address Current Events

Definition: This strategy entails initiating a conversation with the client to understand how specific sociopolitical events or sociopolitical climate more broadly may be impacting them and intentionally providing a space for the client to share their experiences.

Cultural and Contextual Factor(s) addressed: Sociopolitical Context

When to use: This strategy may be useful when societal or community level events (e.g., discriminatory laws or rhetoric, war, mass shootings, police shootings, community violence, protests) are directly or indirectly affecting clients. These events can lead to vicarious trauma and significant distress when not addressed; especially when they are related to aspects of a client's identity. You can then support the client in dealing with their distress.

Note: For younger clients, it may be important to discuss these topics with caregivers first to determine how they discuss these topics within their family.

How to use:
1) Provide space for conversation regarding how the client feels about the current event and how it is affecting them, even if they do not bring it up.
   - Sample Language: *"Your mom told me that you heard on the news that the police killed a Black man. I wanted to check in to see how that was affecting you. What came up for you when you were watching that?"*
   - Sample Language for If they choose not to discuss their experience: *"I am here if or when you would like to talk about them."*
   - Sample Language (with judicious self-disclosure to normalize emotional responses): *"Situations like this can make me feel angry, but we all respond differently, some may feel sad, or not much as all. What was it like for you when you saw the story on the news."*
2) Assess how the current event has affected anxiety and/or OCD symptoms.
3) Assess social media use/engagement. Excessive media or social media use can increase stress and vicarious trauma especially if the event is related to the client's identity.
   - Develop a plan to limit media or social media use.
4) Identify types of support the client may need (see other augmentation strategies: mindfulness or grounding, connecting to positive social supports, advocacy).

Resources:
1) [Coping with Socio-Political Stress](): This resource from Boston University Student Health Services provides strategies for dealing with socio-political stress, including limiting news intake, relaxation, and more.
2) [Helping Children Cope with Frightening News](): This resource from the Child Mind Institute (in English and Spanish) provides tips for talking about current events to children of all different ages.
3) [Disasters and Scary Events: Helping Children Cope](): This resource from Seattle Children's Hospital (in English and Spanish) provides strategies for helping children cope with sociopolitical events or disasters.
4) [Managing your distress in the aftermath of a shooting](): Resource from the American Psychological Association provides tips for managing distress related to shootings.
5) [Discussing Community Trauma in Response to the Killings and Mistreatment of Black and Brown Americans](): Resource by Drs. Marva Robinson, Keisha Ross, and Dr. Maurice Endsley provides talking points on how to address police killings and mistreatment of Black and Brown Americans when a client has brought it up and when they have not.
6) [Kids and Climate Anxiety](): Resource from Child Mind Institute (English and Spanish) provides strategies for supporting youth facing climate anxiety.

Behavioral Activation

Definition: This strategy entails helping youth to recognize how behaviors influence their emotions and supporting youth to systematically engage in activities they may have withdrawn from and other meaningful or rewarding activities to help boost their mood. It can be a treatment on its own or alongside other treatment strategies like exposure.

Cultural and Contextual Factor(s) addressed: Client characteristics (comorbidities)

When to use: This strategy is most often recommended to be used when a client has low mood and lack of motivation. Behavioral Activation is the frontline psychosocial treatment for youth experiencing symptoms of depression, which is one of the most common comorbid conditions youth with anxiety and OCD can experience.

How to use:

1) Teach client about the link between enjoyable or meaningful activities and mood. For youth who are severely depressed, activities may include daily routines (e.g., showering, getting out of bed in the morning after waking up, helping to cook dinner). Depending on the clients' values and goals, behavioral activation activities may involve others (family, friends, community members) or be independent.
2) Help the client to generate a list of meaningful or rewarding activities. This can involve helping the client discover previously or currently enjoyable activities, or routine activities depending on the severity of their current impairment. It is important to make sure that the activities presented to the client are accessible and responsive to their cultural values, strengths, and environmental context. Activities should always be chosen collaboratively, not by the clinician alone.
3) Assist the client in creating a structured plan for where, when, and how these activities could take place (i.e., a behavioral activation schedule), connecting this plan to their goals and values.
4) Support the youth to implement the plan and regularly track their mood symptoms to assess how engaging chosen activities impacts their mood over time.

Resources:

1. Tips for Culturally Responsive Practice: This resource contain tips for clinician's on how to consider client's culture and context when conducting behavioral activation.
2. What Is Behavioral Activation: A resource from Child Mind Institute (in English and Spanish) that provides steps and a case example for utilizing behavioral activation with youth.
3. Behavioral Activation for Depression: Resources from APA Division 12 provides a host of materials for clinicians including treatment manuals, resources, and video demonstrations for conducting behavioral activation.

Client Advocacy and Empowerment

Definition: Advocacy entails helping the client feel empowered to take action for social change.

Cultural and Contextual Factor(s) addressed: Social Identity-Related Stressors and Supports

When to use: This strategy may be useful for youth who have or are experiencing marginalization (interpersonally or socio-politically) based on their identity. Engaging in advocacy can help to empower youth to take values-consistent action, show them that their voice matters, boost their self-efficacy by communicating messages that are important to them, and connect with others with similar values.

How to use:
1) Encourage youth to join advocacy groups. Advocacy groups for youth can include identity-specific groups or general advocacy groups which allow youth to engage in individualized advocacy.
2) Help clients brainstorm ways they can make an impact, such as by joining a (safe) protest or writing a message to their representative.
   - Sample Language: *"I hear that there is a protest coming up at your school. Do you think you might want to make a sign and participate?"*
   - Sample Language: *"I hear that you are upset because the current law banning abortion is harmful to those who can get pregnant. What do you think about writing a letter to your representative to express how you feel?"*

Note: These activities should only be done if safe for the client and age-appropriate. For younger youth, it can be helpful to work with caregivers to discuss family activities that youth can support in these areas.

Resources:

1) Youth Advocacy Resources Hub. Resource from UNICEF (in English, Spanish, French, and soon Arabic and Portuguese) developed with youth voice for youth on how to engage in advocacy.
2) Navigating Personal Safety While Taking Action as an LGBTQ Young Person: Resource from the Trevor Project that provides guiding questions and safety tips for attending vigils and protests.

Clinician Advocacy

Definition: This strategy entails supporting clients meet their basic needs and limit structural barriers to care.

Cultural and Contextual Factor(s) addressed: Environmental Stressors.

When to use: This strategy should be used when basic needs are unmet, or when clients are facing structural barriers to care. Ideally, this is done before starting therapy to ensure that clients can fully benefit from therapy. In addition, as new stressors arise, clinicians may need to engage in advocacy to optimally support their clients (e.g., connecting to external resources for economic immigration-related stressors, communicating with the school to ensure equitable educational opportunities, support with access transportation). See the Relationship Building Strategies for examples of broader societal-level clinician advocacy.

How to use:
Note: The strategies below are intended to be examples only. We know families can experience a range of stressors and clinicians should not feel limited to the list below as areas of potential advocacy. If you are ever uncertain of an area of possible advocacy falls under your scope as the treating clinician, we strongly encourage consultation with peers and supervisors.

1) The first step is to assess for potential environmental stressors (see Person-Centered Cultural Assessment section) and determine client and caregiver needs.
2) For most environmental stressors, connecting the client/family to case management services is an important first step as case workers or social workers are often able to connect people to the resources that they need. *
3) For clients with transportation difficulty, provide transportation passes and/or offer flexible scheduling (i.e., time and telehealth options) to the extent it is feasible for your setting.
4) If the client is not getting their educational needs met, communicate with their school to ensure IEP is being followed appropriately or the child can receive an IEP. This may also include writing a letter to the school with recommendations and attending school meetings with clients to advocate for their needs. If necessary, you can work with school advocates to ensure your client is receiving appropriate accommodations under local educational laws.
5) Communicate with other providers on the youth's care team (e.g., psychiatry, medical providers) and support caregivers to advocate for their child's needs in their other medical appointments (e.g., through psychoeducation, role-playing difficult conversations, etc.).
6) If a client/caregiver is struggling due to environmental stressors (e.g., immigration, housing insecurity), you can work with local organizations to connect the family to advocacy groups in their area.

Many activities that fall under advocacy are unfortunately non-billable activities for many clinicians, making it challenging for clinicians to be able to advocate as much as we would like to do so. Thus, when a youth can qualify for formal case management services, we strongly encourage consideration of making such a referral.

Resources:
1) Moving Beyond Change Efforts: Evidence and Action to Support and Affirm LGBTQI+ Youth: A resource from SAMHSA gives guidance for behavioral health providers, educators, primary care providers, and community leaders to create a supportive environment for LGBTQI+ youth
2) Guidelines for Psychological Practice for People with Low-Income and Economic Marginalization: This resource from APA provides guidelines for working with economically disadvantaged youth including the need to advocate for their needs.

Connecting to Strengths

Definition: This strategy is intended to help the client to identify and connect to personal (e.g., hobbies, skills, social identities), familial (e.g., family closeness) and cultural or community strengths (e.g., art/music, ancestral resilience, religious practices), which can foster positive development and a sense of belonging and empowerment.

Cultural and Contextual Factor(s) addressed: Social Identity-Related Stressors and Supports, Environmental Stressors, Trauma.

When to use: This strategy may be used for any client but may be particularly useful for those who are experiencing identity-related or environmental stressors to build a sense of belonging, support positive identity development, and bolster social supports to cope with chronic stress. Engaging in joyful identity and values-consistent activities can be a form of resistance to identity-based discrimination. This strategy overlaps with racial-ethnic socialization when the focus is on exploring or engaging in racial/ethnic identity development. Importantly, all youth can benefit from highlighting their strengths to increase positive identity development.

How to use:
Personal strengths may include hobbies or skills that the client succeeds at (e.g., sports, photography, cooking, art, music, yoga), personal attributes (e.g., caring, smart, creative), and a strong social identity. Familial strengths may include closeness, routines or rituals, or family values. Cultural and community strengths may include religious practices/beliefs, a strong cultural identity, speaking multiple languages, or cooking certain foods with family, and community groups (e.g., religious youth groups, scouts, recreational sports teams, YMCA/JCC).

1) Support the connection to pre-existing known strengths.
2) Support the exploration of potential personal, familial, or community strengths.
3) Support client in their identity development if this is of interest to the client and if you as the therapist feel equipped to do so. Ensure you are informed about affirming identity-related terminology.

*These strategies may require consultation with other therapists or individuals with lived experience or expertise relevant to your client's needs.

Resources:
1) Strengths Based Therapy: This article from therapist aid provides guidance for therapist to help clients discover and utilize their strengths.
2) Parenting Culture- Gender Development in Children: This resource provides insight into gender identity development and provides tips for caregivers on how to answer children's questions about gender and sex.
3) Supporting LGBTQ+ Young People with Disabilities: This resource by the Trevor Project provides information on understanding identities within the disability community, the intersection of LGBTQ+ and disability identity, and important terminology, especially for clinicians not within the community.

Coping with Racial Stress and Trauma

Definition: This strategy entails teaching and providing clients and caregivers with resources to cope with racism and racial trauma.

Cultural and Contextual Factor(s) addressed: Social Identity-Related Stressors and Supports.

When to use: This strategy may be used when clients are experiencing racial stress or trauma, either acutely or chronically.

How to use: There are a wide variety of techniques clinicians can use to support youth to cope with racial stress and trauma.

1) Before any techniques are used, it is first important for the clinician to initiate discussions about racial stress or trauma and learn from the client about their own experiences (See Person-Centered Cultural Assessment and Additional Measures sections).
2) The resources provided below focus on how to address coping in a variety of ways, including emotional, physiological, behavioral, and spiritual techniques. Additional strategies include relaxation, self-compassion, or social connectedness. We provide evidence-informed resources below to guide your use of strategies to support clients and caregivers with coping with racial stress and trauma. Select specific strategies based on the needs of your client.
3) Importantly, the goal is not for clients to habituate to racial stress and trauma but to develop healthy strategies to cope with the physical and emotional impact to sustain values-consistent behaviors and healthy functioning.

Resources:
1) The C.A.R.E. Package for Racial Healing: This resource created by Dr. Isha Metzger and her team provides psychoeducation and evidence-informed strategies for helping Black teens explore racial identity, racial socialization, relaxation, emotion regulation, cognitive coping and behavioral strategies for coping with racial stressors.
2) Racial Trauma Guide: This resource developed by the University of Georgia Racial Trauma Task Force and the EMPOWER lab includes resources for coping with racial trauma and guidance for being a better ally and discussing race in White families.
3) Racial Stress and Self-Care- Parent Tip Tool: This resource from APA provides information and tips to parents on how to mitigate racial stress and how racial stress can have an impact on parenting.
4) Racial Trauma and Children: This resource from Parenting Culture includes strategies for caregivers to support their children with racial trauma.
5) Empowering Children for Conversations about Race and Skin Color: This resource from Parenting Culture provides tips for discussing race and skin color, both generally and at different stages of childhood.
6) Supporting Youth Who Experience Racism- Ideas for Parents and Caregivers: This resource from Seattle Children's Hospital provides questions to think about and discuss, strategies for helping kids deal with racism and ideas for promoting a positive identity.

Differentiate Religious Practices from Obsessions

Definition: This strategy entails helping the client differentiate between true religious values and practices and OCD-driven religious obsession or compulsions or other anxiety about religion.

Cultural and Contextual Factor(s) addressed: Social Identity-Related Stressors and Supports

When to use: This is a helpful strategy for any client for whom religion is important. It is particularly critical when a youth's religious beliefs become intertangled with their anxiety or OCD symptoms. A common place where this arises is for clients with scrupulosity, or a form of OCD that involves religious or moral obsessions or compulsions. Unlike typical religious practice, scrupulous behavior of beliefs usually exceeds religious law and is typically inconsistent with that of the rest of the faith community.

How to use:
1) In addition to standard assessment of potential OCD and anxiety symptoms, it often is helpful to consult with a clergy member (e.g., rabbi, priest, imam).
   - Talk with the clergy independently first to educate them about OCD and get their perspective about what healthy religious practice should look like in contrast to the youths OCD symptoms.
   - Incorporate the faith leader in discussions of possible exposure practices. This could increase the appropriateness youth and family buy-in.
2) With the client's permission, invite their clergy (or another trusted faith leader within the client's religious community) to facilitate or aid in a therapy session focused on religious OCD symptoms. Having another trusted person may help support the client in their therapy journey.
3) Differentiate the religious practices the client exhibits that are truly driven by religious values/beliefs versus compulsive thoughts.
   - E.g., A client repeats the Lord's Prayer every time they perceive themselves committing a transgression, such as bumping into a peer by accident in the hallway or catching themself thinking a "not nice thought" (e.g., I don't like that kid's outfit). Prayer has escalated to the point that the Lord's Prayer has become a mental ritual they are employing almost all day to forgive their sins. Collaborating with clergy and other members of the faith community can help identify what constitutes a healthy number of times to recite the Lord's Prayer and how to construct an exposure hierarchy that will not require the client to engage in behaviors they consider blasphemous.
4) Help the client develop and practice healthy religious practices with input from caregivers or faith leaders.
5) If the client's religion opposes an identity (e.g., a religious sect that frowns upon homosexuality for a client who identifies as gay), have the client consider their freedom of choice to determine what is consistent with their values. Explain that scrupulous beliefs are rooted in fear and anxiety rather than healthy faith-based values.

Resources:
1) Scrupulosity and OCD: This is a guide from the International OCD Foundation for faith leaders that contains information about scrupulosity as well as questions for clergy. This document could be a useful resource when consulting with faith leaders.

Mindfulness and Grounding

Definition: These strategies entail using techniques to support clients in being aware of their experiences in the present moment in order to create distance between the client and their distress.

Cultural and Contextual Factor(s) addressed: Social Identity-Related Stressors and Supports, Environmental Stressors, Client Characteristics.

When to use: This strategy may be helpful for clients who are experiencing chronic stress related to their identities or environment, as well as those who have excessive worries or get stuck in worry thoughts, rumination, or obsessions. This strategy can help clients recognize, tolerate, and cope with constant worries and strong emotions by creating distance between themselves and their thoughts and experiences. Some strategies assist clients in creating distance by focusing on something else in their environment and some help clients see their experiences more objectively by observing them (e.g., what does the anxiety feel like in your body? Where does the sensation start? Where does it end? If you could draw a line around it, what would it look like?)

How to use:
Below are common mindfulness and grounding exercises. The resources contain helpful examples and handouts for clients.
1) [5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique](): This technique helps the client use their senses to notice their surroundings; the client finds five things they can see, four things they can touch, three things they can hear, two things they can smell and one thing they can taste. This can also be used to examine a singular item (e.g., a stuffed animal).
2) Body Scan: This technique has the client scan their body from their toes to their head, focusing on each part of the body and noticing what they feel, what thoughts come up and what body sensations arise. A body scan can even be used during intense emotional experiences.
3) Counting Breath: Have the client breath normally and count their inhales and exhales until they reach 10, then start over.
4) Present Moment Awareness Exercises: Help the client engage in present moment awareness by focusing on a specific object, sensation, or experience. The steps include observing and describing their sensory experiences as if it is the first time they have experienced it.

   The key concept underlying all of these practices is to approach awareness of thoughts and emotions without judgement (i.e., "non-judgmental awareness").

Resources:
1) [Grounding Techniques](): This resource from therapist aid provides examples of additional grounding techniques.
2) [8 Mindfulness Activities & Exercises for Kids](): This resource from Lurie Children's Hospital provides mindfulness activities for children include intentional breathing, sensory surprise bags, creating mandalas, and more.
3) [Body Scan Meditation by GoZen](): This resource provides a body scan video for kids.

Parenting (Caregiving) Practices

Definition: This refers to a diverse set of strategies that includes a range of skills including, praise, one on one time, behavior charts, effective instructions, consequences, and more.

Cultural and Contextual Factor(s) addressed: Client characteristics.

When to use: These strategies can be utilized for any clients with a range of presenting problems. They are most often utilized for children who have externalizing behavioral challenges (i.e., have big emotions and express them outwardly). They can be utilized to help support positive relationship building between children and their parents and reduction of challenging behavior. Many of these strategies can also be used to support anxious children struggling with managing big feelings and to coach and reward them to engage in brave behavior.

Note. It is important to consider what is leading to behavioral difficulties and ensure that you are also targeting any potential underlying challenges (e.g., experiences of trauma, chronic stressors).

How to use: The specific goals of parenting practices will be unique for each family. Broadly, goals here usually include supporting caregivers and their children to build stronger relationships through positive attending skills such as praise, one on one time, and modeling coping skills. They also often include supporting caregivers to shape behavior by learning to use more predictable and effective consequences. Parenting practices can also support parental self-efficacy by helping them gain more confidence in their parenting skills. It is important that you discuss with caregivers particular strategies you think might be helpful for them and elicit parent perspectives on how recommended strategies are (or are not) aligned with their parenting values. The more you can collaboratively decide on which skills are a good fit for the family's needs and values with the parent, the more likely parents will be to try out recommended strategies with their child.

Resources:
Complete Guide to Managing Behavior Problems: This resource from Child Mind Institute (in English and Spanish) describes several strategies for supporting parents to manage challenging youth behaviors.
Therapy for Black Kids: This resource is a website with tools tailored for Black families and includes parenting tools (e.g., behavior charts).
Tips for Culturally Responsive Practice: This resource provides Tips for considering culture and context when utilizing parenting skills.
Everyday Parenting: The ABCs of Child Rearing: This resource is a free course by Dr. Alan Kazdin (translations available in 22 languages) that provides instructions and demonstrations of evidence-based parenting skills.

Racial-Ethnic Socialization

Definition: Racial-ethnic socialization is the process by which client's can learn about and connect to their their racial and ethnic background by developing and engaging in behaviors, perceptions, and values of that group.

Cultural and Contextual Factor(s) addressed: Social Identity-Related Stressors and Supports (Racism specific), Social Identity-Related Stressors and Supports (Acculturation specific).

When to use: This strategy may be used with youth experiencing racism, discrimination, or acculturation stress. Connecting youth to their racial/ethnic background and identity can facilitate development of a positive racial/ethnic identity, with the goal of positively influencing mental health.

How to use: Racial-ethnic socialization may include a variety of different actions and activities that allow the client to connect with their racial or ethnic background (e.g., caregivers cooking a cultural food with their child, participating in cultural activities with the community, or reading books and movies with the same racial/ethnic background), and conversations around what it means to belong to a particular group (e.g., strengths and barriers that may be faced such as racism and police brutality). The following resources provide more in-depth guidance. Especially if you do not share racial/ethnic identity with your client, it is important to collaborate with the caregiver when engaging in racial socialization messages, given this is a strategy is already a common practice in households of Color.

Resources:
1) Helping Teens Feel Good About Their Racial Identity: This resource from Dr. Monnica Williams provides a definition on ethnic identity, discusses research for identity-affirming practices and provides strategies to build self-esteem related to social identity.
2) Supporting Youth Who Experience Racism- Ideas for Parents and Caregivers: This resource from Seattle Children's Hospital ideas for parents and caregivers for promoting a positive identity.
3) RESilience: Uplifting Families through Healthy Communication about Race: This is an initiative to address the effects of racism, racial bias and discrimination. It provides several tools to support positive racial socialization.
4) Acculturative Stress and South Asian Adolescent Mental Health- A Brief Guide for Clinicians: This document explains common themes of acculturative stress and recommendations for clinicians on how to assist youth with a) balancing collectivistic and individualistic values; b) living a double life; c) family/intergenerational conflicts; and d) discrimination and racism. Although this article is geared toward South Asian American adolescents, many of the strategies can apply to any youth from different backgrounds experiencing acculturative stress.
5) The C.A.R.E. Package for Racial Healing: This resource created by Dr. Isha Metzger and her team provides psychoeducation and evidence-informed strategies for helping Black teens explore racial identity, racial socialization, relaxation, emotion regulation, cognitive coping and behavioral strategies for coping with racial stressors.
6) TF-CBT and Racial Socialization Implementation Manual. This manual (TF-CBT+RS, Metzger, Dandridge, Cohen, & Mannarino, 2023) addresses strategies for integrating Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT, Cohen, Mannarino & Deblinger, 2017) with Racial Socialization for Black youth ages 3-17 years and their parents and/or other caregivers who experience racial-related stress or trauma as well as other types of significant trauma.
7) Black & LGBTQ+: Approaching Intersectional Conversations: A resource from the Trevor Project that supports youth in having conversations about their intersectional identities.

Relaxation

Definition: Relaxation entails intentional efforts to reduce the physiological responses associated with stress in the body. This can include using progressive muscle relaxation to reduce muscle tension and diaphragmatic breathing to reduce heart rate.

Cultural and Contextual Factor(s) addressed: Social Identity-Related Stressors and Supports, Environmental Stressors.

When to use: This strategy may be helpful for clients experiencing high stress due to identity-related discrimination and those who experience high levels of chronic stress, or physiological arousal in response to anxiety. Relaxation strategies can help youth recognize that they can have some control over their physiological responses.

Note: For clients engaging in exposure therapy, relaxation is typically contraindicated directly before an exposure practice, as it can serve as a form of avoidance rather than tolerating the body sensations associated with anxiety and OCD. We encourage use of relaxation in three major ways: (1) to support coping with more chronic and realistic worries as they occur (e.g., during an acute stressful moment or experience), (2) to help youth who struggle to fall asleep at night due to chronic worry to help their brains "settle down" and relax enough to sleep, and (3) in service of "opposite action" principles (e.g., a youth who experiences an aggressive response when anxious or agitated might be coached to use relaxation to withdraw from a potentially aggressive encounter, rather than engage).

How to use:
1) There are many breathing exercises you can use to support emotion regulation and reduce somatic arousal. The premise of these breathing practices is to slow the rate of breathing and calm the body down. Activities can be made more engaging for younger children. Several example breathing activities are provided in the resources.
2) Progressive muscle relaxation is an exercise utilized to help clients notice tension in their bodies and intentionally relax their muscles. The length of progressive muscle relaxation should be tailored based on the child's age and attention span.

Ensure that tools utilized in session are relevant for your client (e.g., breathing video with kids of different racial or ethnic backgrounds).

Resources:
1) How to do progressive muscle relaxation for anxiety: This resource from Anxiety Canada describes how to do progressive muscle relaxation step by step with accompanying audio.
2) Deep Breathing Exercises for Kids: This online resource provides both an explanation of the importance of deep breathing and deep breathing activities (e.g., using props, shapes, imagination, animals, numbers).
3) Breathing Exercise for Kids and Families: In for 4, Hold for 4, Out for 4: This resource from Children's Hospital Colorado provides a video of a sun with which the client can practice deep breathing.
4) Deep Breathe: This resource from Gracie's Corner a YouTube channel for kids for children from diverse backgrounds includes breathing guidance in song form.

Structured Problem-Solving

Definition: This strategy entails a systematic process for helping youth to identify potential solutions to the problems they are facing and then evaluate the pros and cons of each solution to select the best possible option. Problem-solving is a common component of CBT for youth with anxiety and OCD and can help to address a wide range of stressors that clients experience as a part of their daily lives.

Cultural and Contextual Factor(s) addressed: All.

When to use: This strategy may be used when the client is experiencing distress from problems that are not easily addressed or when emotional decisions lead to negative consequences. Structured problem-solving can provide a structured framework to assist clients in making healthy decisions and ultimately give them confidence to handle problems that arise.

How to use:
1) Teach youth the rationale for problem-solving.
   - When our "emotion" brains are in charge we often make snap decisions without always considering all of the options available to us, which can lead to problems for us.
   - Structured problem solving can help us to address this innate human challenge we all face.
   - It can be helpful to teach the steps of structured problem-solving with a mnemonic device to help clients remember the steps. One example is the **SOLVE**, part of a transdiagnostic CBT manual (Esposito-Smythers, 2019).
2) Engage in Problem-Solving Steps with the **SOLVE**:
   - **S**elect problem
     o Determining which aspects, if any are within the client/family's control.
   - Generate potential **O**ptions for responding.
   - **L**ikely outcome: Note whether the outcome of each potential solution would be positive, negative or both.
   - **V**ery best ones: Choose the options that seem to be the best and try them out.
   - **E**valuate the outcome.
   - The process can circle back to evaluation the prior options if needed (e.g., the first chosen solution does not work as well as anticipated).
3) This strategy is best taught first with a more neutral example (e.g., another child's problem) to illustrate the process before asking the youth to try to apply the skill in their own life.
4) Clinicians should be careful not just offer advice and solutions. Rather, clinicians are encouraged to approach this process collaboratively (e.g., taking turns brainstorming solutions) to help youth develop the skills to begin to manage complex problems independently.

Resources:
1) Problem Solving: A hand out from Therapist Aid that assists in conducting structured problem-solving.

Supporting Emotional Safety Related to Identity

Definition: This strategy entails identifying spaces, people, or identity-based groups where clients feel comfortable expressing or discussing their identities.

Cultural and Contextual Factor(s) addressed: Social Identity-Related Stressors and Supports.

When to use: This strategy may be helpful for clients who are experiencing discrimination based on their identities and/or have people in their life that are not accepting of their identities. Finding supportive people and places for clients to express their identity is important for their emotional safety and identity development.

How to use:
1) Identify safe places and people for the client to express and support their identity development. It can be helpful to assist clients in determining:
   - Whether they have allies in their community or at school.
   - If there are organizations for youth with similar identities or experiences in their school or neighborhood.
   - If there are trusted adults or other people they can safely turn to when they are experiencing discrimination.
   - In what physical spaces they feel safe and comfortable to express themselves (e.g., home, school, youth groups, playing sports).
2) If the client cannot identify any accepting spaces, help them connect with communities aligned with their identities or help them advocate for the creation of spaces that are identity-congruent and affirming/uplifting.
3) Research local client community events or online environments (e.g., LGBTQI+ groups, community activism groups, groups for DACA recipients) that might be helpful for the client to attend to either process feelings or be with others who have similar experiences.

Resources:

1) Navigating Personal Safety as LQBTQ+: This resource from the Trevor Project provides guidance on navigating personal safety while taking action as an LGBTQ young person
2) School Safety for LQBTQ+:This resource from the Trevor Project offers guidance for how to create safer spaces in schools for LGBTQ youth.

Supporting Physical Safety

Definition: Supporting physical safety entails determining risk and developing plans to help youth stay safe in their environmental context.

Cultural and Contextual Factor(s) addressed: Social Determinants of Health, Social Identity-Related Stressors and Supports.

When to use: This strategy may be used when a client experiences environmental stressors (e.g., community violence, immigration-related stressors), or when a client with marginalized identities does not feel safe in a particular space given their identity. This often can be a crucial first step for youth to be able to engage in therapy if their environment is unstable at the start of treatment; however, youth may experience new-onset stressors over the course of treatment that may also warrant immediate attention.

Note: Rather than assuming what level of risk is appropriate, evaluate the level of risk that is acceptable to client/family.

How to use:
1) Assess your own ideas about safety and recognize that they may or may not apply to the client and family.
2) Help the client evaluate risk and determine the amount of risk that they/their caregivers feel is appropriate to tolerate. Some questions you can use to assess risk for specific situations can include:
   - Ask the client what they see/smell/hear that indicates safety.
   - Ask about what % their "wise brain" thinks the feared outcome will come true versus what percentage it *feels* like it will come true to identify any discrepancies that might suggest potential risk overestimation.
   - Ask what level of risk feels appropriate to tolerate at this point in time and what level of risk they would ultimately like to be able to tolerate.
   - Ask the client/caregiver what behaviors/risk taking is considered normative for both the family and others in the same situation as the client.
3) Put in place a plan to ensure physical safety and teach youth skills to help them maintain safety in their environments. Developing a plan for safety involves assessing risk and identifying people and actions that can support safety.
   - Do certain times of the day feel safer than others?
   - Are there people who you can travel with?
   - How do you know if you might be in danger? What are warning signs to look out for?
   - Who can you contact (and how) if you are worried you are in danger?
   - Are safe activities available after school?
   Once this information is obtained, the clinician can collaborative with the youth and caregiver(s) to create a plan. Structured problem-solving can also support this process.

Resources:
1) [Community Violence: Reactions and Actions in Dangerous Times](#): This resource from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network discusses how community violence can affect youth and provides strategies to deal with it.
2) [Restoring a Sense of Safety in the Aftermath of a Mass Shooting](#): This resource from the Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress provides tips for parents and professionals that include planning for physical safety.
3) [Family Preparedness Plan](#): This resource from Immigrant Legal Resource Center provides a family prepared with specific guidance for immigrant families.

Trauma Processing

<u>Definition</u>: Trauma processing involves developing a trauma narrative to help clients manage difficult memories and emotions and recognize maladaptive thinking related to the traumatic experience.

<u>Cultural and Contextual Factor(s) addressed</u>: Environmental Stressors (Trauma), Stressors related to Social Identity.

<u>When to use:</u> This strategy may be used for clients who have experienced trauma. Experiences of trauma (included racial trauma) can co-occur with anxiety and OCD.

<u>How to use</u>: Trauma processing is a core component of evidence-based treatments for trauma such as Trauma-focused CBT (TF-CBT). Depending on your training, it may be appropriate to incorporate trauma processing into treatment for anxiety or OCD if the trauma is impairing the clients functioning. Trauma processing typically includes the child engaging in a trauma narrative (e.g., written story, song, rap, poem, picture book) to process their trauma experience(s) on their own and with others. A new version of TF-CBT that incorporates racial socialization has been developed by Dr. Isha Metzger and Colleagues and is available for free (linked below). *Note: That trauma processing is a complicated intervention technique that should only be delivered by clinicians with prior formal training or access to expert supervisory/consultative support.*

<u>Resources:</u>
1) Formal training in TF-CBT is recommended before engaging in a trauma narrative. The Medical University of South Carolina offers a low-cost TF-CBT training that can be found [here](#).
2) [The Trauma Narrative](#): This resource created by Dorsey (2007) and adapted for Fitzgerald Training (2008): Provides an explanation of trauma narratives, how to start one, and tips for conducting the trauma narrative.
3) [Trauma Narrative:](#) This resource from University of Washington Medical Center contains resources for how to develop a trauma narrative including client handouts.
4) TF-CBT and Racial Socialization Implementation Manual. This manual *(TF-CBT+RS, Metzger, Dandridge, Cohen, & Mannarino, 2023)* addresses strategies for integrating Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy *(TF-CBT, Cohen, Mannarino & Deblinger, 2017)* with Racial Socialization for Black youth ages 3-17 years and their parents and/or other caregivers who experience racial-related stress or trauma as well as other types of significant trauma.

<u>Validation</u>

<u>Definition</u>: This strategy entails recognizing and accepting your client's thoughts, feelings, sensations, and behaviors as understandable.

<u>Cultural and Contextual Factor(s) addressed</u>: Social Identity-Related Stressors and Supports, Environmental Stressors.

<u>When to use:</u> This strategy will be used with all clients, but is an especially important strategy for those youth who are experiencing identity-related or environmental stressors given the frequent invalidation they are likely to experience, especially by professionals. Validation is also and interpersonal effectiveness skill that is often taught in Dialectical Behavior Therapy.

<u>How to use:</u> We recommend clinicians intentionally acknowledge and affirm the client's experiences, emotions, and behavioral responses. *Note: a clinician can validate a client's experience without agreeing with a clients reaction.*
1) Acknowledge and affirm the client's experience.
   - <u>Sample Language (Identity-related Stressor)</u>*: "Your classmate made a racist comment after you gave a presentation in class, that sounds like a really hurtful situation."*
2) Affirm and validate the client's emotional experiences.
   - <u>Sample Language (Identity-related Stressor)</u>: *"It makes sense that you are feeling angry after your classmate made a racist comment (use their words)."*
3) Affirm and acknowledge the client's behavioral responses.
   - <u>Sample Language (Identity-related Stressor)</u>: *"You yelled at your peer because you were feeling angry that they made a racist comment to you."*
4) Be mindful of not promising it is going to get better as this could feel invalidating (especially when dealing with injustices).

<u>Resources:</u>

1) **Interpersonal Effectiveness Handout:** Validation: This resource provides steps to engage in validation.
2) Empowering Children for Conversations about Race and Skin Color: This resource from Parenting Culture provides tips for discussing race and skin color, both generally and at different stages of childhood.

Values Exercises

Definition: This strategy entails assessing the client's values to understand how they may affect their perceptions of therapy and inform goal identification for treatment.

Cultural and Contextual Factor(s) addressed: Values, Beliefs, and Experiences of Mental Health.

When to use: This strategy may be useful when trying to understand what is important to a client/family to align treatment goals with their values or when they are hesitant to engage in exposures or other treatment strategies. Knowing a youth's values can help support clinicians to encourage *values-consistent behavior* and explain how certain exercises (e.g., exposures) can fit their values and allow them to lead a lifestyle maximally consistent with the life that they want for themselves. It also can be helpful to understand potential conflicts between the treatment strategies and client values (e.g., if the caregiver values protecting their child, and that feels in conflict with helping their child engage in exposures) to inform future conversations and treatment planning.

How to use:
1) Use tools provided in the resource section below to assess client/family values.
2) Collaboratively determine how treatment strategies align with these values.
3) Identify areas where client actions differ from their values (e.g., they place a high value on physical activity but rarely engage in any physical movement) to identify possible treatment targets a youth may be motivated to address.

Resources:
These resources can help the client discover what values are most important to them.
1) Values Clarification: Provides a list of values of which the client selects 10 and ranks them from 1-10.
2) Values Discussion Questions: Seven questions for the client to think about in regard to their values.
3) Personal Values: Provides a tool for exploring important values, including those of family, friends, and society. Discussion questions provided following the worksheet.

Youth-Caregiver Communication

Definition: This strategy entails general communication skills, such as empathetic listening and assertive communication, to help families address internal conflict.

Cultural and Contextual Factor(s) addressed: Social Identity-Related Stressors and Supports.

When to use: This strategy can be useful for clients who are experiencing family conflict and may be particularly useful for immigrant or first-generation clients who come into conflict with parents because of differing values.

How to use:
1) Have the client and their caregiver discuss which values are most important to them and try to find overlap in values/goals between client and caregiver.
   - For acculturation stressors: Discuss the stages/levels of acculturation with family members and facilitate a conversation on similarities and differences between culture in the US and culture from their home country.
2) Encourage the use of empathetic listening for both the client and caregiver in which they validate the other's emotional experiences as well as their own.
   - Help caregivers focus on validating the client's emotion first, rather than focusing on the behavior or jumping directly to problem-solving.
   - Help the client take perspective and try to understand how the caregiver may be feeling.
3) Practice assertive communication (as appropriate) that involves the clients and caregivers sharing what is important to them and why.
4) Encourage acceptance of differing values while emphasizing common values between the caregiver and the client.
5) In addition to positive communication skills (i.e., empathetic listening, assertive communication, acceptance), encourage positive family time in which client chooses an enjoyable activity to engage in with caregivers.
   - For acculturation stressors: Discuss coping skills the family can use together to address acculturative stress (generally and within the family). Facilitate cultural identity development through discussion/reflection with family members as well as include connecting to strengths.

Resources:
1) [Communication Techniques:](#) This resource from Therapist Aid provides general effective communication strategies and client worksheets.
2) [Assertive Communication:](#) This resource from Therapist Aid provides guidance and worksheets for assertive communication.
3) [Acculturative Stress and South Asian Adolescent Mental Health- A Brief Guide for Clinicians:](#) This document from parenting culture explains common themes of acculturative stress and recommendations for clinicians on how to assist youth with experiences of acculturative stress.

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